

HB 2088 -- FARM-TO-SCHOOL ACT

SPONSOR: Hummel

This bill establishes the Farm-to-School Act. In its main provisions, the bill:

(1) Establishes the Farm-to-School Program within the Department of Agriculture to connect Missouri farmers and schools in order to provide schools with locally grown agricultural products for inclusion in school meals and snacks and to strengthen local farming economies;

(2) Requires the department to designate an employee to administer and monitor the program and to serve as liaison between Missouri farmers and schools;

(3) Requires the departments of Health and Senior Services and Elementary and Secondary Education and the Office of Administration to make staff available to the program for the purpose of providing professional consultation and staff support to assist the implementation of the program;

(4) Specifies the duties of the department employee coordinating the program including:

(a) Establishing and maintaining a website database to allow farmers and schools to connect and provide specified information;

(b) Providing leadership at the state level to encourage schools to procure and use locally grown agricultural products;

(c) Conducting workshops and training sessions and providing technical assistance to school food service directors, personnel, farmers, and produce distributors and processors regarding the program; and

(d) Seeking grants, private donations, or other funding sources to support the program;

(5) Establishes the Farm-to-School Taskforce under the AgriMissouri Program. The taskforce must be made up of at least one representative from the University of Missouri extension service, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the Office of Administration; two persons actively engaged in the practice of small agribusiness appointed by the Director of the Department of Agriculture; and two persons from schools within the state who direct a food service program appointed by the Director of the

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education;

(6) Specifies that the mission of the taskforce is to provide recommendations for strategies that:

(a) Allow schools to more easily incorporate locally grown agricultural products into their cafeteria offerings, salad bars, and vending machines; and

(b) Allow schools to work with food service providers to ensure greater use of locally grown agricultural products by developing standardized language for food service contracts;

(7) Requires the taskforce to prepare a report containing its findings and recommendations and deliver the report to the Governor, the General Assembly, and to the director of each agency represented on the taskforce by December 31, 2015;

(8) Specifies that the provisions regarding the taskforce will expire on December 31, 2015; and

(9) Authorizes the Missouri Agricultural and Small Business Development Authority to make grants, loans, or loan guarantees to Missouri businesses to develop infrastructure including, but not limited to, storage centers, processing facilities, and distribution facilities for local and national food distribution companies to store and process locally grown agricultural products for use in schools within the state.