

KEEP MISSOURI FARMING SUPPORT AMENDMENT #1

KEEP MISSOURI FARMING — AMENDMENT #1

A PERSPECTIVE BY ATTORNEY BRENT HADEN

Haden & Byrne Law Firm, Columbia, MO

In fall 2014, Missouri voters will be offered the chance to vote for a constitutional amendment that, if passed, will permanently enshrine and protect the rights of farmers and ranchers to engage in farming and ranching practices.

This amendment was pursued by Farm Bureau and other groups across every agricultural segment to protect Missouri's most important business. Amendment #1, if passed, will make farming and ranching a right in Missouri, similar in scope and protection to the speech, religion and gun rights already in Missouri's Constitution.

Amendment #1 is critical to ensure the long term future of agriculture in Missouri. It will create the regulatory certainty necessary for agriculture to grow and thrive in Missouri, and help guarantee that families in future generations can continue to farm and ranch across our state.

Since the passage of the amendment in the legislature, I've received several questions about the amendment. Here are some of the most common questions and answers:

WHY IS THIS AMENDMENT NECESSARY?

Missouri's entire economic history is tied to agriculture, and agriculture remains the state's most important business sector. However, as agriculture has changed fewer people are directly connected to farms and ranches by occupation or through family.

This has made agriculture vulnerable to attacks from well funded outside groups that push misinformation on the public to pass burdensome and expensive regulations. These regulations and prohibitions make farming and ranching less profitable, make our food supply less safe and less secure, and cause increased food prices. We've seen some types of farming and ranching heavily regulated and even outlawed in other states when big spending national groups seeking to damage conventional agriculture have shown up to push an anti-agriculture agenda.

These same groups are now targeting Missouri, and we are concerned that they will attempt to use the same tactics here. Amendment #1 is intended to protect Missouri farmers and ranchers from these misguided and damaging laws by making farming and ranching a constitutional right in Missouri law.

WHAT IS REQUIRED FOR AMENDMENT #1 TO BECOME PART OF THE MISSOURI CONSTITUTION?

Amendment #1 must receive a majority of votes cast in the statewide election this fall. It is critical that all supporters of Amendment #1 turn out to vote for the amendment.

WILL THIS AMENDMENT INTERFERE WITH A COUNTY OR CITY GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO REGULATE AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY?

No. The language of Amendment #1 specifically leaves the powers of local governments in place under Article 6 of the Missouri Constitution. If Amendment #1 passes, local governments will have all the same powers.

WHAT ACTIVITIES ARE PROTECTED BY AMENDMENT #1?

Amendment #1 is very broad in its protections. Nevertheless, like our other constitutional protections, its meaning will be more specifically defined by court rulings and state law. The amendment's language guarantees "the right of farmers and ranchers to engage in farming and ranching practices," and protects any activity undertaken by farmers and ranchers to raise crops or animals. However, those who violate laws or regulations would still be subject to enforcement action. Bad actors would not be protected.

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP PASS AMENDMENT #1?

There are many ways you can get involved to help pass Amendment #1 and protect farming and ranching in Missouri.

You can help by donating to Farm Bureau's fund supporting Amendment #1 or Missouri Farmers Care. We expect that out of state interest groups that want to destroy agriculture in Missouri will spend a lot of money in the run up to the 2014 election to spread misinformation and fear about Amendment #1. Countering those groups and getting the truth out will be expensive, and Farm Bureau needs your financial help to make it happen.

Along with your financial help, you can make efforts to promote Amendment #1 in your community. You can help by writing a letter to the editor of your local newspaper explaining the need for Amendment #1 and your support for it. Consider discussing your support for Amendment #1 at your local civic or service organization. You could also host a town meeting in your area to promote Amendment #1.

Finally, show up at the polls this fall and vote to pass Amendment #1. And when you're done, call your neighbors and your friends and make sure they've done the same. The ultimate success of Amendment #1 will hinge on turn out by folks that want to see farming and ranching protected in Missouri for generations to come. Make sure that every supporter you know goes to the polls and votes to pass Amendment #1.

**KEEP MISSOURI FARMING
SUPPORT AMENDMENT #1**
