

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Larry Powell at 8:30 a.m. on January 11, 2012, in Room 783 in the Docking State Office Building.

All members were present except:

Representative Michael Peterson (Unexcused)

Committee Staff Present:

Sean Ostrow, Office of the Revisor of Statutes

Raney Gilliland, Kansas Legislative Research Department

Christopher Sevedge, Kansas Legislative Research Department

Joyce Hladky, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Congressman Tim Huelskamp

Others attending:

See Attached List.

Chairman Powell welcomed the committee and Congressman Tim Hueslkamp.

Congressman Huelskamp presented an update on activities in Washington on Ag Policy. First, he brought the Committee up-to-date on the status of free trade agreements and announced the free trade agreements were passed and approved between Korea, Panama and Columbia, noting the state of Kansas came out the biggest winner and is well positioned to meet the needs of these countries. These countries want Kansas beef, wheat and corn. This is also a huge growth market for pork. The ambassador from Viet Nam was hosted by First District to come to Kansas. The ambassador requested the visit to see how we produce our pork. The Ambassador left Kansas favorably impressed with how our pork is handled.

As far as the farm bill debates are concerned, there are some critical issues to be addressed and two main priorities at hand, crop insurance and the proposed regulation dealing with child labor. He reported that he is confident we will have a very workable and effective crop insurance program. Sen. Roberts is working very hard on the Senate side. We fully expect the direct payments to farmers will no longer exist and risk management tools are critical especially with the crop insurance related to that portion of the bill.

CONTINUATION SHEET

Minutes of the HOUSE AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES Committee at 9:00 a.m. on
January 11, in 783-DSOB

The second issue is the proposed regulation dealing with child labor, which is unworkable. The greatest treasure in rural America is the next generation learning how to work the farm. The child labor restrictions are very onerous and they are serious about passing them.

Congressman Huelskamp shared some of the good news stories he hears in Kansas districts at all of the town hall meetings he attends and that is that sons and daughters of Kansans are moving back to the rural areas to help their families in their businesses. One such story was about a banker whose son moved home from his computer graphics job in Oklahoma to help his father in the banking business. He contrasted these stories with the challenges and difficulties that we hear about on the coast some of the best opportunities are in rural America and rural Kansas. They become a school board member, city council, county commission, and involved in 4-H. I see this in every county. So while there are some ups and downs, there are many good and prosperous things going on in agriculture and rural America.

Chairman Powell thanked Congressman Huelskamp for the update.

Chairman Powell opened the floor for bill introduction requests.

Representative Brookens requested the following amendment to bill introductions:

Extension districts with two or more counties that opt for removal out of the district unilaterally. The bill is currently written that counties must receive permission for removal. Extension districts current status is when one is formed with two to three counties, in order for a county to get out must obtain permission from the extension district.

The amendment would allow a county to unilaterally go out of the extension district. It would be of value to counties by allowing a county to retain autonomy over its taxation and would ensure that when a county goes into an extension district it has the assurance that the counties play evenly and fairly with each other. The amendment would allow many more extension districts to actually be formed.

There being no objection, this request will be introduced as a committee bill.

The meeting adjourned at 9:55 a.m. The next meeting of the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee is scheduled for January 12, 2012.