

Kansas Federation of Animal Owners

Sam Mosshart – President

Information presented to Senate Agriculture Committee relating to
SB414 – February 22, 2012

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee:

Enclosed you will find letters from Kansas Federation members that articulate their concerns with the changes to animal health statutes proposed in SB414 and other similar bills. Their letters spell out the impact the changes will have on them as small business owners, Kansas taxpayers, and agribusiness professionals. Their first-hand knowledge and experience-based opinions carry considerably more weight than mine, so I'll restrict my remarks to two concerns; the process used to implement these changes and the philosophy behind them.

Executive Reorganization Order No. 40 from the Governor's office placed animal health under the auspices of the Department of Agriculture. In the past week, four bills have been filed to address, in some form, the necessary technical changes to accomplish ERO 40. However, in SB414, the technical changes have been accompanied by policy changes regarding greyhounds, USDA licensed facilities, and number of required inspections. These proposals have not been accompanied by public exposition of the reasons for them or why they are so urgently needed as to be attached to essentially technical bills which would otherwise be routine and more quickly passed. Changes to policies in place over twenty years would seem to merit more reflection and discussion than to simply be inserted into bills needed for technical alignment of statutes.

SB414 also seems to be in conflict with the Governor's philosophy on streamlining state government to achieve savings of expenditures through elimination of duplication of services. If placing Animal Health under Agriculture is to reduce staffing and overhead costs – how is expanding the responsibilities of the staff consistent with this goal? The USDA has not announced, as far as I know, that it is dropping its animal health programs in the state of Kansas. As a Kansas and United States taxpayer, I don't wish to contribute to inspection programs at two levels that address the same matters.

Thank you for your consideration of these concerns.

Steve Hitchcock

Government Affairs

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