

HCS HB 951 -- AGRICULTURAL FACILITIES

SPONSOR: Haden

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Agriculture Policy by a vote of 16 to 4. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Administrative Oversight by a vote of 5 to 3.

This bill specifies that the Missouri Department of Agriculture, the United States Department of Agriculture, and any other federal or Missouri state agency with statutory or regulatory authority have exclusive authority to inspect the grounds or facilities in Missouri used for the production of eggs, milk or other dairy products, raising of livestock, or the production or raising of dogs or other animals not used to produce any food product. Unless requested by the owner of the facility, no other entity may inspect the grounds or facilities to enforce or carry out the laws or administrative rules of another state.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this bill would clarify which agencies have the authority to inspect certain agricultural facilities. The bill would protect Missouri farmers from other states and outside organizations attempting to gain access to the facilities without legal authority. However, it also allows for the farmer or producer to authorize other agencies to inspect, if the farmer or producer so chooses.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Haden; Missouri Dairy Association; Missouri Soybean Association; Missouri Animal Husbandry Association; Missouri Farm Bureau; Missouri Federation of Animal Owners; Missouri Pork Association; Missouri Cattlemen's Association; Protect the Harvest; and Missouri Corn Growers Association.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that 20 counties in Missouri have county health ordinances and this bill would prohibit those counties from inspecting facilities regulated under the ordinances. Opponents also expressed concerns regarding local law enforcement's ability to enforce the criminal code such as complaints relating to animal abuse.

Testifying against the bill were the Humane Society Legislative Fund of Missouri; Missouri Alliance for Animal Legislation; Frances Klahr, Sierra Club; Missouri Coalition for Environment; Jeff Jones; Shirley Kidwell; and the Missouri Rural Crisis Center.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say other state and federal agencies also have authority to inspect these facilities and need

to be included in the bill.

Testifying on the bill were Missouri Department of Agriculture; Missouri Department of Natural Resources; and the Missouri Department of Conservation.