

State News Weekly Summary

Agriculture

SENATE AGRICULTURE PASSES TWO BILLS

■(GIT) Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development passed two measures Monday, both addressing livestock.

HB2988, by Sen. Paul Muegge, D-Tonkawa, allows the Department of Agriculture to act in the best interest of the shippers of livestock, in the event of market failure.

After having its enacting clause stricken, the measure passed with a vote of 9 to 1.

HB2989, also by Muegge, creates the Livestock Dealers Act. With a stricken enacting clause, the measure was given a do pass motion with a vote of 9 to 1.

FROM: BRANDON BEARD

DATE: 03/25/96

STATE TREASURER'S AG-LINK PROGRAM HAS HELP FOR FARMERS STRUGGLING WITH DROUGHT

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) State Treasurer Robert Butkin doesn't have any rain for Oklahoma Family farmers, but he does have money—\$19 million ready to loan. The low-interest money is available through the Treasurer's Agricultural Linked Deposit program.

Butkin said the Ag-Link program provides low-interest loans to qualified family farmers by linking certificates of deposit with loans at participating financial institutions. Individual farmers may qualify for up to \$350,000.

To qualify, Butkin said the applicant must have a debt-to-asset ratio of at least 55 percent and must earn at least 60 percent of his or her gross income from farming or ranching. The interest rate charged on loans is reduced by up to three percent.

Butkin said farmers who believe they might qualify for an Ag-Link low-interest loan should contact their local financial institution or call the Treasurer's Office at 405-521-3191.

FROM: OFFICE OF THE STATE TREASURER

DATE: 03/27/96

Appropriations

HOUSE EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE TAKES UP BUDGET REQUESTS

■(GIT) Members of the House Appropriations and Budget Subcommittee on Education met Monday, hearing budget requests from three state agencies before the Legislature makes its final appropriations decisions for the year.

The Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation is asking for \$3,367,169 for fiscal year (FY) 1997, a sizable increase from the \$146,000 the commission was appropriated last year. The governor, however, is recommending only \$1,800,000 for next year.

The largest request from the commission comes in the form of \$2,275,227 for teacher assessment system revisions.

The State Board of Education is asking for just over \$1.5 billion for FY '97, a 5.3 percent increase from last year's funding. The largest portion of the request comes in the form of over \$53 million to fund the Career Teachers Salary Enhancement program. Those teachers having

(Continued)