



Montana Board of Livestock Meeting Minutes

(This Meeting was Open to the Public & By ZOOM)

December 19, 2024

MT Department of Livestock Board Room #319
301 N. Roberts, Helena, Montana

Board Members Present

Gene Curry, Chairman (cattle producer)

Alan Redfield (cattle producer)

Jake Feddes (cattle producer)

Eric Moore (cattle producer)

William Kleinsasser (swine producer)

Greg Wichman (sheep producer)

Lily Andersen (dairy & poultry)

(William Kleinsasser left the meeting after the morning session)

Staff Present

Mike Honeycutt, EO

Brian Simonson, Deputy EO

Donna Wilham, Adm. Asst to EO

Evan Waters, Centralized Services

Lindsey Simon, Centralized Services

Mike Spatz, Centralized Services

Rick Corder, Centralized Services

Dale Haylett, Centralized Services

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski, MT State Vet

Dr. Greg Juda, Director, MVDL

Dr. Brenee Peterson, Animal Health

Jay Bodner, Brands Enforcement

Alicia Love, Meat, Milk & Egg Inspection

Brendan Boots, Centralized Services

Tom Shultz, Centralized Services

Public Present

Ellie Brighton, MT Stockgrowers Association

Dalin Tidwell, USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services

Kali Wicks, Treasure State Strategies

Dr. Gary Schieber

Keith Dynneson

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

(0:10) 8:01 AM

Chairman Gene Curry called the meeting to order at 8:01 AM

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

(0:10) 8:01 AM

Chairman Gene Curry called the meeting to order and addressed the first order of business, introductions:

- Eric Moore, Cattle Representative, Miles City

- Mr. Moore shared about the dryness in their area and how nationwide weather, the Mexican border situation and the New World Screwworm had affected the number of cattle going to markets and calf prices
- Lily Andersen, Dairy & Poultry Representative, south of Livingston
 - Ms. Andersen shared about having to replace a bulk milk tank, having a good Board of Milk Control meeting and how California had declared a state of emergency for HPAI
 - Gene Curry and Greg Wichman added that a worker had a severe case of HPAI and was currently hospitalized
- William Kleinsasser, Swine Representative, Augusta
 - Mr. Kleinsasser reported that pig prices were still where they were in mid-June and July and that feed was cheap. He was disappointed that the Farm Bill didn't go through and said that he was disgusted because Rosendale and Tester had not stepped up to fight Proposition 12
- Jake Feddes, Cattle Representative, Manhattan
 - Mr. Feddes reported that they would start calving in January and were trying to wrap up a new calving barn. He shared that his Mom had been diagnosed with breast cancer, which had made things chaos at home
- Greg Wichman, Sheep Representative, Hilger, North of Lewistown
 - Mr. Wichman reported that they were building fence on a lease place to house more "critters" there for the winter and the posts were going into the ground easily because of the warm temperatures. With "hot" prices, they did not wait until March or April but had already taken their light grass cattle to market. The sheep market was perking up, but the wool market was in the doldrums
- Alan Redfield, Cattle Representative, Paradise Valley, south of Livingston
 - Mr. Redfield reported that he had been getting a lot of paperwork done since his recent shoulder surgery. He added that the hunting season on his place was phenomenal. Ample moisture and no rocks had made their driving fence posts an easier task
- Gene Curry, Cattle Representative, Valier
 - Mr. Curry reported that it was fairly dry, with basically, no snow, warm temperatures and wind in their country. All calves were in the feedlot and had plenty of feed. The dry cows had been taken to Kuna

BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

(10:49) 8:12 AM

(10:49) 8:12 AM – BOARD APPROVAL OF PAST MEETING MINUTES

Gene Curry entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the last BOL meeting:

MOTION/VOTE

(10:55) 8:12 AM

Alan Redfield moved to approve the minutes from the Montana Board of Livestock November 14, 2024 meeting. Greg Wichman seconded. The motion passed.

Gene Curry requested that the BOL minutes be condensed and there was BOL discussion about whether or not to move forward with that change

MOTION/VOTE

(17:25) 8:19 AM

Jake Feddes moved that the BOL audio/video recordings would be our official minutes and that we will publish timestamp of any actions taken within the meetings moving forward, as long as the audio/video recordings were available. **Lily Andersen** seconded. The motion was amended.

