

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Dan Johnson at 3:30 p.m. on March 1, 2000, in Room 423-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Representative Aurand - excused
Representative Compton - excused
Representative Flower - excused
Representative Larkin - excused
Representative O'Brien - excused
Representative Schwartz - excused

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

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Representatives of the Kansas Meat Processors Association

Ron Duis, Salina

Connie Halls, Sabetha

Larry Schuetz, Atchison

John Yoder, Yoder

Dr. Elizabeth Boyle, Associate Professor and Extension Specialist in Meats, KSU Department of Animal Sciences and Industry

Dr. James Marsden, University Distinguished Professor in Meat Science, KSU Department of Animal Sciences and Industry

Connie Fischer, Director, Agriculture Products Development Division, Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing

Dr. Lyman Kruckenberg, Director, Meat & Poultry Inspection Program, Kansas Department of Agriculture

Others attending: See attached list

Chairman Johnson opened discussion on the concerns and assistance available to small meat processing plants in Kansas.

Ron Duis, Salina, speaking for the Kansas Meat Processors Association, discussed concerns of small meat processors in the state. They would like to see all meat processing facilities unified under one set of regulations and interstate shipment of state-inspected meat products. Limited markets, internet sales, sales tax on food, and increased incentives for state institutions to buy from small meat processors were identified as areas of concern. Removal of by-products by rendering companies has also become a problem for many small meat processors. Mr. Duis noted that a limited labor market, workers compensation rates, and affordable health insurance are business concerns facing small locker plants. Ron Duis, Salina; Connie Halls, Sabetha; Larry Schuetz, Atchison; and John Yoder, Yoder, answered committee questions.

Dr. Elizabeth Boyle, Associate Professor and Extension Specialist in Meats, KSU Department of Animal Sciences and Industry, provided a summary of HACCP, food safety and value-added support programs and assistance that K-State, in cooperation with the Kansas Department of Agriculture, Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing, and USDA, has provided to the Kansas meat and poultry industry so they may adapt and comply with required changes in government regulations. ([Attachment 1](#))

Dr. Boyle provided information on the "Branding Your Beliefs" program offered by Lorentz Meats and Land O'Lakes to provide livestock producers and small meat processors the tools they need to capitalize on marketing opportunities to increase the profitability of their operations. She reported that over fifty farms in the Cannon Falls, Minnesota, area have completed the program. The program's goal is to generate economic growth in rural communities. ([Attachment 2](#))

CONTINUATION SHEET

Dr. James Marsden, University Distinguished Professor in Meat Science, KSU Department of Animal Sciences and Industry, discussed HACCP-based microbiological control requirements that must be met by meat processing plants; including, Salmonella performance standards; plant testing for generic E. coli to verify process control; USDA monitoring of E. coli 0157:H7; and USDA monitoring for Listeria monocytogenes and Salmonella in cooked, ready-to-eat products. K-State is helping small meat processors identify and implement effective anti-microbial technologies. He reported that current K-State research projects are addressing steam pasteurization for small volume plants, irradiation technologies and chemical treatments that would be available to all plants regardless of size. ([Attachment 3](#))

Connie Fischer, Director, Agriculture Products Development Division, Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing, presented an overview of the financial assistance the Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing has given to meat processors throughout the state. She outlined future activities of the Agriculture Products Development Division that will have a positive impact on Kansas meat processors and producers: ([Attachment 4](#))

1. Develop reference materials for meat processors and producers who are interested in marketing;
2. Educate state meat inspectors on the marketing and business assistance available at KDOC&H by attending their next staff meeting;
3. Enhance outreach efforts to small and medium sized processors by attending their annual meeting and making plant visits throughout the year; and
4. Continue to provide financial and technical support to the industry.

Dr. Lyman Kruckenberg, Director, Meat & Poultry Inspection Program, Kansas Department of Agriculture, reported that there are 92 state-inspected meat processing plants and 28 custom-only plants in Kansas. He believes the biggest boost to small processing plants would be to allow interstate shipment of state-inspected meat.

Mary Jane Stattelman, Assistant Secretary, Kansas Department of Agriculture, reported that the department is in contact with the state's federal congressional delegation concerning interstate shipment of state-inspected meat. She encouraged everyone to contact their federal representatives on this issue.

Representative Dan Thimesch distributed a news release dated December 30, 1999, from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture concerning their new state meat inspection program ([Attachment 5](#)); a copy of an editorial by Solveig Torvik in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer ([Attachment 6](#)); Montana Big Sky Beef newsletters ([Attachment 7](#)); and a suggested outline of a resolution empowering Kansas producers to market their own meat. ([Attachment 8](#))

Minutes of the February 21 meeting were distributed. Chairman Johnson asked members to notify the committee secretary of any corrections or additions prior to 5:00 p.m., March 2, or they will be considered approved as presented

The meeting adjourned at 5:02 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for March 6, 2000