

**AGRICULTURAL AND VETERANS AFFAIRS BILL**  
**H.F. 2227 (Chapter 45)**

**SUMMARY:** The Agricultural and Veterans Affairs bill provides funding for the Departments of Agriculture and Veteran Affairs, as well as makes policy changes that affect both departments. Changes that affect the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system can be found below.

***ARTICLE 1***  
***Agriculture***

**Section**

**3 Department of Agriculture**

**Subdivision 5. Administration and financial assistance.** This section appropriates \$100,000 the first year and \$100,000 the second year to the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board of Trustees for mental health counseling support to farm families and business operators through farm business management programs at Central Lakes College and Ridgewater College.

**36 Application; date of issuance.** This section adds a new clause requiring licenses issued for a temporary food concession stand to have a license issuance and renewal date consistent with appropriate statutory provisions.

**37 Extent of license.** This section allows licenses for retail food vehicles and carts to be valid statewide and issued once annually unless the structure is a seasonal permanent food stand, seasonal temporary food stand, food cart, or special event food stand. "Special event food stand" means a food and beverage service establishment which is used in conjunction with celebrations and special events, and which operates no more than three times annually for no more than ten total days.

**47 NextGen energy.** This section establishes a NextGen Energy Board with approximately 20 members, including a representative from the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system. The board will advise the commissioner of agriculture and the Legislature on how the state can "achieve energy independence, agricultural, and natural resources sustainability, and rural economic vitality." Other duties of the board include; examining the future of renewable fuels, developing grant programs to assist locally owned facilities, studying the proper role of the state, and evaluating how the state can best leverage additional resources.

This section expires June 30, 2009.

**57 Duties.** This section creates a Renewable Energy Roundtable coordinated by the Agricultural Utilization Research Institute. The Roundtable shall consist of one representative from Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, the University of Minnesota, the Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Commerce. The

Renewable Energy Roundtable will consult, advise, and review projects and initiatives funded by the state.

**ARTICLE 2**  
***Veterans Affairs***

**Section**

- 1** **Veterans Affairs.** This section appropriates \$750,000 the first year and \$750,000 the second year for grants to counties to enhance the benefits, programs, and services provided to veterans, including collaboration with other social service agencies, educational institutions, and other relevant community resources to help reintegrate veterans back into society. The commissioner of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that grants are made throughout all regions of the state and shall develop a description of best practices for the use of these grants.

This section also appropriates \$450,000 the first year and \$450,000 the second year for the higher education veterans assistance program under Minnesota Statutes, section 197.585. This appropriation is available through fiscal year 2011.

This section also appropriates \$52,000 the first year for spousal education benefits in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 197.75. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2009.

- 3** **Educational assistance, war survivors and veterans.** This section clarifies and extends the War Orphans Act of 1943 (renamed the *War Survivors Act*) which provides a full waiver of tuition and fees at any Minnesota public institution of higher education to the dependent children of a soldier or veteran who dies as a direct result of military service. The bill extends this benefit to the person's spouse, as well. The statute also provides a stipend of \$750 per year to the eligible spouse and children during each year of their higher education. The veteran must have been a Minnesota resident at the time of entry into the military, and the benefit ceases once the person attains a bachelor's degree or the equivalent.

This section is effective July 1, 2007.