

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1276
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Agriculture & Livestock
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 20 to 40 percent of global food production is lost annually as a result of plant diseases and pests, costing the global economy approximately \$220 billion each year. The bill author has informed the committee that plant disease and pests are indeed among the largest issues facing agricultural producers in Texas and that with recent climate impacts, the state's approach of licensing regulations, inspections in various areas, and quarantine regulations is no longer effective at addressing the issue. H.B. 1276 seeks to improve the state's plan to target plant disease and pests and reduce losses by agricultural producers by requiring the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service to conduct a study to evaluate the state's response to plant disease or pest outbreaks and make recommendations to state officials for improving the system.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 1276 requires the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service to conduct a study to evaluate the state's response to plant disease or pest outbreaks, including how the state identifies or is notified of an outbreak and the state's capabilities for handling and containing an outbreak. The bill requires the extension service, not later than December 1, 2026, to submit a report on the study's results to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, each member of the legislature, and the commissioner of agriculture. The report must include recommendations for improving the state's current system of identifying and reporting plant disease or pest outbreaks and the state's response to such outbreaks. The bill's provisions expire September 1, 2027.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2025.