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Committees

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

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Hello from the capitol!

It has been a busy week here and on the farm. We finally had a favorable weekend for outside work and I took advantage of it.

I started no-tilling oats Thursday about 5:00 p.m., stopped for supper around 10:00, and finished up on Friday morning with getting in about 25 acres. I had the chance to finally spread 200 lbs of Red Clover on Friday afternoon.

After what seems like months of complaining from Becky and the girls about all the chuck holes and ruts in the private drive I spent Saturday grading out 1 ½ miles of gravel driveway.

The weather says it's spring and we can tell it's spring at the capitol as well because of all the school children that are coming to visit. I really enjoy visiting with the students and their parents who take the time out of their busy schedules to accompany them. Schools that have been in to visit lately have been Osage R-I from Chamois, Osage R-III from Westphalia, St. Joseph from Westphalia, and Maries R-II from Belle. Thanks to all the teachers who arrange these visits for their students and the parents.

At the capitol this week in a Conservation & Natural Resources committee hearing we finally passed out HB 628, the gravel bill. This legislation has involved a lot of negotiation and compromising with special interest groups and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources.

In the Agriculture Policy committee hearing we passed a bio-mass ethanol incentive bill. This bill would include wood chips, switch grass and other agriculture products containing cellulose.

In House Chamber activity we passed HB 74 relating to rural empowerment zones. Currently, rural empowerment zones are only allowed to exist in Hickory County which has a population of 8,940 residents. This legislation allows these zones to exist in any

county with 16,000 or fewer residents which would include all three of the counties in the 112th District. These zones allow counties to help encourage business and industry to settle in the county.

The 112th District is blessed with several large animal veterinarians. Unfortunately, this is not the case statewide. The Missouri Department of Agriculture and the University of Missouri have been working for the last couple of years to address this situation. One way of dealing with this was given approval by the Missouri House of Representatives this week and will help repay a portion of student loans for veterinarians that agree to practice in the field of large animal veterinary medicine for a specific time period. The recipients must be students who attend the College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Missouri-Columbia. HB 693 moves the Large Animal Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program from the Missouri Veterinary Medical Board to the Department of Agriculture and expands the number of qualified veterinarians per year from five to six. This legislation will also increase the amount that can be repaid each year per veterinarian from \$10,000 to \$20,000. The final provision changed in HB 693 reduces the number of years of service each veterinarian agrees to practice large animal medicine in underserved areas of the state from five to four. The total amount any qualifying veterinarian can receive is \$80,000 in loans repaid by the fund.

The key reason most veterinarians choose the field of medicine they do is to help pay off the enormous amount in student loans they owe for their education. This has hurt our rural areas as large animal veterinarians retire at a growing rate. Large animal veterinarians are the first line of defense in the detection and containment of disease in Missouri's livestock industry. This defense against disease protects the health of Missouri and the livestock economy in our state and the nation as Missouri is a large national producer of livestock.

House Bill 469 changes the laws regarding school employee liability, safety practices, and reporting acts of violence. In its main provisions the legislation:

- (1) Broadens employee immunity from correctly following discipline policies to all policies;
- (2) Exempts unqualified employees who refuse to administer medication or medical services from disciplinary action for their refusal;
- (3) Exempts qualified employees from liability for administering medication or medical services, including cardiopulmonary resuscitation, in good faith and according to standard medical practices;
- (4) Specifies that an employee background check and fingerprint record is good for one year and transferable from district to district;
- (5) Specifies that a suspended student who is not allowed on school property without specific permission is also prohibited from attending school events occurring off school property
- (6) Adds safety practice and training to the facility safety accreditation standards;
- (7) Adds prevention-focused criteria to the existing criteria for safe schools grants;
- (8) Changes the requirement for the St. Louis City School District to consider school uniforms and dress codes to allow all districts to impose dress codes;

- (9) Expands the reporting of acts of violence to all teachers at the student's school building and other employees who need to know.

House Bill 155, relating to motorcycle helmets passed the House. This bill requires only persons younger than 21 years of age to wear protective headgear when operating or riding as a passenger on any motorcycle or motortricycle. Currently, all motorcyclists are required to wear protective headgear.

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