

MINUTES  
**HOUSE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Thursday, February 06, 2025

**TIME:** 1:30 P.M.

**PLACE:** Room EW42

**MEMBERS:** Chairman Andrus, Vice Chairman Raymond, Representatives Cannon, McCann, Ehlers, Garner, Nelsen, Pickett, Sauter, Miller, Beiswenger, Dygert, Leavitt, Mendive, Shirts, Mathias, Achilles

**ABSENT/  
EXCUSED:** none

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

**RS 32251:** **Rep. Dygert** introduced **RS 32251** which proposes changes to the Alfalfa Seed and Clover Seed Commission. This proposed legislation increases the number of commission members from six to seven, comprising five grower representatives, one member from the University of Idaho College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, and one alfalfa and clover dealer. Additionally, the bill raises the assessment of one-fourth cent (1/4¢) to one cent (\$0.01).

**MOTION:** **Rep. McCann** made a motion to introduce **RS 32251**. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

**Braden Jensen**, Idaho Farm Bureau Federation (IFBF) introduced the presentation on Industrial Hemp, and explained the presentation is informational, highlighting Idaho's balanced approach to strong drug policies while allowing producers to benefit from the emerging hemp industry. No legislative changes are being proposed.

**Chanel Tewalt**, Director, Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA), said Idaho's hemp program, established in 2021, follows strict regulations, and allowing on-farm production while imposing stringent THC limits. Unlike federal guidelines permitting up to 1% THC before a violation, Idaho enforces a strict 0.3% threshold. Licensing is expensive, requiring background checks and extensive oversight. While farm production and processing are heavily regulated, retail hemp products lack administrative oversight, creating enforcement challenges and market disadvantages for Idaho producers. The state's high fees and strict policies make participation difficult, though efforts continue to refine the program for better efficiency and fairness.

**Triston Sponseller**, Idaho Hemp Processing, IPH Farms, said hemp production must be distinguished from CBD. Shredding occurs in the field, and hemp requires less water. Seed sourcing focuses on low-THC varieties. Processing involves separating the inner core, dust, and hurd, while raw material arrives in bales for further use.

**Matthew Mead**, CEO of Hempitecture Inc., presented the benefits of industrial hemp. Hempitecture manufactures bio-based, sustainable building materials using fiber hemp, not CBD. Fiber hemp offers a major agricultural opportunity for Idaho, while grain hemp has industrial and food potential. Since federal legalization in 2018, the industry is evolving, but Idaho's strict regulations hinder growth. He advocates for aligning with USDA guidelines to support local businesses.

**Travis McAfee**, McAfee Farms, said Idaho's hemp licensing process is challenging. Seeds must contain less than 3% THC. For optimal softness, harvesting should wait until the plant turns white before being sent to a facility. Water availability is limited—local farms primarily grow hay and grain, with the Little Lost River flowing for only half the season. Hemp requires less water, making it a viable crop for the region.

**Tim Cornie**, 1000 Spring Mills, highlighted hemp grain as a superfood and a complete protein. Hemp plants grow 12-15 feet tall, and after being harvested, it softens after three days of moisture and toughens after seven. Idaho produces more hemp fiber than any other state. Most hemp seed originates from Europe and Canada due to Idaho's restrictions, requiring new seed each season.

**ADJOURN:** There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 2:58 p.m.

---

Representative Andrus  
Chair

---

Jayne Feik  
Secretary