

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5439

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks, February 9, 2023

**Title:** An act relating to livestock identification.

**Brief Description:** Concerning livestock identification.

**Sponsors:** Senators Warnick, Dozier, Hasegawa, Lovelett, Salomon, Schoesler and Van De Wege.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks: 2/02/23, 2/09/23 [DPS].

### Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill

- Requires the livestock identification advisory committee to review the costs and operations of the livestock identification program.
- Removes the call out fee for an inspection done by a certified veterinarian or field livestock inspector.
- Changes the livestock identification report annual deadline from September to November.
- Extends livestock inspection fees that expire July 1, 2024, to July 1, 2026.

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## SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, WATER, NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5439 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Van De Wege, Chair; Salomon, Vice Chair; Muzzall, Ranking

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

Member; Rolfes, Shewmake, Short, Stanford, Wagoner and Warnick.

**Staff:** Delika Steele (786-7486)

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

Livestock Inspection Program. The Livestock Inspection Program 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;
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) slaughter plants;
- licensed, certified feedlots;
- change of ownership; and
- prior to leaving the state.

Livestock Identification Advisory Committee. Through July 1, 2024, the Livestock Identification Advisory Committee (advisory committee) is comprised of 12 members—two beef producers, two cattle feeders, two dairy producers, two livestock market owners, two meat processors, and two horse producers. The advisory committee must meet at least twice a year and a quorum of the committee consists of a majority of members. If a member has not been designated for a position described above, that position may not be counted for determining a quorum. A member may appoint an alternate who meets the same qualifications as the member to serve during the member's absence. The director may remove a member from the advisory committee if that member has two or more unexcused absences during a single calendar year.

Inspection Fees. The inspection fee for identified cattle is \$1.21 and the inspection fee for horses is \$3.85. A certified feed lot licensee must pay a fee of \$0.28 for each head of cattle handled through the feed lot. If inspection fees collected in any one-day sale day at a livestock market do not exceed \$150, the livestock market must pay \$150 for inspection services. A call-out fee of \$20 is collected for inspections, including inspections at a processing plant, certified feed lot, or livestock market. These fee changes expire July 1, 2024.

Reporting. WSDA is required to submit reports to the Legislature and the advisory committee starting September 1, 2023, and annually thereafter that include the amounts collected, expenditures, and recommendations for making the program more efficient, improving the program, or modifying the livestock inspection fees to cover the costs of the program.

**Summary of Bill:** The bill as referred to committee not considered.

**Summary of Bill (First Substitute):** The inspection fees that expire July 1, 2024, are extended to July 1, 2026. WSDA must submit a report to the Legislature and the advisory committee by November 1, 2023, that includes the amounts collected, expenditures, and recommendations for making the program more efficient, improving the program, or modifying the livestock inspection fees to cover the costs of the program. The report must be submitted annually until July 2026.

The advisory committee must review the costs and operations of the livestock identification program. Changes enacted by the Legislature to the committee in 2019 will now extend through July 1, 2026.

The call out fee for an inspection done by a certified veterinarian or field livestock inspector is removed.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony on First Substitute:** PRO: This bill removes an unnecessary fee and will modernize the livestock identification program and keep it financially solvent until 2029. The program will be at a deficit without the sunset clause and charging the \$20 fee deters the use of inspectors. This is about protection of assets, protection of livestock, and tracking when livestock is sold. This bill will allow the program to continue protecting against theft and continue providing information about animal diseases and traceability efforts.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Judy Warnick, Prime Sponsor; Mark Streuli, Washington Cattlemen's Association; Brennan Kimbel, Washington State Department of Agriculture.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.