

HB 458 -- MISSOURI FARMLAND TRUST ACT

SPONSOR: Loehner

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Emerging Issues in Animal Agriculture by a vote of 12 to 0.

This bill establishes the Missouri Farmland Trust Act to allow individuals and entities to donate or otherwise convey farmland to the Department of Agriculture to preserve it as farmland and to assist beginning farmers by allowing long-term low and variable cost leases on the land making it affordable for the next generation of farmers to produce food, fiber, and fuel.

The Missouri Farmland Trust is implemented to accomplish the following objectives:

- (1) Protecting and preserving Missouri's farmland;
- (2) Linking new generations of prospective farmers with present farmers; and
- (3) Promoting best practices in environmental, livestock, and land stewardship.

The Missouri Farmland Trust Advisory Board is established within the department to make recommendations to the department director regarding the appropriate uses of farmland in the trust and the criteria for the selection of program participants and to review and make recommendations regarding applications to lease farmland in the trust.

The bill specifies the membership of the board and the terms of its members. The department is authorized to accept or acquire by purchase, lease, donation, or agreement any agricultural lands, easements, or real and personal property including, but not limited to, buildings, structures, improvements, equipment, or facilities subject to preservation and improvement which will be the property of the trust.

The Missouri Farmland Trust Fund is created consisting of gifts, donations, and appropriations by the General Assembly. Moneys in the fund must be used for the administration of the trust and the maintenance, operation, regulation, and improvement of the trust's assets to promote agriculture and its general welfare. Property acquired by the department must be used exclusively for agricultural purposes and must be farmed and maintained using the best environmental, conservation, and stewardship practices as specified by the department. No beginning farmer can lease farmland in the trust for more than 20 years. Any person or

entity donating to or leasing land from the department must release the state from any and all claims, actions, or demands that he or she has now or may have in the future for any injury, death, or property damage related to participation in an activity, any acts connected to the activity, and the condition of the property where the activity occurred.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on General Revenue Fund in FY 2012, FY 2013, and FY 2014. Estimated Net Effect on Other State Funds of a cost of \$2,500 in FY 2012, an income of Unknown Greater than \$3,791 to a cost of \$2,575 in FY 2013, and an income of Unknown Greater than \$7,582 to a cost of \$2,652 in FY 2014.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill will provide younger generations with the opportunity to become involved in agriculture and will preserve farmland for future generations. The farmland trust will provide young farmers with a means to acquire land through a low-cost lease and will allow land to continue to be farmed in the future.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Loehner; Department of Agriculture; Missouri Cattlemen's Association; and Conservation Federation of Missouri.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.