

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESB 5187

As Passed Senate, March 4, 1999

Title: An act relating to updating or repealing dairy and food laws.

Brief Description: Updating or repealing dairy or food laws.

Sponsors: Senator Rasmussen; by request of Department of Agriculture.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture & Rural Economic Development: 1/27/99, 2/3/99 [DP].
Passed Senate, 3/4/99, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

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

Staff: Bob Lee (786-7404)

Background: The Department of Agriculture historically has administered a number of programs and statutes. Over time, administration of several programs has been taken over by federal agencies, or otherwise are no longer active. For example, in 1973, meat and poultry inspections were turned over to the U.S. Food Safety Inspection Service.

In 1992, an additional funding source was provided for the milk inspection program. To supplement general fund money, an additional one-half cent per hundred weight of milk was assessed to provide for closer monitoring of milk producers to avoid de-listing of all of the producers in a bulk tank unit. The authority for this assessment expires on June 30, 2000.

In 1994, two overlapping statutes relating to milk inspection were combined into one statute. Work has continued to bring the statutes in line with current practices and industry needs.

Summary of Bill: The assessment on fluid milk is extended until June 30, 2005. The current rate of fifty-four hundredths of a cent per hundredweight is maintained.

Options for enforcement of the milk quality laws are increased to allow expanded use of civil penalties. Assessing a civil penalty is an option to degrading milk or suspending the milk producer's license. The authority to assess a civil penalty must be used only when consistent with the federal Pasturized Milk Ordinance.

Two members are added to the current nine members on the Dairy Inspection Program Advisory Committee, including a milk hauler and a milk equipment dealer.

The Department of Agriculture is authorized to issue sanitary certificates to enable milk processing plants to export their products to foreign countries. A \$50 fee is established for issuing the sanitary certificates.

Seven chapters of obsolete or redundant dairy and food-related statutes are repealed. These pertain to: (1) filled dairy products; (2) oleomargarine; (3) yellow margarine; (4) State Meat Inspection Program; (5) State Poultry Inspection Program; (6) meat storage inspection; and (7) bread loaf size standards and hop bale standards.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 19, 1999.

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

Testimony For: The assessment on fluid milk needs to be extended to provide adequate monitoring of dairy farms to assure that bulk tank units are not delisted due to failure to meet federal and state requirements. The option to levy a civil fine provides an appropriate means to enforce requirements of the Pasturized Milk Ordinance which will be utilized only if approved by the Interstate Milk Shippers Compact. A number of statutes have ceased to be used for a number of years.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Mary Beth Lang, Candace Jacobs, Department of Agriculture; Chris Cheney, Hop Growers, Dairy Federation.