

**Chapter 43.23 RCW**  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

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*Chief assistants*: RCW 43.17.040.

*Commercial feed law, director's duties relating to*: Chapter 15.53 RCW.

*Commission merchants*: Chapter 20.01 RCW.

*Control of pet animals infected with diseases communicable to humans,  
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*Dairies and dairy products, director's duties relating to*: Chapter  
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*International marketing program for agricultural commodities and trade center: RCW 28B.30.535 through 28B.30.543.*

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*Oath: RCW 43.17.030.*

*Office maintained at state capital: RCW 43.17.050.*

*Pesticide application act: Chapter 17.21 RCW.*

*Pesticide control act, director's duties under: Chapter 15.58 RCW.*

*Planting stock act, powers and duties relating to: Chapter 15.14 RCW.*

*Poisons, enforcement of*

*caustic or corrosive poison act: RCW 69.36.040.*

*chapter relating to: RCW 69.40.025.*

*Powers and duties generally: RCW 43.17.030, chapter 43.23 RCW.*

*Predatory birds, controlled by: RCW 15.04.110, 15.04.120.*

*Rule-making power: RCW 43.17.060.*

*Rural rehabilitation program, director's duties relating to: Chapter 15.70 RCW.*

*Seeds, director's duties relating to: Chapter 15.49 RCW.*

*Soil conservation: Chapter 89.08 RCW.*

*State fairs commission: Chapter 15.76 RCW.*

*State trade fair fund, horse racing moneys, disposition: RCW 43.31.805.*

*Vacancy: RCW 43.17.020, 43.17.040.*

*Weighing commodities in highway transport—Weighmasters, director's duties relating to: Chapter 15.80 RCW.*

**RCW 43.23.001 Definitions.** For purposes of this chapter:

(1) "Department" means department of agriculture;  
(2) "Person" means any individual, partnership, association, corporation, or organized group of persons whether or not incorporated. [1995 c 374 s 61.]

**Effective date—1995 c 374 ss 1-47, 50-53, and 59-68:** See note following RCW 15.36.012.

**RCW 43.23.002 Director—Appointment—Powers and duties—Salary.**

The executive and administrative head of the department of agriculture shall be the director. The director shall be appointed by the governor with the consent of the senate and shall have complete charge of and supervisory power over the department. The director shall be paid a salary fixed by the governor in accordance with RCW 43.03.040. [1983 c 248 s 1.]

**RCW 43.23.005 Deputy director—Appointment—Powers and duties.**

The director of agriculture may appoint a deputy director who shall assist the director in the administration of the affairs of the department and who shall have charge and general supervision of the department in the absence or disability of the director, and who, in case a vacancy occurs in the office of director, shall continue in charge of the department until a director is appointed and qualified, or the governor appoints an acting director. [1983 c 248 s 2; 1967 c 240 s 14.]

**RCW 43.23.010 Divisions of department—Assistant directors—State veterinarian—Salaries—Assignment of duties.** In order to obtain maximum efficiency and effectiveness within the department of agriculture, the director may create such administrative divisions within the department as he or she deems necessary. The director shall appoint a deputy director as well as such assistant directors as shall be needed to administer the several divisions within the department. The director shall appoint no more than eight assistant directors. The officers appointed under this section are exempt from the provisions of the state civil service law as provided in RCW 41.06.070(1)(g), and shall be paid salaries to be fixed by the governor in accordance with the procedure established by law for the fixing of salaries for officers exempt from the operation of the state civil service law. The director shall also appoint and deputize a state veterinarian who shall be an experienced veterinarian properly licensed to practice veterinary medicine in this state.

The director of agriculture shall have charge and general supervision of the department and may assign supervisory and administrative duties other than those specified in RCW 43.23.070 to the division which in his or her judgment can most efficiently carry on those functions. [2002 c 354 s 244; 1990 c 37 s 1; 1983 c 248 s 3;

1967 c 240 s 1; 1965 c 8 s 43.23.010. Prior: 1951 c 170 s 1; 1921 c 7 s 83; RRS s 10841.]

**Short title—2002 c 354:** See RCW 41.80.907.

**Severability—1967 c 240:** "If any provision of this act, or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act, or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [1967 c 240 s 52.]

