

# *Interim Committee on Agriculture & Agribusiness*

**Interim Report to the Joint Committee on Government and Finance  
January 8, 2008**

## Senate Members

Senator Edgell, Chair  
Senator Bailey  
Senator Barnes  
Senator Hunter  
Senator Love

## House Members

Delegate Stemple, Chair  
Delegate Talbot, Vice Chair  
Delegate Anderson  
Delegate Argento  
Delegate Evans  
Delegate Pethel  
Delegate Schoen  
Delegate Swartzmiller  
Delegate Tabb  
Delegate Beach (Nonvoting)  
Delegate Miller (Nonvoting)  
Delegate Proudfoot (Nonvoting)  
Delegate Williams (Nonvoting)

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## Introduction

During the 2007-2008 interim period, the Joint Committee on Government and Finance directed the Agriculture and Agribusiness interim committee to consider:

***Senate Concurrent Resolution 78 - Requesting Joint Committee on Government and Finance study animal protection laws for horses.***

The Committee heard testimony on several topics, including: animal protection; horse abuse and neglect; drought conditions; avian flu; colony collapse disorder; and the creation of an emergency fund within the Department of Agriculture.

## Site Visitation

During the August interims, a site visitation was conducted at Delegate Tabb's farm to show an example of agritourism. Agritourism is a style of attraction where hospitality and events are offered on a farm. Delegate Tabb's farm offers visitors the chance to pick pumpkins, go on hay rides, traverse a cornfield maze, and work alongside staff as they perform their daily tasks on a working farm.

## Guest Speaker

During the October interims, Doug Farquhar, Program Director for Agriculture and Rural

Development at the National Conference of State Legislators, discussed avian flu's effect on agriculture. Mr. Farquhar explained surveillance techniques currently being used by the federal government and stressed that state support is vital for tracking and eradicating avian flu.

### Interim Legislation

The committee does not recommend any legislation for passage during the 2008 Regular Session.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

The Committee requested additional information from several of the aforementioned presenters and all handouts and information contained in the minutes for the meetings are on file in the office of the Interim Committee on Agriculture & Agribusiness. The Committee makes the following recommendations:

- That the Department of Agricultural receive additional appropriations for the Apiary industry, farmers' markets and drought relief.
- That consideration be given to the creation of a rainy day fund within the Department of Agriculture.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Senator Larry Edgell, Co-Chair

  
Delegate Bill Stemple, Co-Chair