



Montana Board of Livestock Meeting Minutes

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

October 29, 2025

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

Board Members Present

Gene Curry (cattle producer)
Alan Redfield (cattle producer)

William Kleinsasser (swine producer)
Lillian Andersen (dairy & poultry)

(Eric Moore, Jake Feddes and Greg Wichman were not present at the meeting)

Staff Present

Mike Honeycutt, EO
Brian Simonson, Deputy EO
Donna Wilham, Adm. Asst to EO
Lindsey Simon, Centralized Services
Evan Waters, Centralized Services
Mike Spatz, Centralized Services
Dale Haylett, Centralized Services

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski, MT State Vet
Dr. Brennee Peterson, Animal Health
Dr. Emily Kaleczyc, Animal Health
Dr. Greg Juda, Director, MVDL
Alicia Love, Meat, Milk & Egg Bureau
Jay Bodner, Brands Enforcement
Tom Shultz, Centralized Services

Public Present

Dalin Tidwell, USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services
Cheryl Curry

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

(0:05) 8:00 AM

Chairman Gene Curry called the meeting to order at 8:00 AM

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

(0:05) 8:00 AM

Chairman Gene Curry called the meeting to order and requested introductions:

- Lily Andersen, Dairy & Poultry Representative, south of Livingston
 - Ms. Andersen reported that they had to dump 16 milkings out of their tank because the cooler quit. She added that their calves were shipped and preg checked and their heifers sold
- William Kleinsasser, Swine Representative, Augusta
 - Mr. Kleinsasser reported that hog prices were still very good for this time of year and futures looked exceptionally well. Just yesterday, he said they

had an exceptional turnout at their open house for Treasure State Sires. Winter wheat rows were coming up nicely with pretty good moisture.

- Alan Redfield, Cattle Representative, Paradise Valley, south of Livingston
 - Mr. Redfield reported that they received about three inches of rain in the last couple weeks. They got all calves shipped and they had good weight. Calves were not all home yet, so they weren't all preg tested
- Gene Curry, Cattle Representative, Valier
 - Mr. Curry reported that their calves weren't shipped yet as they weren't weaned. Their feedlot wasn't ready and they were still looking for a feed truck to replace the one that burned up last winter. Winter wheat was all up and looking good and sprayed for cheat just the other day

Mike Honeycutt reported that although Eric Moore was not able to join the meeting because he was receiving calves at the feedlot and Jake Feddes was shipping for a customer in North Dakota and Mr. Wichman was at home in Hilger and would be on ZOOM when he could, with the four BOL members present, there would be a quorum

BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

(7:03) 8:06 AM

(7:03) 8:06 AM – BOARD APPROVAL OF PAST MEETING MINUTES

Gene Curry requested approval of the minutes of the last BOL meeting, held on September 17, 2025

MOTION/VOTE

(8:57) 8:08 AM

Alan Redfield moved to approve the minutes from the Montana Board of Livestock September 17, 2025 meeting. Lily Andersen seconded. The motion passed.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE UPDATES

(9:18) 8:09 AM

Mike Honeycutt announced that he was restructuring the Executive Office Updates to include his regular updates plus OGSM meeting information, along with presentations from Mike Spatz and Lindsey Simon

(10:30) 8:10 AM YNP Bison/EIS/IBMP Operations Update

Mike Honeycutt reported that the Fall IBMP meeting had been held virtually yesterday morning:

- The meeting, Mr. Honeycutt said, was pretty straightforward about operations, because with litigation between several of the partners, the agenda was restricted. Also, with USDA-APHIS not present because of the Federal shutdown, there was no point in taking any action because one of the Partners was missing

- Yellowstone National Park reported that the bison population was estimated to be in the mid-5000s, and in accordance with the current Environmental Impact Survey (EIS), should there be an out-migration this season, Mr. Honeycutt said those bison would be managed for a decreasing population. Up to 1500 could be removed. The priority would be to fill the cohort on the Conservation Transfer Program. The next step would be Tribal Treaty Hunting and beyond that, the Food Transfer Program
 - Mr. Honeycutt said that the CSKT Tribe were looking at opening up a processing facility, which would be helpful to get some of the Food Transfer Program bison slaughtered and distributed
 - The primary area where Tribal Treaty Hunting takes place is the Beattie Gulch area, because that hunting can only happen on Federal unclaimed land. That land is Forest Service land and so, the Forest Service is heavily involved with that hunt
- Mr. Honeycutt shared that a couple years ago there was success with the Tribal Treaty hunting groups who were contacted the day before a hazing operation was scheduled and they applied hunting pressure to those bison, making the hazing operation easier and giving the Tribes a chance to hunt before the hazing took place
 - Mr. Honeycutt said that if 100-200 bison breached the Zone 3 boundary, the DOL was not very well equipped to handle that, and so, taking the action to pre-emptively haze bison before they crossed the Zone 3 boundary helped to keep those bison from comingling with cattle and also helped to prevent any lethal removal.
- During the IBMP meeting, Mr. Honeycutt reported that an Operations Plan was approved, which was very similar to the previous Operations Plan