*Apiary advisory committee: RCW 15.60.010.*

**RCW 43.23.015 Divisions of department—Reassignment of division functions.** Except for the functions specified in RCW 43.23.070, the director may, at his or her discretion, reassign any of the functions delegated to the various divisions of the department under the provisions of this chapter or any other law to any other division of the department. [2009 c 549 s 5103; 1983 c 248 s 4; 1967 c 240 s 15.]

**RCW 43.23.025 Rule-making authority.** For rules adopted after July 23, 1995, the director of agriculture may not rely solely on a section of law stating a statute's intent or purpose, on the enabling provisions of the statute establishing the agency, or on any combination of such provisions, for statutory authority to adopt any rule. [1995 c 403 s 104.]

**Findings—Short title—Intent—1995 c 403:** See note following RCW 34.05.328.

**RCW 43.23.030 Powers and duties.** The director of agriculture shall exercise all the powers and perform all the duties relating to the development of markets, for agricultural products, state and federal cooperative marketing programs, land utilization for agricultural purposes, water resources, transportation, and farm labor as such matters relate to the production, distribution and sale of agricultural commodities including private sector cultured aquatic products as defined in RCW 15.85.020. [1985 c 457 s 15; 1983 c 248 s 5; 1967 c 240 s 3; 1965 c 8 s 43.23.030. Prior: (i) 1921 c 7 s 90; RRS s 10848. (ii) 1937 c 90 s 10; RRS s 10847-1.]

*Fair commission: Chapter 15.76 RCW.*

*Farm marketing: Chapters 15.64, 15.65, 15.66 RCW.*

**RCW 43.23.033 Funding staff support for commodity boards and commissions—Rules.** (1) The director may provide by rule for a method to fund staff support for all commodity boards and commissions if a position is not directly funded by the legislature.

(2) Staff support funded under this section, RCW 15.65.047(1)(c), 15.66.055(3), 15.24.215, 15.26.265, 15.28.320, 15.44.190, 15.88.180, 15.89.150, and 16.67.190, and chapter 15.115 RCW shall be limited to

one-half full-time equivalent employee for all commodity boards and commissions. [2009 c 33 s 38; 2006 c 330 s 27; 2002 c 313 s 78.]

**Construction—2006 c 330:** See RCW 15.89.900.

**Effective dates—2002 c 313:** See note following RCW 15.65.020.

**RCW 43.23.035 Powers and duties—State agricultural market development programs and activities.** The department of agriculture is hereby designated as the agency of state government for the administration and implementation of state agricultural market development programs and activities, both domestic and foreign, and shall, in addition to the powers and duties otherwise imposed by law, have the following powers and duties:

- (1) To study the potential marketability of various agricultural commodities of this state in foreign and domestic trade;
- (2) To collect, prepare, and analyze foreign and domestic market data;
- (3) To establish a program to promote and assist in the marketing of Washington-bred horses: PROVIDED, That the department shall present a proposal to the legislature no later than December 1, 1986, that provides for the elimination of all state funding for the program after June 30, 1989;
- (4) To encourage and promote the sale of Washington's agricultural commodities and products at the site of their production through the development and dissemination of referral maps and other means;
- (5) To encourage and promote those agricultural industries, such as the wine industry, which attract visitors to rural areas in which other agricultural commodities and products are produced and are, or could be, made available for sale;
- (6) To encourage and promote the establishment and use of public markets in this state for the sale of Washington's agricultural products;
- (7) To maintain close contact with foreign firms and governmental agencies and to act as an effective intermediary between foreign nations and Washington traders;
- (8) To publish and disseminate to interested citizens and others information which will aid in carrying out the purposes of chapters 43.23, 15.64, 15.65, and 15.66 RCW;
- (9) To encourage and promote the movement of foreign and domestic agricultural goods through the ports of Washington;
- (10) To conduct an active program by sending representatives to, or engaging representatives in, foreign countries to promote the state's agricultural commodities and products;
- (11) To assist and to make Washington agricultural concerns more aware of the potentials of foreign trade and to encourage production of those commodities that will have high export potential and appeal;
- (12) To coordinate the trade promotional activities of appropriate federal, state, and local public agencies, as well as civic organizations; and
- (13) To develop a coordinated marketing program with the department of commerce, utilizing existing trade offices and participating in mutual trade missions and activities.

