

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Dan Johnson at 3:30 p.m. on February 9, 2000, in Room 423-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

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

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Clint Riley, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks  
Dr. Marc Johnson, Dean, Kansas State University College of Agriculture, and Director, K-State Research and Extension  
Dr. Rhonda Janke, Associate Professor and Extension Specialist, Kansas State University  
Representative Gwen Welshimer  
Stephen Moring, President, Botanica Analytica Research Laboratories  
Mary Fund, Communications Director, Kansas Rural Center  
Rev. Dr. Joe Hendrixson, Executive Director, Kansas Ecumenical Ministries  
Paul Johnson, Kansas Catholic Conference  
Charles Benjamin, Kansas Natural Resource Council and Kansas Sierra Club  
Bill Fuller, Associate Director, Public Affairs Division, Kansas Farm Bureau

Others attending:        See attached list

Minutes of the February 2 meeting were distributed. Chairman Johnson asked members to notify the committee secretary of any corrections or additions prior to 5:00 p.m., February 10, or they will be considered approved as presented.

**Hearing on HB 2762 - Inspections of controlled shooting areas.**

Chairman Johnson opened the hearing on **HB 2762** and asked Raney Gilliland to brief the committee on the bill. He explained that current law requires that all controlled shooting areas be inspected when an application for a license is received by the Department of Wildlife and Parks. This bill would require an inspection for all new applications for a license to operate a controlled shooting area, but would leave it to the discretion of the department whether or not to reinspect when a renewal application for a controlled shooting area is received.

Clint Riley, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, appeared in support of **HB 2762**. He explained that under this proposal all new license applications for a controlled shooting area would still require an inspection; it would, however, provide the department the flexibility of whether or not to reinspect the area when a renewal application is received relieving department staff of unnecessary and time-consuming inspections. (Attachment 1)

As there were no other conferees, Chairman Johnson closed the hearing on **HB 2762**.

**Hearing on HB 2616 - Establishing a center of excellence at KSU for sustainable agriculture and alternative crops.**

Chairman Johnson opened the hearing on **HB 2616** and asked Raney Gilliland to explain the bill. It was explained that this bill would establish a center of excellence on sustainable agriculture and alternative crops at Kansas State University to emphasize research, education, outreach, and marketing. The funding for the center of excellence is to be redirected funds from within the existing budget for the extension system and

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agriculture research programs at Kansas State University.

Dr. Marc Johnson, Dean of the Kansas State University College of Agriculture and Director of K-State Research and Extension, appeared in support of **HB 2616**, but said that at the present time K-State does not have the positions or funds to add a center of excellence. He reported that substantial work is already taking place at K-State in the areas of sustainable agriculture and alternative crops. He said that K-State already has the administrative apparatus and project teams to support the areas of sustainable agriculture and minimum tillage. He reported that K-State faculty have initiated studies on the feasibility of several alternative enterprises and have responded with assistance on alternative enterprises suggested from outside the university. Dr. Johnson said that K-State Research and Extension is receptive to additional ideas for sustainable agriculture and alternative enterprises at a pace their present resources will allow. ([Attachment 2](#))

Dr. Rhonda Janke, Associate Professor and Extension Specialist, Kansas State University, appeared in support of **HB 2616**. She discussed the interest in alternative crops and organic farming and the opportunity to bring more income into Kansas, specifically, related to medicinal herbs. ([Attachment 3](#))

Representative Gwen Welshimer testified in strong support for **HB 2616** to establish a center of excellence in Kansas for the scientific study of medicinal plants. She discussed the rapid development and profitability of Echinacea and other medicinal herbs in Europe and the United States. She said that Kansas has the assets in place to focus on this industry and become a global center of excellence for regulated quality assurance in the cultivation and manufacturing of phytomedicinals. She explained the organization of the Great Plains Comprehensive Agriculture and Medical Institute (CAMI) and its focus on plant medicine, from (1) research, to (2) crop, to (3) quality control, to (4) manufacturing, to (5) state inspection, to (6) wholesale, to (7) retail, to the (8) export of products that no other location in the world guarantees for quality and purity through state regulation. ([Attachment 4](#))

Stephen Moring, President, Botanica Analytica Research Laboratories, and steering committee member, Kansas Organic Medicinal Plant Growers Association, testified in support of **HB 2616** and discussed the opportunities for production of alternative phytomedicinal crops in Kansas. ([Attachment 5](#))

Mary Fund, Communications Director, Kansas Rural Center, appeared in support of **HB 2616**. She reported that their organization has worked with K-State Research and Extension on a number of projects and believes that establishing a center of excellence on sustainable agriculture and alternative crops would 1) enable the university to better coordinate their existing efforts; 2) focus the university on developing new research efforts for sustainable agriculture and alternative crops; and 3) provide the university a platform for seeking funding from other outside sources interested in these issues. The Kansas Rural Center believes the state should appropriate additional dollars to assist K-State in setting up this center and would also like to see an advisory board established to develop and guide this concept into implementation. ([Attachment 6](#))

Rev. Dr. Joe Hendrixson, Executive Director, Kansas Ecumenical Ministries, testified in support of **HB 2616**. The Kansas Ecumenical Ministries believe the establishment of a center of excellence on sustainable agriculture and alternative crops is a sound investment morally and economically for the future of agriculture and the vitality of rural communities in Kansas. He included a copy of "A Christian Perspective for a Better Future," a summary of their 1999 study of Kansas agriculture and rural communities. ([Attachment 7](#))

Paul Johnson, Kansas Catholic Conference, a full-time market gardener, and board member of the Kansas Rural Center, appeared in support of **HB 2616**. He believes a public/private partnership is necessary to help promote sustainable agriculture and alternative crops and that this new center should get its fair share of economic development funds. He said this center would synthesize what is already being done for sustainable agriculture at K-State, identify what work needs to be done, and move Kansas down the path of responding to this new agriculture market. He also believes the center should have an advisory board to set priorities, inform the public, and promote the center. ([Attachment 8](#))

Charles Benjamin, representing The Kansas Natural Resource Council and Kansas Sierra Club, spoke in support of **HB 2616** to establish a center of excellence for sustainable agriculture and alternative crops. He said that both of these organizations strongly favor an agricultural system that is sustainable, a system that is viable economically, environmentally, and socially. He believes the state should appropriate additional dollars to help K-State establish this center and should set up an advisory board to develop and guide this concept into implementation. ([Attachment 9](#))

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Bill Fuller, Associate Director, Public Affairs Division, Kansas Farm Bureau, expressed support for **HB 2616**, but cautioned against redirecting funds from within the existing budget of K-State Research and Extension that might weaken, or possibly destroy, important functions now provided by K-State that are vital to the family farmers and rural communities of the state. He encouraged the committee to review current activities and programs at K-State that are already focusing on alternative crops and sustainable agriculture. He suggested that possibly a plan that repackages these activities to increase their visibility would achieve the same goal as establishing the center of excellence without creating another expensive level of administration. (Attachment 10)

Chairman Johnson closed the hearing on **HB 2616**.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:07 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for February 14, 2000.