

MINUTES
SENATE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

- DATE:** Tuesday, February 14, 2012
- TIME:** 8:00 A.M.
- PLACE:** Room WW53
- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Siddoway, Vice Chairman Smyser, Senators Corder, Pearce, Hammond, Vick, Nuxoll, Bock, and Schmidt
- ABSENT/ EXCUSED:**
- 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.
- CALL TO ORDER** **Chairman Siddoway** called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. He asked permission to re-order the agenda to accommodate a guest who needed to catch a flight out of the Boise Airport. There were no objections and the agenda was amended.
- PRESENTATION** **Chairman Siddoway** invited the Page for Agricultural Affairs, **Tess Warzyn**, to the podium for recognition of her excellent service during her term with the Senate. He highlighted her school activities and accomplishments at Payette High School, including her 4.25 GPA and pending graduation as Valedictorian, and he thanked her for all she's done for the Committee. **Vice Chairman Smyser** contributed that she has known "**Tess**" since she was a rambunctious little girl and she has developed into a fine young woman, and she is proud of her, and thanked her for her service. **Chairman Siddoway** presented her with a gift and letters of recommendation. **Ms. Warzyn** said she didn't want to leave and had learned a lot about agriculture and that the Committee members are intelligent, dedicated good people doing their best, and she thanked the Committee.
- S1303** **Chairman Siddoway** invited **Stan Boyd** to the podium to present S1303, relating to cruelty to animals. **Mr. Boyd** directed the Committee to the handout and outlined the bill's provisions that would create a felony for a third conviction in fifteen years of cruelty to animals, as defined in section 25.35.02.5(a). He said Section 5(a) is very broad, as it gives a judge and/or jury the ability to look at each individual case on its own merits.
- Mr. Boyd** noted that each prior conviction shall constitute one violation of this chapter, regardless of the number of counts. He cited an example of three dogs overheating in a vehicle, that would be only one count, not three. He also noted that standard, normally accepted practices in agriculture are exempt and that branding calves or docking lambs does not constitute animal cruelty. Supporting documents relating to this testimony have been archived and can be accessed in the office of the Committee Secretary. (See Attachment #1.)
- Chairman Siddoway** invited **Rick Stott**, Idaho Cattlemen and Executive Vice President of Agribeef, to the podium. He spoke in support of S1303. **Mr. Stott** stated that the reputation of his company and industry is important to them, and their focus is providing great products to consumers. One of their primary objectives is the STAR commitment, in which the A stands for Animal Welfare. He said this is not only because it's the right thing to do, but also because consumers are interested in it, and when they passed the resolution last fall, he had phone calls from people around the country congratulating them on being in a state that really cared about animal welfare. He said it's ironic that the proposed statute is receiving a negative perception.

Mr. Stott compared animal cruelty to his morning basketball game, saying that without referees, they are left to call fouls on their own, and everyone knows what a foul is, and same with animal cruelty: everyone knows what animal abuse is, as he experienced when he was asked to rescue horses from despicable treatment. **Mr. Stott** said what this proposal does is put a line in the sand to tell citizens and people across the country that Idaho does care about animals and takes the issue seriously. He said some might argue that the statute doesn't go far enough, and some would argue that the statute isn't needed at all because prosecution already occurs. He said this discussion has been going on for years, and drawing a line in the sand and providing a felony provision is critically important.

Senator Corder commented that **Mr. Stott** was instrumental in writing this statute, and asked him what he says to people who ask why sections b, c, d, and e are excluded, especially since agricultural practices are exempt anyway. **Mr. Stott** answered that quite frankly, the purpose of this is to pass it, and have a felony provision on the books, given the amount of controversy in both chambers on this issue. He said it's not about cutting it off, not doing enough, or doing too little, it's about passing a felony provision, plain and simple. It's more important to get wide support than to wordsmith. He said they think it sends a message of what is acceptable and what is not acceptable and it protects the industry and goes after the people who are really not doing the right thing.

Senator Schmidt asked for clarification on the wording in 5(a) of "intentional" and "malicious" and cited the previous example of leaving three dogs in an overheating car, and if that would be interpreted as intentional and malicious. **Mr. Stott** replied that as with the basketball example, "when you get fouled, you know you got fouled," and it's the same thing with animal abuse: "you know when animal abuse occurs." He said it's a judgement and it depends on how long the dogs are in the car - the difference between running in for an ice cream is probably okay, but 110 degrees for eight hours and two dogs die, that's probably malicious.