As used in this section, "agricultural commodities" includes products of both terrestrial and aquatic farming. [2023 c 470 s 2042; 1995 c 399 s 70; 1986 c 202 s 1; 1985 c 159 s 3.]

**Explanatory statement—2023 c 470:** See note following RCW 10.99.030.

**Severability—1986 c 202:** "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [1986 c 202 s 7.]

**Legislative declaration and intent—1985 c 159:** "The legislature declares that:

(1) Marketing is a dynamic and changing part of Washington agriculture and a vital element in expanding the state economy.

(2) The export of agricultural products produced in Washington state contributes substantial benefits to the economic base of the state, provides a large number of jobs and sizeable tax revenues to state and local governments, provides an important stabilizing effect on prices received by agricultural producers, and contributes to the United States balance of trade.

(3) State government should play a significant role in the development and expansion of markets for Washington grown and processed agricultural and food products.

(4) In order for state government to serve the best interests of agriculture in the area of market development, the role of state government in this area must be clearly defined.

(5) The department of agriculture, the department of commerce and economic development, and the IMPACT center at Washington State University, each possesses its own unique body of knowledge, expertise, and relationships that, when combined and applied in a logical and cooperative manner, will benefit the agricultural industry and the overall state economy and will provide a powerful force to seek aggressively new domestic and international markets for Washington's agricultural products.

It is the intent of the legislature to establish an organized agricultural market development function within state government with clearly defined areas of responsibility which will be responsive to the state's agricultural and food products industries' needs, without duplicating established private sector marketing efforts." [1985 c 159 s 1.]

**RCW 43.23.037 Publishing and dissemination costs—Deposit of proceeds.** The director may collect moneys to recover the reasonable costs of publishing and disseminating informational materials by the department. Materials may be disseminated in printed or electronic format. All moneys collected shall be deposited in the agricultural local fund or other appropriate fund administered by the director. [1997 c 303 s 5.]

**Findings—1997 c 303:** See note following RCW 43.135.055.

**RCW 43.23.042 Consultation with commodity commissions.** The director may consult with each commodity commission established under state law in order to establish or maintain an integrated comprehensive regulatory scheme for each commodity and the agricultural industry in this state as a whole. [2002 c 313 s 112.]

**Effective dates—2002 c 313:** See note following RCW 15.65.020.

**RCW 43.23.050 Powers and duties.** The director of agriculture shall:

(1) Exercise all the powers and perform all the duties prescribed by law relating to horticulture, and horticultural plants and products;

(2) Enforce and supervise the administration of all laws relating to horticulture, horticultural products, and horticultural interests. [1983 c 248 s 6; 1967 c 240 s 5; 1965 c 8 s 43.23.050. Prior: 1921 c 7 s 91; RRS s 10849.]

*Horticultural*

*pests and diseases: Chapter 15.08 RCW.*

*plants, Christmas trees, and facilities: Chapter 15.13 RCW.*

**RCW 43.23.070 Powers and duties of state veterinarian.** The state veterinarian shall exercise all the powers and perform all duties prescribed by law relating to diseases among animals and the quarantine and destruction of diseased animals.

The state veterinarian shall enforce and supervise the administration of all laws relating to meat inspection, the prevention, detection, control and eradication of diseases of animals, and all other matters relative to the diseases of livestock and their effect upon the public health. [1998 c 8 s 20; 1983 c 248 s 7; 1967 c 240 s 7; 1965 c 8 s 43.23.070. Prior: 1943 c 56 s 1; 1921 c 7 s 92; Rem. Supp. 1943 s 10850.]

*Animal health: Chapter 16.36 RCW.*

*Dairies and dairy products: Chapter 15.36 RCW.*

*Diseased animals: Chapter 16.36 RCW.*

**RCW 43.23.090 Powers and duties.** The director of agriculture shall exercise all powers and perform all duties prescribed by law with respect to the inspection of foods, food products, drinks, milk and milk products, and dairies and dairy products and the components thereof.

He or she shall enforce and supervise the administration of all laws relating to foods, food products, drinks, milk and milk products, dairies and dairy products, and their inspection, manufacture, and sale. [2009 c 549 s 5104; 1983 c 248 s 8; 1967 c 240 s 9; 1965 c 8 s 43.23.090. Prior: 1921 c 7 s 93; RRS s 10851.]

