
**Rural Development, Agriculture, &
Natural Resources Committee**

HB 2075

Brief Description: Removing the authority of the department of agriculture to conduct livestock brand inspections.

Sponsors: Representatives Chandler and Ormsby; by request of Department of Agriculture.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Removes the Washington State Department of Agriculture's authority to conduct livestock brand inspections and repeals provisions relating to the creation, administration, and enforcement of the Livestock Inspection Program.

Hearing Date: 2/20/19

Staff: Rebecca Lewis (786-7339).

Background:

Animal Health, Generally.

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) Animal Health Program (Animal Health Program) is charged with protecting animals and the public from communicable animal diseases. Animal Health Program officials monitor movement of animals across state lines, set requirements for reporting and controlling diseases, and conduct testing and investigations.

Livestock Inspection Program.

Under the Livestock Inspection Program, the WSDA records brands, licenses feedlots and public livestock markets, and conducts surveillance and inspection of livestock at time of sale and upon out-of-state movement. Cattle and horses are inspected for permanent identification, such as brands and ownership documents: at public livestock markets; at United States Department of

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Agriculture (USDA)-inspected slaughter plants; at licensed, certified feedlots; at change of ownership; and prior to leaving the state. The program is funded by fees that are set in statute and paid by the livestock industry. The program does not receive General Fund dollars.

Inspection Fees.

The inspection fee at a USDA-inspected slaughter plant is \$4 per head. The minimum fee for the issuance of an inspection certificate is \$5. The minimum fee does not apply to livestock consigned to a public livestock market or inspected at a slaughter plant. The fee for an individual inspection certificate is \$20 per year, or the time and mileage fee, whichever is greater. The time and mileage fee is \$17 per hour and the current mileage rate is set by the Office of Financial Management (OFM). The OFM mileage rate is \$0.58 per mile as of October 1, 2018.

When livestock inspection is required at a public livestock market, the proprietor of the livestock market must collect and remit to the WSDA an inspection fee as provided by law. If the total fees collected for inspection in one day do not exceed \$100, the proprietor must pay \$100 for the inspection services.

Livestock Identification Advisory Board.

Established by the Legislature in 1993, the six-member Livestock Identification Advisory Board (Board) provides advice about livestock identification programs to the Director of the WSDA (Director). The Board's six members are appointed by the Director and include a beef producer, a public livestock market representative, a horse owner, a cattle feeder, a dairy farmer, and a meat processor.

Impounded Livestock.

Livestock that has been found running at large and is subsequently declared a public nuisance may be impounded by either the county sheriff or the nearest brand inspector. All impounded livestock must be brought to the nearest livestock market, or other place approved by the Director. If a brand inspector was not involved in the impounding, one must be notified. A brand inspector must examine the impounded animal in an attempt to ascertain ownership. If a registered brand is found, the owner must be notified through the mail of the animal's impoundment.

The brand inspector is also responsible for publishing information about the impounded animal in a newspaper published in the county where the animal was found. The notice must include information about the animal and where it was found, along with information regarding any pending sale of the animal at auction.

Summary of Bill:

The Washington State Department of Agriculture's (WSDA's) authority to conduct livestock brand inspections is removed, and provisions relating to the creation and administration of the Livestock Inspection Program are repealed. This includes: repealing the Livestock Inspection Program fees; deleting provisions creating and requiring identification certificates and inspection

certificates for livestock generally, including for transporting livestock; and examining the WSDA's inspection and enforcement authority related to the Livestock Inspection Program.

The authority for brand inspectors to impound livestock at large and publish a notice of impounding is removed, but retained for the sheriff of the county where the livestock was found. The requirement for a brand inspector to examine impounded livestock to ascertain ownership by brand, tattoo, or identifying characteristic is removed. Proceeds from the sale of impounded livestock are no longer directed to the WSDA.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.