

MINUTES OF THE SENATE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mark Taddiken at 8:30 a.m. on February 3, 2009 in Room 446-N of the Capitol.

All members were present.

Committee staff present:

Raney Gilliland, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Corey Carnahan, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Jason Thompson, Revisor of Statutes Office
Judy Seitz, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Dr. Fred Cholick, Dean, College of Agriculture; Director, K-State Research and Extension, Kansas State University

Others attending:

See attached list.

Chairman Taddiken noted the Committee had received a written copy of the Kansas Dairy Marketing Advisory Board Report. (Attachment 1)

The Chairman said that copies of the Senate Agriculture Committee Minutes for January 20 and 21, 2009 were distributed to Committee members and will be acted on later.

Hal Hudson, Kansas Pest Control Association, was in attendance and requested the introduction of a bill regarding fees to start a pesticide and safety education fund in Kansas. The bill was not introduced because it is past the bill introduction deadline date.

Dr. Fred Cholick, Dean, College of Agriculture; Director, K-State Research and Extension, Kansas State University, gave the annual report on the Kansas Center for Sustainable Agriculture and Alternative Crops. (Attachment 2) He said the Center works in partnership with state and federal agencies, nonprofit organizations and agricultural organizations to assist family farmers and ranchers to boost farm profitability, protect natural resources and enhance rural communities. There has been an increased interest in sustainable cropping systems.

Dr. Cholick took questions from the Committee.

Dr. Cholick highlighted some information from K-State's Research and Extension Informal 2008 Report to the Kansas Legislature (on file in Senator Taddiken's office). He said the purpose of K-State's Research and Extension is to develop new knowledge and empower individuals with that knowledge to make a difference in their lives. He also said it is necessary to determine what the private as well as the public good is when a new product is developed.

He recognized the efforts of the city of Gove to keep a community grocery store. Several community-focused organizations, including K-State's Center for Engagement and Community Development (CECD), Kansas PRIDE and the Huck Boyd Institute for Rural Development are working together to provide resources and support for rural grocery stores. The Kansas Sampler Foundation and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development also helped in the development of local grocery stores in rural communities.

An educational afterschool program used to teach about food, nutrition and health is part of Healthy Kids in Kansas City, Kansas. This program makes healthy foods fun for children ages 3 to middleteen years. The volunteers are the key to the success of this program. If a healthier lifestyle is followed, there will be less spent on health care in the future.

K-State Research and Extension and the K-State Farm Analyst Program held workshops in 2007-2008 to help families develop a plan to retain family farm ownership. Since the average age of a farmer and ranch operator in Kansas is over 50 there needs to be ongoing education to help in developing successful transition plans.

CONTINUATION SHEET

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The real value of this program goes beyond dollars and cents and is about family relationships and how the transfer of the farm is handled.

Dr. Cholick then noted the sorghum breeder program. He said sorghum has tremendous potential in Kansas in the areas of food, feed and fuel. There is very little public investment in the sorghum plant. K-State researchers are working with scientists from several universities and agencies to improve sorghum that is grown domestically and overseas.

He stated that there are 23 counties which have formed eight extension districts to effectively and efficiently use resources.

Dr. Cholick also noted that for every dollar of State General Funds (SGF) spent for research and extension activities; \$3.9 is generated.

Dr. Cholick answered questions.

Staff also took questions from the Committee.

Senator Ostmeyer moved approval of the Agriculture Committee minutes for January 20 and 21, 2009; seconded by Senator Francisco. Motion carried.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 4, 2009.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 a.m.