MINUTES

SENATE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE:	Thursday, January 29, 2026
TIME:	8:00 A.M.
PLACE:	Room WW53
MEMBERS PRESENT:	Chairman Nichols, Vice Chairman Zito, Senators Lakey, Lent, VanOrden, Blaylock, Kohl, Semmelroth, and Taylor
ABSENT/ EXCUSED:	None
NOTE:	The sign-in sheet, testimonies and other related materials will be retained with the minutes in the committee's office until the end of the session and will then be located on file with the minutes in the Legislative Services Library.
CONVENED:	**Chairman Nichols** called the meeting of the Senate Agricultural Affairs Committee (Committee) to order at 8:00 a.m.
MINUTES APPROVAL:	**Senator Blaylock** moved to approve the Minutes of January 22, 2026. **Vice Chairman Zito** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.
RS 33086	**Relating to the Protection of Working Animals. Senator Shippy** read through the entirety of the RS.
DISCUSSION:	**Vice Chairman Zito** inquired if rodeo animals were protected under **RS 33086**. **Senator Shippy** answered affirmatively. **Senator Lakey** asked if the term "service" included animals such as guide dogs. **Senator Shippy** answered affirmatively.
MOTION:	**Senator Lakey** moved to send **RS 33086** to print. **Senator Blaylock** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.
RS 32888	**Relating to the Idaho Potato Commission. Senator Blaylock** explained this was a part of the Idaho Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) Interim Committee efforts to update, edit, or remove obsolete regulations. The DOGE Committee instructed agencies to provide revisions which updated Idaho Code. This legislation removed programs that weren't currently applicable.
MOTION:	**Senator Lakey** moved to send **RS 32888** to print. **Senator Taylor** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.
RS 32886	**Relating to the Idaho OnePlan. Senator Blaylock** stated **RS 32886** enabled the removal of the IdahoOne Plan program from Idaho Code.
MOTION:	**Senator Lakey** moved to send **RS 32886** to print. **Senator Taylor** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.
PASSED THE GAVEL:	Chairman Nichols passed the gavel to Vice Chairman Zito.
DOCKET NO. 02-0701-2501	**Rules of the Idaho Hop Growers' Commission (ZBR Chapter Repeal) - Pending Rule. Mr. Lloyd Knight**, Deputy Director of the Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA), explained the ISDA wished to repeal the chapter. (Attachment 1).
DOCKET NO. 02-0108-2401	**Rules Governing Grizzly Bear and Wolf Depredation - Temporary Rule. Mr. Lloyd Knight**, Deputy Director of the ISDA, explained the rule outlined the process through which livestock owners could receive depredation reimbursement in the 2024 fiscal year.

DOCKET NO. 02-0108-2501 **Rules Governing Grizzly Bear and Wolf Depredation (New Chapter) - Pending Rule. Mr. Lloyd Knight**, Deputy Director of the ISDA, explained rule amendments were consistent with authorizing statute as amended by the Idaho Legislature in H 592 in the 2024 session, and again by H 82 in the 2025 session. Further clarification was made regarding the depredation reimbursement process and protocols.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Lakey** asked if the language regarding the amount of compensation that was applicable to veterinary services was consistent with statute. **Mr. Knight** explained the statute did not provide a definitive amount of compensation, however, they did work with stakeholders to find a viable amount of compensation for injured livestock. **Chairman Nichols** asked to what extent this topic was influenced by the federal government. **Mr. Knight** stated there was a federal reimbursement process which provided guidance for the State, however the rule was consistent with and tailored to Idaho Code.

TESTIMONY: **Ms. Megan Smith**, Program Director for Living with Wolves, stated her support for the proposed rule. She believed H 592 and **Docket No. 02-0108-2501** represented a meaningful step forward in supporting Idaho producers who experience the hardship of loss associated with predation, while also providing tools and resources to work proactively with producers to prevent depredation through conflict mitigation. (Attachment 2).

