

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Dan Johnson at 3:30 p.m. on March 24, 2003, in Room 423-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

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

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Leslie Kaufman, State Director, Governmental Relations, Kansas Farm Bureau
Mike Beam, Sr. Vice President, Kansas Livestock Association
Mike Schultz, Executive Director, Kansas Cattlemen's Association
Daryl Larson, VP, Kansas Cattlemen's Association, and board member, Kansas Farmers Union
David Pfrang, member, Kansas Cattlemen's Association and R-Calf
Danni Beer, R-Calf United Stockgrowers of America (read by E. T. Anderson)
Wanda Kinney, Kansas Cattlemen's Association
Donn Teske, President, Kansas Farmers Union
Todd Johnson, Governmental Affairs Staff, Kansas Livestock Association
Larry Brack, President, Kansas Cattlemen's Association (written only)
Nathan Pike, member, Kansas Cattlemen's Association and R-Calf USA (written only)
Donald Cress, Council Grove (written only)
Donald Peterson, Council Grove (written only)

Others attending: See attached list

Representative Melvin Minor was welcomed to the committee. He replaces Representative Showalter.

Minutes of the March 17 and 19 meetings were distributed. Members were asked to notify the committee secretary of any corrections or additions prior to 5:00 p.m. March 26, or the minutes will be considered approved as presented.

Hearing and action on SCR 1609 - Concurrent Resolution urging the United States secretary of agriculture to enter into an agreement with the state of Kansas to give Kansas landowners a chance to clean up sericea lespedeza before penalizing them.

Chairman Johnson opened the hearing on **SCR 1609**. Raney Gilliland explained that this resolution urges the United States Department of Agriculture to enter into an agreement with the state of Kansas to avoid penalizing Kansas landowners who discover sericea lespedeza on CRP lands without first being given the opportunity to control the noxious weed.

Leslie Kaufman, State Director, Governmental Relations, Kansas Farm Bureau, presented testimony in support of **SCR 1609** stating that it is extremely important that government agencies work cooperatively, not punitively, with landowners to help control this invasive species. (Attachment 1)

As there were no other conferees, the Chairman closed the hearing and opened discussion on **SCR 1609**.

Representative Feuerborn moved to recommend SCR 1609 favorable for adoption. Seconded by Representative Faber, the motion carried.

Hearing and action on SCR 1610 - Concurrent Resolution urging that federal noxious weed dollars be made available for control of noxious weeds on CRP land in Kansas.

Chairman Johnson opened the hearing on **SCR 1610** and asked Raney Gilliland to explain the resolution. **SCR 1610** urges the United States Department of Agriculture to make additional federal cost-share dollars available to the state of Kansas for the control of noxious weeds. He explained that the Senate removed the restriction that this apply only to CRP land.

Leslie Kaufman, State Director, Governmental Relations, Kansas Farm Bureau, appeared in support of **SCR**

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1610 encouraging availability of federal cost-share dollars for control of noxious weeds. KFB is appreciative of the federal dollars that have already been channeled from USDA to Kansas and hopes to see additional monies available in the future. (Attachment 1)

Mike Beam, Sr. Vice President, Kansas Livestock Association, testified in support of **SCR 1610** to make additional federal cost-share dollars available for noxious weed control in Kansas. He reported that the U.S. Senate recently passed legislation (S. 144) authorizing \$100 million a year to states for invasive species control programs. A copy of this legislation is attached to his testimony. (Attachment 2)

There being no other conferees, the Chairman closed the hearing and opened discussion on **SCR 1610**.

Representative Feuerborn moved to recommend SCR 1610 favorable for adoption. Seconded by Representative Ostmeyer, the motion passed.

Discussion and action on SB 145 - Abolishing state board of agriculture.

Chairman Johnson opened discussion on **SB 145**.

Representative Feuerborn moved to amend SB 145 by removing the language in SB 145 and substituting the language in SB 46, as amended by the committee on March 19, and to rename the bill House Substitute for SB 145. SB 46 amends the Kansas pet animal act. Seconded by Representative Light, the amendment passed.

Representative Feuerborn moved to recommend SB 145, as amended, favorable for passage. Seconded by Representative Kassebaum, the motion carried.

Hearing and action on HCR 5017 - Concurrent Resolution urging USDA to implement country of origin labeling for beef.

Chairman Johnson opened the hearing on **HCR 5017**. Raney Gilliland reminded the committee that country of origin labeling of beef was included in the federal 2002 farm bill. He noted that it is a voluntary program until September 30, 2004, when it will become mandatory. He explained that this resolution urges the United States Department of Agriculture to work to capture both the Congressional spirit and intent of mandatory country of origin labeling of beef through the promulgation of rules that maximize benefits to both United States producers and consumers while minimizing costs to producers, processors, and retailers.