“AMENDED” MOTION/VOTE

(20:23) 8:21 AM

Jake Feddes moved that the BOL audio/video recordings would be the official minutes and that there would also be written minutes with the agenda items and highlights and actions taken by the BOL with timestamps within the video recording. **Lily Andersen** seconded. **Greg Wichman** voted no. The motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS

(21:13) 8:22 AM

(21:20) 8:22 AM – UPDATE ON GOVERNOR’S OGSM STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT AND EXECUTIVE OFFICER STRATEGIC GOALS

Mike Honeycutt reported that there would be no OGSM or Ops Review meeting held in December and so there was no new, fresh report:

- The BOL continued discussion from the last BOL meeting on presenting a more detailed breakdown of Market movement numbers for the OGSM report
- Also discussed by the BOL was possible changes in outgoing brand inspections at the Markets and how those cattle were grouped on the inspection paperwork
- **Mr. Honeycutt** reported that the number of cattle moved through the 12 commission companies in the state this Fall was on par with last Fall’s numbers
- Once the Google AI project was launched in the Brands area in December, **Mr. Honeycutt** said that inspection information would be captured more timely and could be presented in more detail
- Electronic payment issues for inspections continued to be explored and further discussed by the BOL
- The BOL offered input on items to be addressed in the next 6-month horizon to add to the OGSM report

(38:41) 8:40 AM Review of Legislative Audit Committee Findings

After having time in front of the Legislative Audit Committee earlier in the week, **Mr. Honeycutt** presented to the BOL a copy of the official Legislative Audit findings to be discussed:

- Mr. Honeycutt reported that there were three takeaways on the Auditors' opinion of the DOL listed in the report
 - There was an unmodified opinion, meaning that the DOL's financial balance sheets were accurate and a true reflection what was happening in the DOL
 - The Auditors did pass judgement on prior recommendations: while the Estray Fund recommendation was noted as fully implemented, the capital asset activity and how it was depreciated they said was being done correctly now, but only partially implemented because the DOL had not gone back and made changes in previous years' books
 - It was found by the Auditors that about 22% of the deposited funds from inspections done in Fiscal Years '22 and '23 had been made after the 7-day window of time allowed by State law. Mr. Honeycutt said that on June 8, 2024, however, a tracking spreadsheet had been put into effect where Supervisors were sent, bi-weekly, notices of Inspectors who had late deposits and they were to follow up with those individuals to find out the reason why

NEW BUSINESS/EXECUTIVE OFFICER UPDATES

(1:14:13) 9:16 AM

(1:14:25) 9:16 AM – HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATES

Mike Spatz, Human Resource Officer for the DOL, introduced himself

(1:14:25) 9:16 AM Staff Openings, Recruitment and General Updates

Mike Spatz updated the BOL on Staff Openings, Recruitment and General Updates in the DOL:

- Mr. Spatz reported that Brands had five open positions, Animal Health had three vacated positions and one new hire and there had been no resignations or departures from the DOL in the past 3.5 weeks

(1:17:57) 9:19 AM Request to Hire – Brand Livestock Investigator-Field Training Officer (FTO)

It was explained that the three new positions of Brand Livestock Investigator-Field Training Officer (FTO) being requested to recruit and hire were actually a change in job description:

- Mike Honeycutt explained that the hires would not add any FTEs, but be internal ones from the core of Investigators currently on staff, and this would reclassify them as an FTO who would continue in their District responsibility but would provide additional leadership and also get a bump up in pay

MOTION/VOTE

(1:32:03) 9:33 AM

Alan Redfield moved to offer the positions of three Brands Livestock Investigator-Field Training Officers. Lily Andersen seconded. The motion passed.

(1:32:36) 9:34 AM Request to Hire – Brands-Animal Health Area Manager

Mike Spatz explained that it was being requested to repurpose the Assistant Brands Administrator position into a third Area Manager position:

- Jay Bodner said that the DOL used to have three Area Supervisor positions before being transitioned into two Area Supervisors and an Assistant Brands Administrator. He explained that with the Assistant having retired, it was hoped to return to having three Area Supervisors, which he felt would bring more consistency into the markets. Mike Honeycutt said that the Area Supervisor position pay would be in the mid-\$30,000 range rather than the mid-\$40,000 range paid for the Assistant Brands Administrator

MOTION/VOTE

(1:42:15) 9:43 AM

Alan Redfield moved to offer the position of a third Area Supervisor in the Brands Enforcement Division. Jake Feddes seconded. The motion passed.

