

MINUTES
HOUSE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, February 26, 2018
TIME: 1:30 P.M.
PLACE: Room EW42
MEMBERS: Chairman Boyle, Vice Chairman Dayley, Representatives Bell, Miller, VanOrden, Burtenshaw, Kerby, Troy, Stevenson, Amador, Armstrong, Hanks, Zito, Erpelding, Toone
**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Representative(s) VanOrden, Erpelding
GUESTS: Blair Jacobson, Idaho Wheat Commission (Commission); Stacey Satterlee, Idaho Grain Produces Association

Chairman Boyle called the meeting to order 1:33 p.m.

Blaine Jacobson, Executive Director, Commission, stated the Commission is governed by a board of five wheat producers from different areas of Idaho, all appointed by the Governor. Wheat in Idaho was the second largest crop in Idaho last year, with 1.1 million acres harvested and sales over \$4,155 million. The Commission budget is \$3,183,429, which is allocated to research, market development and grower education. Director Jacobson reviewed the Commission's budget and where the funds were distributed. He advised the last five years of world-wide production of wheat has outpaced consumption with the difference going into inventory which pushes wheat prices down. He said Idaho has an advantage compared to other wheat-growing states and overseas competitors because Idaho has stable production due to two-thirds of its crops being irrigated or coming from the naturally-watered Palouse. Director Jacobson discussed some of the market Idaho is developing through research and the impact of NAFTA and Russian emergence into the wheat market. Director Jacobson emphasized that the river system is essential to exportation of Idaho wheat, and the upcoming generations need to be educated on its importance. He said other challenges to the wheat industry are renewal of trade agreements such as NAFTA and TPP, encouraging wheat growers to develop wheat value niches such as high-fiber wheat, and competition with GMO advantaged crops.

In response to committee questions, **Director Jacobson** replied the Black Sea area is becoming more efficient at growing wheat. He informed the committee that high-fiber wheat has resistance starch which does not change into sugar as fast as other wheat does and is, therefore, good for digestion and health. He stated the Commission is trying to raise grower awareness regarding opportunities that have resulted from research development. Director Jacobson and committee members discussed Wheat Commission funding compared to Potato Commission funding and the feasibility of the Commission and the Barley Commission joining efforts.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 2:12 p.m.

Representative Boyle
Chair

Lorrie Byerly
Secretary