

MINUTES OF THE SENATE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mark Taddiken at 8:30 a.m. on March 3, 2009 in Room 446-N of the Capitol.

All members were present.

Committee staff present:

Raney Gilliland, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Corey Carnahan, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Jason Thompson, Revisor of Statutes Office
Kristen Kellems, Revisor of Statutes Office
Judy Seitz, Committee Assistant

Others attending:

See attached list

Chairman Taddiken mentioned that minutes of the committee for February 3, 10 and 11 were distributed to Committee members and action would be taken on them later.

Chairman Taddiken noted that the Committee had received a copy of an e-mail from Karole Lindgren and nineteen (19) other people supportive of **SB 231 - Transferring the powers and duties of the animal health department and state conservation commission to the department of agriculture**, (Attachment 1) because it would save the taxpayers money.

The Chairman opened discussion on **SB 256 - Creating the pesticide safety education fee fund**. Hearings and discussion were held on this bill on February 18. Some amendments had previously been made to **SB 256**.

Senator Francisco moved to add back the words "not to exceed" in lines 30 and 34, seconded by Senator Bruce. There was discussion on the motion. Motion carried.

Tom Phillips, Department Head of Entomology, Kansas State University and Interim Coordinator for the Pesticide Safety Education Program (PSEP), answered questions from the Committee.

Senator Francisco made a motion to charge a \$15.00 renewal fee in addition to the examination fee for commercial applicators and a \$5.00 fee for private applicators. There was no second.

There was discussion on the motion.

Senator Bruce made a motion to table action on SB 256, seconded by Senator Ostmeyer. There was discussion on the motion.

Chairman Taddiken said there are so many questions on **SB 256** that work on this bill will stop and discussion and possible action will be scheduled for another date.

Discussion was opened on **SB 231**.

Chairman Taddiken noted that the Legislative Post Audit report proposing the merging of the Kansas Animal Health Department (KAHD) and the State Conservation Commission (SCC) into the Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA) shows the savings that could be accomplished with suggestions for efficiencies. He said that during the hearings it was mentioned by many conferees that the current system is working. Chairman Taddiken mention that these are good agencies and there is great deal of support from local communities for these agencies, especially the SCC.

Chairman Taddiken has requested the SCC, KAHD and the Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA) visit and find ways to accomplish the goals and objectives set out in the post audit report without merging the agencies. He has requested the agencies (SCC and KAHD) to present a plan of how to accomplish some efficiencies and savings.

CONTINUATION SHEET

Minutes of the Senate Agriculture Committee at 8:30 a.m. on March 3, 2009 in Room 446-N of the Capitol.

Greg Foley, Executive Director, SCC, has reviewed the audit and proposed a reorganization plan as well as a modification in the lease arrangement for their office space. He said only three of the eight temporary positions are filled. These eight temporary positions are funded one-half State Water Funds and one-half Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The NRCS is willing to dissolve this agreement. Mr. Foley said the SCC will reassess their organizational chart in 2010 and evaluate the impact of losing positions and the SCC's ability to implement programs. The SCC is very automated and has a contract with the KDA for basic IT services.

Constantine Cotsoradis, Deputy Secretary, KDA, took questions from the Committee.

Mr. Foley answered questions.

Chairman Taddiken said the SCC has been proactive and is working hard towards using some of the ideas from the Legislative Post Audit report.

George Teagarden, Livestock Commissioner, KAHD, (Attachment 2) suggest that the balances in four different funds in the amount of \$87,803 be swept into the State General Fund (SGF). This would be around 10% of the KAHD SGF allocation. The KAHD is also holding three (3) positions open at this time. Mr. Teagarden said he will be conferencing soon with the KDA on electronic transfer of information and other IT issues. He said their agency will continue to look for more efficiencies.

Mr. Cotsoradis answered questions from the Committee.

There was no further action on **SB 231** as the efficiencies by the KAHD and the SCC could be implemented without merging the agencies. Progress of the agencies in finding those efficiencies will be monitored by the Chairman.

Senator Ostmeyer moved approval of the minutes for February 3, 10 and 11; seconded by Senator Huelskamp. Motion carried.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 10, 2009.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 a.m.