Mr. Stott said he has spoken with people who are executing this law, and one thing that struck him is they said not to mess around with the words because it is very well entrenched in both the judicial interpretation and the administration of this law to be able to execute, from their perspective, people who are truly abusing animals.

Senator Pearce said he recognizes that the definitions in the code are definite, so what is being talked about here is image. He said he read an article recently in Beef Magazine about the Humane Society of the United State's plan about meat used for food. He asked **Mr. Stott** how the line in the sand applies here. **Mr. Stott** answered that is a relevant question that is being debated across the nation. He said HSUS is a deplorable organization that spends 97 percent of its money on marketing and pension plans and high salaries and has no interest in really helping animals in any government action. He said contrast that to the Humane Society of Idaho who spends 98 percent of their money on actually rescuing and helping animals. HSUS prime priority is putting animal agriculture out of business - they're vegans, and they don't want farmers to have business.

Mr. Stott said this bill is not driven by the HSUS, but rather by people having a negative perception that Idaho doesn't care about animals. He said, "It is image, it is perception, and perception is reality." When industry sells its products to consumers, they care about that.

Senator Pearce stated that didn't really answer his question, noting that in two years, someone will be back before these committees asking for more stringent penalty, and "where do we draw a line in the sand?" He shared the story of some neighbors who had sheep, horses and cattle, and had a breakdown in their family, so some neighbors even helped feed the animals, but someone determined it was animal abuse. So the Humane Society hauled the animals away. **Senator Pearce** said to even have those people even considered for a felony was pretty tough, so again, "Where do we draw the line in the sand?"

Mr. Stott said it doesn't change the same approach for that neighbor. It's three strikes. This legislation is for indication of a repetitive, irresponsible, habitual animal abuser. In looking at statistics, when a person is committing reprehensible acts against animals, more than fifty percent of the time, they're abusing people, too.

Mr. Stott said it's not just the guy who has a family breakdown and can't afford to feed the cattle and the neighbors help out; it's the third strike serious issues of repetitious, out of control abuse. He said, to answer where the line is in the sand: "that's why you guys get paid the big bucks." The cattle industry says this is where the line is, to send a message to the citizens of Idaho and consumers that we care, that no one is in favor of animal abuse, and it takes Idaho off the radar of being one of the states that doesn't care.

Senator Bock said he's one of those who thinks that this doesn't go far enough, even though he will probably vote for it. He said he has concerns about the three strike provision, saying if someone is capable of committing horrific acts, why doesn't it go straight to the felony. And, he said echoing **Senator Corder's** comment about having an exemption for agriculture already so the issue is not about interfering with what is normal animal care in the industry, but why doesn't it go farther for companion animal cases that draw big national attention.

Chairman Siddoway noted that **Mr. Stott** is not the "expert" witness, so if he doesn't feel comfortable answering, then that is okay, but if he does, the Committee appreciates his input.

Mr. Stott said he is by no means the expert, but he can answer about why the bill only goes this far. He said they wanted to be able to pass something. Debate in the past several years was to take it farther, but it went nowhere, so fundamentally, that's why it has gone this far. Secondly, he said, in speaking with people who have to administer, execute and prosecute the statutes, they can go after the practices that are unacceptable, like kitty farms and puppy mills. They believe they have the authority to do what they need to do in the current statute, and he said he's been told specifically, "don't mess with the language."

Chairman Siddoway invited **Wyoma Clouss**, Idaho Dog Coalition, to the podium.

Senator Bock apologized for interrupting, and said he would like to hear from people who oppose the bill so the Committee has a balanced perspective, and asked if it would be possible to alternate pro and con. **Chairman Siddoway** said the sign-in sheet indicates no one has signed up to testify against the bill, and no one else has come in since the meeting began. He noted that many members of the Committee have received several emails from people who were on the "1 of 3" side of things, posing their objection and wanting amendments to the bill. **Senator Bock** said he was surprised that there is no one here to testify in opposition.

Chairman Siddoway invited **Ms. Clouss** to continue. She said she is a member of the Idaho Dog Coalition, which includes kennel dog clubs and hunting dog clubs, with about 400 members across the state. She spoke in favor of S1302, saying that when people set a cat on fire or when a little dog is beaten and thrown in the river, that is not neglect, it's torture. She said the definition of "torture" in Oregon is "an action taken for the primary purpose of inflicting pain." And she urged the Committee's support of S1302. Supporting documents relating to this testimony have been archived and can be accessed in the office of the Committee Secretary. (See Attachment #2.)

