

MINUTES  
**HOUSE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

- DATE:** Monday, March 12, 2012
- TIME:** 1:30 p.m. or Upon Adjournment
- PLACE:** Room EW20
- MEMBERS:** Chairman Andrus, Vice Chairman Boyle, Representative(s) Lake, Stevenson, Trail, Bolz, Shirley, Patrick, McMillan (McMillan), Batt, Pence, Lacey
- ABSENT/  
EXCUSED:** Representative Lacey
- GUESTS:** Dave Goids, Idaho News Service; Deana Sessions, Dairy Commission; Casey Anderson, OX Ranch; Bob Naerebout, Idaho Dairyman's Assoc.; Elizabeth Criner, NWWFA
- Chairman Andrus** called the meeting to order at 2:42 p.m.
- MOTION:** **Rep. Pence** made a motion to approve the minutes of Thursday, March 8, 2012. **Motion carried by voice vote.**
- H 650:** **Chairman Andrus** explained **H 650** is the same as **H 625** which was heard on Thursday, except for the one change that was explained. He asked if there was any objection to holding **H 625** in Committee and asked for a motion to that effect.
- MOTION:** **Rep. Trail** made a motion to **hold H 625** in Committee. **Motion carried by voice vote.**
- Chairman Andrus** said they had testimony on **H 625** last week, but would allow testimony on **H 650** if there is any. He said he would also take questions on **H 650**.
- MOTION:** **Rep. Trail** made a motion to send **H 650** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Andrus** will sponsor the bill on the floor.
- Casey Anderson**, Rancher, Council, Idaho, said in 2008 he was approached by Oregon State University to do a wolf-cattle interaction study. He said this presentation will explain how this effects ranchers on the ground. He reviewed the established wolf packs in 1999 and the increase in wolf packs from 1999 to 2005. He said these are only confirmed packs and the actual numbers are greater. He explained the difficulty in getting a confirmed wolf depredation because of the lack of evidence to confirm a wolf attack. He said the wolf will usually eat too much of the calf to get confirmation. He explained the things that come into play when trying to get a confirmation on a wolf depredation. He said only 7% of the actual depredations will actually be confirmed.
- Mr. Anderson** reviewed the wolf presence levels and gave examples of the equipment they used to track the wolves and cattle. He reviewed the confirmed sighting's of wolves in 2009 from APHIS, but this only reflects what the agency had seen. He explained the cow depredations from the ranch in 2009. He explained how cows will spread out to avoid wolves, and where the wolves could be seen.

**Mr. Anderson** said the study was sponsored by the Oregon Beef Commission, because they wanted to find out how wolves acted before they had any in Oregon. He said only one wolf out of a pack of 12 wolves was collared. He reviewed the travel of the collared wolf and the wolf territory. He reviewed the minimum travel distance of the wolf and other movements of the wolf from the den site throughout the summer. Mr. Anderson explained the movement of the collared wolf compared to the movement of the ten collared cows. He said this shows the wolf is moving with the cattle. He said even though there was only one collared wolf they were dealing with three packs of wolves working through their allotments and pastures.

**Mr. Anderson** explained the wolves in relationship to houses. He said the wolf came within 500 meters of the lodge 79 times. He said the wolves came within 500 meters of where three house are, 307 times. Mr. Anderson reviewed how the wolves and cattle interacted on the range. He explained how many times the ten collared cows encountered the collared wolf. He said the wolf was only collared for two weeks. He explained how the wolf was in direct contact with the cows. He reviewed the riparian area and how cattle use it. He said the study shows the cattle only use the riparian area about 1% of the time.

**Mr. Anderson** reviewed the depredation compensation program. He said depredation is the smallest loss the ranchers have. He said there are other losses from the cows such as loss of body condition, and conception rate. He said the cattle are moving and stressed all the time. He said ranchers need to maintain more heifers to maintain the cow heard, which is the largest cost. He said cattle behavior changes greatly and the cattle do not want to use the range like they used to. He said there is also a huge increase in labor. Mr. Anderson said besides the stress on cattle, there is also stress on ranch management and the people that work the range. He said as the number of wolves increase, the number of depredations increase. He said in the grazing season cattle make up the largest food source for wolves. In the non grazing season the largest food source for wolves is deer and elk.

In response to Committee questions, **Mr. Anderson** said the ranch was a cooperator in the study, they allowed the cattle to be collared and gathered the information. He said he felt this was the only way to be able to show information that isn't available and isn't realized. He said much of ranch life is stewardship of wildlife and the land. He said being able to share this information helps with the ability to cope with this situation. He gave estimates of the losses to the ranch and said without profits to the ranch, they can't do the conservation measures on the land they would normally do. He said the ranch owners take conservation seriously and consider themselves extremely good stewards of the land.

**Deana Session**, Idaho Dairy Products Commission, said it is her fiduciary responsibility to review the financial data of the Commission. She said they have gone through an audit and have a very clean report. She reviewed the Commission's financial highlights. She said they have increased marketing activities in hopes of increasing demands in dairy products. She stated the food dollar is not going as far as it used to and sales of milk and cheese have been declining in the last few months. She said they have invested dollars in trying to change this decline and will continue to work on the problem and trying to correct it. She said they are waiting for the right opportunities in investments and have several things they plan to invest their money in this year.

**Ms. Session** reviewed the Fuel Up to Play 60 program. She said there is no projected increase in production in 2012. She also reviewed the mandatory assessment and the current milk prices. She said dairy farmers are struggling as well as the consumer is struggling. She said prices for 2012 are predicted to remain flat and contingent upon a healthy export program. Ms. Session reviewed other budget highlights for 2012. She said they have a huge investment opportunity with McDonald's over the next three years. She said the dairy facts stay the same, Idaho remains the third largest milk producing state in the US.

**Bob Naerebout**, Idaho Dairymen's Association, said they are funded through the Idaho Dairy Products Commission. He briefly gave an over view of the association and what they are facing now. He explained where the majority of the dairy operations are in the state. He said they are projecting a flat growth rate for the industry this year. He stated they are continually engaged in the immigration issue for jobs. He said they are working on training programs and certification programs through CSI. Mr. Naerebout reviewed the industry's economic conditions and current costs of productions. He said feed is the biggest contributor for cost. He reviewed the future market. He explained the priorities for the Idaho dairy industry.

**ADJOURN:** There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 4:13 p.m.

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Representative Andrus  
Chairman

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Susan Werlinger  
Secretary