

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 6299

As Passed Senate, February 16, 2010

Title: An act relating to animal inspection.

Brief Description: Regarding animal inspections.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Agriculture & Rural Economic Development (originally sponsored by Senators Schoesler, Hatfield and Shin).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture & Rural Economic Development: 1/19/10, 2/02/10 [DPS].

Passed Senate: 2/16/10, 45-3.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6299 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Hatfield, Chair; Ranker, Vice Chair; Schoesler, Ranking Minority Member; Becker, Haugen, Jacobsen, Morton and Shin.

Staff: Sam Thompson (786-7413)

Background: The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) Animal Health Program is charged with protecting animals and the public from communicable animal diseases. Program officials monitor movement of animals across state lines, set requirements for reporting and controlling diseases, and conduct testing and investigations.

It is generally illegal to bring animals into Washington without an official certificate certifying that the animals meet Washington health requirements. Certain animals are exempt from this requirement, including imported livestock destined for slaughter within three days after entry.

WSDA may enter animal premises at reasonable times to conduct tests, examinations, or inspections for animal diseases when there is reasonable cause to investigate disease. Interference is illegal. If it is denied access, or an animal owner fails to comply with an agency order, WSDA may apply to a court for a warrant authorizing access.

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.

Cattle must be inspected when ownership is transferred. WSDA officials perform inspections when livestock are consigned to public livestock markets for sale. For private transactions involving fewer than 25 head of cattle, buyers and sellers may jointly complete a self-inspection certificate. The self-inspection process does not involve WSDA inspectors, and information regarding specific transactions is not recorded by the agency.

Brand inspection, verifying ownership, is required prior to moving cattle or horses out of the state. WSDA issues official brand inspection documents.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Restrictions regarding imported livestock are revised. Unless exempt by WSDA rule, instead of three days after entry in Washington, livestock must be delivered within 12 hours after entry to an approved, inspected feed lot for slaughter, a federally inspected slaughter plant, or a licensed public livestock market for sale and subsequent delivery within 12 hours to an approved, inspected feed lot for slaughter or a federally inspected slaughter plant. Persons importing, transporting, receiving, feeding, or housing imported livestock must comply with requirements and make livestock and related records available for WSDA inspection.

WSDA may charge a time and mileage fee for inspecting livestock and related records during an investigation. Fees must be deposited in the agricultural local fund and used to carry out animal inspection functions. WSDA may adopt and enforce implementing rules.

WSDA investigative authority is clarified and modified. The agency may enter property at any reasonable time to investigate whether livestock have been imported in violation of import requirements and to conduct tests, examinations, and inspections, take samples, and examine and copy records. Interference is unlawful.

Self-inspection certificates completed after the effective date of the act are no longer satisfactory proof of ownership for cattle. Self-inspection certificates completed before the effective date of the act may continue to be accepted as proof of ownership of cattle, if WSDA determines that the self-inspection certificate, together with other available documentation, sufficiently establishes ownership.

WSDA may adopt rules governing issuance of replacement copies of brand inspection documents and charge a fee of \$25 for copies, which may be increased by rule.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

[OFM requested ten-year cost projection pursuant to I-960.]

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: PRO: This bill will provide WSDA with necessary authority to verify delivery of imported cattle to slaughter facilities.

Regulation of imported cattle by United States Department of Agriculture officials is inadequate. WSDA must have sufficient tools. WSDA will seek to accommodate currently valid self-inspection certificates.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Wade King, L.D. Green, Willard Wolf, Todd Kelsey, Cattle Producers of Washington; Ed Field, Washington Cattle Feeders' Association; Dr. Leonard Eldridge, WSDA; Jack Field, Dick Coon, Washington Cattlemen's Association.