

HCS SS SCS SB 740, 886 & 1178 -- AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS

This bill changes the laws regarding agriculture.

TAX CREDITS

The bill allows Agricultural Product Utilization Contributor Tax Credits and New Generation Cooperative Incentive Tax Credits to be taken against estimated quarterly taxes and be carried back three tax years. These tax credits are added to the restriction that certain tax credits taken against taxes due on insurance premiums will not reduce moneys transferred to the County Stock Insurance Fund. The fund is to be included in the calculation of total state revenue pursuant to Article X, Section 18, of the Missouri Constitution.

The bill decreases from 100 to 60 the number of employees required to be employed by an employee-qualified capital project for investors to receive a New Generation Cooperative Incentive Tax Credit.

GROWER DISTRICTS

The bill allows for the formation of grower districts. A grower district will allow owners or operators of land to enter into common agreements to produce commercial crops within the district's boundaries.

CLOSED RECORDS

The bill clarifies that records and documents that may endanger the competitiveness of a small business submitted to the Department of Agriculture or the Agricultural and Small Business Development Authority for grant or loan qualification are deemed closed. The amount and recipient of any loan or grant administered by the authority are public records.

MEAT INSPECTION

The bill requires the Director of the Department of Agriculture to promulgate rules consistent with the Federal Meat Inspection Act, the Federal Poultry Products Inspection Act, and all related federal regulations necessary to implement the meat inspection programs of the state.

DONATED VENISON

Currently, donated venison must be processed in a facility that is inspected by the United States Department of Agriculture. The bill allows it to be processed in a facility inspected by either

the United States Department of Agriculture or the Missouri Department of Agriculture.

ANIMAL HEALTH

The bill repeals obsolete provisions regarding animal health and inspections.

AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT LOAN GUARANTEES

Currently, the Missouri Agricultural and Small Business Development Authority issues certificates of guaranty covering a first loss guarantee up to 25% of an agricultural business development loan, up to \$250,000. The bill increases the guarantee to up to 50% of a loan, up to \$250,000.

The bill also decreases from 40% to 20% the immediate redemption amount of the outstanding loans guaranteed by way of the Agricultural Product Utilization and Business Development Loan Guarantee Fund.

BOLL WEEVIL ERADICATION ASSESSMENTS

Currently, pursuant to the Missouri Boll Weevil Suppression Eradication Act, a cotton grower who fails to pay assessments is subject to a per-acre penalty. The bill provides that in addition to other remedies for the collection of delinquent assessments, including penalties and interest, the Department of Agriculture will have an assessment lien covering any current or future cotton crop grown by the producer and the proceeds of the cotton sale until the assessment, penalties, and interest are paid in full. The department will be subject to certain notification and procedural requirements.