

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Sharon Schwartz at 3:30pm on Wednesday, January 27, 2016, 346-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Representative Tom Sloan – 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

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Dr. Bill Brown, Animal Health Commissioner, Department of Agriculture
Mike Beam, Kansas Livestock Association
Gary Harshberger, Chair, Kansas Water Authority

Others in attendance:

[See Attached List](#)

Bill introductions

Dr. Bill Brown, Department of Agriculture, appeared before the Committee to request the introduction of legislation regarding pet animals (RS#2784).

Representative Schwartz moved to introduce the legislation as requested. Motion seconded by Representative Victors. Motion carried. The motion was withdrawn after it was determined that the legislation had already been requested on January 14, 2016.

Hearing on: HB2480 — Amendments to livestock brand law.

Chair Schwartz opened the hearing on **HB2480**.

Natalie Scott, Revisor, provided an explanation on **HB2480**, noting that the bill makes amendments to current statutes regarding livestock brands in the state ([Attachment 1](#)). Ms. Scott also provided a listing of statutes amended by **HB2480** ([Attachment 2](#)).

Dr. Bill Brown, Animal Health Commissioner, Department of Agriculture, appeared before the Committee to provide testimony in support of **HB2480** ([Attachment 3](#)). Dr. Brown noted that the state has had brands since 1939; currently the Department maintains a registry of more than 17,000 brands

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and manages the market brand inspection program. Approximately, 450 new brands are added each year.

The Commissioner stated that in accordance with the current statute, brand inspections shall be performed in areas designated as brand inspection counties, currently include Hamilton, Kearney and Wichita counties. Dr. Brown indicated that current requirements in those counties is burdensome and not reflective of current industry practices. Current statutes have been reviewed line by line and the amendments proposed in **HB2480** will bring the statutes into current practices.

Dr. Brown indicated that livestock brands will continue to play an important role in showing ownership of cattle in Kansas, and changes proposed in **HB2480** will simply reflect the current needs of Kansas cattlemen and women.

Responding to questions from the Committee, Dr. Brown noted that the agency works with the Office of the Attorney General on investigative cases, currently in 26 counties with 22 active investigations. Dr. Brown noted that higher livestock prices are a factor in the number of stolen livestock. Responding to a question concerning chemical brands, Dr. Brown indicated that currently no one uses this type of branding. Cattle moving across state lines into Colorado and Nebraska are required to be inspected. Responding to a question concerning "sweeping of fee funds", Dr. Brown indicated that no fee funds have been sweep from the brand fee fund. Dr. Brown noted that current statutes allow for cattle to come into the state, particularly in the Flint Hills, to pasture for a limited period of time without brands.

Dr. Brown also provided copies of the following information to the Committee:

- Information on the Livestock Brands Program ([Attachment 4](#))
- Investigation Case Summary ([Attachment 5](#))
- Livestock Investigations by counties ([Attachment 6](#))

Mike Beam, Kansas Livestock Association (KLA), presented testimony in support of **HB2480** ([Attachment 7](#)). Mr. Beam stated that KLA supports the changes and updates to the Kansas brand laws. Mr. Beam noted that it is important to note that the bill does not repeal or change the current brand inspection program for livestock auction markets, indicating that the brand inspection fee is paid by the consigners.

Mr. Beam indicated that KLA suggests that K.S.A. 47-423 should not be repealed but amended by language as presented in KLA's written testimony.

Mr. Beam responded to questions from the Committee.

Written testimony in support of **HB2480** was received from Megan Kilgore, Kansas Veterinary Medical Association ([Attachment 8](#)).

Unless specifically noted, the individual remarks recorded herein have not been transcribed verbatim. Individual remarks as reported herein have not been submitted to the individuals appearing before the committee for editing or corrections.

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These were no conferees to appear before the Committee in a neutral position or in opposition to **HB2480**.

The hearing on **HB2480** was closed.

Briefing on:

Gary Harshberger, Chair, Kansas Water Authority (KWA), appeared before the Committee, to present the Kansas Water Authority's recommendations for the coming year as well as plans for future needs for water and funding of projects ([Attachment 9](#)) Mr. Harshberger noted that during the past year, KWA efforts have been focused on the Governor's Long-Term Water Vision for the Future of Water Supply in Kansas. Volunteers have been appointed to service on Regional Advisory Committees across the state.

Mr. Harshberger noted that not all programs work for the various regions of the state resulting in the need to address issues in each region. The Authority has also worked to prioritize funding during the past year to focus on areas most critical to implementing the most important projects, such as streambank stabilization projects above Tuttle Creek Reservoir.

Mr. Harshberger responded to questions from the Committee; noting that one important aspect of the program is to keep the conversation and efforts moving forward in conservation of water.

In response to a question from the Committee, Susan Metzger, Department of Agriculture (DOA), indicated that information is available on DOA's website regarding recommended actions pertaining to the Vision plan. Mr. Harshberger indicated that proposed legislation is being developed and that it is a works in progress.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 pm. The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for January 28, 2016.