

RECORDING OF PROCEEDINGS

Wyoming Board of Agriculture
November 3, 2008
Casper, Wyoming

Present: Juan Reyes
Jim Mickelson
Jim Bennage
Dave Graham
Gene Hardy
Patrick Zimmerer
Bridget Kukowski
Dalin Winters
John Etchepare
Frank Galey

Absent: Jack Corson
Joe Thomas
Ryan Lance

Called to order by President Hardy at 8 am.

Approval of minutes

Jim Mickelson made a motion to approve the September 3, 12, 17, October 1, 15, and July 7 and 8 minutes. The motion was seconded by Dave Graham. Motion carried.

State Fair Advisory Committee Proposal on Tail Docking

James Goodrich presented a letter by Bobbi Jo Heald, along with three charts, and a copy of the livestock tampering statutes.

James gave some background on the issues and how they (State Fair staff and State Fair Advisory Committee (SFAC)) wanted to come to a resolution on the issue. He said their focus was three fold; 1 - to protect the welfare of the animals; 2 - produce a good fair; and 3- to be aware of the impact to producers. He then read the recommendations from the SFAC. Jim Schwartz talked about tying their policy to statutes. He talked about the side of law enforcement and the chain as custody and the fine line there is because of the husbandry practices. He said using ultra sound is an effective process that can be used at check-in. He also suggested a rewards incentive program is another way to reward those participants for practicing good animal husbandry. He would even be willing to help with the cost of this out of his own pocket. The Wyoming Livestock Board cannot enforce the rule. They only have four animal health persons in all of Wyoming and it's not feasible for those four to be able to enforce. He opposes the proposed rule but is in favor of some changes to how to enforce and perhaps incantations. Bone density can be seen with ultrasound and Eric Barlow says it will work.

Club lamb producers were willing to go with three vertebrae, but not happy with three full vertebrae. Jim hates to see the Board give-in on the issue. WSFAC wants to change it to surgically altered and no mention of three vertebrae. John Etchepare is in support of the proposed rule changes being brought forth by the WSFAC and opposes the Wyoming Livestock Board's position. Frank wonders which animals will be chosen to look at further and how would you enforce it? John Etchepare said they can visually see the difference. Frank wanted to know the number of prolapsed sheep at the National Western Stock Show. James said they are very minimal. Dave Graham said the ultra-sound at check-in makes sense to

the exhibitors. He would like to keep the rule and come up with a different method to be done at weigh-in; not after judging the animals. Bryce feels everyone is giving-in to those who don't want the rule. He believes sheep husbandry is not the issue; animal welfare is. Bryce would like to see this proposed rule have a chance.

Jim Bennage feels the new rule criminalizes the violators. Jim Schwartz says yet that it is a criminal offense. It will go back to those responsible for the violation, not the exhibitor. He feels we need to be accountable, but we also need to use science. Jim Bennage likes the idea of incentives for those who abide by the rules. Dalin Winters would like to use the ultra sound and reduce the rule to two vertebrae. Gene reminded the board that they started out with three vertebrae and if we go down to two, he doesn't think the issue will ever end. When asked by Gene if there would be time to do the ultra sound at weigh-in, Jim Schwartz indicated they would hardly know it was being done.

John Etchepare recommends going with the new rule tying it to statute and look at the possibility of ultra sound. Animal Welfare would be looked at for all animals. He also noted the Wyoming Livestock Board could change the statute. Jim Schwartz said that Phil Martin feels the issue has now become a Livestock Board issue and he does not like it.

Patrick made a motion to accept the rule on tail docking as presented by the WSFAC. The motion was seconded by Jim Bennage. Three voted in favor and five were opposed. Motion was denied. Juan made a motion to leave the existing rule as is except to adopt a way to measure the tail length prior to the show. The motion was seconded by Jim Mickelson. Discussion: Patrick feels this motion disrespects the volunteer advisory committee members who worked on the rule. **The motion passed on a voice vote of six for and two opposed.**

NRCS Update

Xavier said the Farm Bill has been extended until March 6. He also handed out the Wyoming summary for the 2002 Farm Bill. He was hoping to have more information on the 2008 Farm Bill, but there are no rules yet.

