

HCS HB 344 -- FARM-TO-TABLE ADVISORY BOARD

SPONSOR: Guernsey

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass by consent" by the Committee on Agri-Business by a vote of 14 to 0.

This substitute establishes the Farm-to-Table Advisory Board with at least one representative from the University of Missouri-Extension Service; the departments of Agriculture, Elementary and Secondary Education, Economic Development, and Corrections; and the Office of Administration. The Director of the Department of Agriculture will appoint one person who is actively engaged in the practice of small agribusiness. The representative from the Department of Agriculture will serve as chair of the board and will coordinate meetings. The board must hold at least two meetings but may hold more if necessary to fulfill its requirements.

The mission of the board is to provide recommendations for strategies that allow schools and state institutions to more easily incorporate locally grown agricultural products into their cafeteria offerings, salad bars, and vending machines and that increase public awareness of local agricultural practices and the role that local agriculture plays in sustaining healthy communities and supporting healthy lifestyles.

The board must:

(1) Investigate the status and availability of local, state, federal, and any other resources that may be used to link schools and other public institutions with local and regional farms for the purchase of locally grown products, increase market opportunities for locally grown products, and assist schools and other entities with education campaigns that teach children and the public about the concepts of food production and consumption; the interrelationships between nutrition, food choices, obesity, and health; and the value of an accessible supply of locally grown food;

(2) Identify any type of barrier that prevents or hinders schools and state institutions from purchasing more locally grown products, the expansion of market opportunities for locally grown products, or schools and other entities from engaging in the educational campaigns;

(3) Develop recommendations for the maximization of existing resources and the development of necessary new or expanded resources to accomplish its objectives and the removal of barriers that hinder these objectives; and

(4) Submit a report with its findings and recommendations to the Governor, General Assembly, and the director of each agency represented on the board by August 31, 2012.

The provisions of the substitute will expire August 31, 2012.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2012, FY 2013, and FY 2014.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill will create an advisory board to work on a program to bring produce grown in Missouri to schools and other institutions more efficiently. Currently, many schools do not know how to work within their current procurement process to purchase fresh, locally grown produce. The advisory board will look at the current obstacles and make recommendations for statute and rule changes to make the process easier. The bill will allow schools and other institutions the opportunity to provide fresh, healthier food choices that could encourage healthier eating behaviors and lifestyles.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Guernsey; American Cancer Society; American Heart Association; Partnership for Children; St. Louis Composting; and Missouri Grocers' Association.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say there is a need for diversity among the board members to ensure all views are included and to understand the current process for schools to obtain locally grown produce.

Testifying on the bill were Missouri Agribusiness Association; and William McKelvey, University of Missouri-Extension.