Chairman Siddoway invited **Jeff Rosenthal**, Veterinarian and Idaho Humane Society, Executive Director, to the podium, who spoke in favor of S1303, to make a third offense of animal cruelty a felony. He said he agrees with some people who have asked if it could be better; however, he says he views this bill as a positive step forward. He says it deals with one of the issues that the Humane Society deals with regularly, which is recidivism, or repeat offenders. This bill has been a long time coming and he thinks it is important that it be added to the statute, as it will show that Idaho does care about animals.

Mr. Rosenthal noted that his agency is also deputized to enforce the statutes and local ordinances regarding animal welfare, including cruelty and neglect, and they do have extensive experience throughout the state dealing with these issues. **Senator Bock** asked if **Mr. Rosenthal** would have any changes to the bill, what would they look like.

Mr. Rosenthal replied he agreed with Idaho citizens that some acts are so egregious and so malicious that on a first offense, he would like to add more powers to deal more appropriately with those offenders. He added that a majority of the cases they see cannot be classified as malicious in intent. They deal with a lot of people who have mental illness or are in circumstances beyond their control, and in some respects, the enforcement is really retribution and doesn't do a lot to solve the real problem. He said education and prevention is the most important tool they have.

Vice Chairman Smyser asked if the Humane Society tries to refer people in such circumstances to other agencies to get help and if that works. **Mr. Rosenthal** answered that yes, they do, but they are often dismayed at the resources available to help people with mental illness, especially those with one of the worst illnesses called animal hoarding. That illness is going to be added to the psychological manual and will be a recognized pathological illness. He said they try to deal with those kinds of cases behind the scenes and not make a media sensation out of the case, but try to do the best thing for the animals.

Vice Chairman Smyser asked if **Mr. Rosenthal** supports **Mr. Stott's** view of the national group as compared to the Idaho group. **Mr. Rosenthal** replied that certainly the groups are very different in their origins. He said the Idaho Humane Society was founded many years before the "quote-unquote United States Humane Society" was founded. He said they have their own agenda, the Idaho Humane Society has its own agenda locally, and in some ways it's quite different. He said they do have some positions that are in common, but the Idaho Humane Society does not find itself in a confrontational relationship with Idaho agriculture.

Chairman Siddoway invited **Wyatt Prescott**, Executive Vice President, Idaho Cattle Association, to the podium. He spoke in favor of S1303, noting that **Mr. Stott** did cover the points around this issue very well. **Senator Nuxoll** asked to confirm that a felony conviction would have to be three offenses against only Section 5(a). **Mr. Prescott** replied, yes, it has to be against that specific portion of the animal cruelty definition.

Senator Pearce asked, and he said he asked **Mr. Stott** the same thing, where the Idaho Cattlemen will stand when new legislation pushes further down the road. **Mr. Prescott** said, "We're drawing the line here today," and he said **Mr. Stott** was right when he said that the legislators are the ones who officially draw the line. He said the possible cost of action is far less than the possible cost of inaction, and they feel as if this is the final line. **Senator Pearce** asked if the Cattlemen's Association will oppose further legislation. **Mr. Prescott** said it is his job to say and do what the membership prefers, and it is his feeling that the members won't go any further.

Chairman Siddoway invited **Bob Naerbout**, Idaho Dairymen's Association, to the podium. He spoke in support of S1303. He stated that he remembers when this issue came up two years ago, and since then, **Stan Boyd** and **Wyatt Prescott** have done their due diligence. **Mr. Naerbout** said this bill before the Committee today has momentum to move, and it's the perception in the beef and dairy industries of the need to go forward with a bill like this.

Chairman Siddoway recognized **Representative Ken Andrus**, Chairman of the House Agricultural Affairs Committee for visiting the Committee today.

Chairman Siddoway invited **Senator Bert Brackett**, Idaho District 23, to the podium. **Senator Brackett** said that Idaho is only one of a few states without a felony provision for the third conviction of animal cruelty, and consequently, Idaho has been targeted. He said as a rancher himself, he cannot defend anyone who abuses animals. The livestock industry has spent a lot of resources and time and thousands of dollars to defend an initiative. If this legislation is passed, the livestock industry will have a much better chance to defeat the initiative. Idaho is a growing agriculture state and cannot defend bad actions and bad behavior.

Senator Brackett then shared and paraphrased some of the emails from people saying the legislation needs to go farther: "Must impose mandatory felony, even for the first offense," and "These offenses constitute a felony with mandatory jail time."

