

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2299

As Reported by House Committee On:
Agriculture & Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to animal identification systems.

Brief Description: Establishing a system of animal identification.

Sponsors: Representatives Linville and Schoesler; by request of Department of Agriculture.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Natural Resources: 1/13/04, 1/20/04 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Authorizes state rules and agreements for meeting federal requirements for animal identification.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Linville, Chair; Rockefeller, Vice Chair; Schoesler, Ranking Minority Member; Holmquist, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Kristiansen, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Eickmeyer, Grant, Hunt, McDermott, Orcutt, Quall and Sump.

Staff: Kenneth Hirst (786-7105).

Background:

The state's livestock identification program and laws are administered by the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA). Among its provisions, legislation enacted last year increased the fees charged to fund the program and identified the evidence of ownership that must accompany cattle or horses when they are moved. The 2003 legislation also directed the WSDA to form an advisory committee to: evaluate mechanisms that may need to be established by the public and the private sectors to comply with federal country-of-origin labeling requirements; evaluate any requirements that may be placed on the meat products industry by federal food safety and traceability requirements as part of homeland security measures; and review the national identification work plan developed by a task force advising the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The WSDA must submit a written report of the findings and conclusion of the advisory committee by December 1, 2005.

On December 30, 2003, U. S. Secretary of Agriculture Ann M. Veneman announced that the USDA would begin the implementation of a verifiable system of national animal identification.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The Director of the WSDA (Director) may adopt rules: to support the agriculture industry in meeting federal requirements for the country-of-origin labeling of meat; and to implement federal requirements for animal identification needed to trace the source of livestock for disease control and response purposes. In doing so, the Director may cooperate with and enter into agreements with other states and agencies of the federal government.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill expressly states that the authority of the Director to adopt rules is for meeting federal requirements both for country-of-origin labeling of meat and for animal trace-back for disease control and response.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: (1) The goal of the federal program had been for country-of-origin labeling; the emphasis has now changed. This bill will help with trace-back activities. (2) The federal government has taken the lead. We want to be able to trace each individual animal. (3) The rules should be developed in consultation with the livestock advisory committee.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Leslie Emerick and Kathy Kravit-Smith, Washington State Department of Agriculture; and Jay Gordon, Washington State Dairy Federation and Washington Cattlemen's Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.