



Montana Board of Livestock Meeting Minutes

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

December 17, 2025

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

Board Members Present

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

William Kleinsasser (swine producer)
Lillian Andersen (dairy & poultry)
Greg Wichman (sheep producer)

(**Jake Feddes was 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
Dale Haylett, Centralized Services
Rick Corder, Centralized Services
Mike Spatz, Centralized Services
Leslie Doely, Livestock Loss Board

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski, MT State Vet
Dr. Brenee Peterson, Animal Health
Dr. Emily Kaleczyc, Animal Health
Dr. Kelsey Martin, Animal Health
Dr. Greg Juda, MVDL
Dr. Steve Smith, MVDL
Jay Bodner, Brands Enforcement
Alicia Love, Meat, Milk & Egg Bureau

Public Present

Dalin Tidwell, USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services
Ellie Brighton, MSGA
Caitlin Wagner, Office of the Governor
Dr. Robert Wilmouth, Rocky Mountain College

Calli Michaels, MWGA
Cheryl Curry

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

(0:03) 8:00 AM

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

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

(0:07) 8:00 AM

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

- Eric Moore, Cattle Representative, Miles City
 - Mr. Moore said that Fall in their area was great for wheat and calves, but now temperatures ranged from 45 above to 10 below zero

- After a big disruption in the market, Mr. Moore said he didn't know if cattle prices would go back to previous highs, but reported that during the October/November Fall Run, about 75%-80% of calves sold were going north of the border
- Lily Andersen, Dairy & Poultry Representative, south of Livingston
 - Ms. Andersen reported that the Fall weather was crazy with no snow, 50-degree temps and the winds howling
 - The Dairy Industry check rating passed, she said, and with "Whole Milk for Healthy Kids" Act recently passing, whole milk would be coming back to schools
- William Kleinsasser, Swine Representative, Augusta
 - Mr. Kleinsasser reported that hog exports to Mexico were up 15%
 - The Fall had been mostly dry and windy, he said, but with the Mountains in the Bob Marshall receiving 3-4 inches of rain last week, their creek was finally running after being dry for seven months
- Greg Wichman, Sheep Representative, Hilger, North of Lewistown
 - Although there had been a snowstorm the weekend before, Mr. Wichman said with the wind, it was all gone. But, because of that storm, they had started feeding hay earlier than they wanted
 - Lamb prices were coming up a little bit and there was some demand for the coarser wools
- Alan Redfield, Cattle Representative, Paradise Valley, south of Livingston
 - Mr. Redfield reported that they were having an open winter with no snow, but had mud, and they could not run logging trucks for a week because of mud
 - Although the replacement heifers were still out on grass, Mr. Redfield said they were starting to feed a little bit because of running out of feed on the hay meadow
- Gene Curry, Cattle Representative, Valier
 - Mr. Curry reported that they had over 100 mph winds a couple times and on the Rocky Mountain Front they were predicting 75 mph-100 mph winds that day, which had blown away the snow they had gotten
 - Mr. Curry said he saw cattle trucks going north every time he went to Great Falls, adding that, if it wasn't for the Canadians right now, the cattle market would look a lot different

BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

(7:35) 8:08 AM

(7:35) 8:08 AM – BOARD APPROVAL OF PAST MEETING MINUTES

Gene Curry requested approval of the minutes of the last BOL meeting, held on October 29, 2025

MOTION/VOTE

(7:39) 8:08 AM

Alan Redfield moved to approve the minutes from the Montana Board of

Livestock October 29, 2025 meeting. Greg Wichman seconded. The motion passed.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE UPDATES

(8:30) 8:08 AM

(8:41) 8:09 AM YNP Bison/EIS/IBMP Operations Update

Mike Honeycutt reported that there had been no real out-migration of bison from YNP, Tahnee Szymanski adding that the National Park Service Fall count was currently around 5300 head, and if there was no out-migration this year, by Fall, that population could be 15% or more higher:

- Dr. Szymanski explained that the current EIS upper threshold of YNP bison was 6000 and she was not certain what the National Park Service would do to remove bison if they reached that upper threshold. Mike Honeycutt said that obligations to Federal treaties had to be considered, such as Tribal Hunting, but that trapping needed to be balanced with that
- The annual MOU for transport of bison going to the Food Transfer Program was in the process of being redone, Dr. Tahnee Szymanski said, adding that there were two large groups of bison in the holding facilities at Corwin Springs and Stephen's Creek, slated to graduate from the quarantine process this Winter, and with the Fort Peck assurance facility mostly empty, around 205 bison, family groups, would be transferred there, once they graduated
- Dr. Szymanski reported that there had been preliminary conversations about where else an assurance facility could be located if the Fort Peck Tribe decided to not operate that facility. Gene Curry reported that the Blackfeet Tribe had purchased a lot of ranches in the last two years and perhaps that would be an outlet for the foreseeable future for those YNP bison, if that was needed
- Mike Honeycutt explained that State Laws did not apply to bison inside the boundaries of the reservation, but once they left reservation jurisdiction, then State law for domestic bison would be applied to them. He shared that the DOL was constantly in the middle of domestic livestock issues dealing with the reservation where non-Tribal members could graze livestock on reservation land

(35:59) 8:36 AM Legislative Interim Update

Mike Honeycutt reported that for the last quarter, the DOL was part of a study on the cattle industry and reported results at the last Economic Affairs meeting:

- Mr. Honeycutt said that also part of that Economic Affairs panel was Chaylee Harney of the Montana Beef Council and Liz Edmundson, Director of the Pulse Crop Committee. Reports were given, questions were asked by the Economic Affairs Committee, but no conclusions came out of that
- Mr. Honeycutt said he met with the Interim Budget Committee the day before and basically gave a policy update. Questions arose regarding why total allotted work hours for the DOL were 10% below average and explained by pointing out that the newly added positions in Meat had not yet been filled. Also explained to the Committee was how the Indemnity Statutory Appropriation was used and that the LLB Statutory Appropriation spending plan included, hopefully, giving away

\$380,000 in grants. Also shared with that Committee was the justification for the increase of per capita fees. In sharing an update on the new Lab, Mr. Honeycutt said that the Committee wanted to go and tour it

(43:20) 8:43 AM Federal Shutdown Impacts Update (if needed)

Mike Honeycutt reported that, since the Federal shutdown had ended, the DOL was in much better shape on Federal funds than several other agencies were:

- Mr. Honeycutt explained that the Federal Big Beautiful Bill reinstated some Meat & Poultry Inspection money, getting back to the 50/50 cost share. With the shutdown over, the DOL had been given more in the State's allotment for RFID tags. Dr. Tahnee Szymanski reported that for the first time ever, a no-cost allocation of tags for swine was offered and that Montana had put in their request for those tags. Dr. Szymanski also said that the Federal Umbrella funds were the same as the previous year when the DOL took a \$360,000 cut

(52:56) 8:53 AM Upcoming Stakeholder Conferences and Conventions

Mike Honeycutt reported that the DOL had a presence at the now finished Stakeholder conferences and conventions, including Montana Farmers Union, Montana Farm Bureau, Montana Stockgrowers, Montana Association of Conservation Districts and Mr. Wichman at the Montana Woolgrowers:

- Mr. Honeycutt and BOL members discussed highlights of those meetings and what needed to be addressed in the coming year by both the BOL and DOL

(1:01:10) 9:01 AM Update on Governor's OGSM Strategic Management and Executive Officer Strategic Goals

Mike Honeycutt reported that the Governor allowed agencies to take the month of December off from OGSM meetings, but said he was still looking for ideas to be addressed for the first horizon in 2026:

- Mr. Honeycutt said that the Governor did, however, hold a Cabinet Retreat, which was held at the new Heritage Center. The Governor wanted to pursue job creation in OGSM in 2026, deploying better technology in State Government and run it more like an enterprise and also try to attract more businesses to the state. The Governor wanted the DOL to promote "innovative agriculture" rather than "value-added" agriculture
- Red-Tape items, Mr. Honeycutt said, would still be front and center for OGSM. Alan Redfield wanted to update fines and address enforceability