Senator Brackett said he serves on the JFAC Committee, where they have discussed that Idaho prisons are 99 to 100 percent full, and there is an upturn in incarcerations. It's been noted they will need another \$5 million to \$7 million for the next fiscal year if this growth continues. County jails are full and filling up from overflow from the state system. They are soon going to have to look at sending prisoners out of state.

Senator Brackett said the expense of a mandatory first time offense must be weighed against other needs of the state, such as education and health care. Mandatory sentence for first time animal cruelty offenders will put people in a correctional institution that would take away scarce resources from all the other important needs of this state. He said this bill strikes a balance, by providing the livestock industry with protection while at the same time does not go to the extreme position that some want.

Vice Chairman Smyser moved, seconded by **Senator Vick**, to send S1303 to the floor with a do pass recommendation. Motion carried by **voice vote**, with **Senator Pearce** voting nay.

S1296

Chairman Siddoway invited **Stan Boyd**, Idaho Cattle Association and Idaho Wool Growers Association, to the podium to present S1296, relating to funds from the sale of stray livestock. **Mr. Boyd** reviewed the proposal, describing that when stray livestock is found, and there is no brand, and they go unidentified and unclaimed, the sheriff can sell them after ten days at public auction and the money from the sale goes to an Unclaimed Livestock Proceeds Account. If no one claims the funds within 18 months, the money is transferred to the Endowment Fund Investment Board and they put it into the Public Schools Endowment Fund.

Mr. Boyd said the money goes in and never comes out, as only the interest is used. There is approximately \$38 million in that fund. This bill would allow those interest monies to be sent to the State Board of Education's Miscellaneous Fund for public education and higher education programs that advance the livestock industry and agriculture in general. The amount released for programs has averaged about \$33,800 over the past five years.

Chairman Siddoway asked if a sheep herder loses his horse and it is sold, the cattle guys will get to say how to spend the sheep herder's money. **Mr. Boyd** replied that the state brand inspector reported that 98 percent of strays are cattle, mostly beef, some dairy, and only two percent are horses, and he doesn't recall any sheep, goats or hogs that have been sold in twenty years.

Senator Bock moved, seconded by **Senator Pearce**, to send S1296 to the floor with a do pass recommendation. Motion carried by **voice vote**. **Vice Chairman Smyser** will carry it on the floor.

S1302

Chairman Siddoway invited **Senator Corder** to the podium to present S1302, relating to the definition of a "dangerous" dog. **Senator Corder** referred to the handouts in the Committee binders. He pointed out on the three page sheet, the left column identifies current law, and the right side is what is proposed.

The other handout is a flow chart, in which the left column describes animal behaviors, and the right side is actions taken. The ovals in the chart are existing law. The rectangles describe proposed changes.

Senator Corder explained that the proposal does not affect "the people out in the country with their dogs and horses - they're covered," but what does need to be addressed is changes in urban areas, where there are now dog parks and pet stores where pets are the primary customers, and the interactions between animals and people.

Senator Corder pointed out that last year, a bill very much the same as this one, passed this Committee and the Senate significantly, but was held in the House over some issues that have now been resolved. He said the current law is "overly restrictive" and at the same time "overly submissive," meaning there is not enough mechanism in place to help the courts deal with different behaviors of animals.

Senator Corder said the current law is not behavior driven, it is action driven. There are behaviors in animals that are not necessarily indicative that the animal is "vicious." There is no "at risk" or "dangerous" category. So a dog can go from being good old "Shep" to a vicious dog that had to be put down in one step. This proposal seeks to add more steps in the interest of adjudicating an animal appropriately, and assign some blame if it exists for when people aren't taking care of their animals.

There will be an "at risk" category, and change "vicious" to "dangerous" and provide the process of how that occurs, so under certain behaviors, it becomes "if/then" solutions. There is even a "third strike" penalty, so "Shep" doesn't have to get put down right away. There is an intermediate stage, then another stage, and finally be put in jail, and it is up to the court to determine whether that act was so bad that Shep should be put down. It also provides a mechanism so Shep can work his way out and be put on parole, because under some conditions, animals just need to be removed from the situation where they were forced to take action. The new statute provides a mechanism to look at mitigating factors and allow animals a reasonable way out, and allow owners a chance to redeem the animals.

