
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

SSB 6109

Brief Description: Establishing a system of animal identification.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Agriculture (originally sponsored by Senators Jacobsen, Swecker, Rasmussen, Oke, Esser, McAuliffe and Spanel; by request of Department of Agriculture).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Allows the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) to adopt rules to establish a system of animal identification to support the agriculture industry in meeting federal requirements, and establishes limitations on that authority.

Hearing Date: 2/20/04

Staff: Kenneth Hirst (786-7105).

Background:

The state's livestock identification program and laws are administered by the 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.

Under the livestock identification laws, the Director of the WSDA has also appointed a six-member Livestock Identification Advisory Board representing beef producers, public livestock market operators, horse owners, dairy farmers, cattle feeders, and meat processors. The board is to provide advice to the Director regarding livestock identification programs and inspection fees and related licensing fees.

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 Bill:

The Director of the WSDA may adopt rules to establish a system of animal identification to support the agriculture industry in meeting federal requirements. In consultation with the Livestock Identification Advisory Board, the Director may cooperate with and enter into agreements with other states and with federal agencies to carry out such a system and to promote consistency of regulation.

Any requirements of an animal identification system for country-of-origin labeling purposes must be substantially consistent with and must not exceed the requirements established by the USDA.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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