

MINUTES OF THE SENATE AGRICULTURE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mark Taddiken at 8:30 A.M. on January 12, 2005 in Room 423-S of the Capitol.

Committee members absent:

Committee staff present: Raney Gilliland, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Lisa Montgomery, Office of Revisor of Statutes
Jacqui Jones, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Adrian Polansky, Secretary, Kansas Department of Agriculture

Others attending: See Attached List

Adrian Polansky, Secretary, Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA), introduced key members of his staff, C.V. Cotsoradis, assistant secretary; Carole Jordan, legislative and policy liaison; Erik Wisner, legislative assistant; Lisa Taylor, public information officer; Dan Riley, chief legal counsel; and Dale Lambley, special assistant. He submitted the Kansas Department of Agriculture 2004 Annual Report (A copy is on file in the office of the Legislative Research Department).

Mr. Polansky presented an overview of the Department for the benefit of the new members of the Committee stating KDA has approximately 300 full-time employees, about half of whom work in Topeka, and the remainder are spread across the state working in the field. The KDA budget is about \$22 million with about 46 percent of the funding coming from the State General Fund, 5 percent from the State Water Plan Fund, 33 percent from fee funds and 16 percent from federal funds.

The Secretary told the Committee that KDA is a regulatory agency serving all Kansans. KDA ensures a safe food supply; regulates the responsible use of pesticides and plant nutrients; protects the state's native and cultivated plants; ensures the integrity of weighing and measuring devices; and guards the beneficial use of state's waters.

During 2004 a variety of topics were addressed by KDA such as:

- Flint Hills burning
- biotechnology
- homeland security
- the grape and wine industry
- grain elevators
- Karnal bunt
- dams and water structures, and
- rules and regulations affecting direct marketers of farm crops

The challenges addressed by KDA in 2004 included concerns regarding BSE in one cow from Washington state and its effect on the cattle industry and Asian soybean rust in nine states that could adversely effect the economic vitality of Kansas agriculture. They are continuing to work to minimize those possibilities.

Head sprouting in the wheat crop caused major concerns for producers in 2004 but KDA was able to change the USDA policy on sprout-damaged wheat and save the credibility of the federal crop insurance program.

KDA reported several successful initiatives as a result of the recommendations of the Governor's Rural Life Task Force.

The Department assumed responsibility for most state-level food safety functions. The Department is establishing and becoming administrators of new food safety laws and regulations.

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE Senate Agriculture at 8:30 A.M. on January 12, 2005 in Room 422-S of the Capitol.

Secretary Polansky then spoke regarding the following subjects:

- Food Safety
- The Kansas Beef Industry
- Homeland Security
- Karnal Bunt
- Asian Soybean Rust
- Legislative Post Audit and Grain Warehouse Inspection
- Governor's Rural Life Task Force
- Grape and Wine Industry Advisory Council
- Irrigation Transition Assistance Program

The Secretary said he feels that KDA manages effective regulatory programs. He feels that these and other activities benefit consumers, rural communities, agriculture and agribusiness in Kansas.

Mr. Polansky then stood for questions.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 19, 2005.