*Commercial feed law: Chapter 15.53 RCW.*



*Eggs and egg products: Chapter 69.25 RCW.*

*Food, drugs and cosmetics: Chapter 69.04 RCW.*

*Honey: Chapter 69.28 RCW.*

*Weighing commodities in highway transport: Chapter 15.80 RCW.*

*Weights and measures: Chapter 19.94 RCW.*

**RCW 43.23.110 Powers and duties.** The director of agriculture shall exercise all powers and perform all duties prescribed by law with respect to grains, grain and hay products, grain and terminal warehouses, commercial feeds, commercial fertilizers, and chemical pesticides.

He or she shall enforce and supervise the administration of all laws relating to grains, grain and hay products, grain and terminal warehouses, commercial feeds, commercial fertilizers, and chemical pesticides. [2009 c 549 s 5105; 1983 c 248 s 9; 1967 c 240 s 11; 1965 c 8 s 43.23.110. Prior: 1921 c 7 s 94; RRS s 10852.]

*Commercial fertilizers: Chapter 15.54 RCW.*

*Grain and terminal warehouses: Chapter 22.09 RCW.*

*Quarantine: Chapter 17.24 RCW.*

*Seeds: Chapter 15.49 RCW.*

*Weeds: Chapters 17.04 and 17.06 RCW.*

**RCW 43.23.115 Gifts, grants, bequests, or contributions.** The director of the department may accept, expend, and retain gifts, grants, bequests, or contributions from public or private sources to carry out the purposes and programs of the department. [2011 c 245 s 1.]

**RCW 43.23.120 Bulletins and reports.** The director of agriculture may publish and distribute bulletins and reports embodying information upon the subjects of agriculture, horticulture, livestock, dairying, foods and drugs, and other matters pertaining to his or her department. [2009 c 549 s 5106; 1977 c 75 s 50; 1965 c 8 s 43.23.120. Prior: (i) 1919 c 126 s 1, part; 1913 c 60 s 6, part; RRS s 2724, part. (ii) 1921 c 7 s 89, part; RRS s 10847, part.]

**RCW 43.23.130 Annual report.** The director of agriculture shall make an annual report to the governor containing an account of all matters pertaining to his or her department and its administration. [2009 c 549 s 5107; 1977 c 75 s 51; 1965 c 8 s 43.23.130. Prior: (i) 1919 c 126 s 1, part; 1913 c 60 s 6, part; RRS s 2724, part. (ii) 1921 c 7 s 89, part; RRS s 10847, part.]

**RCW 43.23.160 Powers and duties.** The director of agriculture shall exercise all the powers and perform all the duties prescribed by law relating to commission merchants, livestock identification, livestock brand registration and inspection. All officers appointed to enforce these laws who have successfully completed a course of training prescribed by the Washington state criminal justice training commission shall have the authority generally vested in a peace officer solely for the purpose of enforcing these laws.

He or she shall enforce and supervise the administration of all laws relating to commission merchants, livestock identification and shall have the power to enforce all laws relating to any division under the supervision of the director of agriculture. [2009 c 549 s 5108; 1983 c 248 s 10; 1967 c 240 s 13. Prior: 1965 c 8 s 43.23.160; prior: 1951 c 170 s 3.]

**RCW 43.23.170 Enforcement in accordance with RCW 43.05.100 and 43.05.110.** Enforcement action taken after July 23, 1995, by the director or the department of agriculture shall be in accordance with RCW 43.05.100 and 43.05.110. [1995 c 403 s 623.]

**Findings—Short title—Intent—1995 c 403:** See note following RCW 34.05.328.

**RCW 43.23.200 Official chemists of department—Designated—Duties.** The chief chemist of the department of agriculture dairy and food laboratory and the chief chemist of the department of agriculture chemical and hop laboratory shall be the official chemists of the department of agriculture. Official chemists of the department shall provide laboratory services and analyze all substances that the director of agriculture may send to them and report to the director without unnecessary delay the results of any analysis so made. When called upon by the director, they or any of the additional chemists provided for pursuant to RCW 43.23.205 shall assist in any prosecution for the violation of any law enforced by the department. [1987 c 393 s 14; 1981 c 297 s 27.]

