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**Kansas Department of Agriculture Agency Update
to the Senate Agriculture Committee
by Jackie McClaskey
Secretary of Agriculture
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Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and provide an update on the Kansas Department of Agriculture.

The Kansas Department of Agriculture is committed to serving Kansas farmers, ranchers, agribusinesses, and the customers/consumers they serve. We have a responsibility to help provide an environment that fosters economic growth and supports and advocates for agriculture. All while maintaining our statutory and regulatory responsibility to help ensure a safe food supply, promote public health, protect animal health and protect consumers to the best of our ability. These efforts are elaborated upon in the agency vision, mission and objectives.

While the agency continues to make strides in each of these areas, more work needs to be done. In order to better gauge progress, each program and division developed objectives and measurable goals aligned with the agency vision, mission and priorities for the first time in 2015. In December, programs and divisions submitted their 2016 goals and they are actively working toward those today.

The Kansas Department of Agriculture is not a large agency, but it is diverse. We are organized into five different divisions (Agricultural Business Services, Animal Health, Conservation, Marketing and Water Resources) made up of 20 programs. In addition, services are provided to the agency by Administrative Services including Fiscal, Records, Information Technology, Human Resources, Legal and the Office of the Secretary, which includes Communications, Economics and Compliance Education/Customer Service.

We have continued to take advantage of our Manhattan location to increase collaboration with Kansas State University and we have a long list of partnerships that continues to grow. In addition to the Manhattan office, we have the Office of the Secretary in the Landon Office Building, the Laboratory and Water Resources Field Office at Forbes Field in Topeka, Water Resources Field Offices in Stockton, Stafford, Garden City and Parsons, a Food Safety field office in Olathe and 129 home-based field employees.

While our agency will continue to identify ways to complete our daily responsibilities as efficiently and effectively as possible with a focus on customer service balanced with upholding our regulatory and statutory responsibilities, a few specific policy issues have been agency priorities:

- water – both the implementation of the Water Vision action items and interstate water collaboration,
- agricultural emergency planning, and
- addressing overreach by Federal agencies creating scenarios that adversely impact Kansans and the agriculture industry.

In addition, each program and division has its own list of successes for the past year which can be found in our annual report.

Just to share a few examples:

Agricultural Business Services:

Food Safety and Lodging: The program purchased USA Food Safety software for licensing and inspection. The software change has been successfully implemented this past summer and in use through the fall and winter. Online license renewal will be offered to businesses this spring.

Dairy and Feed Safety: The program received a federal grant to develop, film and produce a web-based, interactive milk hauler/sampler training module. This will make training and licensing in the field much more efficient for the program and the industry.

Agriculture Laboratory: The lab achieved ISO17025 accreditation for the microbiology section in 2015.

Conservation: Implemented the Compensatory Mitigation Fund to enable Kansas watershed districts to restore, establish, enhance and protect natural resources with conservation easements under Section 404 of the Federal Clean Water Act by providing a third party easement holder on behalf of the watershed districts.

Animal Health: In an effort led by the Division of Animal Health, Kansas was the first state to reach the benchmark of more than 50 percent of export health certificates created electronically. Kansas surpassed that benchmark, set in September 2014, and is now at 65 percent, which leads the country. The more electronic information we receive, the faster it can be processed; therefore, we can be more efficient in our response to our customers' needs.

Water Resources: In August 2015, the Republican River Compact Administration states, including Kansas, reached an agreement that will ensure more certainty to the basin's water users in both Nebraska and Kansas. The agreement provides additional flexibility for Nebraska to achieve its Compact obligations while ensuring that the interests of Kansans are protected.

As we all know, every Kansan is touched by some aspect of the agriculture industry every day. However, few people truly understand that agriculture is our state's largest industry, employer (12 percent of work force), and economic driver, valued at over \$63 billion dollars and making up nearly 43 percent of economic activity. When the retail food industry is included, the workforce percentage grows to 20% and the economic contribution rises to \$72.8 billion (50 percent of the economy). Agriculture is also Kansas' No. 1 export. Agriculture and food products account for 41.5 percent, or \$4.2 billion of total exports annually.

We are proud of the work being done growing agriculture in Kansas. I also wanted to provide updated information on the Trademark program and the Ag Marketing Division. Ag Marketing was originally created in the Board of Agriculture but was transferred to Commerce in 1995. In 2011, Governor Brownback transferred the program back into the Department of Agriculture. Since then, we have re-focused the program into five areas: Trademark (local markets), International, Business Development, Education and Advocacy and Agriculture Workforce Development.

Efforts will continue to focus on how the state can encourage and help develop growth opportunities in all aspects of the agriculture industry by developing innovative programming and delivering solutions designed to create an environment that facilitates growth and expansion of agriculture and rural Kansas. A few examples of program success include:

- over 296 members representing 74 counties in the *From the Land of Kansas* program,
- 4 outbound trade missions and 8 inbound trade and buying missions in FY15 and 3 outbound and 10 inbound trips completed so far in FY16,
- over 60 individual businesses assisted by the agribusiness development team and
- 24 students from 7 high schools earned the Kansas Ag Skills and Competencies certificate.

It has been a privilege to provide you with this agency update. I thank you for your time today and I would be glad to address any questions you might have.