



Week of January 17, 2005

## Senate is Geared Up For a Productive Session

When I am out on my tractor in the fields, I spend a lot of time brainstorming on ideas to help Missouri be the best it can be.

I recently had my first meeting as chairman of the Senate Agriculture, Conservation, Parks and Natural Resources Committee. Although the name of this committee may seem very self-descriptive, it is my goal to make it this committee's mission to create and retain jobs.

Missouri is currently ranked 41<sup>st</sup> in the nation for job creation, yet we rank No. 2 in the number of farms nationally. These farms of all sizes are one of the major drivers of our economic engine in the Show-Me State.

We are the second largest beef cattle producing state in America. We are No. 6 in soybean and rice production, and we are No. 9 in corn production. We are also home to 8.5 million chickens and 24 million turkeys. And did you know that hay is our most widely produced crop?

I, myself, added to that soybean and hay total this past year.

It is my goal to create an easier economic climate for our Missouri Ag producers and to work with all willing parties to promote our products in local and global markets. Doing this will stop some of our downward progress in the job market.

We need to allow new products and ideas to develop, such as biopharming and specialty fisheries, and encourage Agri-Tourism that will help educate people about what life is like on a farm.

An effort needs to be made to make it financially feasible for generation-to-generation farming to return. Too many family farms are being lost to the lack of interest and profit needed for the next generation of farmers to remain involved.

Missouri farmers will benefit from legislation that doesn't only pass through the Senate Agriculture Committee, but legislation that will promote small businesses in Missouri.

The strong conservative foundation of rural Missouri has brought us to a Republican majority in the Senate, House and Governor's office for the first time in more than 80 years. We have a plan and we're ready to govern.

We plan to tackle the state's foundation formula, which determines funding for our public-school systems. It's time our rural districts have budgets that are comparable to the urban strongholds in our state to ensure that your children and grandchildren will receive the best education possible.

We also want to pass legislation to stop out-of-control juries from giving ridiculously huge money awards in court cases — especially medical malpractice cases. By doing so, we'll keep more doctors in Missouri, specifically the rural areas. And that means closer, faster, and better care for you and your loved ones. No more driving hours to a hospital to give birth to your children because your doctors have left the state due to unaffordable malpractice insurance.

Back to business, we want to make sure that companies don't go bust because they can't afford a worker's compensation claim for an employee who may not even have been hurt on the job. We plan to pass new provisions in the law to keep fraudulent cases from harming all of our small businesses.

I will do the best I can as a State Senator to protect the resources that we have currently, improve in the areas that need help, and expand opportunities for all Missourians, farmers or not, to get this state back to where it needs to be—at the top of the list.

If there is ever anything that my office or I can do to help you, please feel free to call us toll free at 1.866.242.0810 or email [dan\\_clemens@senate.mo.gov](mailto:dan_clemens@senate.mo.gov) anytime.

*Editor's note:*

*For a print-quality head shot of Sen. Clemens, contact Gus Wagner at 573-751-4008.*