**Severability—1981 c 297:** See note following RCW 15.36.201.

**RCW 43.23.205 Additional chemists—Appointment—Duties—Compensation.** The director of agriculture may appoint one or more competent graduate chemists to serve as additional chemist of the department of agriculture, who may perform any of the duties required of and under the supervision of the official chemists, and whose compensation shall be fixed by the director. [1981 c 297 s 28.]

**Severability—1981 c 297:** See note following RCW 15.36.201.

**RCW 43.23.220 Disposition of impounded livestock on Hanford reservation—Agreements to act as federal government's agent.** The director of agriculture may enter written agreements with one or more agencies of the United States to act as the federal government's agent for determining the disposition of livestock impounded on the federal

Hanford reservation. The director's authority under such an agreement may include, but is not limited to, selling or donating, on behalf of the federal government, unclaimed livestock to a qualified person, organization, or governmental agency that the director determines to be capable of humanely transporting and caring for the livestock. The director may sell or donate such livestock only if the livestock remains unclaimed after the completion of a reasonable attempt to ascertain ownership and, if ownership is not otherwise determined, by the publication of notice that the livestock has been impounded on the reservation. [1983 c 248 s 12.]

**RCW 43.23.230 Agricultural local fund—Animal disease traceability account.** (1) The agricultural local fund is hereby established in the custody of the state treasurer. The fund shall consist of such money as is directed by law for deposit in the fund, and such other money not subject to appropriation that the department authorizes to be deposited in the fund. Any money deposited in the fund, the use of which has been restricted by law, may only be expended in accordance with those restrictions. The department may make disbursements from the fund. The fund is not subject to legislative appropriation.

(2) There is created within the agricultural local fund the animal disease traceability account which must be used to account for the costs associated with the implementation of chapter 16.36 RCW. [2011 c 204 s 7; 1988 c 254 s 1.]

**RCW 43.23.250 Collection of unpaid penalties, assessments, and debts—Use of collection agencies.** Except as otherwise specified by law, the director or his or her designee has the authority to retain collection agencies licensed under chapter 19.16 RCW for the purposes of collecting unpaid penalties, assessments, and other debts owed to the department.

The director or his or her designee may also collect as costs moneys paid to the collection agency as charges, or in the case of credit cards or financial instruments, such as checks returned for nonpayment, moneys paid to financial institutions. [1995 c 374 s 62.]

**Effective date—1995 c 374 ss 1-47, 50-53, and 59-68:** See note following RCW 15.36.012.

**RCW 43.23.255 Assessments levied by director—Personal debt—Costs of collecting—Civil actions authorized—Attorneys' fees.** Except as otherwise specified by law, any due and payable assessment levied under the authority of the director or his or her designee in such specified amount as may be determined by the department shall constitute a personal debt of every person so assessed or who otherwise owes the same, and the same shall be due and payable to the department when payment is called for by the department. In the event any person fails to pay the department the full amount of such assessment or such other sum on or before the date due, the department may, and is hereby authorized to, add to such unpaid assessment or other sum an amount not exceeding ten percent of the same to defray the cost of enforcing the collecting of the same. In the event of

failure of such person or persons to pay any such due and payable assessment or other sum, the department may bring a civil action against such person or persons in a court of competent jurisdiction for the collections thereof, including all costs and reasonable attorneys' fees together with the above specified ten percent, and such action shall be tried and judgment rendered as in any other cause of action for debt due and payable. [1995 c 374 s 63.]

**Effective date—1995 c 374 ss 1-47, 50-53, and 59-68:** See note following RCW 15.36.012.

**RCW 43.23.260 Interest on unpaid balances.** Except as otherwise specified by law, the department is authorized to charge interest at the rate authorized under RCW 43.17.240 for all unpaid balances for moneys owed to the department. [1995 c 374 s 64.]

**Effective date—1995 c 374 ss 1-47, 50-53, and 59-68:** See note following RCW 15.36.012.

**RCW 43.23.265 Dishonored check or negotiable instrument.** Except as otherwise specified by law, in the event a check or negotiable instrument as defined by RCW 62A.3-104 is dishonored by nonacceptance or nonpayment, the department is entitled to collect a reasonable handling fee for each instrument. If the check or instrument is not paid within fifteen days and proper notice is sent, the department is authorized to recover the assessment, the handling fee, and any other charges allowed by RCW 62A.3-515. [1995 c 374 s 65.]

