

June 4, 2009

Joint Finance Committee Approves Amendments to Governor's Budget

By Jordan Lamb

Last week, the Joint Committee on Finance, approved its final amendments to the Governor's budget bill. The following were two additional ag-related provisions that the Finance Committee included in their budget bill version:

- **Slaughter Fee Removed:** The Governor's budget proposed a per animal fee for all cattle, hogs, calves and poultry slaughtered in Wisconsin. The revenue generated from this fee would be used to pay for four animal health staff persons at DATCP and seven DATCP meat inspectors. The Finance committee amended the Governor's proposal by paying for the animal health positions with a transfer of money from the Agricultural Chemical Cleanup Program and giving DATCP rulemaking authority to establish fees to fund meat inspections by 2010. The details will be developed during the rulemaking process.
- **CAFO Fees Increased:** The Joint Finance Committee also increased a fee and created a new fee for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) (*i.e.*, farms with more than 1,000 animal units). The Finance version of the budget bill increases the WPDES application fee for CAFOs from \$250 to \$1,200 and imposes a new \$345 annual fee on CAFOs. In addition, the Finance budget requires the Department of Natural Resources to promulgate an administrative rule establishing annual fees on the basis of the number of animal units owned.

Budget Moves to Full Legislature for Debate

By Jordan Lamb

The budget bill was introduced as Assembly Bill 75, so now that the Finance Committee has finished its amendments, the budget will next be reviewed by the Assembly.

It is expected that the Assembly will approve a *further* amended budget bill by June 10. Then, that version moves to the Senate for its consideration.

It is still expected that both houses will agree on one version of a budget bill before the end of the month, at which time it will be sent to the Governor for his approval, veto or partial veto. The current fiscal year ends June 30, 2009.

Assembly Ag Committee Moves Four Bills Forward

By Jordan Lamb

Also last week, the Assembly Agriculture Committee took action on four pieces of legislation:

- [Assembly Bill 166](#) eliminates the requirement that a vet clinic must have a state-issued permit to use repackaged pesticides and that they must have continued education.
- [Assembly Bill 11](#) eliminates the World Dairy Center Authority.
- [Assembly Bill 236](#) allows high school students to count an agricultural course as a science credit for the purposes of graduation requirements, if the course has been deemed a science equivalent by the Department of Public Instruction.
- [Assembly Bill 229](#) provides an exemption from the requirement to obtain a food processing plant license for the sale of home-prepared and home-canned, acidic fruits or vegetables (such as pickles) at a community or social event or a farmers' market by a person who receives less than \$5,000 per year from the sale of the food and who complies with requirements concerning notice and labeling.

AB 166, AB 11 and AB 236 were each recommended for passage by a unanimous, 11-0 vote.

AB 229 was recommended for passage with a 9-2 vote. Both the current and past chairs of the committee, Representative Amy Sue Vruwink (D-Milladore) and Al Ott (R-Forest Junction) voted against AB 229.

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