

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5082

As Reported By House Committee On:
Agriculture & Rural Development

Title: An act relating to poultry farming.

Brief Description: Including ratites in poultry farming regulations.

Sponsors: Senators M. Rasmussen, Barr, Erwin and Bauer.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Agriculture & Rural Development, March 24, 1993, DP.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members:
Representatives Rayburn, Chair; Kremen, Vice Chair;
Chandler, Ranking Minority Member; Schoesler, Assistant
Ranking Minority Member; Chappell, Assistant Ranking
Minority Member; Foreman; Grant; Karahalios; Lisk; and
Roland.

Staff: Kenneth Hirst (786-7105).

Background:

Department of Agriculture - Disease Control. State law grants the director of agriculture general supervision of the control of diseases affecting animals. Among the authorities of the director are those to impose quarantines, regulate veterinary biologics, and adopt and enforce rules to prevent the introduction or spread of diseases in domestic animals.

Brand Services. The director is also the recorder of livestock brands in this state. A brand is the personal property of the person who registered it. State law permits the director to enter a slaughterhouse, public livestock market, or place where hides are held to examine livestock or hides for brands.

Summary of Bill:

Disease Control. The general disease control authorities of the director of agriculture expressly apply to the control

and suppression of diseases in ratites. Ratites are ostriches, emus, rhea, and other flightless birds used for human consumption. The Department of Agriculture must adopt rules necessary to assure adequate protection against the potential importation or spread of contagious diseases and parasites.

Brand Services. The poultry for which brand registration services and brand protection are available, under the state's livestock brand laws, now expressly include ratites. The Department of Agriculture may develop by rule, a system under which individual ratites may be identified through the use of implanted microchips. The department may set fees to recover the costs of the system.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: (1) Raising ratites as livestock provides farmers broader choices and opportunities and provides consumers meat that is lower in cholesterol than chicken or beef. (2) Of the other states, 14 currently regulate ratites as livestock; ratite farmers in this state wish to be treated in the same manner. (3) This country is currently a net importer of ratite hides.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Senator Rasmussen; Senator Barr; Jerry Denney, Western Region American Ostrich Association; Pam Revere, Big Mountain Ostrich Ranch; Susan Hathaway, Half Moon Ostrich Ranch; and Lane Boyle, 4 Star Ostrich.