

SB 976 -1, -3 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire

Prepared By: Alexa Piscanio, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 2/20, 3/27

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure authorizes individuals without a veterinary medicine license to practice equine dentistry or cattle pregnancy verification services provided they have specific education to do so.

Fiscal impact: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued.

Revenue impact: May have revenue impact, but no statement yet issued.

Detailed Summary:

Authorizes individuals with a valid degree or certification in equine dentistry to practice, as well as those who have received training in cattle pregnancy verification to perform pregnancy verification services on cattle. Grants the Oregon Department of Agriculture to specify circumstances under which unlicensed individuals may practice equine dentistry or cattle pregnancy verification.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Veterinary access in remote areas
- Sedation and medicine required to administer dental work
- Safety of individual treating the animal, as well as the safety of the animal
- Training requirements
- Education requirements

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 requires the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) to inform those authorized to verify cattle pregnancies about the requirement to report livestock diseases. Includes those authorized to verify cattle pregnancies in the definition of "practicing veterinary medicine" ORS 686.040 (1)(b) (License required to practice veterinary medicine; application and rules).

-3 replaces the measure. Limits exemption for those practicing veterinary medicine without a license to cattle pregnancy verification services. Creates a task force on equine dentistry.

Cattle Pregnancy Verification

-3 limits the exemption to individuals trained in cattle pregnancy verification, excluding equine dentistry. It requires the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) to inform those authorized to verify cattle pregnancies about the requirement to report livestock diseases. The amendment also includes these individuals in the definition of "practicing veterinary medicine" ORS 686.040 (1)(b) (License required to practice veterinary medicine; application and rules). Becomes operative January 1, 2026.

Task Force on Equine Dentistry:

Establishes a task force on equine dentistry to identify ways to provide greater access to equine dentistry throughout Oregon, members are appointed by the Director of ODA.

The members must include:

- Two representatives from statewide agriculture or livestock organizations

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- One representative from a statewide veterinarian organization
- One representative from the State Department of Agriculture
- The State Veterinarian or their designee

Appointments must be completed within 60 days of the effective date of the act. Requires the task force to operate with a quorum and official decisions will require a majority vote. Requires the Director of ODA to designate a chairperson and vice-chairperson for the task force. In case of vacancies, the appointing authority will make new appointments.

Requires the task force to meet as scheduled and adopt operational rules. Requires the task force to submit a report with potential legislative recommendations to an interim committee of the Legislative Assembly related to agriculture by December 15, 2025. Requires ODA to provide staff support, and states that task force members serve as volunteers without compensation or reimbursement unless qualified. Sunsets December 31, 2026.

Declares an emergency, effective upon passage.

BACKGROUND:

Oregon Revised Statutes 686.020 and 686.040 authorize the following individuals to practice veterinary medicine:

- Licensed veterinary professionals in medicine, surgery, or dentistry.
- Authorized representatives of the Department of Agriculture.
- Unlicensed representatives of livestock, cow-testing, or poultry associations who collect blood samples for disease testing, with Department of Agriculture authorization.
- Individuals permitted by the Department of Fish and Wildlife to rehabilitate wildlife.
- Students, agents, or employees of educational or research institutions involved in relevant activities.

These statutes do not currently authorize individuals with training, degrees or certificates in veterinary medicine who do not hold a veterinary license to practice equine dentistry or cattle pregnancy determination.