

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5485

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Agriculture & Natural Resources, February 13, 2025

Title: An act relating to livestock identification.

Brief Description: Concerning livestock identification.

Sponsors: Senators Warnick, Chapman and Wilson, J..

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture & Natural Resources: 2/03/25, 2/13/25 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Extends the current livestock identification fees, the Livestock Identification Advisory Committee, and the Livestock Identification Program report from July 1, 2026 to July 1, 2030.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Chapman, Chair; Krishnadasan, Vice Chair; Short, Ranking Member; Liias, Muzzall, Saldaña, Schoesler, Shewmake and Wagoner.

Staff: Jeff Olsen (786-7428)

Background: The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) 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 Identification Program. The Livestock Identification Program records brands,

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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, 2026, 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
- 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, 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 WSDA director may remove a member from the advisory committee if that member has two or more unexcused absences during a single calendar year.

Livestock Inspection Fees. Legislation enacted in 2019 made changes to fees for livestock inspection and individual identification certificates, and established call-out fees of \$20 for livestock inspections, including inspections at a processing plant, certified feed lot, or livestock market. Legislation enacted in 2023 removed the call out fee for an inspection done by a certified veterinarian or field livestock inspector

In 2023, the fee structure was extended through July 1, 2026. Current fees are as follows:

- unbranded and unidentified cattle—\$4.00 per head;
- branded and identified cattle—\$1.21 per head;
- horses—\$3.85 per head;
- cattle at a processing plant with a capacity of 500 head or fewer—\$4.40 per head;
- cattle at licensed feedlots—\$0.28 per head;
- individual identification certificates for 30 or more horses—\$2.20 per head;
- annual certificate for fewer than 30 animals—\$22.00;
- annual certificate for 30 or more animals—\$5.50 per head;
- lifetime certificate—\$63.00; and
- minimum issuance fee—\$5.50.

These fees expire July 1, 2026.

Reporting. WSDA is required to submit reports to the Legislature and the advisory committee starting November 1, 2023, and annually thereafter that include the amounts collected, expenditures, and recommendations for making the Livestock Identification Program more efficient, improving the Livestock Identification Program, or modifying the livestock inspection fees to cover the costs of the Livestock Identification Program. The reporting requirement expires July 1, 2026.

Summary of Bill: The inspection fees scheduled to expire July 1, 2026, are extended to July 1, 2030. WSDA must continue to submit a report to the Legislature annually until July 1, 2030, with suggestions for making the Livestock Identification Program more efficient or modifying the livestock inspection fees to cover the costs of the Livestock Identification Program.

The advisory committee must review the costs and operations of the Livestock Identification Program through July 1, 2030.

The call out fee for an inspection done by a certified veterinarian or field livestock inspector is removed through July 1, 2030.

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: PRO: In 2019 the fee structure was adopted to fund the inspection program to keep animals safe, free from disease, and to help track diseased animals. The program helps producers and protects animals, and this would extend the program through 2030 without adding or increasing fees. The program is solvent, and the current fees holds the program together. The program is about asset protection, and animal health and disease play a role.

OTHER: The budget is solvent through 2029, but unpredictable issues could arise. The program will continue to provide effective inspections, and by extending the fees it ensures the program can continue to operate and modernize.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Judy Warnick, Prime Sponsor; Mark Streuli, Washington Cattlemen's Association.

OTHER: Brennan Kimbel, Washington State Department of Agriculture.

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