

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2377

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Agriculture & Rural Economic Development, February 23, 2000

Title: An act relating to custom meat slaughter and preparation.

Brief Description: Regulating custom meat slaughter and preparation.

Sponsors: House Committee on Agriculture & Ecology (originally sponsored by Representatives G. Chandler, Linville, Pennington and Haigh; by request of Department of Agriculture).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture & Rural Economic Development: 2/23/2000 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Rasmussen, Chair; T. Sheldon, Vice Chair; Gardner, Honeyford, Morton, Prentice, Snyder, Stevens and Swecker.

Staff: Bob Lee (786-7404)

Background: There are three categories of meat slaughtering and handling facilities that are not federally inspected, but are subject to state licensing and regulatory requirements. A custom farm slaughterer is a mobile unit that slaughters meat animals for the owner of the animal. A custom slaughtering establishment is in a fixed location that slaughters meat food animals for the owner.

The third category is a custom meat facility that can prepare either uninspected meat for its owner, or inspected meat for members of the customer's household and nonpaying guests. Custom meat facilities must handle uninspected and inspected meats separately.

Current law provides that uninspected meat may be prepared only for the use by the owner's household and his or her nonpaying guests and employees. Uninspected meat must be clearly labeled "not for sale." Packages of uninspected meat may not be stored in a retail counter. It is unlawful to sell, trade, or give away uninspected meat.

The statutes, enacted over several years since 1959, contain a number of outdated and redundant provisions.

Summary of Bill: The statutes are reorganized and redundant language is deleted.

The requirement to hold a hearing and for the director to find there is a need for a custom slaughtering establishment prior to issuing a license to open a new business is repealed.

Custom meat facilities are allowed to cut up and sell at retail inspected meat rather than selling only prepackaged inspected meat. Custom meat facilities may use the same equipment to cut up inspected meat as uninspected meat but the equipment must first be cleaned and sanitized.

Provisions of current law are retained that uninspected meat may be prepared only for the use by the owner's household and his or her nonpaying guests and employees. Uninspected meat must be clearly labeled "not for sale." Packages of uninspected meat may not be stored in a retail counter. It is unlawful to sell, trade, or give away uninspected meat.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The state meat inspection laws have not been comprehensively updated for a number of years. The requirement for the department to hold a hearing and find there is a need for a custom slaughtering establishment may have been appropriate in 1959, but only serves to prevent competition today.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Mary Beth Lang, Dept. of Agriculture (pro).