

SB 1019 -1, -2 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire

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Meeting Dates: 2/20, 3/27

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure increases the maximum fee for activating a brand from \$100 to \$150 and increases the brand inspection fee from \$1.35 to \$1.75 per head. The measure also exempts dairy cattle from brand inspection requirements and replaces the definition of “licensed feedlot.” The Brand Inspection Program is repealed on January 2, 2028, and authorizes counties to establish brand programs.

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

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

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Electronic ID tags for cattle
- History of brands, the branding process, and associated fees
- Texas' county-based brand program
- Potential amendment

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 amendment increases the activation fee to \$200. Removes term “large feedlot” and replaces it with the term “feedlot.”

-2 Replaces measure. amendment renames the "brand recording" fee to "brand conflict research fee" and increases the activation and renewal fees to \$200, effective August 1, 2025. It also authorizes the Department of Agriculture (ODA) to contract for brand inspection services, establish a self-inspection program for livestock owners, and directs the Legislative Policy and Research Office to conduct a study of the brand inspection program, with recommendations due by September 30, 2026. Declares an emergency, effective upon passage.

Detailed summary:

renames "brand recording" fee "brand conflict research fee," and increases the activation fee to \$200. Increases the brand renewal fee to \$200. Becomes operative August 1, 2025.

Authorizes the Department of Agriculture (ODA) to contract with qualified individuals to perform brand inspection services on behalf of the department, with the individual adhering to ODA's established rules and fees. Authorizes ODA to establish a self-inspection program, enabling livestock owners to inspect their own livestock. To participate in the self-inspection program, the livestock owner must be the sole owner of the livestock, have a registered brand with ODA, and conduct inspections for no more than 25 animals per event within a 24-hour period, all while complying with ODA rules and regulations. The ODA has the authority to revoke, suspend, or deny self-inspection privileges if necessary. The self-inspection program will become operative on January 1, 2026.

Directs the Legislative Policy and Research Office (LPRO) Director to conduct a study on ODA's current brand inspection program to evaluate the program structure, funding, and effectiveness in meeting statutory requirements. Directs the Director to convene a task force to assess the program's efficiency, identify challenges, compare it to similar programs in other states, and consider potential policy changes to modernize the program.

Requires the task force to consist of:

- Representatives of livestock organizations
- Individual livestock operations owners
- ODA representatives
- Two members of the House of Representatives, selected by the Speaker of the House of Representatives
- Two members of the Senate, selected by the Senate President

Requires the Director of LPRO to prepare a report summarizing the findings of the study and recommendations of the task force, submitted to the interim committees of the Legislative Assembly related to agriculture and natural resources by September 30, 2026.

Declares an emergency, effective upon passage.

BACKGROUND:

The Department of Agriculture (ODA) houses a Brand Inspection (also known as ownership inspection) Program that is required for cattle, whether or not they are branded, to verify ownership in specific instances, such as when there is a change of ownership, before shipment out of state, before sale at auction, before slaughter, and for annual cattle inspection. Brand Inspection consists of ODA's examination of brands, tags, breed, flesh marks, coloring, sex, age, or other distinguishing characteristics of livestock, as well as documents and other evidence of ownership that ultimately results in the issuance or refusal to issue a brand inspection certificate. If livestock owners elect to brand their cattle or horses, the brand must be registered with ODA. Brand inspection fees are currently paid to ODA.