



the dairy dispatch

A publication devoted to supporting the Kansas dairy industry & Kansas dairy farmers

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Associate Membership

Non-producers and businesses may join the Kansas Dairy Association as associate members to help strengthen our activities in the state and provide input to this dynamic and growing industry. Associate membership dues help the Kansas Dairy Association provide a unified voice for all Kansas dairy producers.

Membership in the Kansas Dairy Association entitles you to a subscription to the Dairy Dispatch, the official newspaper of the Kansas Dairy Association, as well as other special membership mailings and activities. You will also be invited to attend the Kansas Dairy Association Annual Meeting which is held during December or January of each year, and the Kansas Dairy Association's annual Legislative Reception.

All Kansas dairy producers who participate in the statewide voluntary assessment to the Kansas Dairy Commission are automatically members of the Kansas Dairy Association.

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2016 Session Begins

Appropriations Bill Out of Committee

The House Appropriations Committee passed out the Fiscal year 2016-17 appropriations rescission bill. The bill makes adjustments to the current and next year's budget, so the budget is balanced. The state has had to make adjustments to the approved budgets the past few years, as the budget has become less structurally sound. The committee made several changes to the Governor's recommendations before forwarding the measure on to the House for debate.

The committee added an amendment that gives the Governor authority to make targeted reductions, if the budget is in the red. This authority, which is similar to the power granted him last year, allows him to make reductions without having to do just across the board cuts. Current statutory authority exists for the Governor to make mid-year spending recessions when revenues are not enough to cover authorized expenditures, but that authority only allows for across the board cuts, which would impact some very sensitive budget areas, particularly K-12 education. The power presented to the governor in the amendment allows him to make cuts, but does not require him to cut education.

The committee also added language in response to the University of Kansas' decision to use a questionable, though legal, form of financing for some new building on campus. The amendment would put a proviso in the state's budget for the next fiscal year that essentially puts a limit on how much the university can spend out of special revenue funds. Those include funds from student tuition and campus fees, housing fees, parking fees or any other source of revenue except grants and federal funds. Many observers found it interesting that the committee chose this action against KU, but did not take any action against the Brownback Administration for its' creative use of financing for a new power plant for the Capitol Complex.

The committee, after making its' amendments, placed the contents of the bill into a senate bill, SB 161, which allows for the bill to go to conference committee quicker and allow the process to move ahead faster. The measure now goes to the House floor for debate and possible amendment. The bill is expected to be debated early the week of February 15th.

The Senate Ways & Means Committee has not taken up its rescission bill at this time. The committee is expected to begin working the bill the week of February 8.

Property Tax Bills

The issue of property taxes is heating up and the House Taxation Committee has scheduled hearings the week of February 8th on various bills that deal with the collecting of delinquent taxes. The bills, brought by local units of government are being heard in advance of a bill that would accelerate a local government tax lid that was approved last year.

The tax lid bill that was approved last year does not go into effect until 2018. The proposal to accelerate the effective date, would move it up to July 2016, which is troubling to many. The law that was approved last session was done in an amendment on the floor of the Senate, without hearings. As approved, the provisions do not align with current statutes for local government budgeting, and make it impossible for local units to properly follow the new law.

The property tax issue could become significant as we

move towards the election this year, with many differing organizations staking out positions. Many expect that the issue could be the other major issue of the session, besides the budget.

Issues Affecting Dairy

Immigration - A bill in the House Federal and State Affairs Committee would prohibit the employment of unauthorized aliens. HB 2525 was introduced the week of Feb. 1, but has not received a hearing. Meanwhile, HB 2587, which would prohibit the adoption of illegal immigrant sanctuary policies by municipalities, was introduced in the House Judiciary Committee. HB 2587 also is a concern because it would be germane for troublesome amendments like the contents of HB 2525.

Endangered species - SB 384 would amend the Kansas Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act to limit the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism's ability to regulate habitat that is not essential to survival of a listed species. It also would require the department to complete recovery plans that balance the economic impacts on a community and the biological impacts on the species prior to regulating habitat.

Brand law - A bill that would revise Kansas brand laws was approved the week of Feb. 1 by the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee. HB 2480 includes an amendment to clarify when owners of cattle entering Kansas with out-of-state brands would be required to register those brands. HB 2480 now will be considered by the full House.

Water - SB 330, which would authorize the KDA Division of Conservation to continue the Upper Arkansas River Conservation Reserve Program (CREP) after June 30, 2016. This program, in existence since 2007, is a partnership between Kansas and USDA that provides incentives to retire water rights along the Upper Arkansas River. HB 2492 is an identical bill assigned to the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee.

Current law allows the Division of Water Resources (DWR) to assess a civil penalty, not to exceed \$250, if a water right owner fails to file an annual water-use report on a timely basis. HB 2491 and SB 337 would increase the maximum penalty to \$1,000 and allow the chief engineer of DWR to indefinitely suspend use of a water right if the annual use report is not filed by June 1 in the calendar year in which it is due.

Schedule Change?

Hall talk seems to be pointing to a significant schedule change for the legislative deadlines. Discussion has begun between House and Senate Leadership to move up certain deadlines. The major deadlines that are the focus of discussions are the "Turn-Around" deadline, when legislation must be out of the house of origin and the "Drop-Dead Day", when all legislation is to be done and the legislature takes its' annual Spring break. The date for the Veto Session would not be changed under the proposed changes and would remain April 27th.

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