

2024

Electronic Cattle Transaction Reporting System

Annual Report to the Legislature



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Agriculture

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Table of Contents

ECTR System	2
ADT Benefits.....	2
ECTR Activity Status	3
ECTR Outreach	4
Moving Forward.....	4

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 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.

The Livestock Identification Program, in collaboration with the Animal Disease Traceability Program, offers free RFID tags to those ECTR account holders who choose to renew their accounts. Producers who renew their account and notify the program of their interest in the promotion will receive the same number of free RFID tags as their reported headcount in ECTR from the previous year.

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

Last year between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023, there were 82 registered users and 821 transactions conducted in the system. This is a 17% increase in registered users from the 2021–2022 year. The reported transactions included 73 out of state movements and 748 change of ownerships; involving 13,512 head of cattle. This is a decrease of 18% from the previous year’s headcount reported by account holders. The total revenue collected for this time period was \$13,584.

This year between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024, there were 99 registered users and 843 transactions conducted in the system. This is an increase of 21% from the previous year’s total number of registered users. These reported transactions include 75 out of state movements and 768 change of ownership involving 5,151 head of cattle. This is a 62% decrease from last year’s headcount reported by account holders. The total revenue collected for this time period is \$7,387.80.

The decrease in headcount is due to a significant drop in usage from two of the primary users of ECTR. One registered user retired from their business and the other user has significantly decreased the number of animals reported through ECTR. These two producers’ transactions comprised 80% of the headcount reported in past years.

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.

In accordance with RCW 16.57.450 and chapter 16-610-021 of the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) all license holders must abide by the regulations of the ECTR Program. To ensure that users are in compliance with these guidelines, all transactions are reviewed, audited, and approved by the Livestock Identification Program. Repeated violations of the RCW and the WAC may lead to a license suspension or revocation. The program had one user whose license was suspended due to submitting incorrect proof of ownership documents, not reporting transactions, not submitting the correct proof of ownership timely, and undermining the principal of the ECTR system by reporting animals through ECTR without the animals bearing an 840 series RFID tag.

Following these violations, multiple Notice of Corrections were issued to the producer. The program and the Division’s compliance investigators also attempted to educate the producer on their actions by various methods. After repeated offenses of misusing the ECTR system, the Livestock Identification Program pursued further enforcement action and the notice of license suspension was issued by the Division’s Operations Director on May 20, 2024. The license suspension is in effect June 1, 2024, through November 30, 2024.

ECTR Outreach

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

- July 2023, an ECTR renewal and promotions industry article was submitted to Washington Cattlemen's Association, Washington Cattle Feeders Association, Washington Dairy Federation, Washington State Veterinary Medical Association and Washington State University Extension.
- Presented with a booth at Washington Cattlemen's Association annual convention Conference in November 2023 promoting the use of ECTR.
- December 2023, a postcard was mailed to all licensed dairies in Washington presenting ECTR as one of the three options producers have when selling calves.
- January 2024, an ECTR year-end review industry article was submitted to Washington Cattlemen's Association, Washington Cattle Feeders Association, Washington Dairy Federation, Washington State Veterinary Medical Association and Washington State University Extension.
- May and June 2024, ECTR was discussed several times during National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials meetings as an alternative movement option for dairy cattle moving to slaughter under the federal order with Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in dairy cattle.
- June 2024, an ECTR renewal and promotions industry article was submitted to Washington Cattlemen's Association, Washington Cattle Feeders Association, Washington Dairy Federation, Washington State Veterinary Medical Association and Washington State University Extension.
- Information about ECTR was shared at Certified Field Livestock Inspector training. WSDA conducts 11 certification training courses per year to Certified Field Livestock Inspectors.
- July 2024, an ECTR presentation was given to the Washington Cattlemen's Association Board to educate board members on ECTR, its use, and to obtain feedback for enhancements.

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

To continue advancing animal disease traceability and promoting the use of ECTR and the use of RFID tags, WSDA will continue to offer promotions 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.