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This Week at the Statehouse

Week Three Legislative Update

SC State Legislative Weekly Update - January 29, 2021

General Assembly Weekly Highlights

The General Assembly reconvened in Columbia this week to continue their work for the state.

The House Agriculture, Natural Resources & Environmental Committee held sub and full committee meetings this past week. The Agriculture Subcommittee met this week and heard [H. 3544](#) SC Equine Promotion Act and [H. 3540](#) Hemp Farming Act Revisions. The subcommittee debated both bills and ultimately voted to adjourn debate on these bills (by a vote of 5-0 to adjourn debate on both bills). In doing so, it allows the committee to consider future actions on the bill. Representative Randy Ligon of Chester offered an amendment related to the refund of the proposed \$2 per ton assessment on commercial and custom blend equine feeds, if requested by the consumer, and it was ***adopted by the subcommittee.***

Clemson University - Public Service Activities (PSA), President Jim Clements and Dr. George Askew, presented PSA's budget request to Ways and Means Economic Development Subcommittee. The requests included additional support for statewide Extension Programs - County offices. This is a direct support to farmers, ranchers and agribusiness across the state. PSA also requested additional funding for critical fruit and vegetable research to increase production yield, address threats of crop disease and improve management of insect pests on fruits and vegetables. During the presentation Dr. Askew mentioned that the state is currently challenged with invasive feral hogs. Clemson said that they will continue to work with farmers and landowners across the state to develop and implement strategies to address the feral hogs.

Upcoming Legislative Week

Senate Medical Affairs full committee is scheduled to meet next week on the appointment of the Director of DHEC, Dr Edward Simmer. Work will also resume on bills related to Santee Cooper Reform and the annual appropriation hearings will carry on next week in the House as the General Assembly develops the Fiscal Year 2022 budget.

Legislators are scheduled to return to the Capitol on Tuesday, February 2nd. SC Farm Bureau Government Relations will continue to monitor, develop strategy and provide timely updated information on action items when available.

New Bills of Interest

New Bills Introduced this Week

House Bill 3766, which can be found [here](#), is sponsored by Representative Richie Yow of Chesterfield County, Representative Sandy [McGarry](#) of Lancaster County, Representative Pat [Henegan](#) of Marlboro County, Representative William Bailey of Horry County, Representative Mark Smith of Berkeley County,

Representative Doug Gilliam of Union County and Representative Ryan McCabe of Lexington County, has been introduced and referred to the House Judiciary committee for action.

In summary, the **bill abolishes DHEC and splits the agency into two separate entities; the Department of Public Health and the Department of Environmental Control.**

Senate Bill 506, which can be found [here](#), is sponsored by Senator Rex Rice of Pickens County, Senator Josh [Kimbrell](#) of Spartanburg County, Senator Billy Garrett of McCormick County, Senator Scott Talley of Spartanburg County and Senator Michael Johnson of York County, has been introduced and referred to the Senate Medical Affairs committee for action. In summary, the bill **expands the types of foods produced by Home-Based Food Production Operations that can be sold for direct sales to retail stores, online and mail order direct-to-consumer sales, including labeling and identification requirements.**

Congressional Report

National News

Next week we will be having conference calls with two of our Congressional Delegation, Congressman Rice and Congresswoman Mace. We are hoping to give them a good representation of our issues.

These calls are next Wednesday, February 3rd at 10:15 with Congressman Rice.

At noon, Feb. 3rd we will have the call with Congresswoman Mace.

If you live in either of the Congressional Districts and would like to participate, please RSVP to Beverly Sease at bsease@scfb.org. Only those that RSVP will get the call-in information. If you have a particular issue you want raised, let us know so that the Congressman/woman can have information/research on that issue.

Also,

Update on CFAP:

CFAP payments have currently been suspended pursuant to a regulatory review of the program by the Biden Administration. However, USDA is still accepting new and/or

modified applications. You have until Feb. 26th to apply. If you have any questions, please reach out to your local FSA office.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will provide additional assistance through the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP), expanding eligibility for some agricultural producers and commodities as well as updating payments to accurately compensate some producers who already applied for the program. Farm Bureau was integral in the addition of these commodities and worked closely with Congress to ensure that all farmers who suffered financial losses as a result of COVID-19 qualified for assistance.

Producers who are now eligible and those who need to modify existing applications due to these updates can contact USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) between Jan. 19 and Feb. 26. Some of these changes are being made to align with the recently enacted Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 while others are discretionary changes being made in response to ongoing evaluation of CFAP.

Of particular interest in this round of funding, certain contract poultry growers can now apply. Eligible producers must:

- have raised broilers, pullets, layers, chicken eggs, turkeys, hogs, or pigs under a contract in 2019 and 2020.
- demonstrate a drop in revenue for the period from January 1, 2020, through December 27, 2020, as compared to the period from January 1, 2019, through December 27, 2019.
- provide a copy of their contract and documentation to support the information provided on their application, if requested by FSA.

Payments are based on eligible revenue for January 1, 2020, through December 27, 2020, minus eligible revenue for January 1, 2019, through December 27, 2019, multiplied by up to 80 percent.

Eligible contract growers can now apply for CFAP 2 between January 19 through February 26, 2021 by contacting their [local USDA Service Center](#). One-on-one support with applications is also available by calling 877-508-8364.

For more information and to apply, click [here](#).

SC Farm Bureau Government Relations

South Carolina Farm Bureau Government Relations

Our Government Relations team serves as the link between our members and government officials at the local, state and national level. We work with local officials, the state Legislature, the Governor's office, departments, agencies, congressional delegation and staff to promote Farm Bureau policy as set by our grassroots **members**. With one united voice, GR staff and our members will continue to advocate for agriculture.

Gary Spires, Director

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