

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5439

As Passed House:
March 24, 2023

Title: An act relating to livestock identification.

Brief Description: Concerning livestock identification.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks (originally sponsored by Senators Warnick, Dozier, Hasegawa, Lovelett, Salomon, Schoesler and Van De Wege).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture and Natural Resources: 3/14/23, 3/17/23 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/24/23, 96-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Extends the current livestock identification fees, the Livestock Identification Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee), and requirement that the Department of Agriculture report on the Livestock Identification Program (Program) to July 1, 2026.
- Requires the Advisory Committee to review the costs and operations of the Program.
- Eliminates the call-out fee for an inspection done by a certified veterinarian or field livestock inspector.
- Changes the due date for the annual report on the Program from September 1 to November 1.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Chapman, Chair; Morgan, Vice Chair; Reeves, Vice Chair; Dent, Ranking Minority Member; Kloba, Kretz, Lekanoff, Orcutt, Schmick and Springer.

Staff: Rebecca Lewis (786-7339).

Background:

Livestock Identification Program.

The Livestock Identification Program (Program) records brands, licenses feedlots and public livestock markets, and conducts surveillance and inspection of livestock at time of sale and upon out-of-state movement. Cattle and horses are inspected for permanent identification such as brands and ownership documents: (1) at public livestock markets; (2) at United States Department of Agriculture slaughter plants; (3) at licensed, certified feedlots; (4) at change of ownership; and (5) prior to leaving the state. Livestock inspection and licensing fees are established by statute.

Livestock Inspection Fees.

Legislation enacted in 2019 made changes to fees for livestock inspection and individual identification certificates, and established call-out fees of \$20 for livestock inspections, including inspections at a processing plant, certified feed lot, or livestock market. In 2022 the fee structure was extended through July 1, 2024. Current fees are as follows:

- unbranded and unidentified cattle: \$4.00 per head;
- branded and identified cattle: \$1.21 per head;
- horses: \$3.85 per head;
- cattle at a processing plant with a capacity of 500 head or fewer: \$4.40 per head;
- cattle at licensed feedlots: \$0.28 per head;
- single individual identification certificates for 30 or more horses: \$2.20 per head;
- annual certificate for fewer than 30 animals: \$22.00;
- annual certificate for 30 or more animals: \$5.50 per head;
- lifetime certificate: \$63.00; and
- minimum issuance fee: \$5.50.

Additionally, if inspection fees collected in any one sale day at a livestock market do not exceed \$150, the livestock market must pay \$150 for inspection services.

Livestock Identification Advisory Committee.

The Livestock Identification Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) provides advice about the Program to the Director of the Department of Agriculture (Director). The Advisory Committee is comprised of 12 members: two beef producers, two cattle feeders, two dairy producers, two livestock market owners, two meat processors, and two horse producers. The Advisory Committee must meet at least twice a year and a quorum of the committee consists of a majority of members. At the time of appointment, no two members may reside in the same county. If a member has not been designated for a position on the

Advisory Committee, that position may not be counted for purposes of determining a quorum. A member may appoint an alternate who meets the same qualifications as the member to serve during the member's absence. The Director may remove a member from the Advisory Committee if that member has two or more unexcused absences during a single calendar year. The Advisory Committee expires on July 1, 2024.

Reporting.

The Department of Agriculture must provide a report on the Program to the Legislature and the Advisory Committee by September 1 of each year that includes the amounts collected, expenditures, and recommendations for making the program more efficient, improving the program, or modifying the livestock inspection fees to cover the costs of the program. The reporting requirement expires July 1, 2024.

Summary of Bill:

The expiration date for the current livestock identification fees, the Livestock Identification Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee), and the requirement that the Department of Agriculture report on the Livestock Identification Program (Program) is extended from July 1, 2024, to July 1, 2026. Call-out fees for a livestock inspection conducted by a certified veterinarian or a field livestock inspector are eliminated. The report due dates are modified so reports are due by November 1, rather than September 1. In addition to its other duties, the Advisory Committee must review the costs and operations of the Program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains multiple effective dates. Please see the bill.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill will help the Livestock Identification Program (Program) remain solvent and continue to provide asset protection to the livestock industry by extending the current livestock identification fees for another two years. The transaction records produced through the Program also help with disease traceability. Without extending the fees, the Program will be in a deficit by September of 2025 and will have to reduce services. Call-out fees are only eliminated for certified veterinarians and field livestock inspectors, who are able to charge additional fees for their services. Keeping call-out fees in place for these individuals deters the use of their services.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Judy Warnick, prime sponsor; Mark Streuli, Washington Cattlemen's Association; and Brennan Kimbel, Department of Agriculture.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.