

## MINUTES OF THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Sharon Schwartz at 3:30pm on Thursday, January 21, 2016, 346-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Representative Jack Thimesch – Excused  
Representative Ponka-We Victors – Excused  
Representative Joe Seiwert – Excused

Committee staff present:

Joanna Dolan, Legislative Research Department  
David Wiese, Office of Revisor of Statutes  
Natalie Scott, Office of Revisor of Statutes  
Raney Gilliland, Legislative Research Department  
Shirley Jepson, Kansas Legislative Committee Assistant  
Heather O'Hara, Kansas Legislative Research Department

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Representative Adam Lusker, member of Local Food and Farm Task Force  
Ron Brown, Chairperson, Local Food and Farm Task Force

Others in attendance:

[See Attached List](#)

### **Bill introductions**

Representative Trimmer, on behalf of Representative Gail Finney, requested the introduction of legislation.

*Representative Trimmer moved to introduce legislation concerning veterinarians pertaining to posting hours worked and supervision of animals. Motion seconded by Representative Lusker. Motion carried without exception.*

### **Briefing on:**

Representative Adam Lusker appeared before the Committee to provide a briefing on the Local Food Farm Task Force; formed by legislation passed during the 2014 Legislative Session ([Attachment 1](#)). Representative Lusker noted that the Task Force was charged with making recommendations relevant to preparing a Local Food and Farm Plan containing policy and funding recommendations for expanding and supporting local food systems and for assessing and overcoming obstacles necessary to increase locally grown food production.

Representative Lusker announced the members of the Task Force, several who were present today. Representative Lusker also thanked staff from Department of Agriculture, Legislative Research

## CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES of the Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources at 3:30pm on Thursday, January 21, 2016 in Room 346-S of the Capitol.

---

Department and Office of Revisor of Statutes, for their assistance to the Task Force.

A brochure entitled Local Food and Farm Task Force Legislative Report was distributed to the Committee (copy available from the Task Force or Kansas Legislative Research Department).

Representative Lusker introduced Ron Brown, Chairman of the Task Force, who provided testimony to the Committee ([Attachment 2](#)).

Mr. Brown noted that of the approximately \$7.2 billion Kansans spent on food in 2012, 90 percent of the food is produced out-of-state. Increasing production of fruits and vegetables for local markets within the state would help diversify and strengthen the Kansas agriculture and Kansas economy.

Mr. Brown indicated that several issues the Task Force has addressed include finding ways to increase funding for more staff from K-State Extension to be located across the state to provide more assistance to those citizens producing produce for local markets; promoting an effort to lower the state sales tax rate on food items and promote more community gardens.

Representative Lusker and Mr. Brown responded to questions from the Committee:

- Home-canned fruits and vegetables cannot be sold at local food markets because the products must be produced or canned in a "certified kitchen".
- Problem exists for local producers to be able to project when a crop will be ready. Large grocery stores contract early for delivery at a specific date.
- There is a seasonal labor shortage across the state of workers to work in or pick large gardens when they are needed.
- Noted by Committee that one local community is converting the kitchen of a closed school into a "certified food producing center".
- Need for more local food markets with the closing of larger grocery stores in small communities across the state.

Chair Schwartz thanked Representative Lusker and Mr. Brown for their presentations.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 pm. The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for Monday, January 25, 2016, with a presentation by the Department of Agriculture.