Mike Schultz, Executive Director, Kansas Cattlemen's Association, testified in support of **HCR 5017** for a common sense country of origin labeling law. The resolution clearly states that importing handlers must carry import documentation with each animal and provide that information to each buyer of that animal until the animal is slaughtered. The resolution is very direct in spelling out "label the imports," and unless U.S. cattle leave this country, they are all eligible for a U.S.A. label. With his testimony is a copy of KCA's comments to USDA on the Issuance of Guidelines for Voluntary Country of Origin Labeling. (Attachment 3)

Daryl Larson, Vice-President, Kansas Cattlemen's Association, and board member of the Kansas Farmers Union, appeared in support of **HCR 5017**. He feels this resolution is an important way for the state of Kansas to show support for Kansas producers. He believes that consumers have a right to know where their food comes from and producers in the United States should not be forced to prove that their livestock is of U.S. origin when it has never been out of the country. (Attachment 4)

David Pfrang, member of the Kansas Cattlemen's Association and R-Calf, testified in support of **HCR 5017**. He believes this resolution will help push the United States Department of Agriculture to act quickly to implement the country of origin labeling law the way Congress intended and ensure that U.S. consumers get the information they want about their food. (Attachment 5)

E. T. Anderson read testimony submitted by Danni Beer, R-Calf United Stockgrowers of America, in support of **HCR 5017**. Mr. Beer stated that USDA's burdensome guidelines released October 8, 2002, have been the source of much confusion and misinterpretation for producers and the food industry. He quoted Secretary of Agriculture Veneman's instructions to her staff "to enforce the country of origin labeling law in a manner that will be the least burdensome for producers." Also reminding her staff that "there is nothing in the country

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of origin labeling law that requires third party verification.” ([Attachment 6](#))

Wanda Kinney, Kansas Cattlemen’s Association, appeared in support of **HCR 5017** and country of origin labeling. She discussed various products labeled and sold in the United States by country of origin. She stated that with 90-95% of the beef consumed in America having been produced here, it would be so simple to mandate that imports be identified and labeled as such. With her testimony she attached a list of countries and their labeling requirements for beef products. ([Attachment 7](#))

Donn Teske, President, Kansas Farmers Union, testified in support of **HCR 5017** and a country of origin labeling law. He believes the most practical and effective method to verify the country of origin for livestock is to accurately identify the minority of imported livestock ineligible for a U.S. label. He stated that this is already being done by federal agencies; it’s just a matter of coordinating existing programs. ([Attachment 8](#))

Todd Johnson, Governmental Affairs Staff, Kansas Livestock Association, presented testimony concerning **HCR 5017**. KLA policy supports a voluntary, market-driven approach to meat labeling; they oppose a mandatory government run program. He reported that during the development of voluntary guidelines, KLA communicated producer concerns to USDA (copy attached). KLA proposed that the least costly system of identification would be to utilize the already required identification of imported cattle; this identification would remain with those animals until slaughter. By default, those cattle not identified as imported cattle would be considered of U. S. origin. He also included a copy of a letter from KLA asking USDA for clarification of country of origin labeling guidelines. KLA suggested redirecting this resolution to Congress, rather than USDA, asking for further clarification of their intent of the law. A proposed resolution is included with his testimony. ([Attachment 9](#))

Leslie Kaufman, State Director, Governmental Relations, Kansas Farm Bureau, shared conceptual support of **HCR 5017**. She reported that overall KFB is pleased with the progress in implementing the country of origin labeling program, but does have some concerns about the proposed regulation. She stated that KFB and American Farm Bureau Federation are submitting formal comments to the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) of the UDSA regarding the proposed guidelines for voluntary country of origin labeling. KFB believes there is a “model” certification program already in existence that the Agricultural Marketing Service should consider. KFB suggests that AMS use the Market Access Program (MAP) as a model. USDA has operated the MAP program for well over a decade with excellent results. She suggested that since an official docket is open at AMS, a copy of **HCR 5017** be sent, not only to USDA in general, but to the Agricultural Marketing Service USDA as well. ([Attachment 10](#))

Larry Brack, President, Kansas Cattlemen’s Association, submitted written testimony in support of **HCR 5017** urging the United States Department of Agriculture to implement country of origin labeling. ([Attachment 11](#))

Nathan Pike, a member of the Kansas Cattlemen’s Association and R-Calf USA, provided written testimony in support of **HCR 5017** stating that the country of origin labeling bill, as written and signed by the president, was never intended to put the burden of proof and cost on the producers. ([Attachment 12](#))

Donald Cress, Council Grove, submitted written testimony in support of **HCR 5017**. He states that if country of origin labeling is allowed to function as the law was originally written, it would be fair to all parties concerned. ([Attachment 13](#))

Donald Peterson, Santa Fe Agricultural Services, Council Grove, provided written testimony in support of **HCR 5017** stating that country of origin labeling is the appropriate action to be taken for the benefit of the United States consumer and producer. ([Attachment 14](#))

As there were no opponents, the hearing on **HCR 5017** was closed. Chairman Johnson opened the floor for discussion.

Representative Larkin moved to amend **HCR 5017** to send a copy of the resolution to the Agricultural Marketing Service USDA, in addition to USDA in general, as proposed by Kansas Farm Bureau. Seconded by Representative Ostmeier, the motion carried.

Representative Larkin moved to recommend **HCR 5017**, as amended, favorable for adoption. The motion

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was seconded by Representative Feuerborn. The motion carried.

Representative Feuerborn requested introduction of a committee bill with the same content as SB 145, as amended in the Senate, in regard to the appointment of the secretary of agriculture by the governor. Seconded by Representative Light, the motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m. No further meetings of the House Agriculture Committee are scheduled for the 2003 legislative session.