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Kansas Farmers Union pleased changes were made to corporate farm bill in House Ag Committee

This week Kansas House Agriculture Committee sent House Bill 2502 to a full house vote. Under the bill, corporate dairy operators acquiring a resolution by a county commission endorsing a new development must go through a 60-day waiting period for citizens to file a protest petition. If 5 percent of voters sign the petition, the resolution is put to a countywide vote in an upcoming election.

"This is a win for Kansas' family farmers and ranchers," Nick Levendofsky, Special Projects Coordinator for Kansas Farmers Union, said. "The next step is a vote on the House floor."

The original draft of the bill, which was endorsed by the Kansas Department of Agriculture, would have raised the petition threshold to 10 percent of voters. The protest process for hog and dairy operations would be identical.

Kansas Farmers Union President Donn Teske said he opposed the bill because it would, "advance the demise of smaller animal production operations in Kansas."

"This is a transfer of wealth," Teske said. "You see a transfer of an industry into fewer hands. I see that as a direct threat to the Kansas farmer."

Teske reflects that "the state infringing on county rights reeks of big government, surprising coming from this state' administration." Kansas Farmers Union is pleased with the changes made to HB2502 before passage and hopes that they remain through this legislative session.