

complete solution might not be discovered for more than five years.


While some farmers are willing to wait for researchers to find an answer to the blight problem, others are moving on to other crops.

To assist those growers, Rep. Howard Swenson (R-Nicollet) is sponsoring a bill (HF1083) that would boost funding for the Agricultural Utilization and Research Institute in Crookston to provide technical assistance and grants. The proposed \$3 million would also fund market research for the alternative crops. Swenson said his idea is that the money would be in addition to appropriations already targeted for the institute.

Swenson's bill also contains money for feed-lot manure process and odor control technology research, and it would provide money to help farmers pay for crop insurance. In all, the bill includes more than \$20 million in spending proposals.

All bills mentioned above are being considered for inclusion in the omnibus agriculture funding bill, but Rep. Bob Ness (R-Dassel), who chairs the agriculture finance panel, warned lawmakers that there may not be enough available money to fund all proposals.

Lawmakers have begun the final push to assemble the omnibus bill.

Legislators are also considering other plans to help farmers survive. The grandest one is a proposal to spend \$80 million in direct payments to farmers, included in a budget surplus rebate bill (HF1) that is currently before a House-Senate conference committee. 

Where to find information

House Public Information Office

175 State Office Building
(651) 296-2146 or 1-800-657-3550

The House Public Information Office is a nonpartisan office that provides committee meeting schedules; legislator information; and publications, including the *Session Weekly* news magazine, educational brochures for all ages, and member directories. All information is available at no charge.

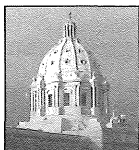
Most of what this office publishes can be viewed on the Legislature's World Wide Web page. To connect, point your web browser at: <http://www.leg.state.mn.us>

Chief Clerk's Office

211 State Capitol (651) 296-2314

The Chief Clerk's Office provides copies of bills at no charge, all agendas for House sessions, and the Journal of the House.

An early model of independent politics



It's a Fact!

Gov. Jesse Ventura was not the first Minnesota politician to spurn the support of special interest groups.

When Hannah Kempfer was elected to the House in 1922, she was adamant that

she would only represent her district as a whole and she refused party or special interest endorsements during her campaign. She ended up serving nine non-consecutive terms as an independent from Otter Tail County.

She was one of four women elected to the House in the first election year that women were allowed on the ballot. Hailing from the small town of Erhard, near Fergus Falls, Kempfer was also the first rural woman elected to the Legislature.

Running at the urging of her Otter Tail County friends, the former schoolteacher and farmer's wife even rejected an endorsement offer from the Nonpartisan League.

"I would rather stand for the principle of representing all of the people of Otter Tail County and be defeated than to be elected under circumstances that oblige me to vote according to the dictation of any party or individuals," she wrote to the league's leaders on Oct. 25, 1922, following a primary election victory.

"My guiding principle will be 'equal opportunities for all with special privileges to none,'" she said.

Kempfer served on House committees including game and fish, public welfare, public health and hospitals, and appropriations. Her committee membership reflected her legislative interests, which included preserving wildlife, improving medical institutions, and providing for the welfare of women and children. She pushed for lowering taxes, although she never served on a taxes committee.

In 1927, she chaired the game and fish committee, securing the passage of legislation that required anglers to obtain licenses annually at a fee of 50 cents. The new law

angered some of her constituents, and she narrowly won re-election in 1928. But because of some lingering resentment from Otter Tail anglers, Kempfer was defeated in 1930, only to be re-elected in 1932.

Throughout her House career, she retained her fierce independent political stance.

"I never depend on lobbyists to instruct me, but I do listen to the pro and con arguments and then do what seems to me the best," she wrote in a campaign advertisement.

Once a female colleague introduced a bill that would have repealed all discriminatory laws against women. Kempfer requested after the bill's first reading that it



Reps. Hannah Kempfer, left, and Mabeth Hurd Paige confer in the House Chamber.

be postponed indefinitely. She opposed the bill because she thought women should have some protection in law, and she succeeded in getting a majority to agree with her. The bill's sponsor reportedly never forgave Kempfer.

H a n n a h

Kempfer's childhood experiences of being both an orphan and an immigrant flavored her later legislative career. She was born Dec. 22, 1880, on an English ship at sea to a stewardess and an unknown sailor. She was left at an orphanage in Stavanger, Norway, and adopted in 1881. Her new family emigrated to America in 1886, settling in Minnesota's Mower County and later moving to Otter Tail County.

At age 17, she became a rural schoolteacher, teaching her first school of 60 students in 1898. Five years later, she married Charles Taylor Kempfer. They did not have any children, but they were foster parents to many orphaned boys and girls.

Articles about Kempfer during her first House campaign focused heavily on her humble beginnings. A headline in the St. Paul Daily News following her election proclaimed, "Minnesota Woman, Once Norwegian Waif, Will Take Seat in Legislature January 2."

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Photo courtesy Minnesota Historical Society

The House meets in session.

30 minutes following session

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno

Agenda: Continuation of morning meeting.

FRIDAY, April 16

8 a.m.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno

Agenda: Health and human services omnibus bill.

Note: This meeting will continue 30 minutes after session in 10 State Office Building.

10 a.m.

TAXES

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams

Agenda: To be announced.

12 noon

The House meets in session.

30 minutes following session

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno

Agenda: Continuation of morning meeting.

Continued from page 4

Securing rights for illegitimate children became a favorite cause of Kempfer's. She successfully sponsored legislation that gave children born out of wedlock the same rights as children of married parents.

"A child should not be punished for what is no fault of its own," she said in response to a floor debate over her bill during which some crude remarks were made about illegitimate children.

"I want to do all I can to improve the lot of these poor children because I am one of them," she told her colleagues. "I am an illegitimate child; I know what it means."

Kempfer is also remembered as the first woman to sit in the House Speaker's chair. She took the gavel for one day on Jan. 28, 1925, and the press reported she had difficulty presiding over a heated debate concerning the gasoline tax.

She died Sept. 27, 1943, at the age of 62, barely a year after retiring from the Legislature.

**If you have Internet access, visit the Legislature's web page at:
<http://www.leg.state.mn.us>**

Former House doorman Charlie Ward dies

The House observed a moment of silence April 6 to honor Charlie Ward, who died April 3, about a year after he retired from his post as doorman of the House chamber.

Ward, who was 79 years old, worked for the House Sergeant-

post office. He retired in 1980 as postmaster.

Ward was born and raised in Anoka and attended St. John's University. He joined the National Guard in 1939 and was on active duty from 1941 until the end of World War II in 1945. He was



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