(32:17) 8:32 AM Legislative Interim Update

Mike Honeycutt reported that the Economic Affairs Interim Committee meeting was scheduled for November 12, 2025 and they would be tackling some of their assigned study bills:

- Mr. Honeycutt said that it was requested that he be present during the portion of that meeting where the study bill with regards to a Montana Cattle Committee would be discussed. Also asked to be present for that discussion were the Montana Pulse Crop Committee and the Montana Beef Council
- It was requested by Mr. Honeycutt that the BOL keep in mind that Legislative planning was coming fast and that in the Spring, the DOL would be bringing the next biennium budget before the BOL and also be requesting any suggestions for items to be brought before the 2027 Legislative Session, maybe including updating more outdated statutes

(45:27) 8:45 AM Shutdown Impacts Update (if needed)

Mike Honeycutt reported that because the Federal Government was still shut down, an update was needed:

- Because of direction from the Governor's Office and because the DOL was in a cash position, there had been no major direct impacts to the DOL due to the

shutdown, Mr. Honeycutt said, as State Special Revenue and other sources were able to be used to keep things moving. The hope was that those sources would get reimbursed, but that might not necessarily be so in some cases

- Mr. Honeycutt said that USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services was able to help with the Phillips County feral swine situation and would be able to fly because of doing cooperative agreement work and their coyote work could be done because of it being paid for by cooperators at the State and County levels. They would, however, be limited in doing general fund work. Also lost due to the shutdown were some USDA-APHIS Veterinary Medical Officers who normally would assist the DOL Veterinarians in some instances, but other State Veterinarians stepped in to aid in some Fall systemic Brucellosis testing
 - Mike Honeycutt gave kudos to Dalin Tidwell and his crew at Wildlife Services for all their help with the Phillips County feral swine situation
- With Packers & Stockyards not working because of the Federal Shutdown, Jay Bodner reported that there was one individual who wanted to be licensed as a new Livestock Dealer who was put in a holding pattern, because he couldn't be licensed
- Dr. Tahnee Szymanski explained that if Veterinarians, who are Federally accredited to do program work have their accreditation expire during the shutdown, the DOL would collect their documentation and just let them continue doing the work that they did. She said that at the MVDL, the Federal employee in the Brucellosis program there, was not able to perform his role in Serology. Mike Honeycutt told the BOL to not be shocked if he greenlit Dr. Juda to ask for an additional person to work in Serology at some point, because Federal employees should work at the MVDL as an augment, not as someone counted on as if they were a DOL employee

(57:30) 8:57 AM Upcoming Stakeholder Conferences and Conventions

Mike Honeycutt reported on the upcoming Stakeholder meetings scheduled throughout the state within the next couple months:

- On November 1, 2025, Mr. Honeycutt would be attending the Montana Farmers Union Conference in Lewistown. Although there was no official function scheduled, Mr. Honeycutt and some DOL staff would be attending the Montana Farm Bureau Convention in Missoula on November 18, 2025. Greg Wichman usually provided a DOL update at the Woolgrower's Annual Convention. The Montana Stockgrowers Association (MSGA) Convention, held the first week in December, would be attended by some DOL staff, with the DOL doing their part in the Beef Marketing and Promotion Committee. Also at the MSGA Convention, the DOL would be conducting a Stockgrowers College session

(1:04:13) 9:04 AM Update on Governor's OGSM Strategic Management and Executive Officer Strategic Goals

Mike Honeycutt reported that he and Brian Simonson had attended a Governor's OGSM meeting earlier in October:

