

# MISSOURI DAIRY PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION

## 2022 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

This session was marked by more than usual divisiveness, particularly in the Senate. What made it especially odd was that the conflicts were most often intra-party, not the customary disagreements between Republicans and Democrats. Those disputes ultimately resulted in an exceptionally few number of bills approved by the General Assembly and the extremely rare action of the Senate adjourning session one day early. However, the legislators did enact the largest budget by far, although a substantial amount of that budget was one-time federal funds from the COVID-19 economic stimulus packages.

The issues of interest to MDPA considered this past session were as follows:

**RAW MILK (HB 1977):** As usual, Rep. Ann Kelley (R-District 127-southwest Missouri) introduced a bill to benefit only one dairy farm/dairy products manufacturer in her area by allowing it to wholesale products to grocery stores and restaurants. This year, Sen. White (R-District 32-southwest Missouri) declined to introduce a raw milk bill in the Senate after doing so in prior years. HB 1977 got off to a fast start; it was assigned to, heard by and voted out of the House Downsizing State Government committee before the end of the second full week of session. However, under House rules, the bill was sent to the House Rules-Administrative Oversight Committee where we benefitted greatly by the committee chairman holding the bill for six weeks before voting it out. We were again helped by Rep. Dean Plocher, the floor leader and next Speaker of the House, who kept it from floor debate for seven more weeks. While we were highly confident that we could kill the bill in the Senate (which we did), it was very helpful for us that the bill lingered in the House until the last two weeks of session.

**ICE DESSERT LICENSING (passed in HB 2331 and SB 710):** This bill repealed State laws requiring all manufactures of iced desserts to obtain an annual license from the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS). While we opposed the bill, DHSS and, apparently, the Governor's Office wanted the bill. Rep. Ben Baker (R-District 160-Neosho area), the sponsor of the House bill was of no help to us, but Sen. Bill White again helped us by arranging three meetings between us and the legal counsel for DHSS, Michael Oldweiler; from him we received assurance that DHSS would offer "letters of compliance" to any of our ice cream manufacturers as a substitute for the license. We are waiting to see if this is an adequate compromise.

**SMALL DAIRY FARM FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE (HB 1720):** We were only monitoring this bill which includes a provision doubling the annual gross revenue for "small farms" to qualify for low-interest loans and doubling the cap on the amount of those loans. The bill was vetoed by the Governor only because it extended the program by two years, rather than the six years the Governor wanted. It is now part of the Special Session, or a potential override of the veto. We are continuing to watch this issue, and will update this report.