

MINUTES  
**HOUSE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Thursday, March 16, 2017

**TIME:** 1:30 PM OR UPON ADJOURNMENT

**PLACE:** Room EW42

**MEMBERS:** Chairman Boyle, Vice Chairman Dayley, Representatives Bell, Miller, VanOrden, Burtenshaw, Kerby, Troy, Stevenson, Amador, Armstrong, Hanks, Zito, Erpelding, Toone

**ABSENT/  
EXCUSED:** Rep. Stevenson

**GUESTS:** Rick Naerebout, IDA; Lindsey Dimond, DFA / IDA; Alan Myers, Myers Dairy LLC; Gretchen Hyde, IRRRC; Jared Myers, Myers Dairy; Sara Stover, DFM

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

**H 293:** **Rep. Dayley** explained in order to provide revenue to assist in the purchase of a modern, functional, user-friendly web-based licensing software program, this legislation would impose a separate statutory increase for veterinarian license renewal fees for 2017, only and include a "sunset" provision.

**Martin Bilbao**, representing Idaho Veterinary Medical Association, in response to a committee question, explained the amount of revenue the fee increase will raise and the number of veterinarians it will affect.

**Sara Stover**, DFM, in response to a committee question, stated the size of the department's reserve is in line with other departments of similar size and function.

**MOTION:** **Rep. Kerby** made a motion to send **H 293** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Dayley** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

**Jared Myers**, Myers Dairy, stated the dairy is a third generation family business started in 1961, by his grandfather. At this time 400 of their 600 milk cows are milked with robotics. He said with the use of robotic milking they have been able to reduce labor costs from seven employees to four. He stated the reason for robotics installation was because of the big changes in available labor. He said there are other benefits as well in a more accurate reporting of milk production and technology enabling them to track several parameters of the cow's movements. There are 100 other values that can be measured. He explained they began discussing the concept in the fall of 2014. They started construction November 2015, and were operating by June 2016. He explained how they feed the cattle differently to train them to go into the milking stalls. The cows can go into the milking stall anytime they want to be milked. He said they average about 2.7 milkings a day.

In answer to a committee question, **Mr. Myers** said, the production has not risen significantly as yet. He said he contributes some of that to the harsh winter and expects to see an increase of approximately 20% in the future.

**Gretchen Hyde**, Executive Director, said seven years ago they launched the "Life on the Range" multimedia series through the Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission as an alternative to traditional advertising. She said it has proven to be very successful. She said they now have 40 videos on YouTube, Facebook and other social media channels. She said the most popular video is a 25 minute documentary about what it takes to raise sheep from baby lambs. She stated it had 380,000 views reaching from all over the world. She explained the results of the most recent annual poll. She said as the demographics change in the state, more and more people look at rangelands as a play ground rather than a work place. The videos give the ranchers an opportunity to tell their stories. Ms. Hyde explained the importance of cattle grazing in relationship to cheatgrass in helping control wildfires.

**George Robinson**, Administrator ISDA, explained the Idaho Pollinator Protection Plan was developed to help offset losses by introducing ways that can address habitat loss, inform the general public about issues and help pollinators maintain healthy populations. The primary purpose of the plan is to establish a systematic and comprehensive method for beekeepers, growers, pesticide applicators, private landowners and public land managers to cooperate and communicate in a timely manner allowing all parties to operate successfully within the state. He said the plan is not designed to eliminate or further restrict pesticide use or to ban the use of pesticides in hives or in close proximity to hives. He explained the plan is a starting point for action and the information it contains can be summarized and tailored for specific projects. He said participation in the plan is voluntary. He said when bee keepers are asked what their biggest concern is, all responded it was lack of suitable habitat forage. He said a bee keeper from Southern Idaho relocated his hives to Northern Idaho because in Southern Idaho they do such a good job of controlling weed there is less forage. He explained the links on the website addressing several different areas pertaining to pollinators. (<https://beeinformed.org>)

**Mr. Robinson**, in response to a committee question, said Colony Collapse Disorder is something the University of Idaho is doing research on. He said this is not as big a problem here as in other areas of the country.

In response to a committee question concerning what cutter bees are used for, **Mr. Robinson** said they are used primarily for alfalfa seed.

**ADJOURN:**

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:48 p.m.

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Representative Boyle  
Chair

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Joan Majors  
Secretary