

SUBJECT: Coordinated program for animal tuberculosis eradication

COMMITTEE: Agriculture and Livestock — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 6 ayes — Patterson, R. Cuellar, King, Rabuck, Rusling, Walker
0 nays
3 absent — Finnell, Hawley, Swinford

WITNESSES: For — L. Garry Adams, College of Veterinary Medicine at Texas A&M University, Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, self; Donald M. Ward, Texas Veterinary Medical Association; Durwood Tucker, Texas Farm Bureau; Jerry Clark, Associated Milk Producers, Inc.; Charles Williams
Against — None
On — David Winters, Texas Animal Health Commission; Michael Kelley, Dennis Baker, Texas Department of Health; Terry Beals, Texas Animal Health Commission

DIGEST: CSHB 1168 would require the following agencies to review the state's current programs to research, control and eradicate animal tuberculosis: Texas Animal Health Commission, Department of Agriculture, Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, Texas Agricultural Extension Service, Texas Animal Damage Control Service, Texas Department of Health, Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine, and the Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory. The Texas Agricultural Experiment Station would coordinate the study.

The entities would be required to implement an improved tuberculosis program to research, control and eradicate tuberculosis in farm and ranch animals. The entities would be required to agree on the program elements to be implemented by each entity.

The bill would take immediate effect if approved by two thirds of the membership of each house.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

CSHB 1168 would ensure that the state's research, public health and food safety entities involved in animal tuberculosis research, control and eradication work together to review current efforts and to implement an improved tuberculosis program. While the entities named in CSHB 1168 all have a part in tuberculosis research and control, there is currently no official coordination of their efforts.

The incidence of tuberculosis in livestock and humans has increased in recent years. The disease is contagious and can spread between livestock and humans; drug-resistant strains of tuberculosis have emerged; some Texas animal herds seem to be chronically infected, and there are numerous incidents of infections among animals imported into Texas. Monitoring imported animals has become especially important with the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Many of the agencies listed in CSHB 1168 have worked together on a preliminary tuberculosis management plan, and the review of current tuberculosis programs and the implementation of an improved plan would be the next step. For example, coordinated research could help develop a vaccine and improved testing.

It is necessary to give the entities statutory direction to develop a coordinated plan and improved tuberculosis program to ensure that the program would be a priority for all involved. The program review would be conducted jointly and the entities would have to agree on their responsibilities, including costs, for an improved program. These entities already have tuberculosis programs and funding; this bill would just require a coordinated plan and efforts.

Human health and the agriculture industry could suffer if the state fails to act now to control and eradicate tuberculosis.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

CSHB 1168 would require the entities to implement an improved tuberculosis program but makes no provision for costs of the program.

NOTES:

The committee substitute names the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station as the coordinating agency for the study.

SB 897 by Sims et al., the companion bill, was approved by the Senate on April 5 and was reported favorably by the House Agriculture and Livestock Committee on April 18, making it eligible for consideration in lieu of HB 1168.