
**General Government & Information
Technology Committee**

HB 2128

Brief Description: Concerning fees assessed by the department of agriculture.

Sponsors: Representative Hudgins; by request of Department of Agriculture.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Extends or creates a number of Department of Agriculture fees related to dairy processing and food processing.
- Redirects dairy-related license fee revenue from the State General Fund to the agricultural local fund.

Hearing Date: 2/17/15

Staff: Dan Jones (786-7118).

Background:

The Department of Agriculture (WSDA) Food Safety Program helps regulate the safety of Washington's food supply by inspecting food processing and storage facilities and their practices, managing several food processing licenses, providing technical assistance, and investigating consumer complaints and food-related emergencies.

The WSDA collects approximately 150 different fees that support WSDA activities, including the Food Safety Program. In a budget proviso in the 2013-15 operating budget, the Legislature directed the WSDA to convene a work group with appropriate stakeholders to review fees supporting WSDA programs that also receive State General Fund support. The resulting work group released a report in November 2013 that made a number of fee-specific recommendations, all of them in the Food Safety Program. This bill is based on the recommendations of the WSDA Fee Work Group report.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill:

The following WSDA fees are amended:

- The milk processing plant license fee is raised from \$55 to \$250 per year.
- The dairy technician's initial license fee is raised from \$10 to \$25, and the renewal fee is raised from \$5 to \$25 each odd-numbered year.
- The sanitary certificate fees for milk processing plants and food processors are raised from \$50 to \$75 per certificate.
- The range for food processing plant license fees, which are based on gross annual sales, is raised from a minimum of \$55 and a maximum of \$825 per year to a minimum of \$92 and a maximum of \$862 per year.
- The food storage warehouse fee is raised from \$50 to \$200 per year.

The following WSDA fees are created:

- The fee for any endorsement in addition to a dairy technician's license is \$25.
- An inspection fee may be assessed by the WSDA for manufacturing facilities that must be inspected under the Pasteurized Milk Ordinance (PMO) but do not satisfy the definitions of "milk processing plant," "food processing plant," or "food storage warehouse" under current law.

Revenue from certain dairy-related license fees (RCW 15.36) is redirected from the State General Fund to the agricultural local fund.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 13, 2015.

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