

MINUTES  
**HOUSE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Wednesday, March 26, 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:** Cannon, Miller

**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. Raymond** made a motion to approve the minutes of March 18, 2025. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

**TJ Bliss**, Ph.D., Chief Academic Officer of the Idaho State Board of Education, explained during the 2024 Regular Session, the Legislature passed **SCR 111**, authorizing the State Board to initiate discussions with Utah to establish an agreement allowing Idaho students to enroll in Utah State University's (USU) new veterinary program. The resolution requires the Board to report back to the Legislature on the results of these discussions. Currently, 11 Idaho students participate annually in Washington State University's (WSU) veterinary program through the WIMU Regional Program, a partnership between WSU, the University of Idaho (UI), Montana State University, and (USU). Recent discussions between UI's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and the State Board of Education have explored expanding veterinary school admissions to include USU's program, potentially allowing 11 additional Idaho students to enroll each year. USU's Dean of Veterinary Medicine has expressed willingness to establish this agreement, contingent on legislative funding. Expanding the program would help address Idaho's shortage of veterinary professionals, particularly in large animal medicine, while also enhancing educational opportunities through collaborations such as the University of Idaho's Center for Agriculture, Food, and the Environment in Rupert, ID. Key stakeholders, including the Farm Bureau and the Idaho Veterinary Medical Association, have expressed support, with state funding needed in the FY27 budget.

**Rachael Bickerton**, Director of Government and External Relations, UI, stated large animal practice is optional rather than mandatory at Washington State. At USU, however, a large animal course is required.

**Dexton Lake**, Farm Bureau, stated USU does not require a pre-veterinary bachelor's degree for admission into its veterinary program. A student can earn a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) without obtaining a bachelor's degree. Additionally, there is a strong financial incentive for veterinarians to specialize in small animals, as the income difference compared to large animal practice can be several hundred thousand dollars.

**Chairman Andrus** and the committee thanked page **Ryia Thomsen** for her service.

**ADJOURN:**

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 2:05 p.m.

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Representative Andrus  
Chair

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Jayne Feik  
Secretary