

MINUTES  
**HOUSE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Monday, February 22, 2021  
**TIME:** 1:30 P.M.  
**PLACE:** Room EW42  
**MEMBERS:** Chairman Kauffman, Vice Chairman Andrus, Representatives Boyle, Kerby, Giddings, Marshall, Nichols, Hanks, Cannon, Moon, von Ehlinger, Toone, Ruchti, Mathias  
**ABSENT/  
EXCUSED:** None  
**GUESTS:** None

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

**Riata Chandler**, Idaho FFA Secretary, introduced the 2020-2021 officers for Idaho FFA stating there are over 5,100 FFA members across the state. They have visited 43 of Idaho's 93 chapters so far this year. She explained the three circle model of agriculture education combines classroom instruction, supervised agricultural experience, and the FFA organization through integral instruction.

**Cade Barkett**, Idaho FFA Vice President, said the District Officer Training was a real highlight for him as he was able to learn and connect with so many amazing people. Even though many events could not take place this year, he said they are working hard to provide the best possible opportunity through a virtual State Convention this year.

**TK Kuwahara**, Executive Director of Idaho Beef, gave a brief history of the Idaho beef industry stating there are over 8,149 beef operations valued at \$2,639 billion dollars which makes livestock the #1 agricultural sector by value in Idaho. She explained the funding for the council and how it is divided between the National Checkoff and the State Checkoff programs. Ms. Kuwahara said COVID-19 provided some unique challenges as supply chains were reduced and consumers began purchasing cuts of beef they were not familiar with cooking in their home. She explained how they used social and digital media to connect to the consumers and educate them on what cuts to purchase, how to store and different ways to prepare beef. Their strategic goals include communicating beef's value and overcoming misconceptions and growing consumer trust in beef and beef products.

**Laura Wilder**, Executive Director of Idaho Barley Commission, said the commission is self governed and serves to enhance the profitability of the Idaho barley growers through research, market development, promotion, information and education. She said Idaho's altitude, high desert climate and agronomic conditions make it an ideal location to grow barley. She said of the 55,000,000 bushels of barley produced in Idaho about 75% goes to make malt. Idaho is the #1 barley producing state in the US followed by Montana and North Dakota.

**Candi Fitch**, Executive Director of Idaho Apple Commission, said Idaho has a relatively small region in the southwestern side of the state that is ideal for growing apples. She explained some of the challenges of this past year as retail sales were flat most likely due to closures in schools and other food services. She said they were able to participate in the Farmers to Family food boxes to help sell fruit that normally goes to other food channels. Ms. Fitch reviewed the 2020-2021 proposed budget with the committee.

**Candi Fitch**, Executive Director for Idaho Cherry Commission, said on average Idaho produces about 1,400 tons of cherries annually. The cherry harvest begins in mid to late June and is finished by the end of July. She said most of the cherries are grown in the Sunny Slope area and there are new cherry orchards coming into production this season. She said the 2020 crop sold very well even though the tonnage was down from 2019. She reviewed the 2020-2021 proposed budget with the committee.

**Candi Fitch**, Executive Director for the Idaho Hop Growers Commission, explained hops is a relatively new crop to Idaho. Initially the industry thought it would be a strong hop year until they faced market struggles from COVID-19 which caused the closure of tap rooms. The dealers adjusted many contracts putting farms in a losing position but minimized the blow to the end users as much as possible. She said this year's quality and yields were down but they remain hopeful for a better year. She reviewed the 2020-2021 proposed budget with the committee.

**ADJOURN:** There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:56 p.m.

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Representative Kauffman  
Chair

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Joan Majors  
Secretary