

SENATOR'S NEWS RELEASE

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SEN. THOMPSON GAINS SENATE APPROVAL OF KEY AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY MEASURES

BILLS FOCUS ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

At the urging of District 34 State Senator Francis Thompson (D-Delhi), members of the Louisiana State Senate overwhelmingly approved a series of bills aimed at promoting development of the state's vital agriculture industry and improving consumer protections in state law. Sen. Thompson, chair of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Forestry, Aquaculture and Rural Development, authored the bills relating to sustainable agriculture, animal care standards, exotic animal regulation, slaughterhouse standards and more.

"What we hope to do with these measures is to establish reasonable regulations and rules that do not unnecessarily hamper the development of our state's number one industry, agriculture, and promote preservation of our natural resources, while at the same time providing the necessary safeguards for consumers," Sen. Thompson said

Sen. Thompson points to Senate Bill 35 which provides for the definition of "sustainable agriculture" as an example. The goal is to provide a science and outcomes-based definition of "sustainable" rather than a growing assumption across the nation that organic production is the only "sustainable" production.

"We are taking a progressive approach here," Sen. Thompson said. "We need to make sure that we are promoting various production methods that satisfy our human food and fiber needs, enhance environmental quality, make the most efficient use of our non-renewable resources, and enhance the quality of life for farmers and society as a whole."

In addition the Senate Bill 35, the Senate also approved the following measures

authored by Sen. Thompson relating to the agriculture industry:

- **Senate Bill 36** establishes a process for the state to set up standards for the care and well-being of animals in an effort to protect farming and the safety of our food supplies. Any standards established by the state would not affect local ordinances dealing with animal care.
- **Senate Bill 146** expands the authority of the state agriculture commissioner to adopt rules and regulations regarding the raising, slaughtering and sale of imported exotic animals to include elk, red deer, sambar, moose, caribou and reindeer.
- **Senate Bill 149** changes current state law to maintain compliance with the Federal Meat Inspection Act and the USDA Food Safety Inspection Service.
- **Senate Bill 145** makes technical changes to make sure state law is consistent regarding the definition of catfish.
- **Senate Bill 148** reorganizes and streamlines certain operations in the Department of Agriculture and Forestry in an effort to reduce costs and improve operations.
- **Senate Bill 50** continues the Department of Agriculture and Forestry as an state agency until July 1, 2015.

The measures now move to the House for consideration. The work of the 2010 Regular Session must be complete by June 21, 2010.

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