(1:42:59) 9:44 AM General Updates

(1:42:59) 9:44 AM Progress of Year-End Performance Evaluations

It was explained that January 31, 2025 was when the Department of Administration turned off the ability of DOL staff to turn in their current performance stats into the Talent system

(1:47:17) 9:45 AM Political Activity in the Workplace Communication

Conduct and Guidelines for employees regarding political activity in the workplace was discussed

(1:48:27) 9:50 AM Overview: Equal Employment Opportunity, Nondiscrimination and Harassment Prevention Policy

Mike Spatz presented to the BOL a condensed Power Point version of the State of Montana mandatory training for employees on Equal Employment Opportunity, Nondiscrimination and Harassment Prevention Policy

(2:14:49) 10:16 AM – LEGAL COUNSEL UPDATE (May Require Executive Session

Lindsey Simon, Agency Legal Counsel, introduced herself

(2:15:31) 10:17 AM Suspension of Custom Exempt Meat Processing License No. 3K4H

Due to a fire at the UpNorth Meats, LLC, a custom exempt processing facility that Inspectors determined damaged the facility to the extent that safe products could not be prepared, Lindsey Simon was requesting that the BOL issue a Final Order by Default, proposing that the facility's license be suspended

MOTION/VOTE

(2:17:43) 10:19 AM

Alan Redfield moved to draft a Request for Suspension of the Custom Exempt

License of No. 3K4H, Up North Meats, LLC. William Kleinsasser seconded. The motion passed.

Greg Wichman requested that the BOL go into an Executive Session with Ms. Simon for some clarification on what had been happening

(2:22:11) 10:23 AM EXECUTIVE SESSION

(2:22:38) 10:59 AM RECONVENE

After Gene Curry called the meeting back to order, Lindsey Simon stated for the record that the BOL initially had gone into Executive Session for Attorney/Client communication regarding pending or potential litigation, but also ended up discussing an issue involving individual privacy rights

(2:23:24) 11:00 AM RECESS

(2:23:30) 11:15 AM RECONVENE

11:36 AM PREDATOR CONTROL

(2:23:41) 11:16 AM

Update on Activities of USDA Wildlife Services – (Presented by Dalin Tidwell, Montana State Director)

Dalin Tidwell, State Director for USDA Wildlife Services for Montana, updated the BOL on activities in the USDA Wildlife Services program in the state:

- Mr. Tidwell reported that it was a quiet time of year, so far, for them with claims tapering off to just a handful at the end of the Fall season and they were gearing up for their main season starting the 1st of January
- He announced that their maintenance contractor/mechanic had to temporarily move his business to Townsend from Lewistown, but all of the aircraft were ready to go for the season
- He shared that Graham McDougal, Wildlife Specialist out of Beaverhead County, had retired after 31 years

(2:38:21) 11:31 AM Report on BOL Meeting with Carter County Predator Board (Non-Agenda Item)

Mike Honeycutt reported that he had gone to Ekalaka and Greg Wichman had attended online, a meeting with the Carter County Predator Board County Commissioners:

- Mr. Honeycutt said that during that meeting, their main questions had been answered regarding how to establish a bounty program in their county and that he was able to share with them the importance of capturing per capita fee from seasonal grazers and with the losses in the hundreds on their lamb crop last year from coyotes, encouraging them to work with Wildlife Services

(2:46:23) 11:39 AM LLB Predation Claims Report and General Updates

Brian Simonson introduced himself as the Livestock Loss Board Representative and updated the BOL on Livestock Loss Board activities:

- Mr. Simonson reported that there were about the same amount of claims as last year, and alerted people that the LLB email had changed and was listed on the website
- The budget for the LLB was explained, with Mike Honeycutt adding that they had more cash numbers than authority right now
- Mr. Honeycutt said that the DOL wanted to wait until the new Livestock Loss Board was appointed by the Governor before making a decision on what to do with George Edwards' vacant position

(2:58:16) 11:51 AM – EXECUTIVE OFFICER UPDATES

(2:58:28) 11:51 AM YNP Bison/EIS/IBMP Operations Update

Mike Honeycutt reported that FWP would be the Lead Chair for IBMP next year and they had decided that they would facilitate internally:

