

Date of Hearing: June 16, 2021

**ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE**

Robert Rivas, Chair

SB 703 (Hurtado) – As Amended April 8, 2021

**SENATE VOTE:** 38-0

**SUBJECT:** Diseased animals: laboratory services

**SUMMARY:** This bill allows the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to establish laboratory certification standards for laboratories analyzing samples obtained from California livestock and poultry for the purpose of detecting conditions that would trigger a regulatory animal health response. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Makes it unlawful for a person to establish, operate, or maintain a laboratory providing for the examination, diagnosis, and identification of specified diseases found on the List of Reportable Conditions for Animals and Animal Products unless the person has received a certificate from CDFA authorizing as such.
- 2) Provides that test results certified by the CDFA are prima facie evidence of the facts stated therein.
- 3) Exempts any laboratory approved, certified, or accredited by the state or the federal government to provide these services.
- 4) Establishes an application and renewal fee of \$1,000. CDFA may adjust the application and renewal fees to cover the department's costs to implement laboratory certification requirements.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Establishes the California Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratory System (CAHFS), to test, examine, and make diagnoses of infectious, nutritional, toxic, metabolic, and other diseases of domestic animals.
- 2) Requires CDFA to periodically publish and make available a list of reportable conditions that pose or may pose significant threats to public health, animal health, the environment, or the food supply. The document is known as the List of Reportable Conditions for Animals and Animal Products.
- 3) Establishes CDFA Fund and requires any moneys that are directed by law to be paid into the fund to be expended solely for the enforcement of the law under which the moneys were derived.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown.

**COMMENTS:** CAHFS is considered the backbone of California's warning system that helps to protect the health of California's livestock and poultry. CAHFS serves the people of California by safeguarding the public health with rapid and reliable diagnoses for animal diseases including

those affecting humans. CAHFS operates in partnership with CDFA, UC Davis, veterinarians, and livestock and poultry producers. CAHFS provides quality services that protect animal health and performance, public health and the food supply. Currently, there are four CAHFS laboratories in the state: Davis, San Bernardino, Tulare, and Turlock.

According to the author, California's robust livestock and livestock product industry generates \$8.35 billion in annual income for the State plus employment for one million people. The occurrence of a foreign animal disease in California that was not immediately detected by a competent laboratory would devastate the state and national livestock industries economically. There is no existing state law that authorizes oversight and certification of laboratories analyzing samples obtained from California livestock and poultry for the purpose of detecting conditions that would trigger a regulatory animal health response. This bill ensures that all laboratories providing service specifically for animal diseases of high consequence provide equally reliable results by allowing CDFA to create laboratory certification standards for these laboratories.

Supporters state this bill would establish a process in which each lab would become certified therefore providing standardization and quality assurance throughout the state. The standardization that would result from the certification of laboratories would additionally state response, product recall, or even trade sanctions from other states and countries. The economic outcome of such inaccuracies can be devastating to local producers, and the repercussions could long outlast the corrective measures.

#### **REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

##### **Support**

California Cattlemen's Association  
California Farm Bureau Federation  
California Poultry Federation  
California Veterinary Medical Association  
Dairy Institute of California  
Western United Dairies

##### **Opposition**

None on file.

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