- Just three months into the fiscal year, Mr. Honeycutt said there wasn't much changed and to not worry about the budget, because the vast majority of the DOL revenue came during the per capita time of year in February and March
- Market Consignments at the Commission Companies was almost the exact same number it was through September last year, an indication that things were moving and being sold, with people taking advantage of the prices right now, but things weren't rebuilding, Mr. Honeycutt said. He added that early into Fall Run was just as big as it had been, even with 30% less cattle out there
- The slaughter numbers in State-Inspected facilities, as a percentage of the total was not a big number, but those facilities were as busy as they had been in previous years
- The handling of the feral swine issue was reported as a high to the Governor because of how that work and collaboration was going. Another high reported was the positive feedback from people on being able to acquire a movement permit at no cost when procured online. Mr. Honeycutt also reported on the work being done by the DOL through a Beaverhead County Brucellosis quarantine and horse EIA quarantines. Improvements in the Lab Information Management System were reported. Also reported was the agreement reached with the Crow Tribe on potential wildlife and livestock surveillance for Brucellosis
 - Mr. Honeycutt explained that the MOU signed with the Crow Tribe was really FWP, but the DOL would be doing some monitoring of elk on the Reservation. Dr. Tahnee Szymanski said the plan was that in February or March there would be an elk capture for Brucellosis surveillance
- Lows reported to the Governor were the FDA check rating and still having to deal with HPAI

(1:20:34) 9:20 AM – HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

Mike Spatz, HR Officer for the DOL, introduced himself and updated the BOL on Human Resources activities at the DOL:

(1:21:26) 9:21 AM Staff Openings, Recruitment Updates

Mike Spatz said that he did not give a report at the last BOL meeting, but understood that both Jay Bodner and Dr. Tahnee Szymanski did a good job introducing their new hires:

- Mr. Spatz reported that the DOL was recruiting for eight positions but there were a couple offers and interviews currently happening, including an offer for a Meat Inspector Supervisor that afternoon. The Microbiologist Section Head position was still being recruited and had been posted for the third time. There had been two new hires and two positions filled up internally since the last BOL meeting. There was one separation and one future resignation that happened the day before
- Dr. Kelsey Martin started on October 20, 2025 as a Program Veterinarian, Blake Buchanan was hired October 14, 2025 as a District 14 Investigator, Kate Finkbeiner was promoted into the Market Supervisor position in Lewistown and Leslie Doely started on October 18, 2025 in LLB

(1:27:23) 9:27 AM General Updates

(1:27:23) 9:27 AM Governor Awards – Recipient and Nominations

Mike Spatz reported on this year's Governor's Award for Excellence in Performance nominees and recipient in the DOL. Supervisors for each person commented on the reasons for their nomination:

- The seven nominees for the DOL were **Becky Rouns**, Compliance Technician for the Animal Health Bureau; **Mike Himmelspach**, Bison Program Manager; **Jac Cima**, Brucellosis Compliance Specialist; **Kim Dallas**, Compliance Team Supervisor; **Wes Seward**, Central Area Supervisor; **Market Supervisor Team**, including Tom Plant, Chris Udem, Knute Larson, Jess Sivumaki, Kevin Ramsey, Don Berryman, Steve Kiewatt, Jon Kamps, Kate Finkbeiner and Jordanne Pruitt; **Cally Goyins**, Brand Recorder. Recipient of this year's Governor's Award for Excellence in Performance went to Becky Rouns

(1:44:45) 9:44 AM Employee Engagement Survey Results

Mike Spatz reported that the 2025 Employee Engagement Survey had good results:

- Mr. Spatz said the survey covered six topics including the Agency, their Supervisor, Team, Work they do, How they get recognition, Customers they work with. Participation rate from the DOL was consistent with other State agencies. Positive trend scores rose to 4.01 out of 5. The survey showed that DOL employees were passionate about their work and Supervisors were doing a great job. The highest score was around customers, showing that DOL employees really believe in what they're doing and who they were doing it for. Areas the DOL could improve in would be in having advancement opportunities

(1:50:46) 9:50 AM Reminder: Year-End Employee Performance Evaluations

Mike Spatz reported that the Year-End Employee Performance Evaluation process would kick off on November 1st:

- Mike Honeycutt said that the DOL was the number one State Agency for participation in the process for the mid-year evaluations, with Mike Spatz adding that the DOL participation was 98%

(1:55:41) 9:55 AM RECESS

(1:56:24) 10:13 AM RECONVENE

Gene Curry called the meeting back to order

EXECUTIVE OFFICE UPDATES (Continued)