- Mr. Honeycutt said that with the EIS implemented and the YNP bison count in the upper 5,000s, the top-end of the threshold, that triggered the most aggressive management activities in terms of trapping for quarantine and administrative harvest and meat transfer, but, the bison had to come out of the Park for those opportunities to happen

(3:04:26) 11:57 AM Session Planning and Legislative Update

Mike Honeycutt updated the BOL on 2025 Legislative Session planning:

- With the exception of getting the Milk Inspection general fund request cut in half, Mr. Honeycutt reported that every other request made by the DOL had moved forward in the Governor's budget. He added that Senator Kassmier had picked up the three bills from the DOL and said he was keeping watch on upcoming bills from other agencies that could affect the DOL

(3:17:31) 12:10 PM Interim Committee Updates

Mike Honeycutt reported that the DOL had a visit this week with the Section C Interim Budget Committee, with both past biennium and new members who would be sitting on the Committee in January, in attendance at the meeting together:

- Mr. Honeycutt said that Senator Cuffe was the new Vice-Chair of that Committee and Senator Schillinger would serve as Chair for the second time come January
- THE DOL planned to use a 50 or so-page document when appearing before the new Section C Committee during Session, that had been put together in 2017, that would break down into minute detail information about the DOL, more information than you'd see in HB2

(William Kleinsasser departed from the meeting at 12:18 PM)

(3:26:12) 12:18 PM LUNCH

(3:26:19) 1:00 PM RECONVENE

Gene Curry called the meeting back to order

CENTRALIZED SERVICES DIVISION REPORTS

(3:26:23) 1:00 PM

(3:26:30) 1:00 PM – FISCAL BUREAU

(3:26:32) 1:00 PM November 30, 2024 State Special Revenue Report

Brian Simonson reported that although not a lot had changed on this report since the last BOL meeting, the numbers in the report were positive ones and covered about 4-5 months of revenue:

- Mr. Simonson said that Projected Revenue budget numbers had stayed the same. Field and Market Inspections were continuing to make modest gains over this time last year. Investment Earnings showed that the level of reserves in STIP were lower than this time last year due to interest rates. The MVDL had a jump for the first time this year, which was because of increases in CWD testing. Wolf Donations were coming in strong year-over-year

(3:29:32) 1:03 PM December 2024 Through June 2025 Budget Projections Report

Brian Simonson explained that things were starting to normalize on this report, and even though the MVDL was still buying quite a few supplies, we were well out of the ramp-up of early fiscal year spending:

- Mr. Simonson reported that in Personal Services, the \$430,000 under in budget authority was partially due to less Brands overtime this year and a lot of vacancies. Milk & Egg also had some vacancies. The Contracts number of \$133,000 was getting more positive as a result of some Federal grants and budget amendments. Not many transfers had been done yet, but, the \$18,000 was a CIO payment, our share, to the Department of Agriculture
- Mike Honeycutt shared with the BOL the value of the CIO role in the DOL
- The \$321,545 shortage listed in General Fund was essentially due to, Mr. Simonson said, to Meat & Poultry Inspection not receiving their anticipated Federal dollars. Mr. Honeycutt said that the DOL was hoping that the new Federal Administration would stabilize their funding, in the Animal Disease Traceability dollars to states as well
- Mr. Simonson said that the projections showed that the Milk Inspection Fee numbers were \$50,000 to \$70,000 short of cash and we're hoping that the Legislature would approve a \$150,000 supplement that would make that fund whole. Mr. Honeycutt said that one other plan would be to hire an Egg/Milk Inspector in the DOL to fill a vacant Dairy Inspector position so that Egg fees would pick up some of the salary

(3:48:56) 1:22 PM November 30, 2024 Budget Comparison Report

Brian Simonson highlighted some numbers on this report that was meant to show year-to-year comparisons across the DOL:

- Under Personal Services, Mr. Simonson reported that Termination Payouts were about \$93,000 more than they were last year, the \$45,743 year-over-year comparison in Personal Services was less money spent than last year, the \$166,000 number for Contacts contained some supplemental money, the \$27,000 listed under Repair/Maintenance was because the VDL spent less than the previous years
- Evan Waters' notes on this report showed that in Personal Services, the DOL budget was 36% expended with 38% of the year left and the Operations budget was right even

ANIMAL HEALTH & FOOD SAFETY DIVISION REPORTS

(3:52:23) 1:25 PM

(3:52:28) 1:26 PM – MEAT, MILK & EGG INSPECTION BUREAU

Alicia Love, Meat, Milk & Egg Inspection Bureau Chief introduced herself

(3:52:54) 1:26 PM Out-of-State Travel Request – Egg Grader Training

Alicia Love requested that the BOL approve out-of-state travel for the Egg Grader-in Training to complete her training so she could work in the Egg Plant independently

MOTION/VOTE

(3:53:21) 1:26 PM

Lily Andersen moved to approve travel for Jamie Crooke, Egg Grader in Training, to attend training with USDA Egg Graders at Skyline Farms in Woodburn, Oregon on January 5 – 12, 2025. Alan Redfield seconded. The motion passed.

