
**Agriculture and Natural Resources
Committee**

2ESSB 5150

Brief Description: Concerning the beef commission.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks (originally sponsored by Senator Shewmake).

Brief Summary of Second Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Increases, incrementally, the Beef Commission's (Commission) levied assessment on Washington cattle to \$2.50 per head between July 1, 2024, and January 1, 2026.
- Exempts the sale of calves identified with green tags from the assessment increases.
- Allows producers and owners of cattle to request a refund of a certain portion of the assessment.
- Provides that the Commission may fund, conduct, or otherwise participate in scientific research related to beef.

Hearing Date: 2/14/24

Staff: Rebecca Lewis (786-7339).

Background:

Washington State Beef Commission.

The Washington State Beef Commission (Commission) was created by statute in 1969 to fund beef promotion, research, and consumer education activities supporting Washington's beef

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industry. The Commission is composed of two beef producers, two dairy-beef producers, two feeders, one livestock sale yard operator, one meat packer, and a representative of the Department of Agriculture.

The Commission is funded by an assessment of \$1 per head of Washington cattle, which is levied at the time of sale. The Commission may collect an additional assessment of \$0.50 per head for cattle subject to assessment under a federal order that is remitted to the national Cattlemen's Beef Board for a national beef promotion and research program. The Commission must prepare a budget each year that covers the anticipated income and expenses to be incurred in carrying out the Commission's statutory obligations. The budget is proposed for discussion at an annual meeting. Public notice of the annual meeting must be given at least 10 days before the meeting is held. Otherwise, the Commission holds regular meetings quarterly. At the end of each fiscal year, the Commission must provide a concise yet detailed report of the Commission's activities and expenditures to the Legislature.

Green Tags.

Green tags are a voluntary means of identifying certain unbranded Grade A dairy calves leaving the dairy business and entering the human food chain and are affixed to the calf's ear. Calves identified with green tags are generally exempt from livestock inspection requirements at the first point of sale so long as certain requirements are met and the calves are not being sold or transported outside of Washington.

Summary of Bill:

Beginning July 1, 2024, the Commission's levied assessment on Washington cattle increases incrementally as follows:

- Beginning July 1, 2024, the assessment increases from \$1.00 to \$1.50;
- Beginning January 1, 2025, the assessment increases from \$1.50 to \$2.00; and
- Beginning January 1, 2026, the assessment increases from \$2.00 to \$2.50.

The increases may not be collected at the first point of sale of calves identified with green tags. As a result, the state assessments that apply to calves identified with green tags remains at \$1 per head.

A producer or owner of cattle from whom an assessment collected may request a refund of no more than:

- \$0.50 per head beginning July 1, 2024;
- \$1.00 per head beginning January 1, 2025; and
- \$1.50 per head beginning January 1, 2026.

Requests for refunds must be mailed to the Commission within 90 calendar days of the assessment. The Commission must process requested refunds on a calendar quarterly basis. Refund requests that are received fewer than 15 days from the end of the calendar quarter must be paid at the end of the next calendar quarter.

The Commission may fund, conduct, or otherwise participate in scientific research related to beef including improving production, quality, transportation, processing, distribution, and environmental stewardship. The Commission must report annually to the Legislative committees with oversight over agriculture by January 1 that includes a record of the assessment amounts collected and spent, as well as the purposes for which the funds were used.

The Commission must hold board meetings in different geographic regions of the state throughout the year, including the northeast, southeast, central southwest, and northwest regions of the state. At least two meetings must be held in Eastern Washington.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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