

KANSAS SENATE AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

JACKIE KELLER- March 19, 2018

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HOUSE BILL 2583

My name is Jackie Keller and I am a sixth generation KS farmer. My 200 acre crop farm has been certified organic since 2004 when I first started working with the previous noxious weed director here in Shawnee Co. He gave me signs to post, "Limited Pesticide Use Area," as the word "Restricted" has a different meaning to pesticide applicators.

I testified in opposition to HB 2479 March 9, 2016 and am encouraged to have learned of the recent amendment which includes representation of Specialty Crops on the noxious weed advisory committee. However, I recommend a certified organic member as well. I see agricultural industries can have one member represented, a possible conflict of interest. I'm also encouraged by the inclusion of mechanical and/or biological methods of weed control, as an option when submitting a plan to address a noxious weed issue. However, given the current herbicide-resistant weed problems, I question what the balance of information would be when educating growers to all of their options.

As the Administrator for the eastern KS chapter of the Organic Crop Improvement Ass., a certifying agency, I work with over 30 organic producers, several certified well over 20 years. A major concern is the potential for more chemical spraying, hence drift damage. In fact, last spring two cases were brought to my attention, they were not from dicamba.

As you all know, there's been many growers who've suffered economically from dicamba drift, we don't need to increase the risk of more acres damaged by prioritizing more chemical use over other control methods, for weeds that could be defined "noxious" by one unelected official, as opposed to elected legislators.

More readily-available education is needed for land-owners/operators who may want to implement non-chemical weed control practices. There's a lot of on-going/on-farm research from reputable sources- some universities, linked to valuable information. Workshops are offered right here in the mid-west. I would like more brought into main-stream thru k-state ext., etc.

Thank you,
Jackie Keller, Certified Organic Farmer and Chapter Administrator
Organic Crop Improvement Ass. (OCIA) KS Chapter #2