(1:19:57) 9:20 AM – HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

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

(1:20:36) 9:20 AM Staff Openings, Recruitment Updates

Mike Spatz reported that the DOL was actively recruiting for five positions and had hired two new people, had one internal promotion, three vacated positions and three notices of resignation since the last BOL meeting:

- Mr. Spatz reported that Daniel Sclavi had been hired as the Meat Inspection Supervisor in the Southeastern Area of the state, Wyatt Gaskin started on November 24th as a Market Inspector in Miles City and Job Greenall was promoted from a Sanitarian to the Sanitarian Supervisor in the Meat, Milk & Egg Bureau. The unfilled Microbiologist Veterinarian Section Head had been reposted with a top salary of \$142,000
 - Mike Honeycutt said that there might be a need to talk to MSU about a collaboration with them to share the Microbiologist Section Head person with them where they would pay 30% of the salary for that person being an adjunct professor for MSU and the DOL paying 70% of the salary for the MVDL's needs, allowing for an even higher salary being offered

(1:32:47) 9:33 AM Requests to Hire

(1:27:23) 9:27 AM IT Support-Level 2 – Central Services Division/Microbiologist – MVDL/Administrative Specialist – Meat, Milk & Egg Bureau

Mike Spatz requested that the BOL approve the hire of an IT Support-Level 2 person in the Central Services Division, a Microbiologist at the MVDL and an Administrative Specialist in the Meat, Milk & Egg Bureau:

- With the departure of an employee who had done IT support, Mr. Spatz was requesting that the BOL approve filling that vacancy at a Level 2 classification, for not only frontline IT work, but also having upper-level knowledge of IT systems
- The Microbiologist position had been vacant for some time, but not hired due to a USDA employee helping there. To assure the Section was fully staffed, it was requested to fill that vacancy with a full-time Microbiologist
- The Administrative Specialist position in the Meat, Milk & Egg Bureau had been vacant since Darcy Alm had left and now, there was a need in that area of the DOL beyond just a front-level Administrative Assistant-type position that would encompass more of the duties that the Bureau Chief needed done

MOTION/VOTE

(1:37:36) 9:38 AM

Alan Redfield moved to approve the hire of a Level 2 Support Information Technology position in the Central Services Division, a Microbiologist at the Montana Veterinary Diagnostic Lab and the upgrade of an Administrative Assistant position to an Administrative Specialist position in the Meat, Milk and Egg Bureau and hire of that Administrative Specialist. William Kleinsasser seconded. The motion passed.

(1:38:01) 9:38 AM General Updates

(1:38:06) 9:38 AM Reminder: Year-End Employee Performance Evaluations

Mike Spatz reported that the Year-End Employee Performance Evaluation process was currently going and that only 10% of the DOL was all the way done with the process due by January 31, 2026

(1:39:50) 9:40 AM – LEGAL COUNSEL UPDATE (May Require Executive Session)
Lindsey Simon, Agency Legal Counsel, introduced herself and requested that the BOL break into an Executive Session to take their temperature on interest in potentially initiating litigation

(1:40:26) 9:40 AM Executive Session Discussing Prospective Litigation

(1:40:26) 9:40 AM EXECUTIVE SESSION

(1:40:29) 10:18 AM RECONVENE

Gene Curry called the meeting back to order

MOTION/VOTE

(1:40:53) 10:18 AM

Eric Moore moved to approve litigation against Meat Processors that are believed to be unlawfully operating without a license. Greg Wichman seconded. The motion passed.

(1:41:50) 10:19 AM RECESS

(1:41:51) 10:35 AM RECONVENE

Gene Curry called the meeting back to order

CENTRALIZED SERVICES DIVISION REPORTS

(1:41:59) 10:35 AM

(1:42:06) 10:35 AM FISCAL BUREAU

Brian Simonson, Chief Financial Officer, introduced himself

(1:42:13) 10:35 AM Increasing USDA Wildlife Services Funding

Greg Wichman requested that the BOL approve increasing the per capita funding for Wildlife Services predator control from \$575,000 to \$675,000 to help with predator control measures for the sheep industry:

