

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

H.B. 1908  
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Agriculture & Livestock  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Currently, there is an increased concern for the safety of the domestic food supply, but there is little law requiring food inspections or regulations by the state. It is important to educate and improve awareness among fresh fruit and vegetable producers on proper food handling procedures.

H.B. 1908 establishes the Texas Department of Agriculture as the lead agency in matters concerning food regulation and requires the department to coordinate, plan, and approve training and awareness programs among producers of fresh fruits and vegetables in Texas.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Department of Agriculture in SECTION 2 of this bill.

### **ANALYSIS**

H.B. 1908 provides legislative findings regarding the safety of the fresh fruit and vegetables produced in Texas. The bill amends the Agriculture Code to designate the Department of Agriculture as the lead agency for such food safety issues, to require the department to assist the fresh fruit and vegetable industries with those issues, and to authorize the department to provide assistance to federal agencies in their implementation of voluntary guidelines relating to sound agricultural practices.

H.B. 1908 requires the department to coordinate, plan, and approve training and awareness programs for producers and packers of fresh fruits and vegetables. The bill requires such programs to inform and educate producers and packers regarding sound agricultural practices, proper food handling procedures, the prevention of accidental or deliberately planned outbreaks of disease, and the enhancement of overall food safety.

H.B. 1908 requires the department to coordinate the planning and implementation of such programs with Texas colleges and universities, the Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Texas AgriLife Research, the Department of State Health Services, and private industry.

H.B. 1908 authorizes the department to adopt rules to implement the bill's provisions. The bill requires the department, in the development of rules for the certification of approved food safety curriculum or training, to consult and coordinate with the Department of State Health Services.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

On passage, or, if the act does not receive the necessary vote, the act takes effect September 1, 2009.