Working dogs and law enforcement dogs are exempted. **Senator Corder** said he spoke with representatives from The Fraternal Order of Police who still have a concern that law enforcement animals haven't been exempted clearly enough. So if this Committee should choose to put this forward, **Senator Corder** would ask it to be sent to the 14th Order so it can be amended to draw a finer exemption for law enforcement dogs, so that under no conditions will a working law enforcement dog be categorized as anything other than law enforcement dogs. **Senator Corder** said he thinks it is okay, but they are nervous about it.

Senator Corder further explained there are no new penalties added. What is added is attorneys fees. Also established is that customary and reasonable kennel costs are appropriate. Another adjustment is the replacement of the word "worry." It was taken out and that caused difficulty in the House in last year's bill. There is no such synonymous term, so "worry" is back in the language. So there is protection that if a dog is in a calving or lambing ground, and that dog is "worrying" animals or causing them anxiety, the owner of the grounds has the right to kill the dog.

Senator Corder said they went back and put in all the assurances for the livestock producers and have suitable and adequate protections for urban people and the situations where animals might interface. He said **Dr. Rosenthal** of the Idaho Humane Society, who testified earlier and is entrusted and contracted with handling these types of situations, will offer more insight here today, as will **Wyoma Clouss**. **Senator Corder** said in the three years they have worked on this legislation, they have tried to hear from everybody. Supporting documents relating to this testimony have been archived and can be accessed in the office of the Committee Secretary. (See Attachments #3 and #4.)

Senator Pearce asked about the definition of "a bite" that it doesn't break the skin, and how he has seen some horrible dog bites that didn't break the skin, so that makes the dog not dangerous? **Senator Corder** replied that is exactly what this proposal is about. A dog might do that once or twice and eventually become an at risk dog and work up to be a dangerous dog, but it depends on the conditions, because the behavior before the bite would be considered - was he snarling? Under current law, it wouldn't make any difference. If a dog bit someone and didn't break the skin, and there was a charge filed, that dog could be put down. Under the proposal, that may not be the case, because the situation surrounding the bite might be taken into account.

Senator Corder shared an example of three Australian Shepherds in a pickup truck in Mountain Home that would bite people after the owner started the truck, and the bite didn't always break the skin. He said if the dogs did that often enough, and there were enough complaints, the dogs would become "at risk" or "dangerous." It is complaint based.

Senator Nuxoll asked why the law enforcement representatives had concerns and what part they think needs to be amended. **Senator Corder** pointed out where the exemptions start, but because some sections have been repealed and then sections combined, the Fraternal Order of Police said the changes could potentially bring their dogs back under regulation, and they don't want their dogs to be "dangerous" because they are just doing their job. An amendment would insert some language indicating that in the entire chapter, these definitions would not apply to law enforcement dogs when doing their jobs. **Senator Nuxoll** asked if **Senator Corder** thinks the bill is okay, and he said he thinks it is okay, but would still like to amend it.

Senator Corder said one more note about S1302 is that it would also allow for counties or cities to enact more stringent laws, but they cannot be breed specific. He said many local governments have tried to enact legislation banning pit bulls, but there are breeds that are used in Europe for children's dogs, so breed should not be the basis for an ordinance.

Chairman Siddoway invited **Wyoma Clouss**, Idaho Dog Coalition, back to the podium. She spoke in favor of S1302, noting that she appreciated being included in the discussions and development of this proposal. **Ms. Clouss** indicated the members of the Coalition are concerned about the United States Humane Society and take this seriously. She said her organization believes that the responsibility of training falls on the owners, and that animals should be judged by behavior, not on looks. She cited an example where they put up a poster with pictures of forty different dogs and asked 200 people to put a sticker on the picture of a pit bull, and only three people got it right.

Chairman Siddoway invited **Jeff Rosenthal**, Idaho Humane Society, back to the podium. He spoke in favor of S1302. He said the Idaho Humane Society is the state's largest animal control agency, enforcing these laws for 22 percent of Idaho's population. He said while it's true that dogs don't hurt people very often and it's usually not very severe, unfortunately, dogs do inflict severe injury every year, and most of the victims are children. **Mr. Rosenthal** said they've been working on the language of this bill for many years, trying to address the needs of many interest groups and individuals, and not just dog owners but also most importantly, the families that send their kids to school every day and hope their kids come home in one piece.

