



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, June 13, 2017

Council Session

Item I-3

#2017-176 - Consideration of Support for Livestock Friendly County

Staff Contact: Chad Nabity

Council Agenda Memo

From: Chad Nabity, AICP, Regional Planning Director

Meeting: June 13, 2017

Subject: Support for Livestock Friendly County Designation for Hall County

Presenter(s): Chad Nabity, AICP, Regional Planning Director

Background

At their meeting on May 16, 2017, the Hall County Board of Supervisors held a public hearing and passed Resolution 2017-23 indicating their intent to apply to the Nebraska Department of Agriculture to be designated as a Livestock Friendly County (LFC). As part of the application they intend to submit, the county board is seeking support from all five municipalities in the form of a letter or resolution of support for the application.

Discussion

The LFC designation will enable the Nebraska Department of Agriculture and local entities involved in economic development activities and recruiting to better position Hall County and the communities in Hall County to businesses involved in livestock agriculture.

While Hall County is discussing some proposed changes to their zoning regulations it is the intent of the County to apply for the LFC designation prior to making any changes to the regulations. The LFC designation for Hall County will not require any of the municipalities to change their livestock regulations.

Grand Island is home to the JBS meat packing plant and soon will be home to the Hendricks/ISA hatchery. Both of these are very large scale processing facilities that are dependent on a strong local livestock industry.

The Nebraska State Fair is located in Grand Island and the livestock facilities on the grounds are some of the best in the world. Multiple national livestock shows have chosen Grand Island as their home. The AKSARBEN Stock show will be relocating to the Fair Grounds.

A resolution of support has been prepared and is included with this packet.

Alternatives

It appears that the Council has the following alternatives concerning the issue at hand. The Council may:

1. Move approve the resolution of support..
2. Move to take no action of the resolution.
3. Refer the issue to a committee.
4. Postpone the issue to future date.
5. Take no action on the issue.

Recommendation

City Administration recommends that the Council move to approve the resolution of support.

Sample Motion

Move to adopt the resolution of support for the Livestock Friendly Designation for Hall County.

RESOLUTION 2017-023
Request to Designate Hall County
as a
Livestock Friendly County
in the
State of Nebraska

WHEREAS, Hall County has nearly 600 agricultural operations, including five stand-alone livestock feeding operations, and numerous family farm feeding operations, and

WHEREAS, Hall County is home to the JBS meatpacking plant, the Hendrix ISA hatchery, the CNH combine and hay tool manufacturing plant, and hundreds of other farm and livestock production and processing businesses, and

WHEREAS, the Hall County Board of Supervisors recognizes the importance of livestock production and processing to the economic vitality of the county, its cities and villages, and to the State of Nebraska where the livestock industry contributes more than \$6 billion annually, and

WHEREAS, the Hall County Board of Supervisors desires to develop the livestock production and processing sectors of Hall County's economy; and

WHEREAS, the Nebraska Department of Agriculture provides a Livestock Friendly County program to acknowledge the importance of this sector of the agriculture industry, and

WHEREAS, the Hall County Board of Supervisors conducted a public hearing on May 16, 2017, after due publication and notice, and received comments from the public concerning designation as a Livestock Friendly County, and

WHEREAS, the Hall County Board of Supervisors is committed to compliance with the Livestock Waste Management Act, and

WHEREAS, the Hall County Board of Supervisors intends to work with all other governmental jurisdictions within its boundaries in implementing livestock development within the county; and

WHEREAS, the Hall County Board of Supervisors hereby commits to enter into a letter of understanding with the Nebraska Department of Agriculture agreeing to develop a plan to support the livestock industry in Hall County and to submit reports as directed by the Department;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved and hereby declared that Hall County fully supports the Livestock Friendly County program in Nebraska and respectfully requests that its application for designation as a Livestock Friendly County be reviewed and approved by the Director of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture.

Resolution moved by Supervisor Scott Arnold.

Seconded by Supervisor Gary Quandt.

Vote:

Supervisor Lancaster:	For <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ; Against <input type="checkbox"/> ; Abstained <input type="checkbox"/> ; Not Present <input type="checkbox"/> .
Supervisor Quandt:	For <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ; Against <input type="checkbox"/> ; Abstained <input type="checkbox"/> ; Not Present <input type="checkbox"/> .
Supervisor Richardson:	For <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ; Against <input type="checkbox"/> ; Abstained <input type="checkbox"/> ; Not Present <input type="checkbox"/> .
Supervisor Schuppan:	For <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ; Against <input type="checkbox"/> ; Abstained <input type="checkbox"/> ; Not Present <input type="checkbox"/> .
Supervisor Bredthauer:	For <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ; Against <input type="checkbox"/> ; Abstained <input type="checkbox"/> ; Not Present <input type="checkbox"/> .
Supervisor Arnold:	For <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ; Against <input type="checkbox"/> ; Abstained <input type="checkbox"/> ; Not Present <input type="checkbox"/> .
Supervisor Lanfear:	For <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ; Against <input type="checkbox"/> ; Abstained <input type="checkbox"/> ; Not Present <input type="checkbox"/> .

