



*Senator
Bill Stouffer*

DISTRICT 21

Senator Bill Stouffer – Cultivating Rural Missouri.

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The Stouffer Report: New Ag Bill Includes Fencing Supplies Tax Break

For the first time in three years, an omnibus agriculture bill has passed the General Assembly.

[Senate Bill 931](#) was sponsored by Sen. Chuck Purgason of Caulfield. Practically the entire session was spent on this bill. It was introduced on the second day and sent to the governor's desk on the second to last.

One of the most important parts of the bill – and something important to our area – is a sales tax exemption for fencing supplies. This has been on rural Missouri's wish list for decades.

Senate Bill 931 also creates a tax credit for building a station selling alternative fuels. The tax credits would actually help cover the costs of installing the pumps and storage equipment for E85 and other alternative fuels. Other tax credits would be continued under the measure. The way the law currently reads, a qualified ethanol producer can get a monthly grant for using Missouri agricultural products to make the ethanol that is used for fuel. Fuel ethanol grant incentives paid for ethanol made from biomass will be available to two producers, for 10 years, starting in 2009.

Senate Bill 931 also covers other issues that have been ignored for too long and I am glad to see they are being addressed. This bill prevents the Missouri Department of Agriculture from making the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Animal Identification System (NAIS) mandatory. It is currently voluntary. If the NAIS were to become mandatory, the legislature would have to authorize it.

Another aspect of Senate Bill 931 addresses the need for more veterinarians to take care of large animals in the state. In order for a

student to benefit from the Large Animal Veterinary Student Loan Program, he or she will have to be a legal resident. Right now, eligible veterinary students at the University of Missouri may be awarded up to \$80,000 in Large Animal Veterinary Student loans. This bill says no more than \$20,000 could be awarded during the course of a year. Those loans could not be granted retroactively. Loan forgiveness is also limited to \$20,000 a year. Sen. Purgason's bill also says the Large Animal Veterinary Student Loan Program will expire on June 30, 2013.

There have been concerns in recent years that the legislature has been ignoring issues important to rural Missouri. Several of us in the legislature spent this year making sure our biggest industry – agriculture – was reflected as a priority in the Capitol as well.

Senator Stouffer serves the counties of Carroll, Chariton, Cooper, Howard, Lafayette, Macon, Ray, Saline, and a part of Clay.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please call toll free (866) 768-3987 or by e-mail at bstouffer@senate.mo.gov.

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