

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESJM 8050

As Passed Senate, February 17, 2004

Brief Description: Informing Congress of Washington's expertise in animal disease.

Sponsors: Senators Sheahan and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture: 2/3/04 [DP].

Passed Senate: 2/17/04, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Swecker, Chair; Brandland, Vice Chair; Jacobsen, Rasmussen and Sheahan.

Staff: Bob Lee (786-7404)

Background: At a work session on January 16 updating state legislative committees on the recent positive test of a cow in Washington State with bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), Washington State University (WSU) provided information on the ongoing research and the accomplishments relating to the family of diseases known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs).

The Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (WADDL) in the College of Veterinary Medicine developed the first and only currently practical live animal test for any TSE, that being for scrapie, and also defined the distribution of abnormal prions in sheep and goat scrapie. It also conducted the preliminary research for the development of what is now a commercially available diagnostic test for chronic wasting disease, which is a TSE that affects certain wildlife species including deer.

Also, WADDL collaborated with the USDA ARS Animal Disease Research Unit at WSU to develop the assay for BSE testing that has been used in Canada and the United States.

The laboratory at the College of Veterinary Medicine is a fully accredited laboratory and is one of 12 in the national animal health laboratory network developed through homeland security.

Summary of Bill: Recognition is given by the Washington State Legislature that addressing BSE and TSE related issues needs to be coordinated at the federal level with cooperation and input from each state including an identification of contributions that institutions in each state may make to an overall response. Any enhancements in the laboratory would also increase the capacity to respond to food safety or animal disease issues that may arise under homeland security.

The state Legislature desires to make Congress and the United States Department of Agriculture fully aware of the current expertise at the Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory and the College of Veterinary Medicine at Washington State University, of its past work, and the head start this institution has to:

1. Develop a BSE test for live cattle that would require a large animal biocontainment facility at an estimated cost of \$25 million;
2. Conduct an itemized list of enhanced TSE research projects costing approximately \$2 million; or
3. Administer a quick surveillance BSE testing program for the state or the region that would require USDA approval of testing protocols, and funding of personnel, equipment, working space and test kits with an overall cost depending on the number of tests to be preformed each year.

Copies of this memorial are to be immediately transmitted to the President, the Secretary of Agriculture, the presiding officer of Senate and House of Representative, and each member of Congress from the State of Washington.

Appropriation: None.

Effective Date: None requested.

Testimony For: WSU has the capability to develop a BSE test for live cattle and to do this will require federal approval and funding.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Sheahan, prime sponsor (pro).