



# CAPITOL

comments

*“The Voice of Agriculture®”*

February 25, 2011

Week 8

## This Week at the Capitol

This week was the deadline to pass appropriation and revenue bills off the floor of the House and the Senate. Committees started meeting to discuss general bills and preparing for next week’s deadline.

The Senate debated several issues this week including a bond bill for the Civil Rights Museum and several other bond bills. The House debated some hot button issues this week, including giving judges a pay raise. There was an amendment to increase legislators’ pay and it failed with 6 votes in favor and 109 votes against.

Secretary of State Delbert Hosemann announced he would seek re-election as Secretary of State. There was wide speculation that he would run for Governor. Other office holders seeking re-election for current seats include: Insurance Commissioner Mike Chaney, Attorney General Jim Hood, and Auditor Stacey Pickering.

## Legislative Outlook

### Animal Cruelty

**S.B. 2821** Creates an aggravated cruelty provision for domesticated dogs and cats, where the first offense is a misdemeanor and the second offense within 5 years is a felony. The felony carries a maximum penalty of a \$5,000 fine and up to 5 years in prison. **STATUS:** S.B. 2821 passed the House Judiciary B Committee and has been placed on the House Calendar. **Farm Bureau policy supports this bill.**

### Agritourism

**S.B. 2695** Provides certain exemptions for people who engage in agritourism. **STATUS:** S.B. 2695 has been referred to the House Judiciary A Committee. **Farm Bureau policy supports this bill.**

### Farm Families

**H.B. 104** Creates a distinctive vehicle tag for the Farm Families of Mississippi. **STATUS:** H.B. 104 passed out of the Senate Finance Committee and has been placed on the Senate Calendar. **Farm Bureau policy supports this bill.**

### Rice Promotion Board

**S.B. 2702** Extends the repealer on the Mississippi Rice Promotion Board. **STATUS:** S.B. 2702 passed out of the House Agriculture Committee and has been placed on the House Calendar. **Farm Bureau policy supports this bill.**

## 2011 MFBF Legislative Priorities

*Production Agriculture—Much of Mississippi’s economy is derived from farming or farm-related activities. Agriculture is Mississippi’s largest industry worth \$6.9 billion dollars a year. In addition, agriculture makes up 34% of the workforce in Mississippi.*

*Taxation—The taxes farmers pay should be used to aid the citizens of Mississippi, but taxation must not be allowed to increase to a point that economic development is hindered.*

*Environment—In order to further conservation efforts in agriculture, attention should be focused toward economic approaches to land management.*

*Energy—The depletion of fossil fuels and the increasing energy prices have caused an emphasis to be placed on renewable fuels. Farmers have the resources through general farm practices to generate energy.*

### Legislative Outlook (Continued)

#### Trespass

**S.B. 2705** Revises the trespass laws for trespassing on property and crop land. **STATUS:** S.B. 2705 has been referred to the House Judiciary B Committee. **Farm Bureau policy supports this bill.**

#### Emerging Crops

**H.B. 1148** Authorizes additional loans for retrofitting agricultural enterprises. **STATUS:** H.B. 1148 passed out of the Senate Agriculture and Finance Committee and has been placed on the Senate Calendar. **Farm Bureau policy supports this bill.**

### Bills of Interest

#### Groundwater Study

**H.B. 1067** Directs Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality to do a groundwater report by January 1, 2012. **STATUS:** H.B. 1067 has been referred to the Senate Environmental and Water Resource Committee.

#### Livestock Burial

**H.B. 983** Allows counties to bury dead chickens if there are at least 10,000 when there is an emergency situation. **STATUS:** H.B. 983 Passed out of the House County Affairs Committee and has been placed on the Senate Calendar.

#### Immigration

**S.B. 2179** Creates the Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhood Act of 2011 which deals with illegal immigration. **STATUS:** S.B. 2179 the bill is in conference. The Senate conferees are: Sen. Fillingane, Sen. Dickerson, and Sen. Watson. The House conferees are: Rep. Blackmon, Rep. Cockerham, and Rep. Moak.

#### Carbon Sequestration

**S.B. 2723** Creates the Mississippi Geologic Sequestration of Carbon Dioxide Act. **STATUS:** S.B. 2723 passed out of the House Oil, Gas and Other Minerals Committee and has been placed on the House Calendar.

### PUBLIC POLICY UPDATES BY EMAIL

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## 2011 Legislative Calendar

**March 1** — Deadline for Committees to pass bills out and to the floor

**March 3** — Ag Day at the Capitol

**March 9** — Deadline to pass general bills off of the floor

## Mississippi Farm Bureau® Federation



Post Office Box 1972  
Jackson, Mississippi 39215-1972

[www.msfb.org](http://www.msfb.org)

Samantha Cawthorn  
Public Policy Director  
601.977.4020 (office)  
601.503.3273 (cell)  
[scawthorn@msfb.org](mailto:scawthorn@msfb.org)