

MINUTES
SENATE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, February 23, 2021

TIME: 8:00 A.M.

PLACE: Room WW53

MEMBERS PRESENT: Vice Chairman Bayer, Senators Siddoway (Burtenshaw), Patrick, Den Hartog, Johnson, Zito, Ricks, Nelson, and Rabe

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: **Vice Chairman Bayer** called the meeting of the Senate Agricultural Affairs Committee (Committee) to order at 8:03 a.m.

MINUTES APPROVAL: **Senator Rabe** moved to approve the Minutes of February 11, 2021. **Senator Den Hartog** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

PAGE INTRODUCTION: **Introduction of New Page - Charlotte Brockman.** **Vice Chairman Bayer** introduced Ms. Brockman. **Ms. Brockman** stated she is from Gooding, Idaho, and expressed her excitement in the page opportunity. She described her education, interests, and future goals. She also remarked that she hoped to learn how the Idaho Legislature functions.

Vice Chairman Bayer indicated that there would be a change in the agenda to allow one of the presenters to connect remotely. She invited the second scheduled presenter to the podium.

PRESENTATION: **Idaho Beef Council (IBC) Annual Report.** **TK Kuwahara**, Chief Executive Officer, IBC, provided an overview of Idaho's beef industry and IBC's mission, vision, objectives, long-range strategic plans, and its members. (Refer to Attachment 1.)

Ms. Kuwahara detailed the programs and initiatives that IBC implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, IBC enhanced its digital presence to engage, inspire, and educate consumers about Idaho's beef industry. One of the programs that she mentioned is IBC's Beef Counts program. It is a partnership between Idaho's beef community and The Idaho Foodbank, which helps ensure that families struggling with food insecurity have access to nutritious, high-quality protein food. (Refer to Attachment 2.) She also noted that IBC launched its new website in May 2020.

Lastly, **Ms. Kuwahara** talked about the growth in Idaho beef exports. She reported that the international marketing programs of IBC resulted in Japanese magazines covering Idaho ranches. (Refer to Attachment 3.)

S 1122 **Relating to Soil Conservation to Revise References to Soil Conservation Districts and to Remove Provisions Regarding the Idaho OnePlan.** **Teri Murrison**, Administrator, Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission (Commission), stated that **S 1122** proposed the elimination of obsolete and unnecessary provisions in Idaho Code Chapter 27, Title 22. This measure was in line with the Governor's Red Tape Reduction Act.

Furthermore, **Ms. Murrison** said the proposed changes include standardizing all references to districts and the Commission as "conservation district" and "conservation commission," respectively. She also mentioned that **S 1122** removed the now-defunct Idaho OnePlan from the statute. She described Idaho OnePlan as an online conservation planning tool that was not funded for almost a decade.

DISCUSSION:

In response to questions asked by Senators Zito and Den Hartog, **Ms. Murrison** replied that the Commission's current mission is much broader compared to its mission several years ago. Its current mission is to promote the conservation of soil, water, air, plants, and animal resources. She added that the change of name from commission to conservation commission does not change the Commission's mission in regards to its relationship with the districts. She commented that the name change was vetted extensively with all the districts through public meetings and received no negative feedbacks on the proposed changes.

Senator Rabe asked Ms. Murrison to elaborate on the OnePlan program. **Ms. Murrison** explained that OnePlan was established in 2000 as a one-stop shop for stewardship projects. She also said that the funding for the program ceased before 2011 and its technology was outdated.

Senator Siddoway asked for an update on the relationship between the districts and the Commission. **Ms. Murrison** acknowledged that there were years during which the Commission and some districts were at odds. She said that the Commission worked, in recent years, with the districts to advocate new developments that resulted in an increase of the Commission's approval rating from the districts. She emphasized that the relationship between the Commission and districts is in its rebuilding stage.

MOTION:

Senator Den Hartog moved to send **S 1122** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Ricks** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

PRESENTATION:

Idaho Sheep and Goat Health Board (Board) Annual Report. **Naomi LeGere-Gordon**, Executive Director, Board, reported on sheep, lamb and wool promotion, research, and education. She explained that the Board is under the auspices of the Animal Industries Division of the Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA).

Ms. LeGere-Gordon addressed the financial condition of the Board in 2020. She also expounded on the Board's greatly expanded social media campaigns, projects, activities, and partnerships.

DISCUSSION:

Vice Chairman Bayer asked about lamb recipe projects and wool fertilizers. **Ms. LeGere-Gordon** answered that recipes can be found on the Board's upcoming website as well as the Board's newsletters. She also explained that there are two types of fertilizers: sheep droppings and wool fertilizers. She pointed out that wool fertilizers come from discarded wool not used to make fabric. This wool is palletized to form fertilizer.

In response to questions from Senators Siddoway and Nelson, **Ms. LeGere-Gordon** talked about the issues and problems the Board faces regarding meat processing and its limited resources. Moreover, she discussed the Board's past and future plans and programs to promote the sheep industry in Idaho.

Senator Zito remarked on the future of the artistic aspects of Idaho's sheep industry such as spinning, weaving, crocheting, and knitting. In addition, **Ms. LeGere-Gordon** asserted there is a 45 percent increase of interest in the above-mentioned crafts throughout the nation.

Senator Johnson asked Ms. LeGere-Gordon to briefly comment on the sheep research station in Dubois. **Ms. LeGere-Gordon** said the sheep experimentation is currently focused on several genetic programs and hiring a new scientist.

PRESENTATION: **Idaho Future Farmers of America (FFA) Updates.** **Clayton Beene**, President, Idaho FFA, introduced himself, and Riata Chandler, Secretary, Idaho FFA, to the Committee.

Ms. Riata shared updates on Idaho FFA activities, accomplishments, and future plans. Furthermore, **Ms. Beene** stated that most of Idaho FFA's conventions, workshops, and trainings were done virtually due to COVID-19 pandemic. On the other hand, towards the end of 2020, some of the FFA officers visited 43 out of 93 FFA chapters in Idaho. He pointed out that the main purpose of the visit was to convince young adults to join FFA and help equip them with leadership abilities.

DISCUSSION: **Vice Chairman Bayer**, and **Senators Den Hartog** and **Zito**, commended Idaho FFA officers and members for their dedication, participation, and support to the State. They recognized their works in helping shape Idaho's future leaders.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Vice Chairman Bayer** adjourned the meeting at 9:12 a.m.

Senator Bayer
Vice Chair

Rellie Wisdom
Secretary