

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1277
By: González, Mary
Agriculture & Livestock
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The bill author has informed the committee that between 20 percent to 40 percent of global crop production is lost to pests annually. Each year, plant diseases cost the global economy around \$220 billion, and invasive insects around \$70 billion, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The bill author has also informed the committee that one of the largest issues facing agricultural producers in Texas is agricultural plant disease and pests and that recent climate impacts have made the continual rise of pests and plant disease in our region more difficult to sufficiently mitigate. The bill author has further informed the committee that annual data on how pests and plant diseases respond to different conditions could better help the state prepare against them in the first place. H.B. 1277 seeks to address this issue by requiring the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service to conduct an annual study on each plant disease or pest outbreak in Texas, including the outbreak's duration and resolution.

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. 1277 amends the Agriculture Code to require the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service to conduct an annual study of each plant disease or pest outbreak in Texas. The bill requires the extension service, in conducting the study, to determine the following for each such outbreak:

- the outbreak's duration;
- how the outbreak was resolved, if applicable; and
- any other information the extension service determines is relevant.

The bill further requires the extension service to do the following:

- not later than January 1 of each year, prepare and publish on the extension service's website a report of the previous year's study;
- not later than January 1, 2028, prepare and publish on the website a report summarizing each annual report and providing policy recommendations to address outbreaks of plant diseases and pests; and
- provide that summary report to the governor, commissioner of agriculture, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the house of representatives.

The bill's provisions expire January 31, 2028.

EFFECTIVE DATE

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