

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Dan Johnson at 3:30 p.m. on January 14, 2004, in Room 423-S of the Capitol.

All members were present.

Committee staff present:

Alan Conroy, Legislative Research Department
Gordon Self, Revisor of Statutes Office
Kay Scarlett, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Adrian Polansky, Secretary, Kansas Department of Agriculture
George Teagarden, Livestock Commissioner, Kansas Animal Health Department
Jack Lindquist, Kansas Agriculture and Rural Leadership, Inc.

Others attending:

See attached list.

Chairman Johnson welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the House Agriculture Committee of the 2004 Legislative Session. Committee rules, as well as rules for conferees appearing before the committee, were distributed.

Doug Wareham, Kansas Agribusiness Retailers Association, discussed the 2004 Agricultural Biotechnology Education Tour for the Agriculture and Environment Committees and other agriculture leaders on January 15 and 16. They will visit the Bayer CropScience Research Facility in Kansas City and the Danforth Plant Science Center and Monsanto World Headquarters in St. Louis. The tour will be hosted by the Kansas Corn Growers Association and Kansas Agribusiness Retailers Association and supported through a grant from the Council for Biotechnology Information.

Leslie Kaufman, Government Relations Director, Kansas Cooperative Council, requested introduction of a committee bill concerning removal of officers of agricultural marketing association by board of directors. Representative Thimesch, seconded by Representative Powell, moved to introduce this request as a committee bill. The motion carried.

Adrian Polansky, Secretary, Kansas Department of Agriculture, presented the department's annual report and discussed recent events in Kansas agriculture and accomplishments of the Kansas Department of Agriculture. He provided an update on the nation's first case of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) discussing the department's detection and prevention efforts to avoid an occurrence in Kansas. The department will be requesting legislation necessary to adopt new protective standards against BSE; a bill to remove sunset dates from fee funds in five of their programs; statutory changes that will be necessary to strengthen and increase the efficiency of the state's food safety regulatory efforts; and issues dealing with grain warehouse bonding and sericea lespedeza. (Attachment 1)

Secretary Polansky reported that today Governor Sebelius announced an Executive Reorganization Order which will transfer several program responsibilities from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to the Kansas Department of Agriculture. The Kansas Department of Agriculture will be the key authority for safety as food is produced, processed, and transported to consumers. He said this shift in duties would complement their existing authority for dairy, meat, and egg compliance. The specific types of establishments that will transfer to the Department of Agriculture include retail grocery stores, food service in retail grocery stores, mobile ice cream vendors, vending machines, convenience stores, retail meat stores and meat processors, specialty shops, variety stores, food wholesalers and warehouses, food manufacturers, bakeries, mills and elevators, bottling plants, wineries, breweries, food re-packers, bottled water businesses, pet food manufacturers, food salvagers, ice plants, cider mills, seed sprouting businesses, and fruit and vegetable markets. KDHE will continue to regulate businesses that prepare food for immediate consumption. (Attachment 2)

Distributed were copies of two letters from Swift & Company to producers and all live animal suppliers notifying them that to ensure compliance with new USDA regulations, effective January 12, any cattle they

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slaughter over 30 months of age will be discounted 15 cents per pound regardless of their grade. (Attachment 3)

George Teagarden, Livestock Commissioner, Kansas Animal Health Department, discussed issues surrounding the discovery of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy in the state of Washington. He provided a time line of events in regard to BSE in the United States since December 23, 2003, and the regulations that have been in effect in the United States since 1989. Regulation changes Secretary Veneman, USDA, announced December 30, 2003, were outlined and discussed. (Attachment 4)

Commissioner Teagarden requested introduction of a committee bill to authorize the livestock commissioner to develop and implement a program, consistent with the provisions of any federal identification program, of data collection, animal identification, and premise registration for the purpose of preventing, tracking, and eradicating infectious or contagious diseases in Kansas livestock, to be called the Kansas Animal Identification Program. (Attachment 5) Representative Feuerborn, seconded by Representative Schwartz, moved to introduce this proposal as a committee bill. The motion carried.

Jack Lindquist, Kansas Agriculture and Rural Leadership, Inc., provided an overview of the KARL program, a private, not-for-profit organization dedicated to identifying and developing leadership for agriculture and rural communities in order to enhance the quality of life for all Kansans. He explained that it is a two-year educational experience offering intensive study, training, and travel for future leaders of Kansas. (Attachment 6)

Derenda Mitchell, Assistant Counsel, Kansas Livestock Association, requested introduction of a committee bill concerning the liability of livestock and meat food product producers in product liability actions. (Attachment 7) Representative Powell, seconded by Representative Dahl, moved to introduce this proposal as a committee bill. Motion carried.

Chris Tymeson, Legal Counsel, Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks, requested introduction of a committee bill relating to the Interstate Wildlife Violators Compact; game warden dog protection; and values for illegal commercialization of fish and mussels. Representative Larkin, seconded by Representative Thimesch, moved to introduce this request as a committee bill. The motion carried.

Chairman Johnson on behalf of Representative Tom Sloan requested introduction of a committee bill concerning preservation of historical property to require consideration of established agricultural use of land. Representative Light, seconded by Representative Powell, moved to introduce this proposal as a committee bill. The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for January 21, 2004.