

MINUTES
HOUSE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, February 28, 2018

TIME: 1:30 P.M.

PLACE: Room EW42

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

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Representative VanOrden

GUESTS: Gretchen Hyde, IRRRC; Brandy Kay, IWGA; Abigail Talboy, Idaho Conservation League; Sean Ellis, Capitol Press

Chairman Boyle called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.

MOTION: **Rep. Toone** made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 14 and 20, 2018, meetings. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

Todd Grimm, US Wildlife Services State Director, explained the areas of responsibility of the US Wildlife Services. He said their mission is to protect the health and value of American agriculture and natural resources. He indicated the Wildlife Services is non-regulatory and has no land management authority or responsibility. He reported about 2/3 of their funding comes from the federal government, with the rest from cooperatives including, state, counties, cities, cattle and wool growers association, airports and industrial companies adding Idaho is low in cooperative support. There are 26 FTE's (full time equivalent) responding in all 44 counties assisting 3,000 property owners. He stated there were 6,700 sheep killed by predators in Idaho in 2016 at an estimated loss of 1.36 million dollars. He said coyotes were responsible for 63% of sheep lost by predators. He reported since 1995, they have completed 2,175 wolf depredation investigations, confirming the death of 750 cattle, 3,200 sheep and 80 dogs. He said they have removed more than 800 wolves. He reported 32 out of 44 counties have wolf depredation. He indicated 3/4 of all cattle wolf depredation happen on private land, most likely because they are more frequently reported. Listing future concerns, he said non migratory geese, and grizzly bears are on the horizon and are being watched closely.

In response to a committee question **Mr. Grimm** said Capture Myopathy in wild animals is caused by extreme exertion, struggle or stress, causing the animals to die of heart failure rather than the outward bite signs seen on the hide.

Dr. Michael Parrella, Dean of Agriculture and Life Science, said U of I currently has nine research and extension centers encompassing 4,000 acres across the state with offices in 42 of the 44 counties. He said they have 950 staff members and 240 faculty members of which half work off campus which is a real advantage in such a large state. He said 25% of the faculty is due to retire in the next three years and stressed the importance of recruiting and keeping the best faculty and graduate students they can. He said the three biggest drawbacks to them hiring and keeping the best early career professionals are; aging research and extension centers, antiquated labs for modern agriculture research and out dated information technology. He noted a benefit of local research centers is the availability of faculty to the farmers and growers. If they have a problem there is an expert on hand to address the issue immediately.

Dr. Parrella stressed the importance of molecular based tools for identification and said they are being used at an increasing rate, therefore modern 'clean' and appropriately equipped labs are required and critical for research perspective. He said in order to solve problems in agriculture today we need an entomologist working with a soil scientist working with a plant breeder all working across disciplines. He explained the ongoing effort to modernize the R & E centers citing examples of the new **Nancy M Cummings** Research and Extension Education center and the new temporary housing in Aberdeen for visiting scientist and graduate students. He emphasized the partnership between the University, Legislature and Industry, all who are working together to move the progress forward.

Dr. Mark Mcquire, Associated Dean of Research for U of I, explained Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI), was hired by the University to conduct a study of the economic impact of the Idaho Agriculture experiment stations. He said they were to focus on Aberdeen, Kimberly and Parma R & E centers which have similar missions in regards to addressing some of the major crops in the state. He reported the results showed the Idaho Agriculture Experiment Stations (IAES) attract additional dollars, giving an example associated with the stripped rust wheat breakout of 2011. He said because of the activities of the facilities based in the R & E centers, there was rapid response saving as estimated 200 million dollars for the wheat industry. He stated it was determined for every dollar invested by the state, there was a \$1.40 return.

Dr. Barbara Petty, Associated Dean, U of I said the extension program has been in existence for more than 100 years helping the people of Idaho navigate a better life by building a thriving, prosperous Idaho. She explained in the K-12 education program, they partner with traditional schools, charter schools, and home schools working toward a common goal of educating our youth. She said they have formal and informal partnerships with school districts, specific schools, and individual classrooms. She stated for the afternoon program, they partner with 21st Learning Center noting that 4-H is one of the top after school programs. Of the blended programs, the most popular one is the 4-H robotics program which is available to all youth, all ages, conducted in the schools in partnership with other youth providers. She said the youth involved in 4-H have a go on rate of 62% as compared to the overall go on rate in Idaho of 42%.

In response to a committee question, **Dr. Petty** explained their focus is centered around five areas; agriculture community development, family consumer science, natural resources and 4-H and youth development. She said they realize if they are spread too thin, they would be less effective over all.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:06 p.m.

Representative Boyle
Chair

Joan Majors
Secretary