

## MINUTES OF THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Dan Johnson at 3:30 p.m. on January 18, 2006, in Room 423-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Representative Joann Freeborn- excused

Committee staff present:

Raney Gilliland, Kansas Legislative Research Department

Gordon Self, Revisor of Statutes Office

Kay Scarlett, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Adrain Polansky, Secretary, Kansas Department of Agriculture

Others attending:

See attached list.

Chairman Johnson opened the first regular meeting of the House Agriculture Committee of the 2006 Legislative Session by asking committee members to introduce themselves. The committee has two new members this session. The Chairman welcomed everyone and expressed the hope that the committee would work together in an atmosphere of cooperation for the benefit of Kansas agriculture. Committee rules and procedures, as well as rules for conferees appearing before the committee, were distributed.

Representative Svaty requested introduction of two committee bills. The first bill would require written notification to the Kansas Secretary of Agriculture before any genetically modified wheat varieties are introduced in the state. His second bill request would require that the federal government implement country of origin labeling before Kansas requires statewide animal premise identification. There being no objection, Chairman Johnson stated that both of these requests would be introduced as committee bills.

Paul Johnson, Kansas Catholic Conference, discussed federal farm legislation and requested an interim study concerning the 2007 federal farm bill to include all legislative committees involved with agriculture, social services, and economic development. As interim study requests are traditionally made at the end of the regular session, Chairman Johnson said this proposal would be addressed at that time. (Attachment 1)

Adrain Polansky, Secretary, Kansas Department of Agriculture, addressed the committee providing an update on activities of the Kansas Department of Agriculture and the status of agriculture in Kansas. He explained that KDA is a regulatory agency charged by law to ensuring a safe food supply; regulating the responsible and judicious use of pesticides and plant nutrients; protecting the state's native and cultivated plants; ensuring the integrity of weighing and measuring devices in every aspect of commerce; and guarding the beneficial use of the state's waters.

He reported that in 2005 Kansas agriculture again distinguished itself for productivity and the ability to change—producing a record corn crop, the second largest soybean crop, doubling sunflower production, with cotton production continuing to increase. Kansas lead the nation in wheat produced, flour milled, grain sorghum produced, and cattle slaughtered. Kansas ranks sixth among the states in value of agricultural products exported. He noted that agriculture and agribusiness contribute to the total economy of Kansas, directly and indirectly. Nearly 20 percent of all Kansans, rural and urban, are employed in jobs related to agriculture. Copies of the Kansas Department of Agriculture's 2005 Annual Report were distributed. Copies are available through the agency.

Secretary Polansky discussed current challenges facing agriculture and rural Kansas, including increasingly high priced and uncertain supplies of petroleum and petroleum-based products; lost beef markets; safeguarding our crops, food and livestock from natural or manmade disasters; and helping specialty segments of the agricultural industry grow and succeed. (Attachment 2)

The meeting adjourned at 4:25 p.m. The next meeting of the House Agriculture Committee is scheduled for January 23, 2006.