

MINUTES OF THE SENATE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE.

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chairperson Tim Huelskamp at 8:30 a.m. on February 5, 2003 in Room 423-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Senator Schmidt, excused

Committee staff present: Raney Gilliland, Legislative Research  
Lisa Montgomery, Revisor of Statutes  
Judy Swanson, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Jennifer Mathes, Bartlett, KS  
Oren Holle, Marysville, KS

Others attending: See attached guest list

Jennifer Mathes, Bartlett, Kansas farmer, testified concerning genetically altered wheat. She addressed the economic impact of GMO on Kansas farmers. She said she had researched the liability issues with GMO crops. (Attachment 1) She said liability protection is needed for Kansas farmers. Traditional crops from experimental varieties also need to be protected. Senator Umbarger requested documentation about the canola issue. Committee discussion was held.

Oren Holle, Marysville organic farmer, said the Monsanto vs. Canada case will be heard in Canada's high court. He felt Monsanto is using unconscionable tactics to lay the blame elsewhere in the Canadian issue. Contamination takes away the market value of organically grown wheat. Japan is a large portion of our specialty market and will not buy any products that are contaminated with GMO. Companies will claim ownership of the GMO, but will not take responsibility for introduction into other crops. It has become impossible for anyone to grow canola without insuring it is not contaminated. Marketability in Kansas has not run into a serious problem yet.

Doug Wareham, Kansas Agri-Business Retailers Association, expressed disappointment that they had such short notice of today's meeting, and he would like to address the claims made by Ms. Mathes by bringing in people who are involved. He noted that GMO products have been approved by the USDA, Food & Drug Administration, EPA and Health & Environment. He said Lisa Drake, Governmental Affairs, with Monsanto would be available after the meeting to answer questions

Senator Umbarger made a motion to conceptually introduce bills concerning 1) Liability protection for Kansas farmers 2) Protection of the states agriculture economy and 3) Protection of traditional crops from experimental varieties. Senator Lee seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.