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State of Minnesota

Printed Page No. 59

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

EIGHTY-SIXTH SESSION

HOUSE FILE NO. 710

February 12, 2009

Authored by Faust

The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Rural Economies and Veterans Affairs

March 2, 2009

Committee Recommendation and Adoption of Report:

To Pass and re-referred to the Committee on State and Local Government Operations Reform, Technology and Elections

March 19, 2009

Committee Recommendation and Adoption of Report:

To Pass as Amended

Read Second Time

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to agriculture; changing duties of the Food Safety and Defense Task
1.3 Force; changing membership and procedures of the Minnesota Organic Advisory
1.4 Task Force; eliminating language requiring two annual reports; amending
1.5 Minnesota Statutes 2008, sections 28A.21, subdivision 5; 31.94; repealing
1.6 Minnesota Statutes 2008, sections 17.49, subdivision 3; 18G.12, subdivision 5.

1.7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.8 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2008, section 28A.21, subdivision 5, is amended to read:

1.9 Subd. 5. Duties. The task force shall:

1.10 (1) coordinate educational efforts regarding food safety and defense;

1.11 (2) provide advice and coordination to state agencies as requested by the agencies;

1.12 (3) serve as a source of information and referral for the public, news media, and
1.13 others concerned with food safety and defense; and

1.14 (4) make recommendations to Congress, the legislative committees with jurisdiction
1.15 over agriculture finance and policy, the legislature, and others about appropriate action to
1.16 improve food safety and defense in the state.

1.17 Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2008, section 31.94, is amended to read:

1.18 31.94 COMMISSIONER DUTIES.

1.19 (a) In order to promote opportunities for organic agriculture in Minnesota, the
1.20 commissioner shall:

1.21 (1) survey producers and support services and organizations to determine
1.22 information and research needs in the area of organic agriculture practices;

1.23 (2) work with the University of Minnesota to demonstrate the on-farm applicability
1.24 of organic agriculture practices to conditions in this state;

2.1 (3) direct the programs of the department so as to work toward the promotion of
2.2 organic agriculture in this state;

2.3 (4) inform agencies of how state or federal programs could utilize and support
2.4 organic agriculture practices; and

2.5 (5) work closely with producers, the University of Minnesota, the Minnesota Trade
2.6 Office, and other appropriate organizations to identify opportunities and needs as well
2.7 as ensure coordination and avoid duplication of state agency efforts regarding research,
2.8 teaching, marketing, and extension work relating to organic agriculture.

2.9 (b) By November 15 of each even-numbered year the commissioner, in conjunction
2.10 with the task force created in paragraph (c), shall report on the status of organic
2.11 agriculture in Minnesota to the legislative policy and finance committees and divisions
2.12 with jurisdiction over agriculture. The report must include:

2.13 (1) a description of current state or federal programs directed toward organic
2.14 agriculture, including significant results and experiences of those programs;

2.15 (2) a description of specific actions the department of agriculture is taking in the
2.16 area of organic agriculture, including the proportion of the department's budget spent on
2.17 organic agriculture;

2.18 (3) a description of current and future research needs at all levels in the area of
2.19 organic agriculture;

2.20 (4) suggestions for changes in existing programs or policies or enactment of new
2.21 programs or policies that will affect organic agriculture;

2.22 (5) a description of market trends and potential for organic products;

2.23 (6) available information, using currently reliable data, on the price received, yield,
2.24 and profitability of organic farms, and a comparison with data on conventional farms; and

2.25 (7) available information, using currently reliable data, on the positive and negative
2.26 impacts of organic production on the environment and human health.

2.27 (c) ~~The commissioner shall appoint~~ A Minnesota Organic Advisory Task Force ~~to~~
2.28 shall advise the commissioner and the University of Minnesota on policies and practices
2.29 to programs that will improve organic agriculture in Minnesota, including how available
2.30 resources can most effectively be used for outreach, education, research, and technical
2.31 assistance that meet the needs of the organic agriculture community. The task force must
2.32 consist of the following residents of the state:

2.33 (1) three farmers using organic agriculture methods;

2.34 (2) two ~~organic food~~ wholesalers, retailers, or distributors of organic products;

2.35 (3) one representative of organic ~~food~~ certification agencies;

2.36 (4) two organic ~~food~~ processors;

- 3.1 (5) one representative from ~~the~~ University of Minnesota Extension Service;
- 3.2 (6) one ~~representative from a~~ University of Minnesota postsecondary research
- 3.3 ~~institution~~ faculty member;
- 3.4 (7) one representative from a nonprofit organization representing producers;
- 3.5 (8) ~~one~~ two at-large ~~member~~ members;
- 3.6 (9) one representative from the United States Department of Agriculture; and
- 3.7 (10) one organic consumer representative.

3.8 The commissioner, in consultation with the director of the Minnesota Agricultural

3.9 Experiment Station; the dean and director of University of Minnesota Extension; and the

3.10 dean of the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences shall appoint

3.11 members to serve staggered two-year terms.

3.12 ~~Terms, Compensation, and removal of members are governed by section 15.059,~~

3.13 ~~subdivision 6. The task force must meet at least twice each year and expires on June~~

3.14 ~~30, 2009~~ 2013.

3.15 (d) For the purposes of expanding, improving, and developing production and

3.16 marketing of the organic products of Minnesota agriculture, the commissioner may

3.17 receive funds from state and federal sources and spend them, including through grants or

3.18 contracts, to assist producers and processors to achieve certification, to conduct education

3.19 or marketing activities, to enter into research and development partnerships, or to address

3.20 production or marketing obstacles to the growth and well-being of the industry.

3.21 (e) The commissioner may facilitate the registration of state organic production

3.22 and handling operations including those exempt from organic certification according to

3.23 Code of Federal Regulations, title 7, section 205.101, and certification agents operating

3.24 within the state.

3.25 **Sec. 3. REPEALER.**

3.26 Minnesota Statutes 2008, sections 17.49, subdivision 3; and 18G.12, subdivision

3.27 5, are repealed.

3.28 **Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

3.29 Section 2 is effective June 30, 2009.