



Since 1894

To: Senate Committee on Natural Resources  
Senator Larry Powell, Chairman

From: Mike Beam, Sr. Vice President

Re: **Support for House Bill No. 2479**

Date: March 9, 2016

*The Kansas Livestock Association (KLA), formed in 1894, is a trade association representing over 5,200 members on legislative and regulatory issues. KLA members are involved in many aspects of the livestock industry, including seedstock, cow-calf and stocker production, cattle feeding, dairy production, grazing land management and diversified farming operations.*

The Kansas Livestock Association (KLA) supports HB 2479 because it improves the manner in which noxious weeds are designated, updates the noxious weed statutes to reflect how noxious weed programs are being administered and funded at the local level, and addresses a manner in which noxious weeds inadvertently have been seeded along our roads and highways.

KLA members discussed the changes proposed in this legislation last fall, especially the change to designate noxious weeds through the rule and regulation adoption process. Currently, noxious weeds must be listed by passage of state legislation...which we all know can take four months, not counting the effective date upon publication in the *Kansas Register* or *Kansas Statutes*. This bill would allow the Kansas Department of Agriculture to list a plant as noxious after the 60 day process authorized by the rule and regulation procedure.

The process of determining a reportable disease in the livestock sector is done through the rule and regulation process. It makes sense to us that invasive plant or noxious weeds that threaten our farm and ranch lands also should be subject to the rule and regulation process in lieu of the passage of legislation.

We believe this approach, in conjunction with the new advisory committee, will provide a more scientific manner than current law. In addition, coupled with the new provision for an emergency declaration, these changes will allow the state to respond in a more timely way when a plant merits a noxious weed designation.

You'll find several updates to the statutes in HB 2479. It's our understanding that many of these were made after the Kansas Department of Agriculture's staff collaborated with county officials, including county weed directors. It seems prudent to update our noxious weed law if the local and state program has evolved to the point that it is inconsistent with the statutes.

KLA is specifically supportive of the provision in New Section 5. Our members repeatedly have noted that invasive species have invaded native grasslands by spreading from road ditches. These right-of-ways may have been planted to invasive plant species with the seed mixture and/or attached to the mulch hay used for reseeding.

KLA members often have expressed concerns with the costly and burdensome management practices necessary to control invasive plant species, especially in native grass rangelands. Two of the most serious invasive plants in Kansas are sericea lespedeza and old world bluestem. These plants are legally used in parts of the United States as an approved crop or grazing resource, but have migrated into native grass pastures throughout the state. Herbicide use is expensive and offers limited control for these specific plants. Our members repeatedly have suggested our state's noxious weed law should be updated and modified to offer more protection from the introduction of new noxious weeds and/or invasive plant species. The provisions of HB 2479 certainly provide a positive step in the right direction.

KLA is supportive of HB 2479 and encourages this committee to give the bill full consideration. Thank you for considering our comments.