

MINUTES
SENATE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, February 18, 2020

TIME: 8:00 A.M.

PLACE: Room WW53

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Guthrie, Senators Patrick, Harris, Mortimer, Lent, Bayer, Jordan, and Nelson

ABSENT/ EXCUSED: Vice Chairwoman Den Hartog

NOTE: The sign-in sheet, testimonies, and other related materials will be retained with the minutes in the Committee's office until the end of the session and will then be located on file with the minutes in the Legislative Services Library.

CONVENED: **Chairman Guthrie** called the Senate Agricultural Affairs Committee (Committee) to order at 8:01 a.m.

GUBERNATORIAL APPOINTMENT: **Wendy Pratt**, Blackfoot, Idaho, appointed to the State Soil and Water Conservation Commission (Commission) for a term commencing January 21, 2020 and expiring July 1, 2024, explained to the Committee her interest in serving on the Commission. She explained her cattle ranching background and understanding of surface and ground water usages. She said as a rancher she is familiar with range issues and has an interest in the conservation of soil and water, which is a great resource for agriculture, ranching, and recreation. **Ms. Pratt** spoke about the ongoing difficulties along the wind erosion corridor. She said she is eager to serve and would like to work to be a problem solver.

When asked what she hoped to contribute to the Commission, **Ms. Pratt** stated she would like to learn more about soil issues. She said she brings the producers' perspective to the Commission. **Ms. Pratt** spoke about the designated wind corridor area in southeast Idaho. She detailed the causes of soil erosion and some of the tactics that have been used to mediate soil erosion. It is through the work of the Commission that soil and water concerns can be addressed.

PAGE INTRODUCTION: **Luke Amar**, Rocky Mountain High School, Meridian, Idaho. He said he attended the American Legion's Boys' State program and was inspired to apply to the page program. He shared with the Committee his interests and his desire to attend Utah State University.

PRESENTATION: **Herman Roberts**, Preston, Idaho, State President, Future Farmers of America (FFA), introduced the State FFA officers in attendance: Shalani Wilcox, State Vice President, Madison; Cassidey Plum, State Secretary, Meridian; Katie Hettinga, State Treasurer, Kuna; Sydney Plum, State Reporter, Meridian; and Kate Doumit, State Secretary, Troy. He invited Ms. Doumit to the podium for the start of their presentation.

Ms. Doumit said through agricultural education, students are provided the opportunities for leadership development, personal growth, and career success. She detailed the three components that make up the three discipline circles: 1.) classroom and laboratory instruction; 2.) supervised agricultural experiences; and 3.) FFA. She explained how students can attain experience through the variety of programs offered. She spoke about her high school opportunities and how they have influenced her life trajectory.

Mr. Roberts reported that Idaho FFA chapters have experienced membership growth. He explained the role of the state officers and how they have traveled across the state visiting other chapters to help direct the work of Idaho's FFA which works to promote premier leadership, personal growth, and career success. He spoke about the new programs and the state conferences for FFA membership training.

Ms. Wilcox spoke about her leadership opportunities and experiences. She said parliamentary procedures competition has been a highlight in her FFA involvement. She said FFA shares their knowledge of agriculture with those that have not had that experience and teaches students skills that they can apply in future schooling and careers.

PRESENTATION: **Roy Eiguren**, Partner, Eiguren Ellis Public Policy Firm, said his firm represents the Amalgamated Sugar Company (Company) and today they will be updating the Committee about the state of the sugarbeet industry. He introduced John McCreedy, President and CEO, Amalgamated Sugar Company.

Mr. McCreedy detailed the history of the Company, its locations, number of employees, cooperative ownership, board members, and marketing association affiliations. He detailed the Company's goals for future growth which include capital investments, brand refreshing, technology updates, and diversification opportunities.

Mr. McCreedy laid out the legislative priorities, reported the sugar industry's farming and manufacturing presence in the United States, and detailed the overall sugar consumption. He explained the U.S. sugar policy and detailed the pricing fluctuations over a 30-year timeframe. He reported consumer sugar consumption, the nutritional components of a well-balanced diet, and how plant-based sugar is a positive addition to foods (see attachment 1).

Brad Griff, Executive Director, Idaho Sugarbeet Growers Association (Association), introduced the Association board members in the audience. He explained the role of the Association is to work with growers to ensure the efficient, successful, and profitable production of sugarbeets.

Randall Grant, Association President, Hazelton reported the membership make up of the Association and said that Idaho is the second largest producer of sugarbeets. He explained the ability to adjust water content through irrigation helps to improve the quality of the sugarbeet and reported labor difficulties and the effect of the prior year's early frost on the harvest.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Guthrie** adjourned the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

Senator Jim Guthrie
Chair

LeAnn Mohr
Secretary