

2021

Electronic Cattle Transaction Reporting System

Annual Report to the Legislature



As Required by RCW 16.57.450

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Washington
State Department of
Agriculture

Derek I. Sandison, Director

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Background

During the 2015 legislative session, the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) introduced and successfully passed Senate Bill 5733. The legislation authorized the Director of WSDA to establish an electronic cattle transaction reporting system (ECTR) as a mechanism for reporting in-state private transactions involving unbranded dairy cattle to the department. The legislation further authorized the director to adopt by rule conditions of licensure, use and fees to support the reporting system.

In April 2019, the Washington State Legislature passed engrossed substitute senate bill 5959 (ESSB 5959), intended to restore financial solvency to the Livestock Identification Program. The program faced a significant budget shortfall due to increased administrative and business costs, and reduced revenue as a result of fewer recorded brands.

Through the legislative process and working with our industry partners, it was recognized that there was a need to increase the use of official individual electronic identification to advance animal disease traceability, safeguard food safety, promote international trade, and have long-term economic viability of the livestock industry. This legislation expanded the ECTR system to both beef and dairy cattle producers in order to report out-of-state movement and change of ownership transactions.

The legislation became effective in July 28, 2019, and the new ECTR system went live in November 19, 2019.

ECTR System

ECTR is an online program that Washington livestock producers may use to report the sale or out-of-state movement of their cattle. Users must register for an account and pay a \$33 annual registration fee. All cattle reported in ECTR must have electronic official individual identification (RFID), commonly known as an “840” RFID tag. Users must submit proof of ownership documentation for all branded cattle that are reported in ECTR. This can be done using the owners’ recorded Washington brand or other proof of ownership documents listed in

rule. At the conclusion of the transaction, users are able to print an ECTR certificate that transfers title of their cattle to the new owner. In the case of out-of-state movements, the ECTR certificate is evidence of legal ownership. With ECTR in place, Washington cattle producers now have three options to receive a required livestock inspection. They may use a WSDA brand inspector, they may use a certified veterinarian or private field inspector, or they may use ECTR.

ADT Benefits

Animal disease traceability or knowing where diseased and at-risk animals are, where they've been, what animals they have comingled with, and when is very important to ensure a rapid response when adverse animal disease events take place. An efficient and accurate ADT system, and identifying animals with electronic official individual identification, can limit the economic strain on owners and communities through shorter investigations, faster control of the disease, and fewer animals subject to quarantine or euthanasia.

For these reasons, the department remains committed to crafting a robust structure that protects our state's cattle industry, allows us to quickly trace any animal disease outbreak, and bolsters consumer confidence in Washington dairy and beef products. It is vital that all sectors of the cattle industry participate in traceability and at the level of integrity needed for a successful program and response.

To assist in advancing animal disease traceability and to promote the use of RFID tags, WSDA offers a promotion to producers who register for ECTR. Producers are eligible to receive free RFID tags*

- 40 tags and one RFID tag applicator for producers with herds of 50 head or less.
- 100 tags and one RFID tag applicator for producers with herds of more than 50 head.

ECTR allows the department to maintain traceability information that can be used in the event of a disease outbreak. It also provides producers with:

- Real-time, 24/7 electronic reporting.
- Electronic payment options (ACH/eCheck and Credit Card).
- Availability wherever an internet connection exists.
- Reports on transaction history.

ECTR Activity Status

The ECTR system went live on November 19, 2019. Between November 19, 2019 and June 30, 2020, 65 registered users conducted 121 transactions involving 775 head of cattle. These

transactions included 14 out-of-state movements and 107 change of ownerships. Total revenue collected for this time period was \$3,516.

Between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021, there were 57 registered users and 563 transactions conducted in the system. These transactions included 93 out-of-state movements and 470 change of ownerships; involving 12,200 head of cattle. This is an exponential increase (1,500%) from the first year of use by producers. Total revenue collected for this time period was \$17,741.

The purpose of this report is to document all examinations and inspections of cattle and records of ECTR license holders performed by the department. This includes details of any actions taken by the department following the examinations and inspections. Audits were conducted on all ECTR transactions. The audits revealed that the majority of cattle were either reported to be branded with the owner's Washington recorded brand or unbranded. Only two transactions had proof of ownership uploaded from a producer reporting cattle branded with another's brand.

ECTR Outreach

WSDA conducted extensive outreach focused on educating beef and dairy producers of the system's availability and the importance of participating in traceability. This included:

- Submitted an industry article in May 2021 to Washington Cattlemen's Association, Washington Cattle Feeders Association, Cattle Producers of Washington, Washington Dairy Federation, Washington State Veterinary Medical Association, and WSU Extension.
- Provided an ECTR presentation at the Washington Cattle Feeders Association meeting in May 2021.
- Participated in WSU Animal Science podcast in February 2021
- Provided an overview to the Fall 2020 WSU Meat Up group
- Provided an overview at the September 2020 Pacific NW Veterinary Conference

WSDA also updated its ECTR webpage to outline what is ECTR, the requirements to use the system, the costs associated, and the promotions available.

Moving Forward

There have been a number of small but impactful enhancements to the ECTR system based on producer feedback.

1. Online renewals can now be done within the user's account. Once the renewal/license fee is paid, producers are able to continue performing transactions and all historical transactions are still available to view.

2. There is no longer a convenience fee charged to producers using the e-check payment method. If producers pay using a credit card they will be charged a 3% convenience fee for the total amount of the transaction.
3. There is a new retry payment feature. If a payment fails, producers no longer have to re-enter all information in the transaction or call the WSDA Livestock Identification Program for assistance. Producers can process payment again through the bank to continue with the existing transaction.
4. Headcount has been added to the ECTR certificate. The total number of cattle are now listed at the bottom of the certificate, helping producers reconcile cattle numbers at the destination.

To continue advancing animal disease traceability and promoting the use of ECTR and the use of RFID tags, WSDA will offer an additional promotion to producers. At the time of renewal, producers will be offered free RFID tags for the volume of cattle they recorded in ECTR the year prior.

New producers who apply for ECTR will still be eligible for free RFID tags:

- 40 tags and one RFID tag applicator for producers with herds of 50 head or less.
- 100 tags and one RFID tag applicator for producers with herds of more than 50 head.