

HB 81 -- Missouri International Agricultural Exchange Website

Sponsor: Johnson

This bill requires the Department of Agriculture to contract with an Internet website development company to build and maintain the Missouri International Agricultural Exchange website. The website is to contain content licensed by the department to promote Missouri agricultural products to international agricultural buyers.

In its main provisions, the bill:

(1) Requires the exchange to allow Missouri-based agricultural sellers to post their products produced in Missouri on the website at no charge to assist in marketing to international buyers. All sellers must register through the website and provide a Missouri address;

(2) Specifies that the state retains ownership of all content on the exchange, but the website developer may use all informational content provided by the department, add to the content, and apply search engine optimization to the website's content to achieve a high search engine ranking;

(3) Allows the website developer to sell advertising on the website to any entity that will benefit from marketing to international agricultural producers or buyers. The developer will be responsible for all costs associated with the development, marketing, and maintenance of the website and will retain all advertising revenues obtained from the website;

(4) Requires the website developer to have a proven experience and expertise in search engine optimization as determined by the Department of Agriculture or the Department of Economic Development and to provide at least three prior website development projects that increased search engine rankings for the client;

(5) Requires the Department of Agriculture, in conjunction with the Department of Economic Development, to review all applications and award an annual contract for the development, design, marketing, and maintenance of the website with annual contract renewals for continuing upgrades, marketing, and maintenance of the website; and

(6) Authorizes the Department of Agriculture to terminate a contract at its discretion. Any developer may have his contract terminated for failure to operate under the department's guidelines for the website. If a contract is terminated, the department must

award a new contract in accordance with the procedures for awarding the initial contract.