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**Testimony on HB 2490 to
The Senate Natural Resources Committee
Chad Bontrager, Deputy Secretary
Kansas Department of Agriculture
March 8, 2016**

Chairman Powell and members of the committee, I am Chad Bontrager, deputy secretary for the Kansas Department of Agriculture. I am here today to express the department's support for House Bill 2490 relating to the department's role and authority in protecting plants and plant products from certain pest and disease outbreaks.

- In Kansas, nearly 89 percent of all land is farmland, with more than 21 million acres planted to crops and more than 16 million acres devoted to pastureland for grazing livestock.
- The Kansas Plant Pest and Agricultural Commodity Certification Act (the Act) provides the Secretary of Agriculture with authority to quarantine and treat or destroy infested plants or plant products to prevent the movement of pests or diseases within Kansas.
- HB 2490 would update the Act by including "chemical toxicant," or any chemical, including agricultural chemicals or biological substances, which if present in unsafe levels can render a plant or plant product unsafe for human or animal consumption, in the definition of plant pest.
- The bill would also clarify that the Secretary's quarantine authority not only applies to injury to plants or plant products, but also injury to public health.
- HB 2490 would also clarify that growing crops are included in the definition of plant.

In the event of a plant pest or disease outbreak, acting rapidly to stop the spread of the event will be critical to the entire agricultural industry. These simple changes to the Act will help ensure the department is able to move quickly to protect agriculture in Kansas.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I will stand for questions at the appropriate time.