

MINUTES OF THE SENATE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Derek Schmidt at 8:30 a.m. on February 19, 2002 in Room 423-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Senator Taddiken (excused)

Committee staff present: Raney Gilliland, Legislative Research Department  
Gordon Self, Revisor of Statutes  
Betty Bomar, Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Mike Beam, Kansas Livestock Association  
Richard Jones, Executive Director, Kansas Association of Conservation Districts  
Leslie Kaufman, Associate Director, Kansas Farm Bureau  
Tracy Streeter, Executive Director, State Conservation Commission  
Jamie Clover Adams, Secretary, Kansas Department of Agriculture  
Sue Peterson, Assistant to the President for Governmental Relations, Kansas State University  
Clint Riley, Department of Wildlife & Parks

Others attending: See attached list

**SB 548 - Control and eradication of Sericea Lespedeza**

\_\_\_\_\_Mike Beam, Kansas Livestock Association (KLA), testified in support of **SB 548**, stated KLA hears continually from ranchers and landowners about the aggressive spread of sericea lespedeza, saying it is the most serious challenge they face as cattle producers and resource managers. Sericea lespedeza has been a problem for grazing lands in the eastern one third of the state; however, county weed departments have identified this plant in over 50 counties. Currently sericea is found in 75 counties within the state. Sericea is difficult and expensive to control, and in some cases the cost of treating and controlling the weed is almost equal to the annual gross income a landowner can expect when leasing the pasture for livestock grazing.

**SB 548** allows the Secretary of Agriculture to identify areas of the state that have the highest sericea lespedeza infestations, gives local conservation districts authority to roll out assistance to private and public landowners for controlling this noxious weed. It is important to put a program in place in preparation of any state or federal dollars that may be appropriated for the purpose of controlling this invasive noxious weed. (Attachment 1)

Richard G. Jones, Executive Director, Kansas Association of Conservation Districts, testified in support of **SB 548**, stating the Conservation Districts have passed resolutions concerning the grazing land problems with sericea lespedeza. One resolution was directed at the eradication of sericea in USDA Conservation Reserve seeded acres and the other was in support of Kansas State University and its research efforts directed at controlling sericea lespedeza. The spread of sericea has a major economic impact on the livestock industry in the state.

Additional funds for controlling sericea lespedeza should not come at the expense of current programs. A new sources of funding should be made available for this problem. (Attachment 2)

Leslie Kaufman, Association Director Public Policy Division, Kansas Farm Bureau (KFB) testified in support of **SB 548**, stating KFB is in favor of allowing for the designation of sericea lespedeza disaster areas and providing for grants for sericea controls. KFB membership strongly encourages all landowners, public and private, to control noxious weeds on their land. The KFB noxious weed Resolutions support: the current shared responsibility for compliance and implementation of the noxious weed law between landowners, counties and the state; technical assistance provided by the state;

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encourages all private landowners, including absentee landowners, governmental entities, railroads, rail trail sponsors and utilities holding or managing land to control and work toward eradicating noxious weeds; control and cost-share procedures that include the use of herbicides, cultural practices and biological methods; increased technical assistance to improve rangeland management; the assisting of landowners in controlling all noxious weeds; and the partnering of governments to implement effective control programs. (Attachment 3)

Tracy Streeter, Executive Director, State Conservation Commission, testified in support of **SB 548**, stating the proposed legislation enables conservation districts located in disaster-declared counties to control and eradicate sericea lespedeza, and allows state grants, up to 80 percent of the total costs, to be provided for the control and eradication of the species, and places a sunset provision on each amendment of June 30, 2005. Mr. Streeter stated he is concerned as to the impact the proposed new programs would have on existing programs and the ability of the agency to carry out its responsibilities. If additional financial assistance is appropriated to the State Conservation Commission for a sericea lespedeza control program, the agency will work with the Secretary of Agriculture to devise and implement the provisions contained in **SB 548**. (Attachment 4)

Jamie Clover Adams, Secretary, Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA), testified in support of **SB 548**. Ms. Adams stated **SB 548** requires KDA to develop criteria that will be used to declare counties sericea lespedeza disaster areas, and provides a mechanism should any federal funds be made available to address invasive plants and pests. Ms. Adams outlined KDA activities in its efforts to address sericea lespedeza infestation for nearly a decade. Ms. Adams stated KDA will propose amendments to clean up the language in **SB 548**, as there is not a noxious weed division within the Department of Agriculture. (Attachment 5)

#### **SB 556 - Establishment of sericea lespedeza research and experiment station at Toronto state park**

The Chairman submitted a Revisor's Bill which is to be a **Substitute for SB 556**, establishing a research and demonstration project in the Toronto state park area, rather than establishing a research station. (Attachment 6)

Mike Beam, KLA, testified in support of **SB 556**, stating KLA supports research and educational efforts. An education effort is needed to provide the latest knowledge about sericea and there is a need to inform more landowners about sericea lespedeza's negative impact on grazing lands. **SB 556** sets up a cooperative process between the Department of Wildlife and Parks and KDA which will benefit all citizens of the state. (Refer to Attachment 1)

Leslie Kaufman, KFB, testified in support of **SB 556**. (Refer to Attachment 3)

Jamie Clover Adams, Secretary, KDA, testified in support of **SB 556**, requiring KDA to cooperate with the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) to explore solutions to sericea lespedeza infestation needs. Ms. Adams stated KDA will work on this project as it has all its efforts to manage and contain sericea lespedeza due to the critical nature of the issue to Kansas agriculture. (Refer to Attachment 5)

Sue Peterson, Assistant to the President for Governmental Relations, Kansas State University, distributed a Memorandum from Steven Graham, Assistant to the Dean and Director, in support of **SB 556**, stating K-State Research and Extension, is always willing to collaborate with KDA and KDWP to conduct research, demonstrate new methods of control, and conduct field days and workshops to share new information with agencies, landowners and the citizens of Kansas. The University favors ways to enhance funding for conducting this research. (Attachment 7)

Clint Riley, Department of Wildlife & Parks (KDWP) testified in support of **SB 556**, stating KDWP continues to work to control sericea and other noxious weeds on department property. In FY 2001 \$138,000 was expended on noxious weed control alone, which does not include other control methods including mowing or burning. Sericea lespedeza has become a growing problem in parts of southeast Kansas, including properties such as Toronto State Park and Toronto Wildlife area. As a consequence, KDWP has developed a number of strategies in an attempt to control the growth, including chemical

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applications, a variety of burning techniques, and the experimental use of goats as grazers around Melvern Lake in cooperation with Emporia State University. Mr. Riley stated that by establishing official experiment plots at Toronto, KDWP could compare many of the control techniques and ultimately provide new information to private landowners about cost-efficient and effective means of controlling the weed. (Attachment 8)

The hearings on **SB 548 and SB 556** were concluded

Upon motion by Senator Huelskamp, seconded Senator Downey, the Minutes of February 12, 2002 were approved as amended, and the Minutes of February 13, 2002 were approved. The voice vote was in favor of the motion.

The meeting concluded at 9:30 a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 20, 2002