

MINUTES OF THE SENATE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mark Taddiken at 8:30 a.m. on January 15, 2008 in Room 423-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Tim Huelskamp
Janis Lee

Committee staff present:

Raney Gilliland, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Emalene Correll, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Jason Thompson, Office of Revisor of Statutes
Matt Todd, Office of Revisor of Statutes
Judy Seitz, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Adrian Polansky, Secretary, Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA)
Dave Barfield, Chief Engineer, Division of Water Resources, Kansas Department of Agriculture

Others attending:

See attached list.

Adrian Polansky, Secretary, Kansas Department of Agriculture, introduced members of his staff:

Constantine Cotsoradis, Deputy Secretary
Erik Wisner, Legislative Communications
Dale Lambley, Special Assistant
David Starkey, Legal Counsel
Carol Jordan, Director Rural and Legislative Affairs
Dave Barfield, Chief Engineer
Ida Kirmse, Homeland Security
Stacey Woolington, Fiscal Officer
Lisa Taylor, Public Information Officer

Secretary Polansky presented an overview of the KDA ([Attachment 1](#)). A copy of the 2007 Annual Report of the KDA was distributed to Committee members (on file at the KDA). He said it has been a good year for Kansas agriculture even though there were some disasters. Secretary Polansky stated that the KDA is the coordinating agency to address animal and plant diseases, food safety, agricultural production and public water supplies in a disaster.

He reported that the sensible use of natural resources and innovation will help build a bioeconomy resulting in jobs for Kansans. Kansas is a founding member of the North Central Bioeconomy Consortium (NCBC) which brings together experts from experiment stations, extension and departments of agriculture from states across the Midwest. The 12 Midwest states have 50 percent of the nation's biomass supply.

The NC 506 Project is working to address diverse issues of sustainability in corn ethanol production systems.

The Midwest Governor's Association (MGA) calls for a regional strategy to achieve energy security and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

There are eleven ethanol plants operating today in Kansas and other plants are under consideration. Approximately 640 permanent jobs were created in these plants. Kansas is currently conducting a survey of the economic benefits of the ethanol industry. The U.S. is currently importing almost \$1 billion worth of crude oil a day. The trade deficit could be reduced while keeping dollars at home by producing ethanol.

Secretary Polansky stated that flexible fuel vehicle (FFV) owners will soon be able to choose a 20 or 30 percent ethanol for their vehicles under a KDA pilot project.

Water is necessary for all kinds of human endeavors and choices need to be made on water allocation and

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other natural resources. Drought-tolerant crops could reduce water needs by 20 percent. A 100 million gallon ethanol plant might use about 400 million gallons of water a year. That is the same amount of water needed for 30,000 dairy cows, six average feedlots, or a town of about 8,000 people.

Secretary Polansky also stated that Kansas must encourage research and development of bioproducts. Kansas can be innovators in renewable energy, animal health and plant sciences, attracting investment green collar jobs and educational opportunities.

Nebraska has been put on notice that they must do whatever is necessary to remedy their longtime overuse of water and ensure that Kansans get the water to which they are entitled.

The Kansas Water Appropriation Act is the foundation for water resource management in the state. This Act takes into consideration the public good as well as the private property. The Intensive Groundwater Use Control Areas (IGUCA) statute is an additional tool that can be used to better manage water in overappropriated areas with declining resources. Secretary Polansky said that water issues are very complex and detailed.

In 2004, legislation and ERO 32 transferred certain food safety inspection functions to the KDA from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE). Secretary Polansky outlined the efficiencies implemented by the KDA to help the regulated community. A pilot program beginning January 22 will begin to sample high-risk foods for sale at retail facilities. This is another step in ensuring the safety of food products. The KDA is requesting a new position in the 2009 budget for the food safety inspection program without increasing fees.

Secretary Polansky stood for questions.

Discussion was held on the feasibility of the restaurant inspection function transferring to the KDA from the KDHE. This possibility will be explored.

There were no bill introductions.

Chairman Taddiken asked for an update on Nebraska's compliance with the Republican River Compact and the status of the legal process. Dave Barfield, Chief Engineer, said that Nebraska is out of compliance for calendar years 2005 and 2006. Paul Morrison, Attorney General, has sent a letter to Nebraska outlining what Kansas wants as a result of their noncompliance. Nebraska has forty-five days to respond.

Chairman Taddiken noted that there is a Senate bill, now in the House, directing how funds from Nebraska would be distributed.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:35 a.m.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 22.