

HB 1836 -- MISSOURI INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL EXCHANGE

SPONSOR: Johnson

This bill allows the Department of Agriculture to contract with an Internet website development company to build and maintain the Missouri International Agricultural Exchange website. The website must contain content approved by the department to promote Missouri agricultural products and services to international agricultural buyers. 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 them to international buyers. A seller must register through the website, show proof of Missouri residency, and provide any additional information required by the department;

(2) Specifies that the state will have exclusive ownership rights of content on the exchange, but the website developer may use 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. The developer is prohibited from selling advertising to any entity that is not related to agriculture or furthers the interest of specified content types;

(4) Requires the website developer to have proven experience and expertise in search engine optimization as determined by the Department of Agriculture or the Department of Economic Development and to provide evidence of 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. A developer may have his or her

contract terminated for failure to operate under the department's guidelines for the website. If the contract is terminated, the department will assume ownership of all site-related domain names and must award a new contract in accordance with the procedures for awarding the initial contract.