LWVIL 2015 Issues Briefing: Sustainable Food and Water Report
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State:
• In February 2013, State Senator David Koehler (Peoria) introduced Senate Bill 1666 requiring the labeling of genetically engineered foods. As genetic engineering of food and labeling of such food was a topic considered in the Agriculture Update, the Glenview League sponsored a caucus at the June 2013 state convention entitled “Genetically Modified (GM) Food--Why Should I Be Concerned?” featuring Professor Stephen Moose, a corn geneticist from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. In addition, members of several Leagues attended one or more of the three public hearings on the bill held during the summer of 2013 in Bloomington-Normal, Carbondale, and Chicago. In November 2013 the Greater Peoria League sponsored a forum on the bill and posted a YouTube video of it which can be found at http://youtu.be/YCnoQYoSIFs. SB1666 did not advance in 2014. However, Senator Koehler is the sponsor of a new, revised bill, SB734, which was introduced on February 3, 2015. It is currently in the Assignments Committee.
• The League continued to monitor the Illinois Pollution Control Board actions related to a 2012 rulemaking proposal by Illinois EPA to strengthen environmental standards for large-scale livestock facilities (also known as CAFOs, concentrated animal feeding operations) and bring the state program into compliance with the Clean Water Act. League members attended and testified at the 2012 Illinois Pollution Control Board (IPCB) public hearings on this regulatory proposal. In January 2014 LWVIL submitted written comments to the IPCB on the proposed rules. Once the IPCB adopted those rules, LWVIL sent a letter of support to the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR) in May 2014. JCAR approved most of the rules but directed the IPCB to reconsider the issue of creating a state CAFO facility inventory. A docket on this topic is open and LWVIL submitted additional comments to IPCB in February 2015.

Local:
• The LWV-Jo Daviess Co. is spearheading water shed planning efforts in Jo Daviess County.
• Members of the Jo Daviess league have also joined LWV members from Cedar Rapids and Dubuque, IA, and LaCrosse, WI, in efforts to develop an Upper Mississippi River Region ILO to work on natural resource preservation issues in the region. See http://youtu.be/8HAhuToAOKk and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9B45Q3KerZk.
• Though the Agriculture Update is officially complete, local Leagues continue to examine food and agriculture issues. Examples include Glenview (July 2014 on the topic of food safety), Glencoe (September 2014, nutrient management and our waterways), and Glen Ellyn/Wheaton (upcoming on March 19, 2015, antibiotics in animal production).
**Anticipated Issues**

- **Pesticide drift:** LWVIL's position on pesticides and the LWVUS position on agriculture provide the basis for involvement in this issue. The Illinois Department of Agriculture receives ~100 complaints annually regarding pesticide spraying, the majority of them related to agricultural drift. In 2009, State Senator David Koehler held a public hearing on drift issues. The outcome was Illinois DriftWatch, an online voluntary registry in which farmers, beekeepers, & vintners can register the GPS location of their fields so that pesticide applicators can avoid unintentional spraying. By the end of 2013 only 79 applicators (out of 34,000 licensed applicators, half of whom are private applicators) had signed up to receive automatic notifications when a sensitive area has been registered. That's compared to 481 registered beekeepers and fruit and vegetable growers. It would appear that the voluntary approach to minimizing spray drift events via DriftWatch has not been successful. For this reason, we have begun participating with those groups in exploring possible legislative changes.

- **Nutrient Management:** Nitrogen and phosphorus runoff into streams and downstream bodies of water is a local, regional, and national water quality issue. The Midwestern U.S. is a significant source of fertilizer (largely nitrogen) runoff from agriculture and is a major cause of the dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico. If state efforts to reduce the nutrient load flowing into the Mississippi River are not reduced, the federal government will step in as it has done with the Chesapeake Bay. Industry best management practices are currently voluntary. No proposed legislation or regulation is on the immediate horizon but this is a topic to watch.

- **Antibiotics in Animal Production:** Regulated by FDA, antibiotic use in animals is governed by a voluntary Guidance for Industry. For several years New York congresswoman (and microbiologist) Louise Slaughter has sought passage of a bill entitled Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act. Momentum has been building with consumer group Food & Water Watch's strategy to engage city councils across the country to prompt congressional action. So far, 14 cities including Chicago, St. Paul, Seattle and Pittsburgh, have passed resolutions to encourage Congress to pass PAMTA.