

**Testimony Submitted to
the Special Committee on Natural Resources
by Jackie McClaskey, Kansas Secretary of Agriculture
November 13, 2017**

During the October 31 meeting of the Special Committee on Natural Resources, several questions were posed related to irrigation and water right appropriation. Secretary of Agriculture Jackie McClaskey shared verbal responses to the questions during the November 13 committee meeting. Following are written responses to the questions from the Kansas Department of Agriculture.

1. Impairment findings are actually based on one year's information. Should impairment be based on a longer-term basis? What is sustainable yield and when should junior water rights be cut off?

Impairment findings and investigations are based on many years of data — both past use and groundwater response, as well as future year projections. Most of the Ogallala Aquifer in Kansas is closed to new appropriations. In areas open to new appropriations, available water supply is calculated in a two-mile radius from the application and balances recharge values provided by the U.S. Geological Survey with the quantity of water already appropriated.

2. What is the contribution of property tax on irrigated land to the State General Fund (SGF)?

A majority of all property taxes collected go to local and county sources. The state share of property taxes accounts for less than ¼ of an average property tax bill. The 2018 average statewide tax per irrigated acre is \$12.85, including \$2.25 contributed to SGF. With about three million irrigated acres in Kansas, about \$38.6 million is collected annually from irrigated land, including \$6.7 million contributed to SGF.

3. What is the economic value of irrigation to the state?

Over the past ten years, irrigation increases value of production by an average of \$676 per acre over dryland acres within the same crop reporting district. Applying economic multipliers to this value, irrigation adds \$1,131 per acre to the state economy compared to dryland farming. With three million irrigated acres in the state, that equates to nearly \$4 billion in value from irrigation. Irrigation is key to a plentiful supply of grain and forage which is the backbone of our state's livestock production and processing, a \$24 billion contribution to the Kansas economy.

4. How many end guns are still in use? Would it be possible to charge a fee on end gun use?

The Kansas Department of Agriculture does not require water right owners to report end gun use. System type reporting is limited to flood, center pivot, or center pivot with low pressure drop nozzles. Recently Groundwater Management District No. 5 (GMD5) is evaluating the removal of end guns in the Rattlesnake

Creek basin to address an impairment to the Quivira National Wildlife Refuge's senior water right. GMD5 estimates there are 1,300 end guns in the Rattlesnake Creek basin and about 2,500 end guns district-wide.

It would be possible to charge a fee on end gun use. KDA's position has been to encourage adoption of irrigation efficient technology and management practices, which may include the removal of end guns.

5. Is it accurate that irrigators pay 37% of the State Water Plan Fund (SWPF) through herbicide and pesticide fees? What portion of those fees are paid by irrigators versus non-irrigators?

About \$3.3 million and \$1.2 million are received by the SWPF annually from fertilizer fees and pesticide fees, respectively. Over the last three years, that accounts for 37% of the total SWPF revenue. Input costs for fertilizer and pesticide are greater on irrigated land versus dryland; therefore, it is reasonable to state that greater than 50% of the pesticide and fertilizer fees are assessed to irrigated agriculture (18% of the SWPF revenue from pesticide and fertilizer fees).

Thank you for the opportunity to share this information. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Deputy Secretary Susan Metzger via email at susan.metzger@ks.gov or via phone at (785) 564-6700.