

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Joann Flower at 1:00 p.m. on February 14, 1997, in Room 423-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Representative Ballou - excused
Representative Compton - excused
Representative Correll - excused
Representative Faber - excused
Representative Henry - excused
Representative Lloyd - excused
Representative Peterson - excused
Representative Weiland - excused

Committee staff present: Raney Gilliland, Legislative Research Department
Kay Scarlett, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Allie Devine, Secretary, Kansas Department of Agriculture
Dr. Joe Beuerlein, Division of Inspections - Meat and Poultry, Kansas Department of Agriculture
Tom Pyle, Pyle Meat Company, Inc., Eudora, Kansas

Others attending: See attached list

Chairperson Flower opened the discussion on issues relating to Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) regulations that are the subject of proposed legislation by Representative Thimesch.

Representative Thimesch expressed concern about the impact compliance with the HACCP regulations will have on the approximately 154 small meat processing plants in Kansas. Referring to Secretary Devine's testimony before the committee on January 20, he provided information on the background of events and the status of the federal HACCP regulations and the calendar for compliance by state-inspected meat and poultry processing plants. Referring to the annual report by Curtis Chrystal, Director, Agriculture Products Development Division, Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing, to the committee on January 23, he said small meat processors, whether federally or state inspected, are faced with training and capital improvements ranging in cost from \$25,000 to \$200,000 per processor to comply with the new regulations. He fears that one-third of the small processing plants in Kansas will be forced to go out of business because of HACCP which will have a significant impact on the Kansas economy.

Representative Thimesch said the intent of his bill is to slow compliance efforts so the negative effect the regulations would have on small meat processing plants could be reduced. He explained that the first part of his bill directs the secretary of the Kansas Department of Agriculture to cease all compliance with HACCP; the second section would leave all current rules and regulations of the Kansas Department of Agriculture in effect; and the third section directs the secretary to study the true impact and ramifications implementation of HACCP will have on small meat processors in the state and to report back to the Legislature on or before April 1, 1997.

Allie Devine, Secretary, Kansas Department of Agriculture, said these questions were raised by the Department at the federal level a year and a half ago. She explained that Kansas is one of 26 states with an "equal to federal" state meat and poultry inspection program, that the state program is funded with 50 percent federal and 50 percent state dollars. She said that failure to comply with HACCP would cause the state to fall below the "equal to federal" standard. She explained that the federal government would then take over meat inspection in Kansas, and the small processing companies would still have to comply with HACCP. She said Kansas would immediately lose \$1.1 million in federal funds. (Attachment 1)

Dr. Joe Beuerlein, Program Director, Division of Inspections - Meat and Poultry, Kansas Department of Agriculture, explained the advantages of keeping the state inspection program as opposed to having federal

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, Room 423-S Statehouse, at 9:00 a.m. on February 14, 1997.

inspection of all small meat processing plants. He explained that the first requirement of the new regulations is the creation of written Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (SSOP's) by every meat and poultry plant under both federal and state inspection. He said the SSOP's put the responsibility for sanitation directly on the plant management. He said that only through education will plant managers learn how their plants can be operated most effectively.

Secretary Devine reported that the Governor's Agriculture Advisory Board at its February 13 meeting unanimously supported the implementation of federal meat inspection guidelines. She emphasized that the deadlines of HACCP are federal deadlines. She said that when the Department sent a letter to all state regulated plants in Kansas to update them on HACCP regulations, providing them with an action and training calendar to meet the compliance requirements, as well as what training and financial assistance was available, the Department received only one response.

Tom Pyle, Pyle Meat Company, Inc., Eudora, Kansas, spoke on behalf of the small meat processing plant industry. He said he appreciated Representative Thimesch's comments and efforts. He related his experiences and the complaints he has heard concerning state meat inspectors and the amount of paper work required for documentation on SSOP's. He expressed his displeasure that state inspected plants can't sell across state lines, stating that small meat processing plants do less than 5 percent of the total business in the United States. He thought some state regulations were stricter than federal regulations and didn't think custom plants should be required to comply with the same regulations as retail plants. Mr. Pyle agreed with Secretary Devine's assessment of the ramifications noncompliance would have, but said it might not hurt to try.

The meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for February 18, 1997.

STATE OF KANSAS

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KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

TO: House Agriculture Committee

FROM: Allie Devine, Secretary of Agriculture

DATE: February 14, 1997

SUBJECT: Information on State/Federal Meat Inspection

Kansas is one of 26 states with an "equal to federal" state meat and poultry inspection program. The state program is funded with 50 percent federal and 50 percent state dollars. The current state program has a budget of \$2.2 million and about 60 employees based across the state.

Federal law mandates that all states have a meat inspection program; nullifying a state's program means only that federal inspectors would step in to take over the program. The Kansas Department of Agriculture would immediately lose \$1.1 million in federal funds; its inspection program would be designated "not equal to" federal, and the federal government would begin taking steps to take over inspection of state plants. That takeover would include implementation of all new federal food safety rules--sanitation standard operating procedures, hazard analysis at critical control points and associated new requirements now being implemented across the nation.

The ultimate customer of the state meat inspection program--and of the 150-some small state-inspected plants in Kansas--is the food consumer. Food safety is a real issue that must be addressed. The meat inspection program, and new federal rules designed to modernize and improve the safety of meat and poultry products, exists to ensure consumer confidence in the products of Kansas meat processing plants.

The Governor's Agriculture Advisory Board, in its Feb. 13 meeting, unanimously supported the implementation of federal meat inspection guidelines and the efforts of the Department of Agriculture and other entities to assist state plants by making resources available to assist them with training and infrastructure upgrade costs.

The economic benefits to local economies must be noted. Kansas Department of Health and Environment guidelines require state plant to have inspected product in order to sell to public institutions. The lack of a state-inspected program would have far-reaching effects on other retailers and wholesalers in Kansas communities.

*House Agriculture Committee
February 14, 1997
Attachment 1*