(1:56:28) 10:13 AM

(1:56:31) 10:14 AM – LEGAL COUNSEL UPDATE (May Require Executive Session)

Lindsey Simon, Agency Legal Counsel, introduced herself and said she did not think there were any changes to update the BOL on regarding pending legal issues with the DOL

(1:56:53) 10:14 AM – Review of Proposed Animal Health Administrator Order No. 25-01

Lindsey Simon reviewed a proposed Animal Health Administrator order with the BOL:

- Ms. Simon explained that because MCA 81-2-115 designated some information as confidential and restricted from disclosing, some decision should be made regarding vendors who potentially have access to confidential animal test and trace information and owner information in the Animal Health and MVDL areas of the DOL. She said, currently there are two vendors who potentially have access to that information, Advanced Technology Corporation and Trace First, who may have to access the programs used in those areas of the DOL to fulfill the requirements of their service contract
- Lily Andersen suggested that the vendors sign confidentiality agreements with the DOL. Although the review of the proposed order had been posted as part of the agenda, there was no public comment given during the meeting regarding the proposed order

MOTION/VOTE

(2:07:25) 10:24 AM

Alan Redfield moved to adopt the Draft Animal Health Order Number 25-01, with comments requested by Lily Andersen added to the order and as presented by Lindsey Simon. Lily Andersen seconded. The motion passed.

(2:08:05) 10:25 AM – Contested Case Hearing Training

Lindsey Simon conducted training for the BOL on Contested Cases involving the DOL, highlighting their role when it came to issuing a final order and to help them understand legal issues when dealing with those type of cases

CENTRALIZED SERVICES DIVISION REPORTS

(2:33:16) 11:50 AM

(3:34:28) 11:51 AM FISCAL BUREAU

Brian Simonson, Chief Financial Officer, introduced himself, adding that he had three standard reports to present to the BOL at this meeting

(3:34:40) 11:52 AM September 30, 2025 State Special Revenue Report

Brian Simonson explained that this State Special Revenue Report had about two to three months of revenue recorded in it and that he saw a lot of positivity with hardly any negative events:

- Mr. Simonson explained that the DOL was essentially planning on spending \$1 million more than what we're actually going to bring in this year, mostly driven by the new Lab in HB10, but those were one-time-only things
- Although Market Inspection fees were \$40,000 ahead of this time last year, Mr. Simonson said that number was a reflection of last year's timing on recording deposits in the system and that number would come back. Per Capita Fee was \$5,000 down, with collecting \$55,000 in offsets so far this year. Per Capita Fee

numbers would leap up after the first of the year, however, when Per Capita Fees started to be collected

- Milk Inspection numbers were showing positive, because two extra payments were collected compared to this time last year. \$30,000 more in revenue was showing in Lab Diagnostic Fees, as the Lab had more business. The increase in Lab fees revenue would be showing up in the numbers after November 7, 2025

(3:47:05) 12:04 PM October 2025 through June 2026 Budget Projections Report

Brian Simonson pointed out that this Budget Projections Report would be driven by Personnel numbers essentially, because there was an extra pay period compared to this time last year:

- Mr. Simonson said that, along with the extra pay period driving a positive projection, was also the addition of four new FTE in Meat & Poultry Inspection, the first hire which came in September and then a second would start in the next month or so. It was not certain when the final two FTE would be hired
- The \$204,000 listed for Contracts was testing with the DSA Federal umbrella and some from the Egg Inspection Plant, and that number would come down when testing caught up. The DOL was out of the Duck Creek Facility at West Yellowstone, and that had saved quite a bit of money in Rent, although the authority didn't change. The \$55,000 listed for Repair and Maintenance was artificially a little negative, Mr. Simonson said, and could fluctuate, because last year there were more vehicles that needed lights and sirens, and so that should correct itself as we moved through the year. The Diagnostic Lab Fees were \$104,000 less than budgeted, because of Supplies during the CWD/Brucellosis testing period
- Two more dairies were lost this year and that would have some effect on our revenue stream for Milk Inspection. But, with the influx of \$150,000 of General Fund in the Milk Inspection Fees, that was projected to be more than needed, which was about \$90,000 in the hole, if just relying on the Fees
- Bottom line on it all, Mike Honeycutt said, was that Brian was projecting to deliver you \$726,000 of expenses under authority this year

