

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1361
By: Hardcastle
Agriculture & Livestock
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The number of animal disease outbreaks that have been reported around the globe over the past decade have greatly intensified public interest in developing a national animal identification program for the purpose of protecting animal health. The European Union, Canada, and Australia already have animal identification systems in place. A strong U.S. identification system is in increasing demand as a necessary component of our Nation's agricultural infrastructure. Because of its complexity, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) plans on phasing in the National Animal Identification System (NAIS). It is vital that Texas develop and implement within the state an animal identification program that is consistent with that of the USDA.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Animal Health Commission in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

This bill creates an animal identification program to provide for disease control and to enhance the ability to trace disease-infected animals, which is consistent with the United States Department of Agriculture's National Animal Identification System. The Texas Animal Health Commission (Commission) may require the use of official identification numbers and may establish a date by which all premises must be registered. The Commission may further assess a registration fee on all entities that register for a premises identification number. This bill provides that information collected by the Commission is exempt from public disclosure requirements. The bill authorizes the Commission to disclose information to certain persons, including a governmental entity. The bill provides for penalties for failure to comply with the Commission's order. The bill authorizes the Commission to adopt, implement and enforce rules for the animal identification system.

EFFECTIVE DATE

This Act takes effect September 1, 2005.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE

C.S.H.B. 1361 adds a subsection which was not in the introduced version, to provide for the release of information for emergency management purposes as compliant with Chapter 418, Government Code.