Mr. Rosenthal testified that officers respond to an average of about 1,000 incidents per year in Ada County of dog bites and dog attacking other animals and people. The actual seizures we conduct every year amounts to about 75 dogs that attacked or bit humans, and 26 dogs that attacked other animals. How often the cases occur boils down to about 25 local nuisance citations issued annually and about six or fewer uses of the current state statute. We deal with these situations through mediation and a lot of times the owners will choose to have their dog destroyed when they feel it's a danger.

Mr. Rosenthal said in 2003, he personally dealt with a case of a dog that killed a child and under current state law, they'd have no ability to destroy that dog even though it was completely unprovoked and killed the child and partly devoured the child. That is the biggest deficiency of current state law. Unfortunately there are some dogs that are so maladapted and so irresponsibly kept in society that the court does need discretion to order an animal destroyed.

Mr. Rosenthal described how this proposal creates a tiered structure, where the courts can deal with less severe cases by certain controls and restrictions, and then on subsequent offenses, the dog may be subject to destruction. This follows a basic model that has been successful in many other states and has reduced the incidents of dog bites. It is also unique in that it draws from local interest groups, the Humane Society, and agriculture groups that have all participated in the process of give and take to come up with this language. He said he understands they are going from just a short paragraph on "vicious dogs" to a greatly extended statute, but based on his extensive experience, these situations are always unique and all need to be examined.

Mr. Rosenthal said a 2006 article written about him was titled, "Nobody loves a biter." He said he wished that was the case, but it's not and the owners of the dogs involved in these incidents often mount a very passionate and emotional defense, and in many circumstances, justifiably so, because there are situations where dogs are going to bite and it's normal behavior, and that needs to be addressed in the code. There are cases of dogs that by their nature may pose a danger to someone who is interfering with their normal activities. So the approach here has been to create as balanced a process as possible.

Mr. Rosenthal said the situation is changing, with 78 million dogs in the U.S. interacting with them more often in more different situations than ever before, from dog parks to dog daycares, to inside schools, etc. This approach mirrors one advocated by the American Veterinary Medical Association. All of the groups that came to the table to work on this legislation had an overriding concern for protecting the public from dogs, and protecting the interest of the injured, and preserving the responsible dog owners' property rights, and recognizing the normal range of dog behavior. **Mr. Rosenthal** said this is the best attempt to come up with a workable solution to the problem.

Chairman Siddoway asked **Mr. Rosenthal** for his opinion on whether or not this bill should go to the amending order for the language for law enforcement animals. **Mr. Rosenthal** replied he has not heard the inquiry from law enforcement, but he has seen dogs doing their job, and he has never had one become an issue and come before him, so he's not aware of any deficiency. He said he feels law enforcement is covered both under the language of the law and common sense and practicality.

Chairman Siddoway asked **Senator Corder** if the bill really needs to go to the 14th Order. **Senator Corder** said he is not afraid of the amending order, but it might slow it down, and he would not expect any devious action to occur. He said he doesn't mind changing it to accommodate the Fraternal Order of Police, but he would yield to the will of the Committee, and have the record reflect that he tried. He said if it becomes an issue in the House, it can be addressed there.

Senator Schmidt stated from his reading of the bill, the law enforcement exemption seems clear, so he moved, seconded by **Senator Pearce**, to send S1302 to the floor with a do pass recommendation. The motion carried by **voice vote**. **Senator Corder** will carry the bill on the floor.

PRESENTATION **Chairman Siddoway** welcomed **Laura Johnson**, Section Manager, Market Development Division, Idaho State Department of Agriculture, to the podium. She introduced guests from the Department, including Director **Celia Gould**. **Ms. Johnson** said she's excited to share the successes of Idaho agriculture and exports and its effect on the state economy.

She shared that 2011 was a record-setting year, breaking 2008 levels by 22 percent. She said there are many reasons behind that increase, such as economic recovery around the world, increasing global demand, higher prices for some commodities, but it also reflects the efforts of three full-time strategic offices around the world, in Idaho's top ten agricultural markets. These offices should get some credit for these successes as some of the best resources for the state of Idaho. They visit Idaho only a few times a year and they are here today.

Ms. Johnson introduced the International Trade Office representatives: **Eddie Yen**, Idaho-Asia Trade Office; **Xu Fang**, Idaho-China Trade Office; and, **Armando Orellana**, Idaho-Mexico Trade Office. Supporting documents related to the testimony of these gentlemen have been archived and can be accessed in the office of the Committee Secretary. (See Attachments #5, #6, and #7.)

ADJOURNED **Chairman Siddoway** called the meeting adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

Senator Siddoway
Chairman

Christy Stansell
Secretary