

MINUTES
HOUSE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, February 26, 2014
TIME: 1:30 pm or Upon Adjournment
PLACE: Room EW42
MEMBERS: Chairman Andrus, Vice Chairman Boyle, Representative(s) Bolz, McMillan, Batt, Bell, Agidius, Dayley, Miller, Romrell, Stevenson, VanOrden, Pence, Erpelding
**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Reps. Agidius, Miller, VanOrden
GUESTS: None

Chairman Andrus called the meeting to order at 2:38 p.m.

Lacey Menasco, Administrator, Idaho Bean Commission, presented the annual report. She said the mission of the commission is to promote Idaho's premier reputation as a consistent, top-quality, disease-free, dry and green bean seed producer. She said some of the objectives of the Bean Commission are to promote Idaho beans, both edibles and seed; support disease, pest, cultural practices and breeding research through the University of Idaho and private companies; conducting grower and consumer education; and monitoring policies and regulations.

Ms. Menasco noted the 2013 highlights as being a \$1 million dollar endowment to the University of Idaho to fund bean research and a multi-state bean research program with growers, dealers and university representatives from Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming and Idaho. She said the commission funded a number of projects in 2013 such as a bean growers school in both the Magic Valley and Treasure Valley and Ag Pavilions at the Western Idaho and Twin Falls County fairs. She said they conducted grower surveys at the Bean Schools and as a result, nightshade control was identified as the number one challenge of growers and the use of chemicals was noted as the number one concern of the industry.

Ms. Menasco said bean revenue was down in 2013 due to production being lower but bean acres in Idaho will be higher in 2014. She said the yellow bean research that was started in 2009 will continue through 2014 due to a Specialty Crop Block grant. She said the grant has allowed them to develop a yellow bean variety. It was initially started to market as a seed bean in Mexico because of the disease and virus resistance and has proven to be popular in Idaho. She said the new yellow bean variety is now ready for production as a result of this research and will be available next year for the Mexico and US markets. She said future activities include supporting the development of a regional bean research consortium, to continue to pursue grant funding, further research into nightshade and to establish an endowment with the University of Idaho.

Candi Fitch, Executive Director, Idaho Apple Commission, presented the annual report. She said this was a hard year for apples because of damage, decrease in productions and a spring frost but acreage has stabilized. She said newer varieties have been planted on the trellis drip systems which have replaced some of the older blocks that are not high density and with the new high density planting growers can triple the amount of trees per acre. She said the market was average to above average due to substantial production in the mid-west and east. Expectations are high for 2014 and there is concern about the water situation.

Ms. Fitch said the largest percentage of the Apple Commission budget goes to research and they have been fortunate to receive three Specialty Crop grants for projects at the University of Idaho Parma Research Center. She said with the money the Commission received from a grant in 2010, they were able to develop three new Foodservice Recipes that were mailed to all of the Idaho Schools in September 2013.

Ms. Fitch said the Apple Commission participated in the buy Idaho show for the fourth year. She said they were involved in the Ag Pavilion at the Canyon County, Expo Idaho, and the Twin Falls County Fair.

Candi Fitch, Executive Director, Idaho Cherry Commission, presented the annual report. She said according to the Northwest Cherry Growers information, the 2013 crop was down 37% relative to the 22.5 million box 2012 crop. She said the season ran 81 days and the first shipment was June 1. She said this was an early ship date as the 10 year average start date is June 7. She said the crop was about 50% less than it was last year. She said the Idaho Cherry Commission is a member of the Northwest Cherry Growers (NWCG), Idaho Preferred and Ag in the Classroom. She said Idaho, Washington, Oregon, Utah, and Montana are the states included in the NWCG.

Candi Fitch, Executive Director, Idaho-Oregon Fruit and Vegetable Association, presented the annual report. She said they represent onion, apple and cherry shippers. She said they are members of Ag in the classroom, Food Producers, and the Idaho Business Coalition for Immigration reform. She said Idaho and Eastern Oregon are some of the largest onion growing areas in the United States and the size and grade standards exceed USDA standards. She said it's a global market place where research is important for them to stay competitive.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:13 p.m.

Representative Andrus
Chair

Angela Sandoval
Secretary