

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill No: HB 133

49th Legislature, 1st Session, 2009

Short Title: NMSU Sustainable Agriculture Program

Sponsor(s): Representative Jeff Steinborn and Others

Analyst: James Ball

Date: January 30, 2009

Bill Summary:

HB 133 makes an appropriation to provide teaching, research, and extension services in a sustainable agriculture program by the Small Farm Institute (SFI) at New Mexico State University (NMSU) for students and small-scale farmers and ranchers.

Fiscal Impact:

\$100,000 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Board of Regents at NMSU for FY 10.

HB 133 contains a reversion clause.

Fiscal Issues:

According to the Higher Education Department (HED), NMSU did not submit this request for review. The request is not included in the department's legislative recommendations for FY 10.

Issues:

According to the website of the College of Agriculture and Home Economics (CAHE) at NMSU, a committee presented a proposal to the Dean of the College in September 2007 to create the SFI to give NMSU the opportunity to play a proactive roll in addressing the needs of small farmers and ranchers throughout New Mexico. The committee identified the SFI mission as dedication to the advancement of sustainable, economically viable, and environmentally sound agricultural practices that will enable present and future small-scale farmers in New Mexico to maintain viability and profitability of their operations. The committee recommended that the SFI be based on the main campus at NMSU with outreach statewide.

The CAHE website also states that SFI will focus on three primary objectives:

- conduct ecologically and systems-based agricultural research;
- develop and offer site-based and distance education classes in organic and sustainable agriculture at the high school, community college, undergraduate, graduate, and adult learner level; and
- create and disseminate scientific and practical production and marketing information relevant to small farms in New Mexico and the desert Southwest.

Background:

According to HED, NMSU operates the Sustainable Agriculture Research Education Center located in Alcalde for the benefit of small family farms and ranches of north central New Mexico. The mission of the center is to provide a mechanism for faculty to conduct research and deliver education and extension programs on sustainable agriculture systems for crop, vegetable, fruit, nut, flower, herb, and livestock production.

Related Bills:

HB 171 *NM-Grown Produce for School Meals*

SB 107 *Fresh Fruits & Vegetables in School Lunches*