

MINUTES
HOUSE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, February 24, 2022

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: Room EW42

MEMBERS: Chairman Kauffman, Vice Chairman Andrus, Representatives Boyle, Kerby, Giddings, Marshall, Nichols (Brooks), Hanks, Cannon, Moon, McCann, Toone, Ruchti, Mathias

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Rep. Mathias, Moon, Ruchti

GUESTS: The sign-in sheet will be retained in the committee secretary's office; following the end of session the sign-in sheet will be filed with the minutes in the Legislative Library.

Chairman Kauffman called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Jim Sprinkle, Ph.D., Extension Beef Specialist - Nutrition, University of Idaho Extension (U of I), spoke on grazing patterns. Cattle can be identified that have less yearly maintenance costs and also utilize rugged rangeland pastures more sustainably during hot summer days. Individual cow size and individual calf weaning weights have increased, but overall cowherd profitability has declined. Cow size has increased approximately 200 pounds during this time, as has the appetite. Specialized equipment is used to collect individual daily feed intakes for cattle in a feedlot setting on a real-time basis. Recognizing increasing cow size has corresponding feed needs, but the amount of available grazing and pastureland is constant, the University of Idaho was encouraged to look at ways the cattle can become more feed efficient.

The University of Idaho Extension is investigating whether cattle perform competitively to their contemporaries in a rangeland environment with respect to forage intake, livestock production, and grazing behavior. In addition to monitoring grazing locations (every five minutes) with GPS technology, utilizing accelerometers are being used to measure daily activity (grazing, resting, or walking). Accelerometers are used on rockets to measure velocity in three different directions and can be used to monitor cow head movements to distinguish the activity 24 hours a day at five-second intervals. A history of each cows daily activity for at least 30 days can be obtained.

Research has demonstrated cattle can be selected which not only are more efficient but also graze rugged rangeland pastures more sustainably than do their inefficient counterparts when temperatures get hot in summer. Efficient cattle, presumably with fewer maintenance requirements, maintained similar production outputs to their inefficient herd mates. On late-season rangeland with decreasing forage quality and no supplementation, young efficient cattle lose less weight than do inefficient cattle. Early indications suggest that efficient cattle can be identified with genetic markers, possibly revolutionizing the selection of herd replacements which can more effectively graze pastures with endangered species concerns.

Bob Howard, Desert Mountain Grass Fed Beef, spoke on generational sustainable ranching. After questioning customers, Mr. Howard discovered they want meat from non-confined cattle. He explained grass-fed cattle do not cost more to raise than conventional grain-fed cattle. Additionally, the carbon produced by the cattle gets reincorporated into the soil and encourages more grass to grow. Generational sustainable ranching also requires a year-round supply of 2 year old cattle.

Rick Waitley, Leadership Idaho Agriculture, introduced the Class of 42, 2021-2022.

MOTION:

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Representative Kauffman
Chair

Jayne Feik
Secretary