

HB 2223

1. The inclusion of Mead in the revision is prudent for agri-business and environmental reasons.
2. All efforts to expand the use of honey in products is beneficial to producers because across the US, and in particular Kansas, the market is substantially short of locally produced honey. The US consumes four times the honey produced domestically and each addition to our domestic market, no matter how small, is an economic boost.
3. Honey bees are a vitally important part of our environment; indeed one third of food stuffs consumed in the US are a result of their pollination. Any product that creates an additional demand for honey induces growth in the number of bee colonies and thereby assists in addressing a national shortage of bees while enhancing pollination.
4. The market for mead is a growth market and to allow Kansas producers to participate in that growth is a positive step.
5. Specialty crops including honey production are a special area of emphasis for the Kansas Department of Agriculture to enable fresh farm-to-table products to be grown and produced in Kansas expanding the economy and infusing healthier food products into consumption channels.
6. Specialty crops including honey production enable farmers to diversify thereby improving profitability. That includes new farmers who do not have the means to enter large scale farming and can add bees to smaller farms to increase profitability.