Mr. Jeff Abrams, Wildlife Program Associate at the Idaho Conservation League, was also in support of the proposed rule and encouraged the state to increase the compensation amount for depredated livestock.

DOCKET NO. 02-0420-2501 **Rules Governing Brucellosis (ZBR Chapter Rewrite) - Pending Rule. Dr. Scott Leibsle**, Veterinarian and Administrator of the Animal Industries Division for the ISDA, defined Brucellosis and explained the Idaho Brucellosis Program (Program). He explained the Program included Designated Surveillance Areas (DSA), which required increased disease surveillance for resident and grazing cattle herds. He emphasized the federal government largely determined how Brucellosis was managed. Dr. Leibsle provided vaccination and testing data. The rule had no regulatory changes, but simply language reorganization and clarification. (Attachment 3).

DISCUSSION: **Senator Semmelroth** asked if the federal government conducted Brucellosis tests within the DSAs, and if not, why. **Dr. Leibsle** answered no, perhaps due to cost concerns. **Senator Lakey** asked if the federal government could enact an effective Brucellosis vaccination program. **Dr. Leibsle** clarified the RB-51 Brucellosis vaccination was not intended to prevent infection, but to prevent the animal from aborting their pregnancy. The vaccination gave the ISDA additional time to conduct tests. **Dr. Leibsle** stated it would likely be cost-ineffective and problematic for the federal government to enact such a program. **Senator Lakey** asked if there were any effort being made to make a preventative Brucellosis vaccine. **Dr. Leibsle** noted the efficacy for developing a vaccine for a bacteria was problematic. He explained they were only recently able to conduct research on Brucellosis due to federal restrictions. In addition, Brucellosis was relevant primarily in three states and there was a lack of funding.

Senator Blaylock inquired as to why prior notification was not required in an emergency situation to enter and inspect a premises. **Dr. Leibsle** noted they relocated language that was already used in the Rule and that the ISDA would make every effort to notify and work with cattle producers so they would not be inconvenienced.

DOCKET NO. 02-0424-2501 **Rules Governing Tuberculosis (ZBR Chapter Rewrite) - Pending Rule. Dr. Scott Leibsle**, Veterinarian and Administrator of the Animal Industries Division for the ISDA, defined Tuberculosis and explained the Tuberculosis Program. Dr. Leibsle provided test results from the Tuberculosis Program. **Dr. Leibsle** explained that none of the proposed changes to the Tuberculosis rule would impact or change the regulatory scope of the program. Clarifications were made and unnecessary requirements were eliminated.

DISCUSSION: **Chairman Nichols** asked which states were currently affected by Tuberculosis. **Dr. Leibsle** responded Tuberculosis was only endemic in Michigan due to their deer population. Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona were affected. Minnesota, South Dakota, and Colorado contained traces in standalone herds.

DOCKET NO. 02-0426-2501 **Rules Governing the Public Exchange of Livestock (ZBR Chapter Rewrite) - Pending Rule. Dr. Scott Leibsle**, Veterinarian and Administrator of the Animal Industries Division for the ISDA, gave a brief summary of the Idaho Public Livestock Market, which was composed of auction yards, buying stations, and trader lots. Recent negotiated rulemaking made minor efficiency updates, which included requiring buying stations and trader lots to notify the state they were still operating, with no fees involved. Daily digital livestock sale reports were submitted in lieu of physical paper releases for each animal sold.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Lakey** asked if the digital reports were a part of the negotiated rulemaking discussion. **Dr. Leibsle** answered affirmatively. **Senator Lakey** asked what occurred if trader lots and buying stations missed their notification deadline. **Dr. Leibsle** explained they had a successful informal process of contacting the trader lot or buying station, rather than immediate permit suspension.

PASSED THE GAVEL: Vice Chairman Zito passed the gavel to Chairman Nichols.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Nichols** adjourned the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

Senator Nichols
Chair

Rachel Verrette
Secretary