

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2nd Session of the 43rd Legislature (1992)

SENATE BILL NO. 885

BY: HARRISON

AS INTRODUCED

AN ACT RELATING TO AGRICULTURE; AMENDING 2 O.S. 1991,
SECTION 1762, WHICH RELATES TO THE OKLAHOMA
AGRICULTURAL LINKED DEPOSIT PROGRAM; DIRECTING
CREATION OF A STATEWIDE RANGELAND IMPROVEMENT
PROGRAM; SPECIFYING CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF THE
PROGRAM; PROVIDING ELIGIBILITY; SPECIFYING
INFORMATION REQUIRED ON CERTAIN APPLICATION;
PROVIDING FOR PARTICIPATION IN CERTAIN PROGRAM;
AUTHORIZING PROMULGATION OF CERTAIN RULES; ADDING
CATEGORY OF PERSONS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE CERTAIN
LOANS; DECLARING MONTH OF NOVEMBER TO BE RANGE
MANAGEMENT MONTH; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION;
PROVIDING FOR NONCODIFICATION; AND PROVIDING AN
EFFECTIVE DATE.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 1501-211 of Title 82, unless
there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

Sections 1 and 2 of this act shall be known and may be cited as
the "Rangeland Improvement Act".

SECTION 2. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 1501-212 of Title 82, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. The Oklahoma Conservation Commission is hereby directed to develop and implement a statewide Rangeland Improvement Program. The program shall identify those practices which will promote biological diversity and improve habitat quality for wildlife and domestic animals. All treatment and management practices useful in restoring rangeland shall be included in the program.

The program shall define eligible practices as those published in a Soil Conservation Service Field Office Technical Guide.

B. Any owner or lessee of rangeland in this state may participate in the Rangeland Improvement Program by making application to the local Conservation District. The application shall identify specific practices defined by the Soil Conservation Service as useful in restoring rangeland in which the applicant wishes to engage, the projected cost of such practice, and such other information as the Commission may require.

Upon approval of the application by the Conservation District, the applicant shall be eligible to participate in the Oklahoma Agricultural Linked Deposit Program pursuant to Section 1761 et seq. of Title 2 of the Oklahoma Statutes.

C. The Commission is authorized to promulgate rules and regulations necessary for the implementation of this act.

SECTION 3. AMENDATORY 2 O.S. 1991, Section 1762, is amended to read as follows:

Section 1762. As used in the Oklahoma Agricultural Linked Deposit Program:

1. "Eligible agricultural business" means any person engaged in producing, processing or marketing alternative agricultural products or an at-risk farm or ranch business, within the State of Oklahoma in operation which has developed a management plan through the

Intensive Financial Management and Planning Support (IFMAPS) program of the Cooperative Extension Service of Oklahoma State University or the Farm Business Management Program of the State Department of Vocational and Technical Education or any person who has been certified by the Oklahoma Conservation Commission as an eligible participant in an approved Rangeland Improvement Program;

2. "Eligible lending institution" means a financial institution that agrees to participate in the Oklahoma Agricultural Linked Deposit Program, and:

- a. eligible to be a depository of state funds, or
- b. is an institution of the farm credit system organized under the federal "Farm Credit Act of 1971", 12 U.S.C. 2001, as amended;

3. "Agricultural linked deposit" means a certificate of deposit placed by the State Treasurer with an eligible lending institution or an investment in bonds, notes, debentures, or other obligations or securities issued by the federal farm credit bank with regard to an eligible lending institution for the purpose of carrying out the intent of this act;

4. "Alternative agricultural products" means those products included in a report submitted by the Cooperative Extension Service of Oklahoma State University to the State Department of Agriculture, and any other products which the State Board of Agriculture determines will broaden Oklahoma's agricultural economic base;

5. "An at-risk farm or ranch business" shall be one which seeks a production loan and meets the following criteria:

- a. at least sixty percent (60%) of gross income derived from farming and/or ranching, and
- b. a debt-to-asset ratio over forty percent (40%);

6. "Agricultural Linked Deposit Loan Package" means the forms provided by the State Treasurer for the purpose of applying for an agricultural linked deposit;

7. "Board" means the State Board of Agriculture; and

8. "Department" means the State Board of Agriculture or the State Department of Agriculture.

SECTION 4. WHEREAS, Oklahoma rangelands occupy an estimated 14.5 million acres of land area; and

WHEREAS, rangeland supports a renewable natural resource, range vegetation; and

WHEREAS, proper management of the range resource provides forage and habitat for both livestock and wildlife by converting energy from the sun in combination with soil, water and nutrients to produce food and fiber; and

WHEREAS, livestock production is a vital part of the economy of the State of Oklahoma; and

WHEREAS, proper management of the range resource according to ecological principles protects the soil, water and air quality which is the foundation of all life, both plant and animal; and

WHEREAS, properly managed rangelands protect watersheds, recharge aquifers, and reduce sediment, ensuring quality water for both rural and urban users; and also provides recreation, beauty, solitude, and other aesthetic values; and

WHEREAS, properly managed rangelands will enhance for future generations a stable environment, dependable food and fiber production, a stable economic base, and recreational opportunities, which will result in a higher quality of life.

The month of November is hereby declared Range Management Month in the State of Oklahoma.

SECTION 5. Section 4 of this act shall not be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes.

SECTION 6. This act shall become effective September 1, 1992.

43-2-1687

RWT

