

MINUTES
HOUSE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, February 18, 2013
TIME: 1:30 P.M.
PLACE: Room EW42
MEMBERS: Chairman Andrus, Vice Chairman Boyle, Representatives Bolz, McMillan, Batt, Bell, Agidius, Dayley, Miller, Romrell, Stevenson, VanOrden, Pence, Erpelding
**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** None.
GUESTS: Elli Brown, Veritas Advisors LLP; Carol Youtz, Board of Veterinary Medicine; Sean Ellis, Capital Press; Brent Olmstead, Milk Producers; Stan Boyd, Wool Growers; Dennis Tanikuni, Frank Priestley, Idaho Farm Bureau; Jim Lowe, Farmstead Cornmaze; Rachael Raue; Christina Rutledge, GMO Idaho; Douglas Jones.

Chairman Andrus called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m.

Chairman Andrus introduced the committee's new page, **Esther Frederick**, from Meridian, Idaho.

Stan Boyd, Idaho Sheep Commission, presented an update. He noted that legislation last year changed the board's name to Idaho Sheep and Goat Health Board. He affirmed they are self-governing under the Idaho Department of Agriculture, Division of Animal Industries, with five commissioners. He explained that the board can assess wool at eight cents per pound. This goes to animal damage control and research and promotion. He claimed that there are about 60 sheep operations in Idaho, which utilize public lands and their own grounds. He remarked that Idaho ranks 7th in the U.S. for wool production.

Mr. Boyd disclosed that monies from the commission are used for services to wool growers; they underwrite a bulletin to educate on lamb practices, bring in speakers and specialists to visit with wool growers, conduct a wool and lamb quality improvement program, address new and proper aspects of animal care, and best harvesting practices. He submitted statistics of last year's lamb prices being too high, then crashing; they have slowly come back up this year.

In regards to questioning, **Mr. Boyd** replied that alpaca producers may join the Sheep Commission, but there are currently so few in Idaho that he is not aware of any present members. Concerning the number of goats in Idaho, he believes there are about 16,000. Relating to those who do not pay the wool assessment, Mr. Boyd confirmed that some producers in north Idaho go to Spokane, out of state, and are difficult to collect. Most of the larger flocks in the state do pay; he estimated about 80% of growers pay the assessment.

Trent Clark, Director of Public and Government Affairs, Monsanto (Idaho), introduced **George Gough**, Director of Government Affairs, Monsanto (California), who presented an update on genetically modified seeds. Mr. Gough stated his expertise in agricultural biotechnology. He commented Monsanto has Idaho locations in Filer, Nampa, Payette, and Soda Springs. He remarked that they sell Round Up brand weed killer to worldwide markets. The division in Nampa grows vegetable seeds for worldwide distribution.

Mr. Gough mentioned four platforms: seed and genomics, technology (including breeding, research and development), agricultural productivity, and other crops like wheat and sugarcane. He asserted that biotechnology offers advantages over traditional plant breeding. He explained that with biotechnology, they insert key genes for strength and yield. They can also insert genes that stop pests from feeding, which cannot be done with conventional breeding. He said Monsanto wants to make sure their food or feed is safe or nutritionally equivalent for humans and animals, their plants are safe for the environment, and that they are not creating a new crop pest.

Mr. Gough defined that other countries grow genetically modified crops with their own regulations. He conveyed that growers have found real benefits in productivity, pesticide reduction, good economic return, and less greenhouse gas or CO2 emissions. Mr. Gough expressed concerns that global population is increasing and farmers will need to produce more with less available arable land. He maintained that current Monsanto objectives include improved weed management, pest and disease protection, stress tolerance, and yield. He submitted that the biggest challenge for growers is weed control, which robs crops of yield and moisture.

Mr. Gough pointed out other Monsanto projects, including improvements in canola, wheat and vegetables. He noted that pests, fungi and viruses are other challenges. He described how the U.S. is losing ability to compete globally due to low yield in the wheat industry. Mr. Gough indicated that fruits and vegetables also face problems with diseases which affect yield and natural plant defenses. Innovations are on the horizon to improve taste, nutrition, health and shelf life.

With reference to questions on an increased value to producers, **Mr. Gough** claimed that if a grower can produce more at less cost, his value is greater and also passes benefits on to the consumer.

H 96: **Carol Youtz**, Acting Director, Idaho Veterinary Board, presented **H 96**. She explained that this bill addresses housekeeping changes for certified veterinary and euthanasia technicians. It also ensures that technicians graduate from an accredited program. She specified that a name change is included for a national veterinary medical association.

In response to questions on training, **Ms. Youtz** clarified that two years must be completed for a certified veterinarian technician; however, euthanasia is different and requires one day of intense training for proper certification.

MOTION: **Rep. Erpelding** made a motion to send **H 96** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Erpelding** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

H 97: **Carol Youtz**, Acting Director, Idaho Veterinary Board, presented **H 97**. She indicated that all original application fees will be made nonrefundable. This will enable the office to recover substantial expenses in processing applications and requesting documents from other states, which may take about ten hours total. Also she remarked that the positive fiscal impact is less than originally reported, showing after further research, these numbers are closer to \$200 or \$300 per year, instead of \$1000-2000.

Concerning the cost of application fees, **Ms. Youtz** answered that the application fee is \$275, plus a \$34 criminal background check.

MOTION; **Rep. Agidius** make a motion to send **H 97** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Agidius** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

H 113: **Rep. Bolz** updated the committee on the amendment for **H 113**. He stated that they had come to an agreement on the language and would have the amendment ready for the next meeting.

MOTION: **Rep. Bolz** made a motion to **HOLD H 113** for time certain **February 20, 2013**. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

Representative Andrus
Chair

Kim Jensen-Porter
Secretary