

SB 976 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire

Action Date: 04/01/25

Action: Do pass with amendments and requesting referral to Ways and Means. (Printed A-Engrossed.)

Vote: 5-0-0-0

Yeas: 5 - Girod, Golden, Nash, Prozanski, Taylor

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 2/20, 3/27, 4/1

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure authorizes individuals without a veterinary medicine license who have received training in cattle pregnancy verification to perform pregnancy verification services on cattle and authorizes the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) to specify circumstances under which unlicensed individuals may practice cattle pregnancy verification. It also creates a Task Force on Equine Dentistry.

Detailed Summary:

Cattle Pregnancy Verification

Exempts from the statutory requirement that any person practicing veterinary medicine, surgery, or dentistry obtain a veterinary medicine license, those individuals who have received training in cattle pregnancy verification to perform pregnancy verification services on cattle. Requires the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) to inform these individuals about the requirement to report livestock diseases. Requires ODA to adopt rules specifying the circumstances under which unlicensed persons may perform these verification services. 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 with members are appointed by the Director of ODA.

The members must include

- Two representatives from statewide agriculture or livestock organizations
- 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.

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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:

The amendment replaces the measure. It removes the provision exempting an individual who holds a valid degree in equine dentistry from the statutory requirement to hold a veterinary medicine license. It requires individuals performing cattle pregnancy verification services to report livestock diseases and directs ODA to inform these individuals of this requirement.

The amendment also establishes a Task Force on Equine Dentistry and 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 (ODA).
- unlicensed representatives of livestock, cow-testing, or poultry associations who collect blood samples for disease testing, with ODA 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 cattle pregnancy determination.