(3:54:44) 1:28 PM Revisit Water Activity Letter

Alicia Love revisited two “water activity standards in jerky” letters she had requested permission to send to Montana plants at previous BOL meetings:

- Per BOL request, Ms. Love added a proposed implementation date to both letters
- Ms. Love also, per BOL request, reported on jerky standards for USDA plants that she had received from the Frontline Supervisor for USDA plants in Montana who simply stated that if water activity was listed as a critical control point in a HACCP Plan, that it should be measured for every lot of jerky and he provided Ms. Love with the Jerky Compliance Guideline
- Ms. Love explained that several years ago the Bureau put out a letter that did not require plants to measure water activity in every batch of jerky, but added that didn't follow FSIS regulations and she felt it was time for the Bureau to set the record straight for the industry with a letter that would formally communicate to them what they need to do to follow Federal regulations and give them some time to come into that compliance

MOTION/VOTE

(4:05:29) 1:39 PM

Jake Feddes moved to approve implementing the #1 Water Activity Letter, requiring all Montana State-Inspected plants to do a water activity test on each batch of jerky, not allowing the option of quarterly testing of that product, with an implementation date of April 1, 2025. Alan Redfield seconded. Eric Moore voted no. The motion passed.

Mike Honeycutt reported that the DOL budgetary ask for additional staffing in the Meat, Milk & Egg Bureau had made it to the Governor's desk

(4:13:40) 1:47 PM – VETERINARY DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY

Dr. Greg Juda, Lab Director for the Montana Veterinary Diagnostic Lab introduced himself

(4:14:11) 1:47 PM Operational Update

Dr. Greg Juda gave an Operational Update for the MVDL:

- Dr. Juda reported that they were currently, fully staffed at the VDL, but reported that one of their APHL Fellows had left to pursue other opportunities, but said they had three remaining APHL Fellows who would be there for the next year

(4:16:11) 1:50 PM CWD and Brucella Testing Update

Dr. Greg Juda gave a year-over-year recap on CWD and Brucella testing at the VDL from July 1, 2024 – December 18, 2024:

- Dr. Juda reported that there were 3500 fewer Brucella tests performed this year than the previous year, a 5% decrease year-over-year, which he said had been consistent over the last three or four years
- There were over 10,000 CWD tests performed at the VDL this year, approximately 1800 more than last year, Dr. Juda said, a 21% increase year-over-year. Not only did the VDL test for CWD in Montana, but in North Dakota and for the Spokane Indian Tribe
 - Dr. Juda said to check on the FWP website for more detailed reports on CWD findings

(4:33:02) 2:06 PM Lab Instrumentation Update

- Dr. Tahnee Szymanski expressed the importance of growing confidence in utilizing the VDL through getting in front of the Veterinary community to do outreach and continuing education. She commented that Dr. Schwarz had been a tremendous ambassador for the VDL
- Dr. Juda reported that the Dairy Scan for the Milk Lab should be delivered in the next week or so. He said that a repair on one of the thermocyclers in Molecular Diagnostics was completed the previous week and did not cost anything because it was under a service contract. The VDL was doing their diligence on replacing the Immulite Chemistry Analyzer. Instruments nearing their sunset horizon were the FP Analyzers in Serology and two 7500 Thermocyclers in Molecular, but Dr. Juda thought they would be covered financially with NAHLN funding

(4:40:56) 2:14 PM Building Construction Update

Dr. Greg Juda shared the photos and Architect Field Report 17 on the construction progress of the new Lab complex that had been given to him by Max Grebe, LPW Architecture

(4:48:00) 2:21 PM Out-of-State Travel Request

(4:48:12) 2:21 PM Conference for Research Workers in Animal Diseases (CRWAD)