(2:53:39) 12:11 PM September 30, 2025 through June 2026 Budget Comparison Report

Brian Simonson reported that there was not a lot to say regarding this month's Budget Comparison Report:

- Mr. Simonson explained that the Salaries number in this report got worse by nearly \$400,000 due to the extra pay period and also because termination payouts last year were \$66,000 more than they were this year
- Supplies were listed at \$124,000 over last year because of the MVDL getting some contracts done more quickly than they did at this time last year, and because supplies were expensive
- Rent numbers were \$50,000 better than last year. Other Expenses, indirects, were \$44,000 less than last year and once we collect that money, that number will correct itself

- The Claims number, which is depredation remediation in the LLB was \$54,000 more this year than last, but the funds were available to allocate to that

(3:57:53) 12:15 PM LUNCH

(3:58:00) 12:45 PM RECONVENE

Gene Curry called the meeting back to order

PREDATOR CONTROL

(3:58:06) 12:45 PM

(3:58:06) 12:45 PM Update on Activities of USDA Wildlife Services – (Presented by Dalin Tidwell, Montana State Director)

Dalin Tidwell, State Director for USDA Wildlife Services for Montana, introduced himself and updated the BOL on the latest activities of USDA Wildlife Services:

- Mr. Tidwell said that even during the Federal Government shutdown, they were able to keep their service going with cooperative dollars, but there were still furloughed office staff and the non-lethal initiative team was furloughed as well
- The helicopters were in good shape right now, Mr. Tidwell reported with only standard maintenance being needed. He did report that the turbine in 95 Tango had 400 hours left on it before needing an overhaul
- Mr. Tidwell gave Federal fiscal year end IR numbers: Wolf-82 IRs with 42 calves, 9 cattle, 8 guard dogs, 1 livestock dog, 7 lambs, 13 sheep. 39 Wolves were removed, 5 collared and 75 surveyed. Black Bear-22 IRs with 3 calves, 2 goats, 1 sheep, 1 lamb, 1 llama, 1 piglet and a Human Health & Safety Investigation. 4 Black Bears were removed. Grizzly Bear-133 IRs with 86 calves, 15 cattle, 1 lamb, 3 sheep, 10 swine, which included piglets and adult swine. 3 Grizzly Bears were removed, 1 was collared and 5 had custody transferred. Mountain Lion-27 IRs with 13 goats and 2 domestic dogs, 15 lambs. 6 Mountain Lions were removed. Coyotes-11,501 removed with the following tools: 8,430 by firearms, 1,505 by neck snares, 1,385 traps, 179 by foothold traps and 2 by M-44s
- Mr. Tidwell shared about Wildlife Services part in dealing with the Feral Swine situation in Phillips County
- There was BOL discussion about the possibility of any compensation for Gene Curry because some of his calves had been injured by Grizzly Bears. Mike Honeycutt said that the law was pretty clear on it having to be a confirmed kill to qualify for LLB funds. He said he would research whether or not the USDA Indemnity Program would pay for injuries and would have an answer on that for the next meeting

(4:20:24) 1:08 PM LLB Predation Claims Report and General Updates

Brian Simonson, Deputy Executive Officer, introduced himself and said that he would give the Predation Claims report rather than task it to newly-hired LLB staffer, Leslie Doely, since she had only been in that position a week:

- Mr. Simonson said that Ms. Doely came out on top of the applicants for that position because of her experience with the DOL, being a rancher and a member of Woolgrowers and other things
- Although the confirmed or probable kills were about the same in number as reported last year, Mr. Simonson reported, and the payouts on those kills was more, probably due to the increased price at the market for cattle
- Mr. Simonson was hoping that by the end of December they would be looking to get grant applicants so that the LLB could award those grants in January or early February. Mike Honeycutt said that currently there was around \$300,000 available in this grant cycle and that this past summer there had been \$216,000 given out for 13 different projects
- The Legislature, Mr. Simonson said, had given the LLB authority to do a multiplier, but, the LLB would need to explore establishing a rule to see if it was feasible or not with their available funding

ANIMAL HEALTH & FOOD SAFETY DIVISION REPORTS

(4:27:42) 1:15 PM

(4:28:08) 1:15 PM – MEAT, MILK & EGG INSPECTION BUREAU

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

(4:28:31) 1:15 PM General Updates

(4:28:31) 1:15 PM Update on FDA Check Rating Response and Timelines

Alicia Love, at the request of Mike Honeycutt, reported on the failed FDA check rating in the dairy program that had occurred in September:

- Ms. Love explained that milk leaving the state must be compliant with regulations in the Pasteurized Milk Ordinance (PMO), but the September check rating had some “heavy hitter” violations, including protection of water supply contamination violations and food contact surface violations
- Staff had already been documenting those violations and had already sent letters to certain establishments citing repeat issues. Lily Andersen said that failing another check rating would implode Montana’s dairy industry
- Mike Honeycutt said that it was a shared failure and that the DOL needed to take accountability for what they had not done as well and work with the industry to get it solved. He added that Inspectors needed to document issues but also follow through on enforcement
- Lily Andersen said that education for the industry was critical in moving forward to help them understand what was a “big deal” in the inspections
- Alicia Love said that her three Sanitarians were responsive when asked questions, but pointed out that some dairy owners did not appear to be interested

in joining them during an inspection to see what they were looking at and it was hard for the Sanitarian to know what wasn't asked

- Ms. Love reported that in the Meat program, the percentage of enforcement was down compared to where it usually was this time of year and that staff retention was up and she felt that program was progressing in a good direction and would be in a good place to be responsive if the program grew

(4:56:41) 1:44 PM – ANIMAL HEALTH BUREAU

(4:56:45) 1:44 PM Request Standing Approval for Out-of-State Travel for Veterinarians to Adjacent States

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski requested that the BOL give standing approval for Veterinary staff be able to travel to adjacent states to help with necessary program work when they have staffing challenges:

- Dr. Szymanski reported that both Idaho and Wyoming brought Veterinary help into Montana this Fall, the first week of testing three large, Brucellosis-affected herds. She said they offered their help because staffing was tight with USDA staffing due to the Federal shutdown. To return the favor, Dr. Szymanski asked the BOL to approve standing approval to send one of our Veterinarians to adjacent states, if needed

MOTION/VOTE

(4:59:48) 1:47 PM

Lily Andersen moved for standing approval for out-of-state travel for State of Montana Veterinary personnel to travel to neighboring states to assist in disease work, with a one-week/person limit. William Kleinsasser seconded. The motion passed.

(5:01:35) 1:48 PM Disease Updates

(5:01:35) 1:48 PM Phillips County Feral Swine Response

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski gave a report, with pictures, of the recent Phillips County Feral Swine Response, a coordinated effort, by the DOL, FWP and USDA Wildlife Services:

- Dr. Szymanski said that USDA Wildlife Services set up a trap for the swine with a gate that could be deployed by cell phone. The trap was baited with feed, and because the animals were very "food-motivated," they came into the trap, which Dr. Szymanski said showed they were still fairly domestic
- Dr. Szymanski reported that the swine were taken to Producer Partnership for processing or composting, and then the 14,000 pounds of meat from all the trapped swine would be donated. After all deployments were completed, Dr. Szymanski figured that 90% of that pig population would have been removed

(5:15:24) 2:03 PM Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

Dr. Emily Kaleczyc reported that HPAI was still very active in the state, with wild birds spreading the virus:

- Dr. Kaleczyc reported that since the last meeting when there was talk about the first detection for HPAI for the season in a commercial flock, there had been seven more detections, these in backyard flocks, spanning the state from Valley, Beaverhead, Broadwater, Cascade, Park and Yellowstone Counties
- The initial commercial flock had been released from quarantine and the cleaning and disinfection was completed

(5:16:36) 2:04 PM Brucellosis

Dr. Emily Kaleczyc reported that it had been a busy Fall testing season, having gone into the season with three affected herds:

- Dr. Kaleczyc said that the Beaverhead County herd completed their whole herd test with no additional positive animals identified, and had been released from quarantine for Brucellosis. The Madison County affected herd had no positive animals identified after completing their annual whole herd test. The Gallatin County affected herd was still currently testing but should be finished by the end of the week
- Dr. Szymanski had been working with the State of California to hopefully, remove their import requirements for Montana, on cattle originating from a DSA
- Mike Honeycutt said that the DOL now carried a full staff of Veterinarians, with the recent hire of Dr. Kelsey Martin

BRANDS ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

(5:27:36) 2:15 PM BOL Discussion on the Passing of Cattle Industry Leaders (Non-Agenda Item)

