

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Larry Powell at 9:00 a.m. on January 13, 2011, in Room 783 in the Docking State Office Building.

All members were present except:

Representative Michael Peterson - Excused  
Representative Vincent Wetta - Excused

Committee staff present:

Sean Ostrow, Office of the Revisor of Statutes  
Raney Gilliland, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Michael Wales, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Kay Scarlett, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Carole Jordan, Director, Rural Development Division, Kansas Department of Commerce

Others attending:

See attached list.

Chairman Powell opened the floor for bill introduction requests. There were none.

Carole Jordan, Director, Rural Development Division, Kansas Department of Commerce, provided an update on activities of the Agriculture Products Development Division in the Kansas Department of Commerce. She stated that agriculture marketing is an integral part of the rural development functions of the Kansas Department of Commerce partnering with and promoting rural Kansas through technical, financial, and capacity-building assistance. They work closely with the Secretary of Agriculture and report on a regular basis to the Agricultural Advisory Board. Highlights and new initiatives in FY 2010 include:

- Launched the Connect Kansas Initiative, an effort to increase broadband internet access throughout rural Kansas;
- Hosted a Marketplace conference for rural entrepreneurs;
- Partnered with the State Energy Office to co-host the Kansas Energy Conference;
- Continued their Kansas Dairy Initiative and enhanced their Agricultural Export Initiative;
- Began utilizing social networking; and
- Took agritourism classes to every corner of the state. (Attachment 1)

Becki Rhoades, Marketing Specialist, answered committee questions concerning financial assistance provided through the Division, including Business Enhancement Grants, agritourism scholarships, and value-added loans. She explained that the majority of their budget is funded by EDIF (Lottery) dollars, \$751,000 in FY 2010, down from \$931,000 in FY 2008. The Division has sought public/private partnerships to maintain programs to producers.

The meeting adjourned at 9:47 a.m. The next meeting of the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee is scheduled for January 18, 2011.