

RECORDING OF PROCEEDINGS

Wyoming Board of Agriculture
December 19, 2007
Conference Call

Members Present: Jack Corson, President
Gene Hardy, Vice President
Jim Bennage
Joe Thomas
Dave Graham
Jim Mickelson
Patrick Zimmerer
Juan Reyes

Excused: John Etchepare

Unexcused: Ryan Lance
Frank Galey
Dalin Winters

Staff Present: Muff Parker, Recording Secretary
Jason Fearneyhough, Deputy Director
Hank Uhden
Justin Williams

Guest: Jim Schwartz, WLB

Called to order by President Corson at 8 a.m.

Roll call was taken.

Minutes

Jim Mickelson made a motion to approve the December 5 Conference Call minutes. The motion was seconded by Joe Thomas. Motion carried.

Weed and Pest Conference Issues

Hank Uhden said there is a possibility of some legislation regarding the Weed and Pest Council and how the designated and declared lists are made up. Bill Taliaferro would like to have pests added to the declared list and direct mill levy funds toward them, as well as use state funding if there were some predators on the state list. The Weed and Pest Council does not want to make changes at time. They would like to have counties add predators to their local declared list. The Department is encouraging everyone to wait until after legislature so funding is not jeopardized. Hank wanted to make sure everyone knows the predator groups are not going after Weed and Pest Funds.

Range Insurance

Justin Williams explained the systems used for determining the moisture content/precipitation levels. Wyoming is currently using the vegetative system and the other one is the precipitation system. It is important when purchasing this insurance, to let those reviewing the data where you may have evergreens, etc., because that will skew the data.

Justin said the Big Horn/Domestic Sheep Working Groups will be meeting January 14. They usually meet only one time a year, and the last meeting was in Lander in August. They have formed a subcommittee to revise and prioritize issues. They are focusing on the development of vaccines, the application of vaccines, stress relaters, the Payette National Forest, reviewing their direction, and the Sierra Madre Group implementations. He also feels they need action items to track their progress.

When Jack asked about Sage Grouse counting, he said they are using satellite imagery to look at the sage grouse habitat including mapping that habitat and counting leks, but not actual counts are being done.

Wyoming Livestock Board

Jim Schwartz said Brucellosis continues to be a big problem. He said they are not testing at the sale barns in Montana and Idaho like Wyoming does. The Vets are paid, but not the sale barns, so they are talking of reducing that testing.

He said they need some flexibility in the law to be able to pay more than \$3.50 a head in some cases where it's difficult to find someone to test. They also need to be able to get some funding to the sale barns. He went on to say they also need to find a way to help producers because of the additional costs involved. He is also concerned about some of the hobby (less than full-time ranch) producers because they don't all know they need to be vaccinating.

Jim Mickelson said in his high risk area, he feels it's a Game and Fish problem.

Jim Schwartz reminded the Board that the herd plans are voluntary, not mandatory now, but there is still some co-mingling of cattle & elk.

The Livestock Board was approved for \$945,000 for testing at \$3.50 a head. They have requested an additional \$750,000. He also said he believes the funding will be gone by next June. Evidently some producers are going to out-of-state barns as opposed to WY barns, where they are tested. He said he wants the Board's support to have the WLB do everything they can do to control Brucellosis. As an additional note, he said he has heard Montana wants Wyoming to eliminate or reduce the elk feed grounds.

Jim also visited some about the brand program. When the legislation passed last year, there was a mistake with the fees, and they have proposed language changes in the upcoming session to correct that. The past legislation allows for 35% of that program to be funded by general funds.

He also asked the Board not support the legislation exempting sheep feed lots, as that would dramatically reduce their budget.

When asked what his plans are to make the WLB more efficient in the future, he indicated they would be getting their feet under them in the next few years, but would then re-evaluate and perhaps be able to reduce the seasonal inspectors.

He and Jason attended a meeting in Salt Lake City regarding wild horses. The purpose was to find new ways to reduce the numbers in long-term holding facilities.

Jim Schwartz also said he's interested in working with the Department of Agriculture on a sage grouse seminar towards the end of January. He would like to showcase what folks are doing.

He recently attending a meeting in Billings regarding Foot & Mouth Disease and he is now a proponent of animal ID, to allow immediate trace back if there is an outbreak so they can react quickly. The gentleman who worked on the outbreak in England will be in Cheyenne on February 25 and 26, and Jim encouraged everyone to come to the meeting to hear more about their outbreak. More information will be released later.

There being no additional business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jack Corson, President

Date