Gene Curry announced that a former Executive Officer, the first Executive Officer, of the DOL, Les Graham had passed away. Staff and BOL members expressed their gratefulness for his service to the industry and how he would be missed. Mr. Curry also announced that Blake Nuffer, who was a partner at the Ramsey market had passed and Steve Reeverts, a Superior Rep, just the previous week, had passed as well

(5:36:11) 2:23 PM BOL Discussion on Raising the Brand Inspection Fee for Local Inspectors (Non-Agenda Item)

Gene Curry reported that he had received a call from Lee Cornwell regarding a solution for keeping Local Brand Inspectors:

- Mr. Curry explained that Mr. Cornwell shared that his proposed solution for keeping Local Brand Inspectors was to raise the brand inspection fee from \$1 to \$2, something that Mr. Cornwell said he was going to present at the Stockgrowers Convention
- Mike Honeycutt said that he and Eric Tillman had gone to a State Ag Teachers Conference and talked about putting together a curriculum to teach kids how to read brands and brand regulations, which would give those students professional credentials and something they could submit if they applied to the DOL for a job. He said they should speak to OPI and Ag folks again about doing that as it hadn't been discussed since COVID
- Mr. Honeycutt said there was nothing that prohibited ranchers from paying a gratuity to a Local Inspector, along with their regular fee

(5:46:20) 2:34 PM BRANDS ENFORCEMENT DIVISION UPDATE

(5:46:28) 2:34 PM Online Market Consignment Permit

To clear up the confusion between a Market Consignment and a Transportation permit, Mr. Bodner said they had posted language changes on the website stating the differences:

- Mr. Bodner said that the Transportation Permit was not available online because the animal needed to be inspected whether at a shipping point, a slaughter facility or before you took off

(5:54:06) 2:41 PM ServiceNow Lifetime Horse Inspection

Jay Bodner reported that as part of the ServiceNow upgrades, that horse inspection would be included in the program and, if everything went well with testing, there would be a “soft” implementation on November 6, 2025:

- The way it would work, Mr. Bodner said, was once the information was input into the system, it would be sent to State Print & Mail and they would send those Lifetime Horse Inspection cards directly to the producer

(5:55:54) 2:43 PM Audit Compliance

Jay Bodner updated the BOL on how Inspector and staff audits were going in the Brands area of the DOL:

- Mr. Bodner reported that the two new individuals in District 14 and District 15, the Great Falls and Kalispell areas, were working on their audits and was giving them opportunity to get to meet every one of their Local Inspectors. He said they were given 45 days to complete the audits, which would be at the end of the month
- Every Inspector book and every inspection in those books would be tracked in ServiceNow, Mr. Bodner adding that was currently operational in the program and would be part of the November 6, 2025 migration of information into ServiceNow

(5:57:58) 2:45 PM Red Tape Review

Jay Bodner reported that he already had about seven or eight pieces of legislation he had been working on for the Red Tape Review:

- Mr. Bodner said that the proposed changes he was considering were more modernization and update-type changes in statute that he had sent to staff for their initial review and then would eventually be brought forward to the BOL for their consideration as well

(5:58:40) 2:46 PM Missoula County Feral Horses

Jay Bodner updated the BOL on the Missoula County feral horses:

- Mr. Bodner explained that these horses had been around since the 1950s-1960s and originated from some rodeo stock that didn't get quite gathered up and now has expanded into a population of horses reaching from Missoula towards Lolo. Some had been hit by vehicles and some had been in people's yards and now

calls had been coming into the DOL regarding whose responsibility those horses were

- Mr. Honeycutt explained that the horses could not be considered estrays because we know where they came from but knew there was no owner. He said the Title 81 Abandoned Horse statute seemed to be the only way to define them, meaning the responsibility for those horses was on the shoulders of the County Commission who would need to do certain things to get them rounded up and offered for sale. If the Commission decided to move forward, the DOL offered them assistance because of our experience in those things. Jay Bodner added that these horses do not fall under the Federal Wild Horse and Borough Act, because they were not classified as BLM horses, they are feral not wild

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

(6:11:10) 2:58 PM

There was not public comment made

SET DATE FOR THE NEXT BOARD MEETING

(6:11:29) 2:59 PM

Gene Curry requested that the BOL make a decision about the date of the next BOL meeting:

- It was agreed upon by some that the month of November was “a wreck” to have a meeting in, and so, it was decided to hold the next BOL meeting in Helena on Wednesday, December 17, 2025

MEETING ADJOURNED

(6:15:40) 3:03 PM


Gene Curry, Chairman