



Week of March 10, 2008

AGRICULTURE BILL GROWS OUT OF CONTROL

The fate of legislation I'm sponsoring this session illustrates that sometimes, no matter how clear your intentions, a situation can spiral out of your control — and then it's up to you to rein it back in.

[Senate Bill 898](#), which received first-round approval from the Senate yesterday, is an omnibus ag bill that had various small incentive features for Missouri's farmers and producers. The ideas behind the legislation have been thrown around this building for many years and for many reasons were not seen all the way through. Some of the components of the bill included tax exemptions for input costs such as farm fencing and ag-related fuel, an addition to the noxious weed control laws, and changes in tax reporting requirements for ag tax credits.

These issues have received broad support from many Missourians, ag groups and other legislators. When I took them to the floor this week, I was expecting strong support from both our city and country cousins in the Missouri Senate.

The original estimated cost of our bill was around \$500,000. While I attempted to stand strong to the original intentions of the bill, many other senators lined up with their Christmas wish lists of projects big and small and by the end of two days of debate, my little bill had ballooned to Barry Bonds-like proportions — and to more than an estimated \$5 million in costs — a ten-fold jump!

While some of the amended ideas were worthy of consideration, I have to stay true to my conservative roots by killing my own bill. I am committed to my mission as Ag Committee chair to do everything in my power to protect and enhance Missouri's number one industry and I will find other ways to achieve the original goals of SB 898. However, I am taking a stand for taxpayers as a fiscal conservative and am saying "no" to everybody's expensive Christmas wish lists.

If you have any questions or comments about this topic or any other, please don't hesitate to contact my office, toll free, at (866) 242-0810.

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