

MINUTES
SENATE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, January 30, 2024

TIME: 8:00 A.M.

PLACE: Room WW53

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Hartgen, Vice Chairman Nichols, Senators Foreman, Hart, Schroeder, Carlson, Zuiderveld, Semmelroth, Taylor

ABSENT/ EXCUSED: None

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 Hartgen** called the meeting of the Senate Agricultural Affairs Committee (Committee) to order at 8:00 a.m.

Chariman Hartgen called Rick Waitley to the podium to introduce the University of Idaho - Agricultural Economics Class of 2024.

PRESENTATION: **Introduction of the University of Idaho (U of I) Agricultural Economics (Ag-Econ) Class of 2024.** **Rick Waitley**, Executive Director, Food Producers of Idaho (FPI), gave a brief overview of the U of I Ag - Econ public policy tour. He stated this was FPI's 22nd year to sponsor the tour. The students were involved with the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at the U of I and were excited to be a part of how public policy works in Idaho. **Mr. Waitley** asked the students to introduce themselves to the Committee (Attachment 1).

MINUTES APPROVAL: **Senator Carlson** moved to approve the Minutes of January 23, 2024. **Senator Taylor** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

PASSED THE GAVEL: Chairman Hartgen passed the gavel to Vice Chair Nichols.

RULES REVIEW: **Vice Chair Nichols** instructed the Committee to ask questions before voting on the dockets.

DOCKET NO. 02-0610-2301 **Rules Governing the Growing of Potatoes (ZBR Chapter Rewrite) - Proposed Rule.**

MOTION: **Senator Schroeder** moved to approve **Docket No. 02-0610-2301**. **Senator Carlson** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

DOCKET NO. 02-0616-2301 **Rules Governing Honey Standards (ZBR Chapter Rewrite) - Proposed Rule.**

MOTION: **Senator Taylor** moved to approve **Docket No. 02-0616-2301**. **Senator Carlson** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

DOCKET NO. 11-0201-2301 **Rules of the Idaho State Brand Board (Fee Rule) - Proposed Rule.**

MOTION: **Senator Carlson** moved to approve **Docket No. 11-0201-2301**. **Senator Semmelroth** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

DOCKET NO. 24-3801-2301 **Rules of the State of Idaho Board of Veterinary Medicine (ZBR Chapter Rewrite, Fee Rule) - Proposed Rule.**

MOTION: **Senator Zuiderveld** moved to approve **Docket No. 24-3801-2301**. **Senator Schroeder** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

RULES REVIEW: **Vice Chair Nichols** informed the Committee the next docket was not being voted on. She introduced Sam Eaton.

DOCKET NO. 29-0101-2301 **Rules of the Idaho Potato Commission (ZBR Chapter Rewrite) - Proposed Rule.** **Sam Eaton**, Vice President, Legal & Government Affairs, Idaho Potato Commission (IPC), stated to the Committee the pending rule was being adopted pursuant to Executive Order 2020-01; Zero-Based Regulation resulting in the removal of unnecessary and redundant language. There were no changes to the pending rule it was being adopted as originally proposed.

Mr. Eaton outlined that the rules governed the payment of taxes to the Idaho Potato Commission. Records were to be kept by growers, dealers, handlers, shippers, processors, container manufacturers and out of state re-packers of Idaho potatoes. He stated the use of certification marks, trademarks, branding of individual potatoes, the state brand grade, packing requirements, and additional labeling were governed procedures before the Idaho Potato Commission.

PASSED THE GAVEL: Vice Chair Nichols passed the gavel to Chairman Hartgen.

PRESENTATION: Idaho Potato Commission (IPC) Updates. **Jamey Higham**, CEO, IPC, opened with a quick overview of IPC history. The IPC was established in 1937, it was a state agency responsible for promoting and protecting the famous "Grown in Idaho" seal, a federally registered trademark that assured consumers they were purchasing genuine, top-quality Idaho potatoes. **Mr. Higham** acknowledged Idaho's generational potato farmers along with ideal growing conditions, rich volcanic soil, climate, and irrigation. These were factors that differentiated Idaho potatoes from potatoes grown in other states. He communicated there were issues the Idaho potato industry still faced such as droughts, inflation, and federal regulations initiating the reclassification of the potato as a grain instead of a vegetable (Attachment 2, and 3).

PRESENTATION: Snake River Sugarbeet Growers Association (SRSGA). **Zach Patterson**, President, stated the SRSGA represented 700 growers in southern Idaho and eastern Oregon. There were over 180,000 acres of sugarbeets grown in those regions, which represented 16 percent of sugarbeets grown in the United States. He mentioned the average sugar beet contained one cup of sugar, four and a half cups of water, four tablespoons of molasses, and 2.4 ounces of beet pulp.

Mr. Galen Lee, Vice President, SRSGA, mentioned the challenges that faced the sugarbeet industry such as, labor, water infrastructure, and farmland preservation. He noted that most harvesters were pulled by a tractor, but his was unique, it was a Ropa Tiger, there were only one of these in Idaho and he was fortunate enough to rent it at harvest time (Attachment 4).

PRESENTATION: Amalgamated Sugar - Community Matters. Brodie Griffin, Vice President of Agriculture, gave a brief overview of Amalgamated Sugar Company. It was founded in 1897 in Ogden, Utah. In 1916 the first of three factories were built in Idaho, one in Twin Falls, the second in 1917 in Paul and the third in 1942 in Nampa. He cited these factories remained in operation today and produced a total of up to 2.2 billion pounds of sugar each year. He stated over one billion dollars were contributed to the Idaho economy and that Idaho produced ten percent of the nation's real sugar.

Mr. Griffin mentioned the Mini-Cassia Steam Dryer for drying beet pulp was powered by steam from the existing boiler house. It eliminated two existing pulp dryers that burned natural gas and/or coal, it resulted in nearly 100 percent energy savings that could significantly reduce product loss. He stated the factory planned on the transformation of bio gas into two megawatts of power. This method may have qualified for a federal tax credit in the future (Attachment 5).

DISCUSSION: Chairman Hartgen inquired if Amalgamated Sugar would use the megawatts that were generated.

Mr. Griffin answered yes, the power generated would be used internally.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Hartgen** adjourned the meeting at 8:32 a.m.

Senator Hartgen
Chair

Melissa Price
Secretary