Dr. Greg Juda requested that the BOL approve the out-of-state travel for Dr. Erika Schwarz to attend the American College of Veterinary Microbiologists (ACVM) Program Meeting, which was being held in conjunction with the Conference for Research Workers and Animal Diseases (CRWAD):

- Dr. Juda explained that Dr. Schwarz was Board-Certified through the ACVM and that her continuing education credits would come through the CRWAD Meeting

MOTION/VOTE

(4:50:28) 2:34 PM

Greg Wichman moved to approve out-of-state travel for Dr. Erika Schwarz-Collins, Board-Certified Veterinary Microbiologist, to attend the Conference for Research Workers in Animal Diseases (CRWAD), scheduled for January 17-21, 2025 in Chicago, Illinois. Lily Andersen seconded. The motion passed.

(4:53:15) 2:27 PM – ANIMAL HEALTH BUREAU

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski, State Veterinarian and Administrator of Animal Health and Food Safety, introduced herself

(4:53:19) 2:27 PM Brucellosis

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski reported that after 10+ years of herself, her predecessors and folks across the country working on it, the USDA announced the completion of their biennial review and removed all three Brucella species from the Select Agent List, including Abortus, Suis and Melitensis:

- Because Brucella was now not considered a “Select Agent,” Dr. Szymanski said that development of a Brucellosis vaccine would hopefully be made easier. She added that in coming months, she would be working with the State Veterinarians in Idaho and Wyoming to bring a group of people together to reinvigorate the conversation of where to prioritize and focus priorities for research now that it was done
- Dr. Szymanski reported that because USDA had not gotten their funding yet, no Fiscal Year '25 EID tags had been made available to Montana and other states
- Dr. Szymanski announced that the slaughter trace of two animals originating from two different herds spoken about previously were through their testing with no indication of Brucellosis in either herd. Currently, there were two affected herds in the DSA and a single suspect in Gallatin County that would be retested in January

(4:58:28) 2:32 PM HPAI Cases, Surveillance and the New Federal Order

- Dr. Tahnee Szymanski reported that the CDC announced the first severe case of Avian Influenza in a human in the US, the second in North America, which included a case in British Columbia earlier in the Fall. Both cases were genotype D1.1, one of the genotypes that was circulating in wild birds that were what was detected in Montana earlier this year in Flathead and Missoula Counties
- Genotype B3.13 was the dairy variant, Dr. Szymanski said, and the HPAI surveillance program in the state kicked off that week for one plant. Two other large plants, she said, were still working out details for that surveillance. All but one Grade A dairy in the state had entered into the surveillance program. Conversations had been held with USDA and Public Health to offer testing to dairies in the state for complete home consumption or legal sale of raw milk in Montana

(5:01:21) 2:35 PM New World Screwworm (NWS)

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski said that there no additional comments on the New World Screwworm at this time and no substantial updates from USDA in regards to the border opening. She said that the Mexican Government closed down for two weeks over Christmas, and so, there would be delay about what was required to get animals back moving into the US

(5:02:39) 2:36 PM Animal Disease Traceability Update and Discussion

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski reported that November 5, 2024 the new Federal rule on Animal Disease Traceability went into effect, requiring that any animal required to have official ID have an ID that was both visually and electronically readable in its ear, but that animals who currently had existing tags would get grandfathered in:

- Dr. Szymanski said that Montana had been getting pushback since the November 5th Federal ADT rule came into effect on its rule requiring that all sexually-intact animals that come into Montana have an identification requirement. The major problem was the cost of purchasing tags because there had not been enough no-cost tags to go around
- Dr. Gary Schieber, the Market Veterinarian in Sidney and Keith Dynneson, who operated a feedlot in Sidney commented on the issue
- Also addressed was the issue of people bringing in “feeder” heifers from out of state and then turning them into “replacement” heifers once they got into Montana

MOTION/VOTE

(5:34:34) 3:08 PM

Eric Moore moved to approve that Montana accept sexually-intact feeder cattle, under 18 months of age, without an individual ID, from North Dakota. Alan Redfield seconded. The motion passed.

