

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman John Faber at 3:30 P.M. on January 31, 2007 in Room 423-S of the Capitol.

All members were present.

Committee staff present:

Raney Gilliland, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Jason Thompson, Revisor of Statutes
Florence Deeter, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Joe Kejr, President, Kansas Association of Wheat Growers
Dean Stoskopf, Chairman, Kansas Wheat Commission
Bob Timmons, Chairman, Kansas Corn Commission
Kenlon Johannes, CEO, Kansas Soybean Commission
Jeff Casten, Chairman, Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission

Others attending:

See attached list.

The Chairman asked Vice-Chairman Knox to give an update on the Sub-Committee's research and discussion of the pesticide licensure bill. A document from the Department of Agriculture (DOA) was distributed to the members (Attachment 1). The Sub-Committee heard testimony from persons who were using pesticides in the cutting of tree stumps and pasture of CRP ground. Their discovery of having to take a test covering commercial aspects to procure a business license for the work they were doing seemed egregious to them. The (DOA) is willing to make adjustments and work with Rules and Regulations to come in line with the statutes. A sub-category will be drafted to allow the non-restricted use of pesticides after having passed a scaled-down licensure test. The Sub-Committee voted to recommend no action on this bill and allow the DOA to develop the necessary testing and licensure procedures.

The Chairman recognized Representative Holmes, Chairman of the Rules and Regulations Committee, who recommended that a letter of intention from the Committee be sent to the DOA, the chair and vice-chair of the Rules and Regulations Committee, and supporting staff for the purpose of establishing public record.

The Committee accepted the sub-committee recommendation and approved by voice vote that a conceptual letter be drafted and sent to the DOA, the chair and vice-chair of the Rules and Regulations Committee, and supporting staff.

The Chairman welcomed Joe Kejr, a former Representative and currently President of Kansas Association of Wheat Growers, to present the annual report to the committee (Attachment 2). Mr. Kejr asked the committee to consider a bill to open the Wheat Commission's statute to change the current levy of 10 mils to 20 mils, and the payment of refunds be changed from one year to ninety days. He also advocated for the sorghum and soybean commissions to have the same consideration.

Mr. Dean Stoskopf, a farmer raising wheat in Hoisington, Kansas, and Chairman of the Kansas Wheat Commission, brought the annual report giving data relevant to the production and sale of wheat (Attachment 3). He noted that wheat is the primary grain for food consumption around the world and Kansas State University has begun important research on the wheat genome. Two new wheat varieties are available to wheat growers and are considered to be profitable and competitive.

Mr. Stoskopf noted that the international market for wheat remains very competitive. Nigeria became the nation's largest consumer of wheat with a twenty percent increase over the year 2005. Since ninety percent of those purchases come from hard red winter wheat, it is imperative to maintain a solid working relationship with Nigeria. Buyers in Iraq purchased 86 million bushels of hard red winter wheat, doubling the number of bushels since 1984. Prior to the war, Iraq was the largest purchaser of wheat; presently, Australia is the top consumer. He maintained that the Kansas Wheat Commission will continue to do research, invest in the international market, and communicate with wheat farmers to remain competitive in the production and

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distribution of wheat.

The Chairman acknowledged Bob Timmons, Chairman of the Kansas Corn Commission(KCC), whose annual report contained relevant information on the activities of the commission ([Attachment 4](#)). His report included a description of current projects in the areas of production, research, domestic market development, the foreign market element, and models of education. He stated the KCC provides counsel to various groups and communities who are giving consideration to developing ethanol plants. Mr. Timmons indicated because there is a high rate of usage of water, there is an on-going study of the use and depletion for irrigating corn. He will provide the committee with an interim study report.

Bob Hazelwood, a farmer from Berryton who serves on the Kansas Soybean Board (KSB), spoke in place of Kenlon Johannes, CEO of Kansas Soybean Commission. He noted that the Kansas Soybean Commission is part of a federal check-off program under the United States Department of Agriculture ([Attachment 5](#)). The Commission collects one-half of one percent of the value of soybean sales. One-half of that fund is then sent to the United Soybean Board for national and international projects. A first priority for the Kansas Soybean Board is production research conducted to develop environmentally friendly products from soybeans. Consumer education programs are in place for children in school, for nutritional uses of soybeans, and for information on biodiesel fuels and other industry uses ([Attachment 6](#)).

Jeff Casten, Chairman, Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission, gave the annual report of promotional activities and market development ([Attachment 7](#)). Support for grain sorghum is at an all time high with a ninety-six percent of voluntary check-off for various programs. He reported that a downward trend in grain sorghum production nationwide contributes to a downward trend in Kansas, even though Kansas is the leader in sorghum production. Breeding programs in place at Manhattan, Hays and Kansas State University comprise the largest public entities in the nation for research and development to maximize the yield in grain sorghum production.

The Chairman recognized Joe Kejr to provide further information on his bill request. Mr. Kejr said that joint discussions on opening the statutes were held with other commodity board members. He stated it has become more difficult to acquire both state and federal funds for research and continue to maintain the designated budget. Dusti Fritz, CEO of Kansas Wheat Commission, stated the agency has six different areas of interest in wheat, two of which are being given priority. One is the acceptance of bio-technology in wheat production, the other centers around educating the urban consumer.

By consensus the Committee accepted the bill request.

The Chairman announced the meeting tomorrow morning, February 1, 2007, Room313-S, in the Old Supreme Court Room. Congressman Jerry Moran will be speaking to a joint meeting of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, the Senate Agriculture Committee and the Senate Natural Resources Committee on aspects of the farm bill.

The next meeting will be February 1, 2007, at 3:30 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.