

**Date: February 8, 2024**

**Re: HB 2543- Written Proponent**

**To: House Agriculture and Natural Resources, Chairman Rahjes**

**From: Claudia Hissong, Kansas Farm Bureau**

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Chairman Rahjes and members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to provide written proponent testimony on HB 2543. My name is Claudia Hissong, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Kansas Farm Bureau (KFB) members. KFB is the state's largest general farm organization representing more than 30,000 farm and ranch families through our 105 county Farm Bureau Associations.

A statewide brand program provides benefits to the Kansas cattle industry through animal identification. These brands are a form of permanent identification that signify ownership and are beneficial in instances of lost or stolen cattle. The brand program maintains a brand registry and assists with the market brand inspection program at livestock markets. Additionally, a special investigator assists local law enforcement with lost, stray and stolen livestock. *KFB policy supports a statewide brand program and encourages all cattle owners to obtain and use registered brands, to keep a regular count of their livestock and report all loses to local law enforcement officials.*

While HB 2543 would give authority for a fee increase, *KFB policy supports modest fee increases when it is in the best interest of Kansas producers.* This fee increase is reasonable given the importance of an established, effective statewide brand program to cattle producers in the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 2543 and we ask for your support of the bill.