

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Dan Johnson at 3:30 p.m. on February 17, 2003, in Room 423-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Representative Faber - Excused

Committee staff present: Raney Gilliland, Legislative Research Department
Amy VanHouse, Legislative Research Department
Gordon Self, Revisor of Statutes Office
Kay Scarlett, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Greg Foley, Acting Secretary, Kansas Department of Agriculture
Terry Werth and Jerry Kanzenbach, Smoky Hill Meat Processing, Victoria, Kansas
Dr. Evan Sumner, Manager, Meat and Poultry Inspection Program, Kansas Department of Agriculture
Ron Duis, Kansas Meat Processors Association
Janet McPherson, Assistant Director, Governmental Relations, Kansas Farm Bureau
Chris Tymeson, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks

Others attending: See attached list

Minutes of the February 10 and 12 meetings were distributed. Members were asked to notify the committee secretary of any corrections or additions prior to 5:00 p.m. February 19, or the minutes will be considered approved as presented.

Hearing on HB 2188 - Livestock for purposes of meat inspection to not include buffalo or domesticated deer slaughtered for sport or recreational purposes.

Chairman Johnson opened the hearing on **HB 2188**. Raney Gilliland explained that this bill would amend current law to exclude buffalo or domesticated deer slaughtered for sport or recreational purposes from the state's meat inspection processing regulations. Current law requires that buffalo and domesticated deer be inspected the same as other inspected meat products in the state.

Greg Foley, Acting Secretary, Kansas Department of Agriculture, appeared in support of **HB 2188** to remove buffalo and captive deer from the definition of "livestock" when they are slaughtered for sport or recreational purposes. The buffalo producer who wants his animals slaughtered under full inspection so he can sell the final product may still do so. He said the renewed interest in sport hunting of buffalo prompted the need for this change in current law. Secretary Foley and Dr. Evan Sumner answered committee questions. (Attachment 1)

As there were no other conferees, the hearing on **HB 2188** was closed.

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Hearing on HB 2072 - Eliminating state meat and poultry inspection program.

Chairman Johnson opened the hearing on **HB 2072**. Raney Gilliland provided a history of the Kansas Meat and Poultry Inspection Program since its inception in 1969. The state program operates under a grant of authority from USDA, which also operates a meat inspection program in the state. The authority granted to the state requires that Kansas provide a meat inspection program that is at least equal to the USDA program. There are currently 87 state inspected processing plants and 23 custom plants in Kansas.

Terry Werth and Jerry Kanzenbach, Smoky Hill Meat Processing, Victoria, Kansas, appeared in support of **HB 2072**. They discussed the problems they have experienced with the regulations and inspectors in the Kansas Meat and Poultry Inspection Program. They believe the state program could work with clarification of regulations, additional training for inspectors, and possibly some personnel changes. (Attachment 2)

Dr. Evan Sumner, Manager, Meat and Poultry Inspection Program, Kansas Department of Agriculture, appeared in opposition to **HB 2072** and discussed what he believes are the strong points of the state inspection program: (Attachment 3)

- Program staff is a first line of detection and defense against natural or introduced animal diseases.
- State program provides assurance of food safety for Kansans.
- State program is positive for the economies of rural communities and small farmers.
- The costs for a small meat processing plant to seek federal inspection could be expensive.
- Costs of doing day-to-day business are higher for plant owners under federal inspection.
- The state program has a history of building partnerships to help the industry meet new demands.

Ron Duis, representing the Kansas Meat Processors Association, testified in opposition to **HB 2072** and in support of the continuation of the state meat inspection program. He said that federal inspection was and is designed for big companies, while state meat inspection was and is designed for the small meat plants that are a vital business in many small rural communities in the state. Mark Tiettel, a member of their Board of Directors, likes the choice of state or federal inspection. Overall, they believe the current system works and works well. (Attachment 4)

Janet McPherson, Assistant Director, Governmental Relations, Kansas Farm Bureau, appeared in opposition to **HB 2072** stating that Kansas Farm Bureau policy is clear as it pertains to meat inspection. KFB strongly supports the state Meat and Poultry Inspection Program administered by the Kansas Department of Agriculture. Meat is inspected for the protection of all consumers, thus, the program should be supported primarily by State General Fund appropriations. State-inspected meat should be allowed to move in interstate commerce. (Attachment 5)

Chris Tymeson, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, testified in opposition to **HB 2072** as the Department is concerned with the potential elimination of state regulated meat processors. The potential loss of processors who could not afford to enter into the federal inspection program could have an indirect impact on hunters. He said that in today's society, few hunters have the location or the knowledge to process their own big game harvest, thus resulting in the potential loss of a big game hunter as well as the loss of assistance

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in control of big game populations. (Attachment 6)

Representative Thimesch submitted a written statement that he is taking a neutral stand on **HB 2072** due to a lack of information to make a good policy decision to keep or eliminate the program. (Attachment 7)

There being no other conferees, the Chairman closed the hearing on **HB 2072**.

The meeting adjourned at 5:02 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for February 19, 2003.