

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6256

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Agriculture & Rural Economic Development, February 07, 2008

**Title:** An act relating to heritage livestock and poultry breeds.

**Brief Description:** Creating the Washington heritage livestock and poultry breed recognition program.

**Sponsors:** Senators Jacobsen and Rasmussen.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Agriculture & Rural Economic Development: 2/7/08 [DPS].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6256 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Rasmussen, Chair; Hatfield, Vice Chair; Schoesler, Ranking Minority Member; Jacobsen, Morton and Shin.

**Staff:** Bob Lee (786-7404)

**Background:** As some specialized breeds of livestock and poultry have become favored in modern food production systems, competitive market forces have caused other breeds to diminish or become extinct.

There is interest in establishing a procedure to provide recognition to owners of animals of rare and diminishing breeds of livestock. A goal of the recognition program is to provide owners an incentive to continue rearing these animals by increasing public awareness of these animal breeds.

**Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute):** A Washington Heritage Livestock and Poultry Breed Recognition Program is created in the Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation (department). To apply for recognition, the animal owner may submit an application to the department that includes the history of the animal breed, photos of the animals, a brief history of the breed's origin and any interesting or unique characteristics.

To assist with the determination of whether a breed is a heritage breed, the department may use the conservation priority list established by the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy. For livestock breeds that are not on that list, the owner may submit

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supplemental information regarding the breed's status as a rare or diminishing breed for consideration by the department for possible designation.

The department must periodically issue recognition awards to the owners of animals and is to maintain a website that includes those animals. The program expires on July 1, 2010.

**EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY AGRICULTURE & RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute):** The provision that directed the Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation to consult with the Department of Agriculture was deleted.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: In England, there are survival stations at which all the old English breeds are maintained including sheep that shed wool naturally rather than having to shear it. On the east coast, there are old breeds brought over by the Pilgrims of which remnant animals still exist. It is important to maintain the genetic diversity of livestock breeds because they have unique traits. Specialty restaurants are looking for unique menu items and heritage breed livestock products are quite popular but scarce. Providing a recognition program will stimulate interest in preserving heritage breeds.

OTHER: The domestication of livestock became common 8,000 to 11,000 years ago and many of livestock species are dying out. A Heritage Livestock Breed program compliments the Heritage Barn program by teaching people about the history of agricultural resources and how they have changed over time.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Jacobsen, prime sponsor; Heidi Siegelbaum, Chef's Collaborative; Dawn Turbyfill, Heirloom Heritage Farms.

OTHER: Holly Neibergs, Washington State University; Allyson Brooks, Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation.