



Washington  
State Department of  
Agriculture



# 2019 Annual Report to the Legislature

## Electronic Cattle Transaction Reporting System



As required by RCW 16.57.450

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**Washington State Department of Agriculture  
Animal Services Division**

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# Electronic Cattle Transaction Reporting System

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## Background

During the 2015 legislative session, the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) introduced and successfully passed Senate Bill 5733. On May 7, 2015, Governor Inslee signed into law SB 5733 authorizing the Director of WSDA to establish an electronic cattle transaction reporting system as a mechanism for reporting in-state private transactions involving unbranded dairy cattle to the department. The law further authorized the director to adopt by rule conditions of licensure, use and fees to support the reporting system.

The signing of SB 5733 signaled a significant milestone in a multi-year, collaborative effort with the Washington State Dairy Federation to create an alternative reporting system to replace the "15-Head Exemption," which expired January 1, 2016. Until January 1, 2016, this exemption allowed for the private sale of 15 head or less of unbranded dairy breed females without a livestock inspection. The exemption was eliminated to strengthen and improve Washington's Animal Disease Traceability (ADT) system, which allows WSDA to quickly track the movement of any livestock in the event of an animal disease outbreak. The goal is to limit the spread of the disease and protect the livestock industry.

The system that was created for the dairy industry, known as "ECTR", was designed to provide dairy producers a flexible and easy-to-use system to report private transactions of unbranded dairy cattle via the web, rather than obtaining a WSDA livestock inspection. The system cost approximately \$15,000 to create and requires an annual maintenance cost of up to \$1,500 if the system is in use.

In anticipation of the ECTR legislation, the department began collaborating with the Washington State Dairy Federation and other ADT work group members in March of 2014 to develop the purpose and scope of the ECTR system. Members of the ADT work group include representatives from:

- AgriBeef Company
- Cattle Producers of Washington
- The Washington Cattle Feeders Association
- The Washington Cattlemen's Association
- The Washington State Dairy Federation
- The Washington State Farm Bureau
- The WSDA Livestock Identification Advisory Committee

WSDA completed the development of ECTR in January 2016, making the system available to all Washington licensed dairy producers.

## ADT Benefits

Animal disease traceability or knowing where diseased and at-risk animals are, where they've been, what animals they have comealed with, and when is very important to ensure a rapid response when adverse animal disease events take place. An efficient and accurate ADT system can limit the economic strain on owners and communities through shorter investigations, faster control of the disease, and fewer animals subject to quarantine or euthanasia.

For these reasons, the department remains committed to crafting a robust structure that protects our state's cattle industry, allows us to quickly trace any animal disease outbreak, and bolsters consumer confidence in Washington dairy and beef products. It is vital that all sectors of the cattle industry participate in traceability and at the level of integrity needed for a successful program and response.

ECTR allows the department to maintain traceability information that can be used in the event of a disease outbreak without disrupting dairy management practices. It also provides dairy producers with:

- Real-time, 24/7 electronic reporting.
- Electronic payment options (ACH/eCheck).
- Availability wherever an internet connection exists.
- Reports on transaction history.
- The ability to delegate agents to report on dairies behalf.

## ECTR Activity Status

There has been minimal use of the ECTR system since it was created in 2016. Out of approximately 400 licensed dairy producers in the state, only eleven have registered to use the system, and only two have reported transactions. In fiscal year 2016, one producer reported one transaction with 5 cattle sold. In fiscal year 2017, two producers reported three transactions for a total of 49 animals sold. There were no transactions reported in fiscal years 2018 or 2019.

The purpose of this report is to document all examinations and inspections of cattle and records of electronic cattle transaction reporting license holders performed by the department. This includes details of any actions taken by the department following the examinations and inspections. Because there were not transactions in fiscal year 2019, we did not conduct ECTR inspections or examinations this year.

**Electronic Cattle Transaction Reporting (ECTR)**

With the elimination of the "15-head exemption" on January 1, 2016 the Washington State Department of Agriculture and the Washington State dairy industry have partnered to implement the ECTR system to provide WSDA-licensed dairy producers the option of reporting cattle transactions online rather than through a livestock inspection.

**ECTR System 4-step reporting process:**

- Step 1: Log in / Registration → Step 2: Report Transaction →
- Step 3: Payment Site Print Receipt
- Step 4: Transaction History

The ECTR System is an alternative to a live brand inspection. The goal was to establish an electronic system to report private transactions involving unbranded dairy cattle that don't meet the two exemptions:  
1. Cattle destined for a public livestock market in another state where brand inspection is performed by WSDA inspectors or an agent according to an agreement between WSDA and the other state.  
2. Cattle moving out of Washington that have a certificate of permit showing the livestock are heading directly to a designated out-of-state inspection point.

## ECTR Outreach

Since the release of ECTR and its resulting use, WSDA has conducted extensive outreach focused on educating dairy producers of the system's availability and the importance of participating in traceability. This has included the "Want an alternative to a livestock inspection?" campaign that highlighted the dairy industry's Green Tag and ECTR alternatives. As part of the effort, WSDA has made use of its social media sites, created an ECTR webpage with charts describing costs of a livestock inspection versus ECTR, mailed postcards to all licensed dairy producers in the state, sent letters to dairy producers with more detailed information regarding reporting requirements, and developed new informational fact sheets made available at the annual dairy conference. WSDA has also collaborated with the Washington State Dairy Federation, which conducted its own outreach efforts including website links to educate their membership regarding livestock inspections or use of the two alternative programs that are available exclusively to licensed dairies.

## Moving Forward

The Legislature enacted Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5959 during the 2019 session. This legislation allows for the expansion of ECTR to include beef cattle in addition to dairy cattle. With this expansion, ECTR transactions can now be used as an alternative to mandatory livestock inspections designated by the Director of Agriculture. All cattle that are reported in ECTR must have electronic official individual identification. This expansion provides all livestock producers additional options for mandatory cattle inspections and enhances our overall animal disease traceability program.

WSDA webpage describing costs of a livestock inspection vs. ECTR

**A CHANGE IN REPORTING CATTLE TRANSACTIONS – NO EXEMPTIONS FOR SMALL, PRIVATE SALES**

On Jan. 1, 2016, the livestock inspection exemption known as the "5-head exemption" was eliminated. This exemption applied to individual private sales of unbranded female dairy cattle involving 15 head or fewer.

The rule change requires that **all cattle** must receive a livestock inspection before any change of ownership or before any movement out of state.

There are two exemptions:

- Cattle destined to a public livestock market in another state where brand inspection is performed by WSDA inspectors or an agent according to an agreement between WSDA and the other state.
- Cattle moving out of Washington that have a certificate of permit showing the livestock are heading directly to a designated out-of-state inspection point.

**ALTERNATIVE TO A LIVE BRAND INSPECTION – OPTIONS FOR REPORTING CATTLE SALES**

WSDA and the Washington State dairy industry have partnered to explore an alternative system that allows electronic reporting of private sales of unbranded dairy cattle. This Electronic Cattle Transaction Reporting (ECTR) system provides WSDA-licensed dairy producers the option of reporting cattle transactions online rather than through a livestock inspection.

However, it can only be used for cattle that are individually identified through an identification method authorized by the department.

**The need for inspections:**

In 2015, Gov. Jay Inslee signed a [law](#) authorizing WSDA to establish an electronic cattle transaction reporting system as a key private transactions involving unbranded dairy cattle could be reported.

The goal of the ECTR effort was to create a reporting system that will complement dairy management practices and allow commerce to move with ease, while maintaining a robust database that can be used for animal disease traceability.

Below is a cost comparison between reporting cattle transactions through the ECTR system versus requesting a livestock inspection. For questions, please contact the Livestock Inspection Program at (360) 902-1855 or [livestock.inspection.Program@wsda.wa.gov](#).

**EXAMPLES OF ECTR COSTS VS. INSPECTION COSTS**

Scenario 1 – A change of ownership on one head of unbranded dairy cattle when time and mileage does not apply.

Possible Fees	Cost of fees	Livestock Inspection Costs	ECTR Costs
Minimum Certificate Fee	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$-
Inspection Per Head Fee	\$1.60	\$-	\$-
ECTR Per Head Fee	\$1.30	\$-	\$1.30
Beef Commission Fee	\$1.50	\$1.50	\$1.50
ADI Fee	\$0.23	\$0.23	\$0.23
Time Fee	\$17.00	\$-	\$-
Mileage Fee	\$5.75	\$-	\$-
Totals		\$6.73	\$3.03

In this scenario, producers utilizing ECTR would save 55% over a traditional livestock inspection.

Scenario 2 – A change of ownership on 74 head of unbranded dairy cattle when time and mileage does not apply.

Possible Fees	Cost of fees	Livestock Inspection Costs	ECTR Costs
Minimum Certificate Fee	\$5.00	\$-	\$-
Inspection Per Head Fee	\$1.60	\$118.40	\$-
ECTR Per Head Fee	\$1.30	\$-	\$96.20
Beef Commission Fee	\$1.50	\$111.00	\$111.00
ADI Fee	\$0.23	\$17.02	\$17.02
Time Fee	\$17.00	\$-	\$-
Mileage Fee	\$5.75	\$-	\$-
Totals		\$246.42	\$224.22

In this scenario, producers utilizing ECTR would save 9% over a traditional livestock inspection.

Scenario 3 – A change of ownership on 33 head of unbranded dairy cattle when time and mileage does apply for 3 hours and 110 miles.

Possible Fees	Cost of fees	Livestock Inspection Costs	ECTR Costs
Minimum Certificate Fee	\$5.00	\$-	\$-
Inspection Per Head Fee	\$1.60	\$-	\$-
ECTR Per Head Fee	\$1.30	\$-	\$42.90
Beef Commission Fee	\$1.50	\$49.50	\$49.50
ADI Fee	\$0.23	\$7.59	\$7.59
Time Fee	\$17.00	\$51.00	\$-
Mileage Fee	\$5.75	\$63.25	\$-
Totals		\$171.34	\$99.99

In this scenario, producers utilizing ECTR would save 42% over a traditional livestock inspection.