

MINUTES  
**HOUSE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Monday, March 02, 2015  
**TIME:** 1:30 p.m. or Upon Adjournment  
**PLACE:** Room EW42  
**MEMBERS:** Chairman Andrus, Vice Chairman Boyle, Representatives McMillan, Batt, Bell, Dayley, Miller, Romrell, VanOrden, Burtenshaw, Kerby, Troy, Pence, Erpelding  
**ABSENT/  
EXCUSED:** Rep. Boyle  
**GUESTS:** Stan Ellis, Capitol Press

**Chairman Andrus** called the meeting to order at 2:51 p.m.

**Blaine Jacobson**, Wheat Commission Executive Director, presented the Idaho Wheat Commission's annual report. He stated the Idaho wheat market is growing at a robust rate and the outlook is for continued growth in the next 15 years. This year's wet weather presented problems for the growers. Idaho typically enjoys dry weather at harvest. It is highly unusual to have excessive moisture at the levels received this year. August and September were the wettest on record in southern Idaho since 1953. He said this damage exposed gaps in the crop insurance program. A task force has been assembled by the Governor to examine the problem and bring some help to the growers.

**Mr. Jacobson** said the gluten free diet had an impact on the wheat market. He indicated research shows about 1% of the population is allergic to gluten with another 6-7% sensitive to gluten. He stated the products used to substitute for gluten are often less healthy with more sugars and starches. He also clarified the misconception that gluten has changed over the last 50 years, saying tests have shown that not to be the case.

**Mr. Jacobson** stated Idaho wheat has a nice balance of export and import customers. About half of Idaho's harvest goes domestic and the other half goes to exports. Domestic customers include known brands such as Wheaties, Wheat Chex, Sun Chips, Pizza Hut and several more. Japan is the top export destination followed by Mexico, Philippines, Korea and Taiwan.

In response to committee questions about what advances have come through research in the past ten years, **Mr. Jacobson** said Idaho has the 2nd highest yield per acre in the nation. He continued explaining there is constant research into developing disease and insect resistant varieties.

Responding to committee question about what was being done to improve varieties to make them more drought resistant, **Mr. Jacobson** said this will be among the first to be launched but they are most likely to be about seven years out.

**ADJOURN:** There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:18 p.m.

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Representative Andrus  
Chair

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Joan Majors  
Secretary