

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Joann Flower at 9:00 a.m. on February 4, 1997, in Room 423-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Committee staff present: Raney Gilliland, Legislative Research Department
Gordon Self, Revisor of Statutes
Kay Scarlett, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Dr. William Reid, K-State Research and Extension, Pecan Experiment Station, Chetopa, Kansas

Others attending: See attached list

Chairperson Flower welcomed members of Kansas Farm Bureau that were in attendance as a part of Farm Bureau's "Day at the Statehouse."

Representative Correll introduced Dr. William Reid, K-State Research and Extension, Pecan Experiment Station, Chetopa, Kansas, who reported on the pecan industry in Kansas.

Dr. William Reid addressed the committee stating that the pecan industry is a \$2 million industry in Kansas. He said the pecan tree, native to southeast Kansas, was left by early settlers for shade as well as for the pecans. He explained that the pecan tree is an invader species that grows in floodplains and river bottoms. He said it wasn't until the 1940's or 1950's that the pecan was looked at as an economic opportunity; today between two and three million pounds of Kansas pecans are sold annually.

He said the major problem with the pecan industry in Kansas has been the shrinking of marketing opportunities for pecans because of the consolidation of shellers in the 1980's, there are currently less than 25 shellers nationwide. He reported that most of the Kansas crop is sent to Georgia or Texas. He expressed the need for a shelling plant in Kansas to take care of the pecans grown in Kansas, and possibly northeastern Oklahoma and southwestern Missouri as well. Kansas pecans could then be marketed in Kansas providing better promotion of the industry.

Dr. Reid discussed how K-State Research and Extension is working with growers on how to thin out and properly manage the native pecan trees. He said it takes about 4 years to thin out and get the native pecan trees into maximum production; K-State then encourages planting of new trees, which take approximately 13 years to reach full production. He said K-State is program sharing with the University of Missouri in supporting the pecan program in Kansas.

Dr. Reid reported that a federal pecan marketing order was passed in either 1993 or 1994. He said there was an attempt to pass a state pecan marketing order at that time, however, it failed due to a lot of misinformation and the definition of a grower. He said that Georgia defines a grower as someone with more than 30 acres of pecan trees, thus the small producer isn't required to pay the check-off fee. He said this is something Kansas growers may need to consider.

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for February 5, 1997.

HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE GUEST LIST

DATE: 2-4-97

NAME	REPRESENTING
Donna Bates	Kansas Farm Bureau
Kent Ebbins	Kansas Farm Bureau
Jean Ebbins	" " "
Donita Ebbins	" " "
William Reid	Kansas State Univ.
Chris Williams	KDOC & H
Robert E. Tamm	Kansas Farm Bureau
Francis Kelsey	Kansas Farm Bureau
Elwyn A. Tuckey	Kansas Farm Bureau
Henry & Shirley Bell	Kansas Farm Bureau
Ron Betzen	KFB
Gary H. BURTON	KFB
Connie Burton	KFB
Helen L. Norris	KFB
Joe Lieber	KS Co-op Council
Sadie White	
Dave Denning	Kansas Farm Bureau
Troy Burr	Kansas Farm Bureau CN Co.