

MINUTES  
**HOUSE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Wednesday, February 12, 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:** Mathias

**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 1:30 p.m.

**MOTION:** **Rep. Shirts** made a motion to approve the minutes of February 10, 2025. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

**Chairman Andrus** recognized the service Legislative Page, **Blyss Miller** who has been assigned to the committee during the first half of the session.

**Michael Parrella**, Dean, Special Assistant to the President at the University of Idaho (U of I), presented the State of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, highlighting its land grant mission of expanding education and applied research. Since 1892, the Idaho Agricultural Experiment Station has driven agricultural innovation, including developing the Russet Burbank potato and advancing sustainability, disease management, and invasive species control. Cooperative Extension provides statewide education in agriculture, natural resources, health, and youth development, with Idaho 4-H serving over 75,000 youth. FY26 request: \$157,900 for a Viticulture & Small Fruits Specialist to support growers in disease management, water efficiency, and post-harvest practices—an area lacking in-state faculty expertise.

**Brett Wilder**, Assistant Professor, Area Extension Educator in Agricultural Economics, presented the 2024 Financial Condition of Idaho Agriculture, saying Idaho's agricultural sector remains a key economic driver, ranking 7th in farm GDP as a percentage of state GDP (3.27%), despite being 38th in total GDP and 19th in total farm GDP. Agribusiness contributes 17% of the state's economic output, supports 1 in 9 jobs, and accounts for 12.8% of Idaho's GSP. In 2024, net farm income rose 12% to \$3.3 billion, driven by lower costs for fertilizer, pesticides, feed, and fuel, though interest expenses increased. Idaho's total exports reached \$4 billion, with food and agriculture exports at \$1.2 billion. As the state hits a record \$11.3 billion in agricultural revenue, geopolitical factors, inflation, and rising fixed costs will challenge producers, with livestock remaining strong while the crop sector faces ongoing pressures. Top trading partners include Canada, Taiwan, Mexico, Japan, and Singapore.

**Kendra Kaiser**, Director and Assistant Research Faculty at the Idaho Water Resources Research Institute (IWRRI), reported that the institute, established in 1963 by the U of I Board of Regents, is one of 54 national water research and technology centers. It conducts and directs research to address water resource needs at the state, regional, and national levels. Additionally, IWRRI supports student training and faculty development in water resource science while leading innovative education and outreach programs which share research-based insights with water managers, agency scientists, and the public.

**ADJOURN:** There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 2:43 p.m.

---

Representative Andrus  
Chair

---

Jayne Feik  
Secretary