

MINUTES
HOUSE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, January 20, 2014
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: Steve Wilder, Brett Wilder, Idaho FFA; Shawn Dygert, Idaho Ag Teachers; Laura Wilder, Idaho FFA Foundation; Katie Mosman, Idaho Ag Teachers; Sara Schmidt, FFA Alumni; Vivien Jackson, Cathy Yenne, Paula McMullen, Vallivue FFA; Amy Nichols, Idaho Ag Teachers; Wyatt Neal, Parma FFA; Jim Lowe, Food Producers; Don Johnson, Dallas Change, Idaho State Grange; Lisa Kauffman, Humane Society of the US; Sean Ellis, Capital Press; Don Heikkila, Idaho State Grange

Chairman Andrus called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

Shawn Dygert, Idaho Vocational Agricultural Teachers Association, introduced **Brett Wilder**, President of Idaho FFA.

Brett Wilder, President, Idaho FFA, introduced several members of the Idaho FFA and Ag teachers that were present. He said he was before the committee representing over 4,200 FFA members in Idaho and over 12,000 students statewide enrolled in agriculture education.

Mr. Wilder explained the Three Circle Model, which includes classroom instruction, supervised agricultural experience and FFA. He reviewed the components of classroom instruction regarding agricultural education and discussed his experience with FFA in the classroom. He said there are more career pathways in agriculture than people realize and reviewed the demographics of classroom instruction in agriculture. He stated that one of the most important aspects to learning the materials presented in the classroom is the supervised agricultural experiences. He said this is the hands on way to take the information learned in the classroom and bring it to the home. Mr. Wilder explained his experience in the sheep industry and attributed his work ethic to agriculture and being a part of high school agricultural education. Mr. Wilder reviewed potential careers for students and other educational benefits of this program

Mr. Wilder said the FFA mission statement is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education and it is with FFA that this is possible. He explained the opportunities to network through 25 different career development events, where students have the opportunity to learn more about a field they are interested in.

Mr. Wilder stated the Three Circle Model has been able to make a positive influence in the lives of students. He said last year they had a series of round table discussions on agricultural education and invited superintendents, industry leaders, teachers and members of the community to talk about the strengths and opportunities of involvement. He reviewed the results of these discussions. He explained that although agriculture education is expanding into the future and giving students what they need, it is very difficult to be sustainable.

Shawn Dygert, Agriculture Teacher at Kuna High School, Idaho Vocational Ag Teachers Assoc., reviewed some of the critical crisis needs of the Idaho Ag Education Initiative. He said they have experienced growth in the program and have also experienced an increase in turn over in Ag teachers. He said they have found that they have some very specific critical needs and they want to encourage the supporters of agricultural education to move forward with this initiative and go through the legislative process. He said the support and input, especially at the round table discussion has been a great opportunity to address the needs of all students regardless of the size of the program.

Mr. Dygert said with the needs of students in mind, the Ag Initiative was created. He reviewed the different funding components of the Initiative and said this Initiative would establish a full time Executive Director position. It would also establish a mentoring system to keep Ag teachers in the profession and make sure that teachers are well prepared with a solid support base. Mr. Dygert said they want to create programs with higher standards and a situation where the programs can be successful. He also reviewed the Ag education start up grants and explained it is a huge undertaking to be able to start up these programs. He said they want to set themselves apart from the rest of the industry and would encourage others interested in this same model to identify critical needs and find ways to work toward those solutions. He said it is important that the requests stand on their own merit and it is important that Ag education in Idaho is a proven opportunity for students. He said it is important to recognize the parts of the program that can't be measured. He said the confidence, leadership, self motivation and work ethic that the program provides for students is a very important part of the program.

In answer to the question of how other states fund these types of programs, **Mr. Dygert** said there is not a standard of how programs are funded, other states have done what has worked best for them. He said this funding adaptability is one of the strengths of the Ag education program.

In answer to questions regarding the cost of the quality standards of the program, **Mr. Dygert** explained the cost would be for program improvement. He also explained that if this initiative is not successful this year, the longer there is a delay, the harder it is to keep the students up with the latest technology in order to be successful.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

Representative Andrus
Chair

Angela Sandoval
Secretary