

**Agriculture Commissioner
Budget 602
House Bill No. 1290, Senate Bill No. 2009**

	FTE Positions	General Fund	Other Funds	Total
1999-2001 legislative appropriation	55.50	\$4,479,272	\$4,596,441	\$9,075,713
1997-99 legislative appropriation	<u>48.00</u>	<u>4,655,240</u>	<u>4,873,761</u>	<u>9,529,001</u>
1999-2001 appropriation increase (decrease) to 1997-99 appropriation	7.50	(\$175,968)	(\$277,320)	(\$453,288)

NOTE: The 1999-2001 appropriation amounts include \$27,134, \$17,909 of which is from the general fund, for the agency's share of the \$5.4 million funding pool appropriated to the Office of Management and Budget for special market equity adjustments for classified employees.

Item Description

State meat inspection program - House Bill No. 1290 provides for the establishment of a state meat inspection program. The bill appropriates \$454,000 of special funds to the Agriculture Commissioner and authorizes eight FTE positions to implement and operate the program for the 1999-2001 biennium. Of the \$454,000, \$250,000 is from the Ag PACE fund at the Bank of North Dakota, \$200,000 is from federal funds, and \$4,000 is from fee collections. The bill creates a committee for only the 1999-2001 biennium to assist the Agriculture Commissioner in establishing the administrative rules for the program. In addition, a section of legislative intent was added providing that the Agriculture Commissioner attempt to begin the program by July 1, 2000, but if that is not possible, the program should begin no later than January 1, 2001.

Minor use product registration - The Legislative Assembly provided \$45,000 from the environment and rangeland protection fund for a .5 FTE position for minor use product registration activities, including writing and preparing federal Sections 18 and 24 crop pesticide registrations for minor use labeling. The Legislative Assembly authorized the commissioner to use this funding to increase a .5 FTE position to a one FTE position for performing these activities.

Status/Result

The program is anticipated to be operational by October 2000. The department hired the program coordinator in December 1999, the senior inspector in April 2000, and plans to hire two additional inspectors by October 2000. The department concluded the public hearings on the administrative rules for the program in April 2000 and is in the process of obtaining federal approval for the program. For the 2001-03 biennium, the department anticipates needing \$950,000 and seven FTE positions for the program. The federal government will provide \$425,000 of the \$950,000 with the remainder to be requested from state sources. The seven FTE positions include the coordinator, senior inspector, four inspectors, and one support position.

The department combined the .5 FTE position authorized by the 1999 Legislative Assembly with a vacant .5 FTE position within the department and has hired a one FTE position to perform minor use product registration activities and crop harmonization activities of the department. Funding for the position is being provided from the environment and rangeland protection fund (\$45,000 appropriation), and the department anticipates receiving a federal grant from the Environmental Protection Agency for the remainder of the funding needed for the position. The department has been successful in labeling a number of products under Section 18 but has been unable to under Section 24, because of the federal requirement that the state receive the approval of the company producing the product that will carry the label under Section 24. The state has been unable to obtain approval from any of these companies.

State Board of Animal Health position - The Legislative Assembly authorized an additional position for the State Board of Animal Health; however, no additional funding was provided for the position.

The State Board of Animal Health reallocated funding within its line item appropriation to hire a clerical position in September 1999.