(5:39:41) 3:13 PM RECESS

(5:39:56) 3:30 PM RECONVENE

Gene Curry called the meeting back to order

BRANDS ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

(5:40:04) 3:30 PM

Jay Bodner, Brands Enforcement Division Administrator, introduced himself

(5:40:15) 3:30 PM BOL DISCUSSION ON CLEARANCES (Non-Agenda Item)

The BOL discussed clearances at the markets when mixed calves were listed:

- Jay Bodner explained that when animals were brought into a market situation and the load was mixed, ownership and brands were looked at. On the clearance side of those, they still were not split off between steers and heifers because the Service Now platform that the DOL used at the markets did not talk directly to the Commission Company platform, which was Sales Time and so sometimes there were mistakes made between the Commission Company and brands staff. He said that with a year of ServiceNow under our belt, the DOL would maybe be initiating conversation again about looking into building a link between the two platforms

(5:43:33) 3:33 PM OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL REQUEST

(5:43:35) 3:33 PM Western States Livestock Rural Enforcement Association

Jay Bodner requested that the BOL approve out-of-state travel for four Brands Enforcement staff to attend the Western States Livestock Rural Enforcement Association Annual Conference being held in Reno, Nevada in March

MOTION/VOTE

(5:45:40) 3:35 PM

Eric Moore moved to approve out-of-state travel for Jay Bodner, and two Area Supervisors, Shawn Hando and Dan Bugni and one Brands Enforcement Division employee, to attend the Western States Livestock Rural Enforcement Association (WSLREA) annual meeting, scheduled for March 4-6, 2025 in Reno, Nevada. Jake Feddes seconded. The motion passed.

(6:46:43) 3:36 PM LIFETIME HORSE INSPECTION POTENTIAL ARM RULE CHANGE

Jay Bodner reported on the findings of research he had done regarding charging Deputy Stock Inspectors \$250 for Lifetime Horse Inspection books:

- Mr. Bodner said that the ARM rule that addressed that charge was put into place in 2015. In FY24, he said that 51 Lifetime Horse Inspection books were issued. Each book contained 50 inspections and Deputy Stock Inspectors received \$30 for each inspection they gave
- Jake Feddes reported that three different Deputy Stock Inspectors had contacted him about the \$250 charge for the books, and two of them said that if they would continue to be charged for the book, they would not buy books anymore and leave the inspections to be done by the State employees

MOTION/VOTE

(5:53:55) 3:44 PM

Alan Redfield moved to approve a rule change in ARM 32.2.404 that would eliminate the \$250 purchase fee of a Lifetime Horse Inspection book issued to Deputy Stock Inspectors. Lily Andersen seconded. Greg Wichman voted no. The motion passed.

(5:57:06) 3:47 PM BOL DISCUSSION REGARDING DIRECT-TO-SLAUGHTER BRAND INSPECTION (Non-Agenda Item)

Jake Feddes shared the problems he had at his business with employees calling in sick on slaughter days and having to reschedule the slaughter, which also meant that the brand inspection being done before the animal was slaughtered had to be redone as well:

- Mike Honeycutt reported that ARM 32.18.201 addressed the Inspection Certificate that permitted the movement of livestock identified and it was valid for 36 hours
- Jay Bodner said he would redraft that rule and bring it back to the BOL at their next meeting

(6:02:24) 3:52 PM BRANDS ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

(6:02:30) 3:52 PM Staffing

Jay Bodner added to the Brands Enforcement Division staffing situation that had been presented by Mike Spatz earlier that day:

- Mr. Bodner reported that there had been no applicants for the Roving position and Sidney and Glasgow Market Inspector positions had been hard to fill. Eric Moore suggested advertising positions at colleges and community colleges

(6:06:00) 3:56 PM Google AI

Jay Bodner reported that the Google AI project deployment that had been scheduled for December 9, 2024 had been moved to January 7, 2025

(6:09:56) 4:00 PM Blackfoot Tribe Land Division Meeting

Jay Bodner reported that the Blackfoot Tribe Lands Department had reached out to the DOL regarding cooperation with them because of the challenges they had with the volume of cattle going to the reservation for summer pasture and also challenges with truck stops and staffing:

- Gene Curry suggested seeing if they would be willing to work with the DOL on more training for their Inspectors because those Inspectors signed DOL books as a Deputy Stock Inspector

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS/COMMENTS FROM PRODUCER ORGANIZATIONS

(6:12:32) 4:02 PM

There was no public left in the room or online for comment

SET DATE FOR THE NEXT BOARD MEETING

(6:15:26) **4:05 PM**

The BOL scheduled the next BOL meeting for Friday, January 24 2025

MEETING ADJOURNED

(6:18:40) **4:08 PM**



Alan Redfield, Vice-Chairman