**Effective date—1995 c 374 ss 1-47, 50-53, and 59-68:** See note following RCW 15.36.012.

**RCW 43.23.270 Export market development project records—Confidentiality.** Except for release of statistical information not descriptive of any readily identifiable person or persons, all financial and commercial information and records supplied by persons to the department with respect to export market development projects shall be kept confidential unless confidentiality is waived by the party supplying the information. For purposes of this section, persons include any natural person, joint venture, firm, partnership or association, private or public corporation, or governmental entity. [1996 c 80 s 2.]

**RCW 43.23.275 Market development and promotion matching fund program.** There is created a market development and promotion matching fund program within the Washington state department of agriculture. The purpose of the program is to allow the department of agriculture and the agricultural industry to combine funds in order to enhance access to markets that are growth sales areas for the industry's product. The goal of the program is to expose buyers to Washington's diverse agricultural products. The agriculture [agricultural] industry may bring in buying missions, perform trade promotions in various markets, hire overseas contractors, and perform other marketing

functions that help it target the correct buyer and market for its product. [2001 c 324 s 2.]

**Findings—Intent—2001 c 324:** "The legislature finds that the growing and processing of food and agricultural products is the dominant industry in Washington state and a major employer in rural Washington. The legislature also finds that agriculture is a critical component of Washington's international trade industry, accounting for billions of dollars in exports every year.

The legislature further finds that the export market for Washington's agricultural products has dropped significantly in recent years and that such a drop has negatively impacted the economy in Washington's agricultural regions. Therefore, it is the intent of the legislature to enhance Washington's international trade of agricultural products by increasing funding for the Washington state department of agriculture's international marketing program in an effort to promote marketing of Washington's products and to assist the agricultural industry in efforts to reduce trade barriers that stand in the way of trade in new and emerging markets." [2001 c 324 s 1.]

**RCW 43.23.280 Trade barrier matching fund program.** (1) The legislature finds that trade barriers have become an increasingly important issue in the agricultural arena. Further, the world trade organization highlighted the need for "a fair and level playing field." The legislature finds that both large and small commodity groups need adequate resources to address trade barrier issues.

(2) There is created within the department of agriculture a trade barrier matching fund program to assist agriculture [agricultural] industries in fighting trade barriers. The purpose of the program is to allow the department of agriculture and the agricultural industry to combine funds in order to address trade barriers issues impacting the agricultural industry. [2001 c 324 s 3.]

**Findings—Intent—2001 c 324:** See note following RCW 43.23.275.

**RCW 43.23.290 Food assistance programs—Use for essential nonfood items.** (1) The director of the department may exercise powers and duties with respect to the administration of food assistance programs in the department. It is the intent of the legislature in administering the food assistance programs transferred to the department by chapter 68, Laws of 2010, that programs continue to be provided through community-based organizations. It is the intent of the legislature that in accepting the administration of food assistance programs, the department's core programs administered by the department by July 1, 2010, not be impacted.

(2) The director of the department may adopt rules necessary to implement the food assistance programs.

(3) The director of the department may enter into contracts and agreements to implement food assistance programs, including contracts and agreements with the United States department of agriculture, to implement federal food assistance programs.

(4) The department may not restrict the amount of food assistance program funding provided to food banks that may be used for essential nonfood items, including diapers, feminine products, and hygiene

products, to less than 25 percent of total funding. [2023 c 31 s 1; 2010 c 68 s 1.]

**Effective date—2010 c 68:** "This act takes effect July 1, 2010."  
[2010 c 68 s 5.]

**RCW 43.23.300 Program to promote and protect pollinator habitat and pollinator species.** (1) The department shall establish a program to promote and protect pollinator habitat and the health and sustainability of pollinator species. As funds are made available, the program must provide technical and financial assistance to state agencies, local governments, and private landowners to implement practices that promote habitat for all pollinators, including native species, as well as beekeeper and grower best management practices. The program must be administered in coordination with the apiary program established in chapter 15.60 RCW, the honey bee commission authorized in chapter 15.62 RCW, and programs administered by the conservation commission and conservation districts.