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 16th DAY OF May, 2017.

HALL COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



Pamela E. Lancaster, Chair of the Board
of Supervisors



Marla J. Conley, Hall County Clerk

Program Summary

The Nebraska Unicameral Legislature has directed the Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) to develop a Livestock Friendly County program to recognize counties that support Nebraska's livestock industry. The Livestock Friendly County program assists counties and agriculture producers promote the Nebraska livestock industry.

What is the Livestock Friendly County program?

- The Nebraska Livestock Friendly County program is a voluntary program that recognizes counties that actively support the livestock industry. NDA partners with counties in the program to encourage development of the livestock industry in the county.

How does the Livestock Friendly County program work?

- Counties must apply to NDA to be designated as a Livestock Friendly County. Application materials are available from NDA, and any county may apply.
- The county board is required to hold a public hearing and pass a resolution asking NDA to designate the county as a Livestock Friendly County. The county submits an application to NDA. Local producer and community groups can work together to ask the board to submit a Livestock Friendly County application to NDA.
- Counties that are accepted by NDA may include the Livestock Friendly County designation in materials promoting the county. The information gathered as part of the application process will also be a valuable resource for local producers and others interested in supporting the county.

How will NDA evaluate county applications?

- Each county is different. There are a wide variety of activities and regulations adopted by Nebraska counties that support the livestock industry. NDA will look at all of the things county government and groups in the county are doing to support livestock.
- If the county is zoned, NDA will evaluate county zoning regulations that apply to livestock operations. The Livestock Friendly County regulations include examples of things counties can do to be considered livestock friendly, but a county can apply even if they do not fit any of the examples given.

Why should a county apply for the Livestock Friendly County designation?

- Every county has something to gain from pursuing the Livestock Friendly County (LFC) designation. However, designation is not something the state does to a

county, but rather it is recognition for the work the county does to establish a thriving livestock industry.

- Nebraska's agriculture economy depends on livestock. Livestock is Nebraska's largest agriculture industry with nearly 50% of all agriculture receipts originating from livestock sales. Livestock processing is the largest single employment class in Nebraska and provides many jobs in rural communities.

Frequently Asked Questions

Does a county give up zoning authority and local control by participating in the Nebraska Department of Agriculture's Livestock Friendly County program?

No. Applying for or receiving a Livestock Friendly County (LFC) designation under the Department program does not in any way affect a county's ability to zone. There is nothing in the statute that created the LFC program or in the regulations that govern the Department's administration of the program that allows for the state to take over the county's responsibility for zoning. Zoning is a function given to the county by the Nebraska Legislature in Neb. Rev. Stat. §23-114 and following. The LFC program, created by the Legislature as a promotional program, was codified to §§54-2801 and 54-2802. Neither the statute nor the regulations speak about the State, or any of its agencies, controlling zoning.

The only authority the Department has under the program is to evaluate how the county has used its zoning powers in terms of treatment of the livestock industry and to make a determination as to whether or not the county is consistent in its approaches with livestock and whether the county and its actions related to the livestock industry warrant an LFC designation.

Can my county be designated as a Livestock Friendly County if it has setbacks that are different than those outlined in the Department's regulations?

Yes. The regulations governing the Department's LFC program were carefully crafted recognizing the unique differences in landscape and needs in the individual counties across Nebraska. The regulations include a series of criteria in which individual counties will be evaluated by the Director of Agriculture. The setback distances identified in the regulations, like most of the other evaluation criteria, are not definitive, but rather are guidance for the Director in evaluating county applications. The regulations clearly provide opportunities for counties to have practices different than those identified in the guidance (like the setbacks).

The Livestock Friendly County program will cost too much to comply with in both dollars and personnel time.

There is no better way to address the concern of too much financial and personnel cost than to refer to the application form. The county need only originate a resolution and a narrative to apply. The balance of the application requirements are that the county attach copies of documents that already exist. The regulations require an annual report from program participants. The annual report is a simple update of changes to any of the county's filed documents and a description of activities taken by the county to nurture and support livestock during the preceding year.

The Livestock Friendly County program is nothing more than a way to force big livestock operations into my county.

The type of economic activity that is allowed in any county is controlled by that county. A county designated a LFC county, through its own zoning regulations, would retain control of zoning for any livestock operation, just as it does now. Whether a county has been designated an LFC county does not influence in any way the activities that are allowed in that county.

Why should our county seek a Department Livestock Friendly County designation when our county can self declare without going through the Department's certification process?

Working with the Department to secure an LFC designation brings with it recognition and credibility that cannot be achieved simply through self-declaration.

