

MINUTES
SENATE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, March 12, 2019

TIME: 8:00 A.M.

PLACE: Room WW53

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Guthrie, Vice Chairman Den Hartog, Senators Patrick, Harris, Mortimer, Lent, Bayer, Jordan, and Nelson

ABSENT/ EXCUSED: None

NOTE: The sign-in sheet, testimonies and other related materials will be retained with the minutes in the committee's office until the end of the session and will then be located on file with the minutes in the Legislative Services Library.

CONVENED: **Chairman Guthrie** convened the meeting of the Senate Agricultural Affairs Committee (Committee) at 8:00 a.m.

MINUTES APPROVAL: **Senator Lent** moved to approve the Minutes of February 5, 2019. **Senator Jordan** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

H 176 **Relating to Potatoes; Amending Section 22-1204, Idaho Code, To Revise Definitions and to Provide that Certain Rulemaking Shall Not Be Authorized; And Declaring an Emergency. Representative Britt Raybould**, Idaho House of Representatives, explained that this legislation updates the definition for "grower", "shipper", and "processor" in state law for the Idaho Potato Commission (IPC), restricts promulgation related to this statute change for one year, and goes into effect immediately after passage and approval. **Representative Raybould** stated that due to its nature as a definition change, this legislation will have a de minimus impact to the General Fund.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Mortimer** asked Representative Raybould how this bill will directly affect the IPC. **Representative Raybould** answered that the definitions provided by this bill ensure that the IPC can more fully represent the growers, shippers, and processors within Idaho's Potato industry.

Senator Mortimer asked Representative Raybould if she could define "primary management" and if it is defined in code. **Representative Raybould** answered that primary management simply clarifies the occupation and the capacity of shippers, growers, and processors.

Senator Mortimer asked Representative Raybould if there is anything that would restrict the managers of a growing operation and a shipping operation from serving on the IPC at the same time.

Representative Raybould answered that there are no such restrictions.

MOTION: **Senator Mortimer** moved to send **H 176** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Vice Chairman Den Hartog** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

RS 27086 **Vice Chairman Den Hartog** asked for unanimous consent to send **RS 27086** to a privileged committee for printing. There were no objections.

PRESENTATION: Idaho Bean Commission (IBC). **Andi Woolf-Weibye**, Executive Director, IBC, stated that the IBC promotes Idaho's premier reputation as a consistent, top-quality, disease free, dry and green bean seed producer, and promotes beans as a nutritious and healthy food. The objectives of the IBC are to promote Idaho bean seed and consumption, and support research of diseases, pests, cultural practices, and breeding . Other objectives include conducting education to growers and consumers, and monitoring policies and regulations. **Ms. Woolf-Weibye** explained the IBC's budget from fiscal year (FY) 2019. **Ms. Woolf-Weibye** further detailed the IBC's various educational and promotional activities from 2018. Some of the future plans for the IBC were discussed, which included further promotional and educational opportunities that will help Idaho's bean industry continue to thrive.

PRESENTATION: Amalgamated Sugar Co. (ASC)- Annual Report. **John McCreedy**, Chief Executive Officer, ASC, explained that ASC was founded in 1897 and that there are currently three operations in the State of Idaho: Twin Falls, Cassia, and Nampa. The growers own all of the cooperative and it is governed by a board of directors made up of 25 individuals who are elected from different counties across the state. **Mr. McCreedy** stated that ASC is the second largest sugar beet processor in the United States, with 730 growers and 182,000 acres. The ASC has sugar beet acreage in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. ASC employs over 1,600 people, contributes over \$1 billion annually to Idaho's economy, and grows approximately seven million tons of beets each year. **Mr. McCreedy** explained that ASC primarily markets their product in the west and midwest, and they also have over 1 million tons of byproducts, which equates to \$70 to \$90 million annually. The ASC's long term goals are to improve crop yield, improve land utilization, reduce pesticide usage, reduce fuel usage, reduce fertilizer usage, and improve soil conservation. **Mr. McCreedy** also stated that their main legislative priorities include transportation, infrastructure, and education. **Mr. McCreedy** explained that despite popular opinion that sugar causes obesity, statistics show that sugar consumption has decreased over the past ten years while obesity has increased during that same time.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Bayer** asked Mr. McCreedy if beets can be used for another purpose other than for sugar extraction. **Mr. McCreedy** answered that they can be used for cattle feed prior to being sliced, but it is not very common.

Senator Bayer asked Mr. McCreedy why the ASC doesn't divulge to the consumer on their labels that their beets have been genetically engineered. **Mr. McCreedy** answered that the stance of the ASC in regards to genetic engineering is that it is incredibly useful and that the company discloses it on its website. However, the ASC doesn't feel the need to put a label on its products indicating whether or not the products have been genetically modified, because it isn't required by law.

PRESENTATION: Idaho Sugarbeet Growers Association (ISGA). **Randall Grant**, ISGA, explained that the ISGA has 540 members across the State of Idaho. Their mission is to promote the interest of the sugarbeet industry in order to increase efficiency and profitability each year. The sugarbeet growers in the region grow about 180,000 acres, producing over 7 million tons of beets annually, and making the ISGA the second largest sugarbeet growers in the country. One of the reasons the ISGA is so successful at growing sugarbeets is due in part to its unique climate, wherein growers depend on irrigation and aren't subject to the volatile weather patterns like other areas of the country. **Mr. Grant** further explained that despite the tough times within the farm industry, the sugarbeet industry remains strong due its steady prices and solid production.

PRESENTATION: Idaho Eastern-Oregon Seed Association (IEOSA). **Roger Batt**, Executive Director, IEOSA, explained that Idaho is recognized internationally as one of five major global seed production regions. The IEOSA exports seed to over 120 different countries from the State of Idaho. The value of the seed industry in Idaho is approximately \$500 million.

Brett Lawley, Bayer Crop Science, explained the status of sweet corn seed production in Idaho. **Mr. Lawley** stated that the Treasure Valley is the main area in Idaho where sweet corn seed production is ideal. Idaho's high desert climate makes it ideal for growing sweet corn seed. The high heat and low humidity decreases the chance for fungal disease to infest the corn. Approximately 70 percent of the world's temperate sweet corn is grown in the Treasure Valley.

Brad Smith, Kimberly Seed International, explained the status of pea production in Idaho. There are three main types of peas grown in Idaho: the garden pea, the dry edible pea, and the Austrian winter pea. Idaho is ranked number one in Austrian winter pea production and contributes 43 percent of total production in the United States.

Stuart Smith, explained the alfalfa seed production in Idaho. Idaho is the second largest alfalfa seed producer in the northwest behind Washington. Approximately 16,000 acres of alfalfa were planted in Idaho in 2018. **Mr. Smith** explained that some of the biggest challenges with alfalfa fields are bugs and infestation. Alfalfa fields depend on pesticides to help prevent disease and infestation.

Gina Lonis, Trinidad Benham, explained Idaho's bean industry. Idaho ranks fifth in the nation in dry edible bean production. In 2017, 178,000 acres were harvested of dry edible beans; an estimated production value of \$8 million dollars to Idaho's economy.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business, **Chairman Guthrie** adjourned the meeting at 9:20 a.m.

Senator Guthrie
Chair

Jacob Garner
Secretary