

2022

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

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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

Last year, 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.

Between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022, there were 70 registered users and 794 transactions conducted in the system. These transactions included 48 out of state movements and 746 change of ownerships; involving 15,966 head of cattle. This is an increase of 24% from last year's use by producers. Total revenue collected for this time period was \$23,066.

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.

Rulemaking Changes for ECTR

WSDA received a petition for rulemaking from the WSDA's Livestock Identification Advisory Committee to amend chapter 16-610 of the Washington Administrative Code to reduce the ECTR per head fee. After an analysis was completed, it was determined that the ECTR per head fee would be reduced to \$0.80. The department also amended WAC 16-610-021 to clarify the requirement that sellers using ECTR must provide proof of ownership by describing how the seller must provide that documentation.

These rulemaking changes go into effect July 4, 2022.

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:

- Podcast Interview with Pacific Northwest Ag Network July 2021
- Industry Meeting September 2021 to discuss reducing the ECTR per head fee.
- Provided an ECTR presentation at the Pacific Northwest Veterinary Conference in October 2021.
- Submitted an industry article in October 2021 to Washington Cattlemen's Association, Washington Cattle Feeders Association, Washington Dairy Federation, Washington State Veterinary Medical Association.
- Advisory Board Meeting November 2021 to discuss proof of ownership requirements for ECTR account users.
- Presented with a booth at Washington Cattlemen's Association Conference in November 2021 promoting the use of ECTR.
- LID Advisory Committee Meeting April 2022 to discuss petition for rulemaking for ECTR per head fee and proof of ownership.

- Submitted an industry article in June 2022 to Washington Cattlemen's Association, Washington Cattle Feeders Association, Washington Dairy Federation, Washington State Veterinary Medical Association.

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 enhancements to the ECTR system based on producer feedback during the last year.

1. Color and breed updates based on producer requests.
2. RFID tag numbers stay in order they were entered on certificate for easier producer reconciliation
3. The drawn brand image and registered brand image show up so producers can see which brand they are selecting when uploading animals to transaction.

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.