(2) Subject to the availability of funds appropriated for this specific purpose, and in consultation with the department of fish and wildlife, the department must:

(a) Review, in consultation with Washington State University, education needs related to pollinator education and develop a plan that outlines the goals related to pollinator education and the necessary partners, personnel, and other resources;

(b) Evaluate and complete an analysis of critical impacts and needed best management practices for managed and wild pollinators. The department shall lead this effort in partnership with Washington State University, and in collaboration with the department of fish and wildlife and the state conservation commission. The effort must utilize the framework established in the state's managed pollinator protection plan as a guide for formal recommendations and education opportunities. The analysis must address food insecurities, habitat loss, virus and disease, pests, and pesticides, which may play a role in pollinator health decline. The department shall make the resources produced pursuant to this subsection available to the public on the department's website, as well as through Washington State University and the state's conservation districts;

(c) Document, in consultation with Washington State University, the bee species within the state and map their distributions as practicable;

(d) Provide economic and environmental impacts of weed listing and categorization on pollinator health to county noxious weed control boards in consultation with the state noxious weed control board and annually submit a report to the noxious weed control board describing pollinator health issues;

(e) Provide materials, where practicable and in consultation with Washington State University, about certification programs that support pollinator health, biodiversity, and low-impact pesticide application to the public;

(f) Educate the public through plant nurseries about the necessity for blooming nectar plants to be available to wild and managed pollinators throughout their respective active seasons;

(g) Survey registered beekeepers to determine whether the current apiary program should be expanded to include apiary inspections or registration of apiary yards;

(h) Continue and maintain partnership with federal agencies and neighboring states to promote and enhance the implementation of the national strategy to promote the health of honey bees and improve pollinator health;

(i) Increase the availability of pollinator-related resources on the department's website, as practicable, and other state agencies' websites as appropriate;

(j) Review guidelines on state-managed lands to protect native pollinators and improve transparency for state-managed land areas which may permit managed honey bees so that impacts to wild pollinators from honey bees may be minimized; and

(k) In consultation with the department of revenue, review the open space taxation act and provide recommendations to the legislature, in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, on options to include pollinator habitat in the current open space property tax classification. [2021 c 278 s 3; 2019 c 353 s 2.]

**Purpose—Intent—2021 c 278:** "(1) The purpose of this act is to implement the recommendations of the pollinator health task force created by section 3, chapter 353, Laws of 2019, entitled "Recommendations of the Pollinator Health Task Force - for Pollinator Health in Washington" (November 2020).

(2) The task force provided recommendations to help prioritize and enact policy changes for pollinators in Washington. The recommendations are organized under five broad categories: (a) Habitat; (b) pesticides; (c) education; (d) managed pollinators; and (e) research.

(3) The task force met for the first time the same week that the Asian giant hornet was first discovered in Washington and the week after the Houdini fly was also reported for the first time in Washington. Asian giant hornets primarily hunt honey bees and destroy entire honey bee hives. The Houdini fly threatens native mason bee populations as well as managed mason bees. Washington is home to over 400 different species of native bees, 65 species of butterflies, as well as moths, wasps, beetles, flies, and hummingbirds. The loss of pollinators, managed and unmanaged, can lead to decreased yields of many fruits, nuts, and vegetables. Washington is currently the top producer in the United States of apples, sweet cherries, alfalfa, blueberries, and pears. In Washington state, honey bees and other pollinators are responsible for the production of tree fruits, small fruits, and other crops.

(4) The legislature intends by this act to implement various recommendations from the pollinator health task force to protect and expand the habitat upon which pollinators depend, by providing technical and financial assistance to public and private landowners, and by coordinating with state agencies and local governments in promoting practices to ensure sustainable, healthy populations of managed and native pollinators." [2021 c 278 s 1.]

**Findings—Intent—2019 c 353:** "The legislature finds that more than three-fourths of the world's flowering plants and about thirty-five percent of the world's food crops depend on pollinators to reproduce. In Washington state, honey bees and other pollinators are

responsible for the production of tree fruits, small fruits, and other crops, with the value in 2016 of crops pollinated by honey bees exceeding three billion dollars. The legislature further finds that, beyond agriculture, pollinators are keystone species in the terrestrial ecosystems of Washington, with fruit and seeds derived from insect pollination providing a major part of the diet of numerous bird and mammal species. The state has experienced pollinator habitat loss through property conversion, fragmentation, and degradation of land, and with the state's population continuing to grow at a fast pace, the additional loss of habitat is a significant concern.

