

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5443

As Passed House
April 6, 1993

Title: An act relating to livestock identification, public livestock markets, and certified feed lots.

Brief Description: Modifying the regulation of livestock.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Agriculture (originally sponsored by Senators M. Rasmussen, Barr and Loveland; by request of Department of Agriculture).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Agriculture & Rural Development, March 25, 1993, DPA;
Passed House - Amended, April 6, 1993, 91-7.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Staff: Kenneth Hirst (786-7105).

Background:

Fees. A number of the fees for livestock related inspections and services rendered by the Department of Agriculture are set by statute. For example, the annual licensing fee for the operator of a feed lot is \$500; for the operator of a public livestock market it is \$100, \$200 or \$300, based on the average gross sales volume of the market. The biennial fee for renewing a brand registration is \$25. The fee for inspecting brands at mandatory inspection points is not more than \$2 per head for horses and 30 cents to 50 cents per head for cattle, as set by the director by rule.

Individual Identification. A livestock brand is the personal property of the person who registered the brand with the department. The brand and related sales records are used to identify the owner of livestock, not to provide the identity of an individual animal. However, state law

allows the director of agriculture to issue, for a fee, identification certificates or similar identification for individual horses. This form of identification is valid only for the use of the horse owner in whose name it is issued.

Summary of Bill:

Public Livestock Markets. The director of agriculture is authorized to set the annual licensing fees for public livestock markets by rule, within prescribed limits. These limits are up to \$150 greater than the fees currently established by statute.

Certified Feed Lots. The annual fee for a license for a certified feed lot is now \$500 to \$750, rather than \$500, as under current law. The director is to specify the amount of the fee by rule. The monthly fee that the operator of a feed lot must pay to the director is now 10 cents to 15 cents for each head of cattle handled through the feed lot, rather than 10 cents per head.

Brand Registration and Inspection. The director may increase the brand registration and renewal fee by not more than 50 percent by rule. The biennial fees are currently \$25. The director must, by rule, set a late renewal fee for such registrations. The fee for transferring title to a recorded brand is now not more than \$15, rather than \$10, and the fee for securing a copy of a person's own brand registration record is now not more than \$7.50, rather than \$5, as set by the director by rule.

The department's minimum fee for conducting brand inspections at a public livestock market is to be set by rule, rather than being set by statute at \$60. This minimum fee is to be not less than \$60 and not more than \$90.

The brand inspection fee for horses is now \$2 to \$3 per head, rather than not more than \$2 per head, as set by the director by rule. The brand inspection fee for cattle is now 50 cents to 75 cents per head, rather than 30 cents to 50 cents per head, as set by rule. These fees apply to inspections made at mandatory inspection points designated by the director by rule. A person must pay the fee upon being billed by the department.

I.D. Program. The director is authorized to expand the Individual Identification Program currently authorized for horses to include the individual identification of cattle.

Board. The director of agriculture must appoint a six member board to provide advice regarding the Livestock

Identification Program and changes in brand inspection fees and related licensing fees. The director must submit proposals on these subjects to the board, before formally proposing them as rules. If the director formally proposes such a rule that has not been approved by the board, the director must explain to the board, in writing, the reasons for doing so.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: (1) The current Livestock Identification Program is in financial trouble and the livestock industry wants a greater voice in the administration of the program. The bill increases revenues for the program and will more directly involve the industry in management decisions for the program. (2) Although not perfect, the Brand Inspection Program provides a good deterrent to livestock theft.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: (In favor) Senator M. Rasmussen; John Frost, Department of Agriculture; and Kent Lebsack, Washington Cattlemen's Association.