Legislature concludes veto session

The Kansas Legislature completed a five-day veto session early May 1. The House of Representatives adjourned at 1:29 a.m., and the Senate followed at 3:30 a.m.

Legislators approved a budget deal that does not balance, as required by the state constitution, but relies on the governor to make cuts instead. The package assumes he will cut $88 million and sweep $115 million from the state highway fund. It also delays a nearly $100 million payment into the state employees’ pension system.

They also approved the following bills of note to agriculture.

SB 366 prohibits political subdivisions from enacting or enforcing policies pertaining to nutrition labeling, among other things.

HB 2490 changes the plant-pest laws and adjusts scale-testing laws. It adds a definition of “toxicant” to the Plant Pest Act and amends the definition of “plant pest.” It grants additional quarantine authorities to the secretary of agriculture as necessary to contain or prevent plant pests. The bill also establishes rates for testing and proving weights, measures and other devices, and it permits another fee for adjusting them.

Sub for SB 227 establishes the Contaminated Property Redevelopment Act, releasing a purchaser of real property, acquired after July 1, from environmental liability for pre-existing contamination.

SB 319 amends the Protection From Stalking Act by expanding the definition of “harassment” to include the use of an unmanned aircraft system (UAS or “drone”) over or near any place where one may reasonably expect to be safe from uninvited intrusion or surveillance.

Sub for HB 2156 establishes new exceptions to current permitting requirements for activities related to endangered or threatened species of wildlife, including normal farming and ranching practices.

SB 330 outlines conditions under which the state can enter into the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program with the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Sub for HB 2088 accelerates by one year the effective date (now Jan. 1, 2017) of a property-tax lid and public-vote requirement for cities and counties. Proposed increases in property-tax levies beyond the rate of inflation will require voter approval, except that certain types of property-tax increases are exempt.

Sub for SB 280 contains myriad changes to the property-tax valuation and appeals process. Most notably, agricultural use classification must be presumed valid if the taxpayer provides documentation of a commitment to use the property for agriculture.

SB 337 amends the laws dealing with annual water-use permits.

SB 99 increases vehicle-length limits for stinger-steered automobile transporters and certain combinations used to transport custom-harvester equipment, and it increases certain weight limits for vehicles fueled primarily by natural gas.

The Legislature returned June 1 to adjourn sine die, the mostly ceremonial, official end of the session.

The state Supreme Court’s May 27 ruling on education funding means there could be a special session this month. The justices gave lawmakers until June 30 to adjust the school-finance system.

Finding our way to the next farm bill

While Congress begins to ponder the 2018 farm bill, let’s review how the Agricultural Act of 2014 (AA-14) is performing and how concerns might be addressed before the upcoming debate.

In March, the Congressional Budget Office estimated overall spending under AA-14 will be $14.7 billion less than expected, largely due to the reduced cost of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) as the national economy has improved. Nutrition spending is down $35.5 billion, Title 1 is up $22.2 billion, conservation is up $175 million, and crop insurance is down $1.5 billion.

No one expects any savings to be available to spend on the next farm bill. And no one expects Congress to increase funding in 2018. Instead, there will be renewed efforts to reduce costs, primarily SNAP, Title 1 and crop insurance.

AA-14 offered a choice between shallow-loss revenue protection under the Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) program and price protection under the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program. More than 90 percent of corn and soybean farmers and two-thirds of wheat growers chose the county ARC (ARC-CO) program. Nearly all rice, peanut and canola producers opted for PLC.

Fortunately, both ARC and PLC retained “decoupling,” under which farmers are paid on their crop-acreage bases, rather than on current-year production, when revenue or prices fall. Decoupling prevents distortions in crop production by encouraging farmers to respond to market prices rather than to the potential for government payments. If Title 1 is reauthorized in 2018, it is essential that decoupling be included.

AA-14 didn’t specify how county-payment yields should be established, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) decided...
Straight Rows

is published quarterly (spring, summer, fall and winter) by the
Kansas Soybean Association
1000 SW Red Oaks Place, Topeka, Kansas 66615-1207
phone: 785-271-1000 | fax: 785-271-1302
toll-free: 800-328-7390 or 877-KS-SOYBEAN (877-577-6923)
www.KansasSoybeans.org | info@kansassoybeans.org

2016 Board of Directors

District 1............................................. Lucas Heinen, Everest
District 2......................................... Raylen Phelon, Melvern
District 3......................................... Gail Kueser, Garnett
District 4......................................... Kregg Rennie, Columbus
District 5......................................... Gary Robbins, Emmett
District 6......................................... Cady Barilla, Turner
District 7......................................... Grant Webber, Sublette
At-large........................................... Brice Bunck, Topeka
Dwight Meyer, Hiawatha
Teresa Brandenburg, Osborne

Atchison County............................... Bill Niemann, Nortopolis
Brown County................................. Terry Reschke, Hiawatha
Cherokee County............................. Roger Draeger, Galena
Doniphan County............................ Josh Falk, Robinson
Labette County............................... Marvin Wahl, Oswego
K-State Research & Extension.............. Doug Shoup, Ph.D., Parsons
K-State Agronomy............................. Gary Pierzynski, Ph.D., Manhattan
Kansas Soybean Processors.................. Jerry Murphy, Emporia
Kansas Soybean Commission............... Dennis Grunenbach, Andale
American Soybean Association............ Charles Atkinson, Great Bend
DuPont Young Leaders...................... Andy Winnick, Grantville
Matthew Atkinson, Columbus

2016 Executive Committee

President........................................ Raylen Phelon
1st Vice President............................ Lucas Heinen
2nd Vice President........................... Dwight Meyer
Secretary........................................ Teresa Brandenburg
Treasurer........................................ Gary Robbins
Chairman........................................ Terry Reschke

Staff
Chief Executive Officer.................... Kenlol Johannes
Director of Field Services................... Dennis Hupe
Director of Communications............... Brad Parker
Director of Operations...................... Adam O’Trimmble
Program Manager............................ Janey Hall
Accounting Assistant........................ Dawn Bradley
Administrative Assistant.................... Mary Lou Dillman

Volume 20, Issue 4  •  Summer 2016

Soggy bottom, foggy bottom ...

It has been good to get our recent rains, and I never want to say that I want it to stop raining because I would bet that, come July and August, we all will be wishing for a good rain.

As I drove by one of my fields this morning, it reminded me of a “soggy bottom.” As I thought about that “soggy bottom” field, I tried to remember where I had heard that before. The more I thought, I realized it wasn’t “soggy bottom.” It actually was “Foggy Bottom” that I had heard while riding the Metrorail in Washington, D.C. That “Foggy Bottom” that I had heard while riding it wasn’t “soggy bottom.” It actually was good rain.

July and August, we all will be wishing for a good rain.

Mary Lou Dillman
Dawn Bradley
Accounting Assistant
Dennis Gruenbacher, Andale

Chief Executive Officer
Benjamin Johannes
Director of Field Services
Dennis Hupe
Director of Communications
Brad Parker
Director of Operations
Adam O’Trimmble
Program Manager
Janey Hall
Accounting Assistant
Dawn Bradley
Administrative Assistant
Mary Lou Dillman

Apply now for next class of DuPont Young Leaders

DuPont and the American Soybean Association (ASA) are seeking applicants for their 2017 Young Leader program.

Since 1984, ASA’s DuPont Young Leader program has identified and developed farmer-leaders who continue to shape the future of agriculture. Participants gain experience and build lifelong friendships.

“The Young Leader program has been a game changer for the soybean industry and all of agriculture,” said Kansas Soybean Association (KSA) President Raylen Phelon, Melvern, who completed it in 2004 with his wife, Karen. “It provides industry-leading training that helps unleash participants’ leadership potential while fostering collaboration among farmers across North America. We’re extremely grateful to DuPont for its long-standing support of the program.”

The Young Leader program has two parts. Phase 1 will take place at the DuPont Pioneer headquarters in Johnston, Iowa, Nov. 29–Dec. 2. Phase 2 will be Feb. 28–March 3, 2017, in San Antonio, Texas, in conjunction with the 22nd annual Commodity Classic convention and trade show.

Those interested in representing Kansas must apply at http://SoyGrowers.com/young-leader-program on the web by Sept. 15. KSA, ASA and DuPont will work together to select a farmer or farm couple for the next class.

“It gets people involved from the farm community and teaches them to talk to people who really don’t know much about agriculture,” said Matthew Atkinson, Columbus, who participated in the last class with his fiancée, MaryAnn Ross. “It also was great to learn about others’ ways of farming, comparing them to ours, and the different challenges we all face as a community of farmers.”
Corporate partners and advertisers are extremely important to the overall effort of the Kansas Soybean Association. They provide the Association with financial support and are links to the allied industries that provide soybean farmers with inputs and capital to manage our enterprises. KSA also relies on corporate partners to keep us up-to-date with the latest breakthroughs in production technologies, and we all work together to create and implement environmental and trade policies that benefit the soybean industry.

Thank you,
corporate partners

www.egebio.com

Girard National Bank  •  Ohlde Seed Farms  •  Stine Seed Co.  •  United Suppliers
Bringing industry experience, Extension perspective

After growing up on a small farm north of Lyndon that produced soybean, wheat, corn and sorghum and raised stocker cattle, I enrolled at Kansas State University (K-State), majoring in agronomy. I really enjoyed learning about the science behind farming. It's a lot more complicated than people think, as my wife, Lara, often comments.

Following my bachelor's degree, I stayed for master's and doctoral degrees in weed science. I then took a job with Monsanto in Saint Louis, Missouri, working on transgenic soybean traits. It was a wonderful experience, but Lara and I were looking to get closer to home. In 2008, I returned to K-State as the Southeast Area Extension agronomist and have done Extension and research work in that part of the state since then.

I joined the Kansas Soybean Association (KSA) Board of Directors after Kansas Soybean Expo 2014 as the K-State Research and Extension representative, succeeding Gary Kilgore. When he decided to step down, I jumped at the chance to fill the role and have enjoyed my time on the Board.

For as significant as the soybean industry is to Kansas and the nation, we have a small number of people to speak up for what we do. It is important to have active representation for the commodity we grow. We need KSA and the American Soybean Association to represent us so we can continue to provide soybean meal and oil for the world.

Beyond KSA, I have chaired sections and judged graduate-student contests at annual meetings for the American Society of Agronomy, Weed Science Society of America and North Central Weed Science Society. I also belong to Farm Bureau and the Kansas Livestock Association.

Lara and I have a small farm and are our local 4-H Club leaders. We are blessed that she can stay at home to watch our three children – Leanne, 9; Garrett, 6; and Cade, 2 – and shuttle them to 4-H and sport activities.

Soybean farmers urge Congress to back TPP

More than 200 farm and food groups – including the Kansas Soybean Association, American Soybean Association, and 25 other state and regional soybean associations – urged lawmakers to support the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) in an April 11 letter to House and Senate leaders. They encouraged Congress to continue its work toward approving TPP this year.

"If faithfully implemented, TPP will help level the playing field for U.S. exports and create new opportunities for us in the highly competitive Asia-Pacific region," the letter said. "TPP is critical to the livelihood of the U.S. food and agriculture sector because it will create conditions that encourage economic growth and increased employment in rural areas and throughout the supply chain."

The soybean industry is a leader on trade issues because soybeans are the nation’s top agricultural export. Soybeans also see significant benefits from increased meat exports – particularly pork and chicken – because livestock consume about 97 percent of U.S. soybean meal.

"Exports are fundamental to the success of the agricultural industry because 95 percent of the world’s consumers live outside of the United States and 20 percent of U.S. farm income is from exports," the groups wrote. "TPP will boost annual net farm income in the United States by $4.4 billion."


Ass’n sends Action Alert about dicamba proposal

Farmer-members whose dues were paid up and who had active e-mail addresses on file at the Kansas Soybean Association (KSA) office should have received a message May 27 about the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA’s) proposed draft label for the first dicamba formulation (M1691) for dicamba-tolerant soybeans.

As noted in that message, KSA and the American Soybean Association had two main objections to the draft label. First, they opposed the prohibition on the common practice of tank mixing. Second, they opposed the draft’s impractical 110-foot-perimeter buffer requirement.

The comment period for the draft ran through May 31. KSA encouraged all its members to submit comments about the matter. The letter KSA sent is posted at http://KansasSoybeans.org/policy on the web.

Contact the KSA office at info@kansassoybeans.org or 877-KSOYBEAN (877-577-6923) if you did not get the message and would like to receive such Action Alerts in the future.
ed to use published National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) yields. For counties without NASS yields, USDA chose to use Risk Management Agency yields, which frequently are higher. As a result, ARC-CO payments for 2014 crops were substantially lower in some counties than they were in adjacent counties, a situation expected to be repeated for 2015. Farm organizations have met with USDA to resolve the inconsistencies going forward. We want to take that problem off the table before it becomes an issue in 2018.

A major priority for farm organizations is how to prevent crop insurance from being cut or means-tested, either before or during the next farm-bill process. Opponents argue it has become more of an income-support program than a true insurance product. The administration and congressional leaders tried to cut $3 billion in payments to insurance companies in last fall’s budget agreement, an effort that was reversed in subsequent legislation. Still, the president’s 2017 budget includes $18 billion in cuts over 10 years.

While crop insurance is authorized separately, further efforts will be made to reduce its cost. Supporters need better explanations for how the program buttresses the farm economy and better justifications for premium subsidies paid to farmers.

Farm organizations already have met twice this year to discuss their concerns, reduce the potential for misunderstandings and improve cooperation. In addition, passing the next farm bill will require restoring and building on past coalitions with the conservation and nutrition communities.

In the debate on AA-14, crop-insurance opponents tried to reduce the premium subsidy and cap payments to farmers and insurers. Farm organizations staved off the attack by agreeing to make conservation compliance a requirement for crop-insurance eligibility. In exchange, mainstream conservation groups opposed more draconian proposals. That alliance needs to be re-established to reauthorize both sectors’ programs in 2018.

The cooperation between the farm and hunger communities dates back to earlier farm bills and reflects longstanding recognition that an agriculture-only bill is unlikely to pass the urban-dominated House and a nutrition-only bill would have difficulty in the Senate. Proponents of both programs need to re-establish an effective working relationship before their organizations begin to testify on policies.

The path to the next farm bill will be more difficult due to the state of the U.S. agricultural economy. Farm prices and income are down 40 percent from 2013, and land rents haven’t adjusted. Lenders are more reluctant to extend operating loans, and farm-input costs remain high relative to commodity prices. In that environment, satisfying everyone will be a challenge.

It will not be impossible to find our way to a new farm bill in 2018, but production agriculture must be much better prepared than we were before the three-year donnybrook that was AA-14. Otherwise, we’ll have no one else to blame if we find ourselves bogged down again. By John Gordley, who directs the American Soybean Association’s office in Washington, D.C.
Calendar of events

June 13–16  USA Poultry & Egg Export Council board of directors meeting, North Lake Tahoe, California
June 20–24  Midwestern Association of State Departments of Agriculture annual meeting, Manhattan
June 27–29  National Biodiesel Board meeting, Washington, D.C.
July 11–13  American Soybean Association Board of Directors meeting, Washington, D.C.
July 14     World Initiative for Soy in Human Health meeting, Washington, D.C.
July 20–22  United Soybean Board meeting, Minneapolis, Minnesota
July 22–24  Four State Farm Show, Pittsburg
July 28–30  Kansas Soybean leaders’ annual agribusiness tour, Clay Center–Manhattan area
July 30     Kansas Soybean Association Board of Directors meeting, Clay or Riley County
Aug. 1      Soy Transportation Coalition board of directors meeting, Chicago, Illinois
Aug. 1–3    North Central Soybean Research Program board of directors meeting, Columbia, Missouri
Aug. 2      Kansas primary election
Aug. 8–12   Syngenta Leadership at Its Best, Greensboro, North Carolina
Aug. 11     Kansas Soybean Commission meeting, Topeka
Aug. 16–18  Emerging Leaders Academy (Class 3, Phase 2) statewide tour
Aug. 18–19  Risk & Profit Conference, Manhattan
Aug. 24–27  Soy Aquaculture Alliance meeting, Brookings, South Dakota
Aug. 30–Sept. 1 U.S. Soy Global Trade Exchange, Indianapolis, Indiana
Sept. 8     Saline County kids day, Salina

See more at http://KansasSoybeans.org/events