Like any third-party appraisal, the purpose of the Department LFC program is to give the applying county an unbiased evaluation of how the county's zoning regulations and other requirements on livestock production are affecting the future development and growth of the industry in the county. A self-declaration does not provide the same unbiased appraisal as is provided by going through the Department LFC certification program.

Applying for the Department designation sends a strong message of commitment to local farmers and businesses that rely on livestock production. It recognizes their importance to the local community and economy and demonstrates a willingness to have county regulations and actions evaluated to ensure the county is doing all that it can to foster a good environment for growth of those businesses and operations.

The program doesn't do anything there is no incentive to becoming designated a Livestock Friendly County.

While the LFC program itself does not bring with it a direct financial incentive to the county, the incentive to the county for participating in the program is clear - the promotion and growth of the livestock industry within a county, in general, carries both substantial direct and indirect benefits to the county's local economy. Local livestock production generates jobs, an additional marketing outlet for local crop producers, increased tax dollars, and markets for ethanol co-products and other benefits too numerous to list. The Legislature intended this program for economic development in all counties that participate.

Although a specified financial incentive is not currently attached to the LFC program, it is not out of the realm of possibility in the future. The idea of having a direct financial incentive to counties that obtain Department LFC designations was discussed by lawmakers at the time of the program's creation but did not come to fruition due in part to the State's financial difficulties at the time.

My county doesn't get anything for participating in the program except a logo to use on promotional materials and on our county letterhead.

Department staff participate in trade missions and trade promotion throughout the year. The Department is continually promoting the agricultural products of this state, and promoting Nebraska as a positive place to conduct agricultural business. Counties designated as LFC counties will be promoted as such during these trade missions and promotions. It's important to note that Nebraska commodity boards and agricultural associations also travel extensively in support of the agriculture industry. They, too, would have the option of promoting LFC counties in their numerous contacts. Essentially, a county receives free advertising to a state, national, and international audience advertising that is designed to help the county grow its economy. Without a formal designation, counties will be missing out on numerous exposure opportunities for future economic development.



Livestock Friendly County (LFC) Benefits

Every county has something to gain from pursuing the Livestock Friendly County (LFC) designation. However, designation is not something the state does to a county, but rather it is recognition for the work the county does to establish a thriving livestock industry. Summarized below are just a few of the benefits of seeking designation.

Framework for Discussion

Pursuing the LFC designation initiates a conversation among county residents about the impact livestock has in the county, as well as how the industry is supported. The conversation becomes a self-examination of where the county is and where it wants to go with livestock and livestock business development. Designation means that the county has made a commitment to support the livestock industry in a socially, economically, and environmentally sound manner.

Producer/Business Confidence

LFC designation tells livestock producers and related businesses that the county wants economic growth and will support their industry for years to come. This type of confidence helps businesses make long-term decisions about investing in and possibly expanding their operation.

Public Education

Education begins with an open and honest conversation with friends and neighbors about the livestock industry. It is a conversation about the impact the industry plays as a consumer of local grains, how it supports main street businesses, and how livestock production adds economic activity to the county. Livestock businesses also contribute taxes that pay for roads, schools, and other services. It's a conversation about how a healthy livestock industry can co-exist with neighbors and businesses, both rural and urban.

County Pride

The LFC sign at the county entrance tells visitors that the county is committed to the people, the businesses, the environment, and the livestock industry. The designation is a strong statement of support for animal agriculture.

Publicity

Designation ceremonies are a celebration that provides an opportunity to put the county in the spotlight with both local and statewide media outlets. This type of positive publicity exposes the county to a large number of outside people and businesses, and it does so in a very favorable light. This positive publicity is then ongoing as the county is listed on NDA's web site with all other officially designated Livestock Friendly Counties.

LFC Benefits_082311.doc

RESOLUTION 2017-176

WHEREAS, the City of Grand Island recognizes the importance of livestock to the economic viability of the City, County, and State economies, and

WHEREAS, Grand Island is the proud home to the Nebraska State Fair, will soon be home to the AKSARBEN Stock Show, and is home to numerous livestock and agriculture-based businesses, and

WHEREAS, the Nebraska Department of Agriculture provides a Livestock Friendly County program to acknowledge the importance of this sector of the agriculture industry; and

WHEREAS, the City supports the efforts of Hall County to pursue the Livestock Friendly County designation to recognize the importance of livestock to the economic viability of both Hall County and the City of Grand Island.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA, that the city does support the Livestock Friendly County Program in Nebraska and the effort of Hall County to obtain this designation.

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Adopted by the City Council of the City of Grand Island, Nebraska, June 13, 2017.

Jeremy L. Jensen, Mayor

Attest:

RaNae Edwards, City Clerk

Approved as to Form	☐ _____
June 9, 2017	☐ City Attorney