

## MINUTES OF THE SENATE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mark Taddiken at 8:30 A.M. on March 9, 2005 in Room 423-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Steve Morris- excused

Committee staff present:

Raney Gilliland, Kansas Legislative Research

Lisa Montgomery, Office of Revisor of Statues

Jacqui Jones, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

George Teagarden, Commissioner, Kansas Animal Health Department (KAHD)

Brad Harrelson, State Policy Director, Governmental Relations, Kansas Farm Bureau (KFB)

Donn Teske, Kansas Farmers Union (KFU)

Mike Beam, Senior Vice President, Kansas Livestock Association (KLA)

Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA), Secretary Adrian Polansky (written only)

Others attending:

See attached list

Chairman Taddiken asked Raney Gilliland of the Legislative Research Department to give an overview of **HB-2053 - Premises registration and animal identification and tracking system.**

The Chairman invited Commissioner George Teagarden to testify on behalf of KAHD. Mr. Teagarden told Committee members that progress is being made in Kansas on the National Animal Identification System, which is the official name for the USDA's animal identification system. Kansas was granted a "pilot project" by USDA to register premises within the state and to develop and test a reading and reporting system that will be attached to commercial transport trucks (Attachment 1). One company developing a system will be mounted on commercial transport has delivered its unit to Kansas State University. Another company has tested its system and is in the process of making adjustments.

KAHD began registering premises in December, 2004. The applications are in the hands of county extension agents as well as several farm and ranch organizations. Individuals may choose to register their premises on-line. To date, there are approximately 350 registered premises in Kansas. The Commissioner pointed out that **HB-2053** allows KAHD to go forward on the issue of voluntary animal identification with both individual animal identification and the national tracking system.

Language has been inserted in the bill to clarify that the program is voluntary and the sunset provision has been removed from the original statutory language. KAHD has requested that the bill take effect upon publication in the *Kansas Register*. Mr. Teagarden explained that the intent of the amendments to three sections of the bill is to shift the burden of indemnity away from the counties and to the state, but only if funding is not available from the United States government.

The Commissioner stated that the national animal identification system is a reality and KAHD wants to assure the Committee that Kansas is posed to implement the voluntary system as it progresses and develops.

The Commissioner then stood for questions.

Chairman Taddiken invited Brad Harrelson, KFB to testify in support of **HB-2053.**

The members of KFB support the establishment and implementation of a national animal identification system capable of providing support for animal disease control and eradication, as well as enhancing food safety (Attachment 2). The members feel that the program should protect producers from liability for acts of others after livestock leaves the hands of the producer. The program should ensure the security of producer information and respect the privacy of producers by collecting data only necessary to establish a traceback system.

## CONTINUATION SHEET

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Mr. Harrelson stated that KFB members are concerned about the associated cost to producers and their ability to comply with the program. (Attachment 2-1).

Mr. Harrelson then stood for questions.

Chairman Taddiken invited Donn Teske, KFU to testify in support of **HB-2180**. Mr. Teske stated that although KFU supported the bill, there were still some reservations. KFU is concerned that the cost of the program should be spread equitably throughout the system.

KFU members are strong supporters of mandatory Country of Origin Labeling (COOL). However, they were concerned about the cost of the program to producers. They believe that COOL could be implemented along with the national ID program.

Another concern of KFU is confidentiality. The members want assurance that the data gathered is truly confidential and that one entity does not have access to data that others would not. They feel that the valuable data gathered, if falling into the wrong hands, would let that person have an unfair advantage in the marketplace (Attachment 3).

Mr. Teske stood for questions.

Chairman Taddiken invited Mike Beam, KLA to testify in support of **HB-2053**. Mr. Beam stated that KLA supports this bill because it will repeal the May 15, 2005-sunset date in last year's legislation. Thus, the Legislature will continue to allow the state to participate in a pending federal/multi-state pilot program and renew the confidentiality provision for records and data collected by KAHD (Attachment 4).

KLA members wanted the Committee to be aware of the concern they have regarding the confidentiality issue in the premise or animal registration program. They believe that language in the bill is on track, although it has yet to be resolved at the federal level.

Presently, neither USDA nor Congress is prepared to mandate that premises be registered, individual animals be identified, and any animal movement be tracked or reported. KLA members feel that someday individual animal identification will be the normal practice in the marketplace (Attachment 4-1). Also, animal identification could become mandatory if there is a serious contagious foreign animal disease outbreak.

Mr. Beam stated that KLA believes the State of Kansas should continue to develop a voluntary individual animal identification program and prepare the state and Kansas livestock producers for a nationwide fully implemented program. The sunset date should be repealed from last year's bill and the suggested amendments be adopted.

Mr. Beam then stood for questions.

Written testimony in support of **HB-2053** was provided by the Kansas Department of Agriculture. (Attachment 5).

Hearings on **HB-2053** were closed.

Senator Ostmeyer made a motion to approve the minutes of March 1, 2005. Senator Huelskamp seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The Committee meeting adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

The next Committee meeting was scheduled for March 15, 2005.