Letter to all State Department's of Agriculture

Jim Mickelson presented a draft letter to be sent to all Boards of Agriculture and all State Department's of Agriculture explaining the brucellosis issue in Wyoming. Their hope is to use the letter as an educational tool for those who don't have brucellosis in their state. Jim Schwartz would also like to send them a brochure on the disease. He went on to explain the special are in the northwest they are hoping to establish. He said it is not a split-state issue. The eighteen month testing is workable as opposed to the twelve months, previously proposed. Jim Mickelson and Joe Thomas, with Jim Schwartz' help will finalize the letter and send it out.

State Climatologist

Steve Gray talked about the climate changes we are seeing in the state. He said Wyoming is normally a very dry state, with an annual precipitation of sixteen inches. Wyoming is vulnerable to any charges. The majority of surface water comes from snowpack above 10,000 feet. There has been a 1% increase in temperature over the last 100 years. The scientists use several types of measurement to come up with that data. The changes occurring today are all over the earth, not just in certain areas. He said Wyoming will probably be warmer, by three to seven degrees, by mid-century, and will probably break even on precipitation. Steve talked about some possible changes to the state if all of this is true. He says what is driving these changes is not as important as trying to make changes now to be prepared for the problem.

He says you cannot use cloud seeding to get out of a drought. If there is no water in the clouds, you can't get water. The procedure may allow you to get a little more snow and if you can figure out how to store that, it may help during a drought.

Wyoming Business Council (WBC) Strategic Plan

Jim Bennage thanked the WBC for holding public meetings and encouraging the Board of Agriculture, in particular to participate. He felt the Board of Agriculture should: Refine what agriculture is about, into the plan; look at priorities; be careful of duplicating efforts; collaborate with other agencies; make priorities action items; work on development and marketing; and leadership and education strategies. Jason added that water development was an issue discussed, as well as expanding entrepreneurship to not just the youth. Jim Bennage felt the Board needed to put together some comments to give to the WBC. He suggested contributing to the overall strategic plan and action items. Jim Bennage, Patrick Zimmerer, Juan Reyes, and Dalin Winters will draft a letter.

Natural Resources and Policy Update

Justin Williams, Chris Wichmann, and Jessica Crowder all introduced themselves and talked about their responsibilities within the section, talked about the Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative (WLCI). He said the WLCI and U.S. Geological Survey are working on a map of the critical habitat for the sage grouse.

Water Quality Grant Requests

Cathy Meyer with the Lower Wind River was present to answer any questions regarding their request for the Lower Wind River Conservation District. **Jim Mickelson made a motion to approve their request in the amount of \$29,980.80 with a term of December 31, 2010. The motion was seconded by Dalin Winters. Motion carried.**

Ann Trosper was representing the Powell Clarks Fork District on their request for an extension until July 31, 2009 in the amount of \$6,877.84. **Dalin Winters made a motion to approve their extension and the term. The motion was seconded by Jim Mickelson. The motion carried.**

The Lincoln County extension request was approved at a prior meeting and no action was taken.

Derek Grant visited with the board about the development of a communication plan he is working on. He said he is doing some pro-active outreach, also.

John talked about the rules being finalized by USDA regarding Cool legislation. He also said Wyoming can now do interstate shipment of meat if someone is willing to build a plant.

John has also gotten word that the BLM is not going to fund the wild horse gather this fall. He has asked for a letter to go to them in conjunction with the Governor's office.

John then went through some of the bills coming up this session that are of interest to the members and the ag community.

The subject of scheduling the next years' meeting dates was tabled until next meeting except for noting the statutory meeting April 13.

Patrick read a draft letter prepared by Jim Bennage, Juan, and himself regarding the comments from the board to the WBC on their strategic plan. Jim Mickelson moved to send the letter to the WBC. The motion was seconded by Dave Graham. Patrick will email it to Muff to get signatures.

Cathy Meyer was on hand to ask the board what their position on the JBS merger. At this time, the Department's position was the state is against the merger. The board agreed they would be better able to address this at a later time after further research.

There being no additional business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Gene Hardy, President

Date