

FOX EYE RANCH/CHRIS MENSCH
LAWRENCE, KS.

For 20 years, my family and I have run a horse business near the Lawrence area. This has included standing stallions, shipping semen, maintaining a band of broodmares, showing horses, boarding, teaching horsemanship and holding clinics. This entails the purchase of hay, grain, bedding, vet and farrier services, fertilizer and seed tillage. It also includes financing fences, arenas, barns, sheds, stalls and equipment which includes tractors, trucks, trailers and manure spreaders. Just making this list makes me feel faint. But, these purchases are not just about us but positively influence numerous businesses from the Kansas farmers to the Ford Motor Co.

The KEEP is a low impact, high result proposal for horse owners in Ks. It is for horse owners by horse owners. This voluntary check-off program has the opportunity to provide financial assistance to a wide variety of equine related activities positively impacting Ks agriculture.

These nickels could help fund a ramp for a therapeutic riding program, offset expenses for returning veterans program, assist with Equine Assisted Psychotherapy. They could also be used for 4-H clubs, rodeo programs, scholarships for college or trade schools, FFA, assistance for national competition teams and support for rescue facilities. As a personal example, we were approached by a local Girl Scout troop that wanted us to hold a clinic that would allow all their members to earn their Horsemanship Badge. We struggled to make this affordable for them but also for us. It is still unclear about whether or not they will be able to afford this. How helpful it would be for them and for us if there were funds available.

The nickel a bag is small change for the huge impact this non-tax program could have on Kansas business and our business.