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Committees

Agriculture Policy
Appropriations-Transportation and Economic
Development
Conservation & Natural Resources

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Hello from the capitol!

Hurray! This is the last week of session and I am ready to get home. The work is really starting to pile up on the farm. With all the sunshine and warm weather it is sure hard to come to the office in the mornings.

We have been in late every evening since last week and that will continue until we end at 6:00 p.m. on Friday, May 18th. Things haven't changed much from last week. The Senate leadership and the House aren't always on the same page and that makes for some difficult times. The House wants a couple of priority bills to come out of the Senate before they will handle a certain Senate bill. The Senate wants certain bills passed before they will take up bills coming from the House. So we are currently at somewhat of a stalemate which I feel will be resolved soon. Or it will have to wait until next year.

Something that contributes to this problem is that the Senate has the option of a filibuster that any senator can use to stop or hold up a piece of legislation. This is what has been happening. It seems that any legislation that the House has as a priority and really wants to see passed gets hung up with a filibuster or is not brought to the floor for fear of a filibuster.

As I mentioned before, this time of the year with legislation dying every day, everyone is looking for a vehicle to try to amend their bills to. We have rules that to amend something to a bill it needs to be within the scope of or germane to the bill. In the last week this rule gets stretched to the max.

We took up and passed Senate Bill 22 which is the omnibus local government bill. This bill had 45 amendments and over 300 pages.

There was another bill with 33 amendments. That bill came to the House as a 65 page bill. After all the amendments were added it left the floor with over 250 pages. A person really has to watch and read to keep track of what is in some of these bills. As you might guess, it is almost impossible for everyone to know everything in every bill. That is why you

really have to rely on the sponsors of these big bills to let you know what is in a piece of legislation and if there is anything controversial.

The House passed Senate Bill 156 which has become an omnibus agriculture bill. **As of this writing SB 156 is still in conference between the House and the Senate. We don't know yet whether it will pass or fail.**

Items included in this bill are as follows:

1. This legislation makes the Family Farm Breeding Livestock Loan tax credit subject to the same reporting requirements as what is required for agricultural tax credits under the Tax Credit Accountability Act. The sections also require new generation cooperatives to report under the Tax Credit accountability Act, when an agricultural tax credit is issued as a result of a producer member investing in the cooperative. New generation cooperatives must operate within the state in order to be eligible for either the Agricultural Product Utilization Contributor tax credit or the New Generation Cooperative Incentive tax credit.
2. This legislation includes “trailers manufactured in Missouri” as part of the definition of “farm machinery and equipment” for which a sales tax exemption shall apply and authorizes the sales tax exemption for diesel fuel to include gasoline, kerosene, and other blended fuel if they are used exclusively for agricultural purposes.
3. This legislation creates a sales tax exemption for the purchase of fencing materials for agricultural purposes.
4. The legislation makes the plants spotted knapweed and sericea lespedeza subject to existing noxious weed control laws.
5. This legislation establishes the Missouri Rice Certification Act, which prohibits the production, transporting, or handling of certain rice varieties except as provided in rules promulgated by the Department of Agriculture.
6. Wineries, distillers, manufacturers, wholesalers, or brewers may hold alcoholic beverage tastings off a licensed retail premises, provided no sales transactions take place. Alcoholic beverage tastings may be held by these same entities on temporarily licensed retail premises.
7. The Large Animal Veterinary Student Loan Program is created, which makes loans available to a maximum of six eligible students per year at the College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Missouri-Columbia. A student may receive loan funding for each year he or she remains in good standing at the College, up to a maximum of \$80,000. Loan principal and interest shall be forgiven provided the loan recipient practices large animal veterinary medicine in underserved areas of the state as determined by the Department. The program shall expire on June 30, 2013.
8. The total cumulative amount of tax credits issued by MASBDA per fiscal year for interest waived for family farm livestock loans is increased from \$150,000 to \$300,000.
9. The Missouri Ethanol and Other Renewable Fuel Sources Commission is renamed as the “Missouri Alternative Fuels Commission” and its membership is expanded from seven to nine members. The Commission shall: 1) make recommendations on legislation to facilitate the sale and distribution of alternative fuels and alternative fuel

vehicles; 2) promote the production and use of alternative fuels; 3) promote the development and use of alternative fuel vehicles and other related technology; 4) educate consumers about alternative fuels; 5) develop a long-range plan to reduce petroleum fuel use; and 6) report annually to the Governor and General Assembly.

As always, it is an honor and pleasure to serve as your state representative.