

## SCOPE STATEMENT

### **Agricultural-Related Agencies: Determining Whether Cost Savings Could Be Achieved By Making the Animal Health Department and the Conservation Commission Divisions of the Department of Agriculture**

Kansas has an Animal Health Department with responsibility for protecting the public health, safety, and welfare through prevention, control, and eradication of infectious and contagious diseases and conditions affecting the health of livestock and domestic animals. The agency directs a brand registration and inspection program to identify ownership of lost or stolen livestock. The agency also regulates and enforces laws governing facilities that produce, sell, or harbor companion animals. For fiscal year 2008, the Department has 34 full-time-equivalent staff, and is projected to spend about \$3.2 million.

The Department of Agriculture in Kansas regulates various agricultural industries, promotes agricultural development, regulates the quality of water resources and disseminates information on Kansas agriculture. The Department has five major programs: Administration, Regulation of Water Resources, Food Safety and Consumer Protection, Agricultural Laboratories, and Environmental Protection. These programs assist in protecting the health and safety of the public through consumer protection and preventive activities. Many of these programs are partially financed through fees imposed on businesses and individuals regulated by the agency. In fiscal year 2008 the Department employed approximately 338 full-time-equivalent staff, and is projected to spend nearly \$26 million.

A review of other states in the region (Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, and Oklahoma) shows that those states have placed their animal health function within their departments of agriculture. Several of those states also have placed soil and water conservation functions under their Departments of Agriculture. Kansas legislators would like to know whether greater operational efficiencies and cost savings could be achieved if Kansas adopted a similar structure for these agricultural-related agencies.

A performance audit of this topic would answer the following question.

- 1. Could Kansas achieve greater operating efficiencies and reduce costs by merging its Animal Health Department and Conservation Commission into the Department of Agriculture?** To answer this question we would review the functions performed by the Kansas Animal Health Department and Conservation Commission to determine whether they are substantially the same as the functions performed by similar divisions or programs contained in other states' departments of agriculture. We would look at how the other states have structured their animal health and conservation functions within their departments of agriculture to determine whether it appears that the combination results in reduced administrative overhead. We would also look that the Administration Program within Kansas' Department of Agriculture and interview staff to determine whether it appears that the Department could absorb the administrative functions of these other agencies without significant increases in staff. In addition, we would look at other areas of the Conservation Commission and Animal Health Department's operations, to

determine whether similar functions are already being carried out within the Department of Agriculture that could potentially absorb some of those functions. Finally, we would estimate the overall savings the State might achieve through such a combination of agencies.

**Estimated time to complete:** 12-15 weeks