Therefore, the legislature intends by this act to initiate a concerted effort to protect and expand the habitat upon which pollinators depend, by providing technical and financial assistance to public and private landowners, and by coordinating with other state agencies and local governments in promoting practices to ensure sustainable, healthy populations of managed and native pollinators." [2019 c 353 s 1.]

**RCW 43.23.310 Environmental justice obligations of the department of agriculture.** The department must apply and comply with the substantive and procedural requirements of chapter 70A.02 RCW. [2021 c 314 s 6.]

**Conflict with federal requirements—2021 c 314:** See note following RCW 70A.02.005.

**RCW 43.23.330 Washington commodities donation grant program.**

(1) The department must implement the Washington commodities donation grant program established in this section. The purpose of the program is to procure Washington grown produce, grains, and protein otherwise at risk of ending up as food waste for distribution to hunger relief organizations for use in Washington state.

(2) The program established in this section must, to the extent practicable:

(a) Rely upon existing infrastructure and similar grant programs currently being implemented in Washington, in order to maximize the beneficial impacts of the program in the short-term, and to expeditiously enable the distribution of grants under this section;

(b) Be designed to achieve efficiencies of scale by the grant recipients carrying out food acquisitions and distributions and to target large volume food acquisition opportunities;

(c) Give priority to recipient organizations that have at least five years of experience coordinating the collection and transportation of donated agricultural products to food bank distributors, food bank distribution centers, or both, for redistribution to local hunger relief agencies; and

(d) Provide for equitable benefits experienced from the program by food producers of varying sizes and types, including minority and vulnerable farmers, including veterans, women, and federally recognized Indian tribes.

(3) The department must issue grants under this section to one or more nonprofit organizations to acquire food directly from food producers located in Washington. A recipient nonprofit organization may use funds under this section to compensate food producers donating



commodities for pick and pack out costs incurred associated with the production of a food product, including costs of food product inputs and harvest, and for their marginal postharvest logistical and administrative costs that facilitate the acquisition and distribution of the food product by grant recipients.

(4) An organization that receives funds under this section must report the results of the project to the department in a manner prescribed by the department. [2024 c 341 s 204.]

**Findings—Intent—2024 c 341:** See note following RCW 70A.207.040.

**RCW 43.23.340 Agricultural pest and disease response account.**

(1) The agricultural pest and disease response account is created in the state treasury. All receipts from moneys appropriated to the account by the legislature or moneys directed to the account from any other lawful source, for the purpose of funding emerging agricultural pest and disease response activities, must be deposited into the account. Moneys in the account may be spent only after appropriation.

(2) Following a declaration of emergency under RCW 17.24.171 or issuance of a quarantine order under RCW 16.36.010 or 17.24.041, expenditures from the account may be used only for activities necessary to respond to emerging agricultural pest and disease threats in order to protect the food and agricultural economy of the state, the public health of the state, or the environment of the state including, but not limited to, actions authorized under this chapter and chapters 15.08, 16.36, 16.38, and 17.24 RCW.

(3) By October 1st following any fiscal year in which expenditures were made from the account, the department must provide the director of the office of financial management with a close-out cost summary of expenditures authorized for that fiscal year. [2024 c 228 s 2.]

**Findings—Intent—2024 c 228:** "(1) The legislature finds that Washington agriculture is complex and highly diverse, producing more than 300 agricultural commodities on over 35,900 farms. Agricultural production in Washington is highly valued, generating \$12,800,000,000 per year in production value, not including over \$17,000,000,000 in food and agricultural products that pass through Washington's ports annually.

(2) The legislature also finds that the Washington state department of agriculture's statutory duties include monitoring and responding to new, emerging, and transboundary plant and animal pests and diseases. Pest and disease challenges, to the state's food systems, public health, and the environment, have increased in frequency and severity due to changing climate patterns and global trade flows.

(3) In order to better protect Washington's food and agricultural economy, public health, and the environment, the legislature intends to provide more reliable and readily available funding to prevent, quickly detect, and rapidly respond to emerging threats from agricultural pests and diseases." [2024 c 228 s 1.]