

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Joann Flower at 9:00 a.m. on February 21, 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:

Others attending: See attached list

Chairperson Flower explained that the sponsor of HB 2299 and HB 2300 that were scheduled for hearing today requested that they not be heard.

Discussion and action on HB 2425 - Certain duties of secretary of agriculture related to state compliance with certain federal regulations.

The Chair opened discussion on HB 2425 and called the committee's attention to a letter she had received from Thomas R. Pyle, Executive Director, Kansas Meat Processors Association, concerning this bill. (Attachment 1) The fiscal note on HB 2425 was also distributed.

Raney Gilliland, Legislative Research Department, reviewed the bill for the committee.

Representative Thimesch reported that yesterday he, Staff, and the Committee Chair had participated in a 15 to 20 minute telephone conference call with Dr. Bob Fetzner, Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA, who has the responsibility for oversight of all the state meat inspection programs. As a result of this conversation, Representative Thimesch said he thought that it was possible the small meat processors were overreacting to the new regulations. He said the small processors are not well organized with no spokesman to intervene for them, and that possibly many of the small processing plant operators are intimidated by the state inspectors. He said that he has come to the conclusion that communication is the main problem in the implementation of SSOP and HACCP.

Representative Thimesch offered some suggestions as to what he thought needed to be done. He said that Dr. Fetzner was willing to come to Kansas, tour some of the small meat processing plants, and participate in an open discussion on what is actually required to comply with the HACCP regulations. Representative Thimesch said that he hoped that the Kansas Department of Agriculture would take steps to communicate more effectively with the small processors and thought the Secretary of the Kansas Department of Agriculture should study the impact and ramifications implementation of the HACCP regulations will have on the small meat processors in the state. He proposed that the committee hold more hearings on HACCP, bring Dr. Fetzner to Kansas to explain the federal requirements for compliance with HACCP, ask for an interim study on this issue, and review the situation a year from now.

Representative Thimesch stated that he didn't believe passage of HB 2425 would be appropriate at this time; however, he thought a House Resolution incorporating his proposals might help make this process work.

Representative Ballou moved to introduce a House Resolution outlining Representative Thimesch's proposals and request an interim study on HACCP. The motion was seconded by Representative Weiland.

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, Room 423-S Statehouse, at 9:00 a.m.
on February 21, 1997.

After considerable committee discussion on the content of a House Resolution, Representative Dahl offered a substitute motion to table **HB 2425** and request that Representative Thimesch and Staff prepare a House Resolution for the committee's review. The motion was seconded by Representative Schwartz. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 a.m. The next meeting is unscheduled at this time.

Kansas Meat Processors Association

Thomas R. Pyle, Executive Director
800 Main St. • Box 490
Eudora, Kansas 66025
(913) 542-2151 • FAX (913) 542-2152

February 17, 1997

Rep. Joann Flower
Room 426-S
State Capitol
Topeka, KS 66612

Dear Joann,

I want to go on record as saying that the Kansas Meat Processors Association fully supports the bill put forth by Representative Thimesch and would like to see it brought onto the floor of the house for a vote.

We feel strongly that the USDA continues to make laws, rules, and regulations that are both costly and time consuming to our members without any benefit to us. We can not cross state lines and yet are burdened with rules more stringent than the Federal Inspection program warrants.

Until such time as Sec. of Agriculture Dan Glickman and Congress see fit to let us cross state lines with products equal to federally inspected product, we will try to discourage any changes in laws that negatively affect our businesses.

Thank you for your consideration and attention to our plight.

Cordially,



Thomas R. Pyle
Executive Director

*House Agriculture Committee
February 21, 1997
Attachment 1*