- Calli Michaels, Public Affairs Director for the Montana Woolgrowers Association, explained that the request Mr. Wichman made had been brought up by the Montana Woolgrowers Association at their convention
 - Ms. Michaels said that Wildlife Services funding had not kept up with inflation and that they had to prioritize their investigations for wolves and grizzly bears because those were paid out under the LLB. That meant they were cutting back on the amount of coyote work they were able to do in Eastern Montana, where coyotes were the main issue, and that impacted sheep producers

- Mike Honeycutt explained that general fund was the source of funds for the LLB and their investigative reports, but the statutory appropriation of the per capita fee was about the aerial hunting of coyotes, and Wildlife Services used those funds to keep the helicopters in the air. He reminded the BOL that we were not collecting as much per capita fees as we had four or five years ago, as both cattle and sheep numbers were down 30%-40% from that time. To maintain the fund balance cushion where it was in case another obligation arose, such as a disease emergency, was why the BOL voted to increase per capita rates by 3%
- Ellie Brighton, Montana Stockgrowers Association expressed their organization's support of Wildlife Service and the work they did and felt that coyote control was a vital service. Alan Redfield shared that his family in Eastern Montana struggled with coyotes to the degree that those in Western Montana struggled with wolves. Lily Anderson said she had quite a few neighbors who struggled with coyotes. Eric Moore said he wasn't opposed to the concept, but hoped to have a better idea of where the DOL's reserves were and what this would do to the budget in the long term

MOTION/VOTE

(1:43:24) 10:37 AM

Greg Wichman moved to increase the per capita funding to USDA Wildlife Services by \$100K, from \$575K to \$675K. Alan Redfield seconded. Eric Moore voted no. The motion passed.

Mike Honeycutt clarified that the intent of the motion was if it could be done. Gene Curry said it was an open-ended motion with no specific time frame

(2:11:11) 11:05 AM November 30, 2025 State Special Revenue Report

Brian Simonson explained that he hadn't reported to the BOL in two months and so his report would be looking at four to five months' worth of revenue, somewhere between 33% and 42% of the amount anticipated to be collected for the year:

- Mr. Simonson said that Field Inspections were down \$13,000, which was significant, but within a reasonable variance. Market Inspections were at \$165,000, short from last year, which could be a timing issue, because there were 36 fewer deposits in the system compared to last year, and he expected that number to correct itself. Milk Inspection numbers were down, reflective of being down two or three dairies compared to last year. The MVDL did \$243,000 in business during the past two months, a little down from last year, but well within the variances of that operation. Wolf Donation collections were more than last year

(2:17:49) 11:11 AM December 2025 through June 2026 Budget Projections Report

Brian Simonson explained some of the bigger numbers seen in this report:

- Mr. Simonson projected about \$708,000 of excess authority by the end of the year, with \$486,000 in Personal Services and \$326,000 in Operations. The \$279,000 in Salaries was due to a lot of Brands turnover, vacancies across the DOL, new FTEs in Meat & Poultry Inspection that were unfilled and the

Veterinary positions and Biologists racking up that amount as well. Of the \$209,000 reported in Overtime, nearly \$150,000 of it was spent in the last two months due to Fall Run. Rent was listed at almost \$138,000, and was paid with per capita. Eric Moore requested a breakdown of Motor Pool expenses from other Rent expenses. The \$62,700 listed for Repair & Maintenance was more money spent last year, maybe more quickly, on vehicles, but a big chunk of that money was for preventative maintenance on the MVDL equipment. The negative \$36,000 listed for the Lab was a vast improvement over last year, with supplies being purchased a little earlier than last year

(2:25:03) 11:28 AM November 30, 2025 Budget Comparison Report

Brian Simonson reported that there were some bigger numbers to report on, but on the last report, the DOL was ahead of payroll and in this report, everything pretty much evened out:

- Mr. Simonson explained that, mostly because of vacancies and substantive payouts last year, the DOL spent almost \$69,000 less in Salaries than at this time last year. \$133,000 more was spent in Contracts than last year due to more DSA testing. The Personal Services budget was 36% expended with 38% of the payroll complete. The Operations budget was 36% expended with 34% of the budget year lapsed. The Livestock Loss reduction listed of \$311,439 was the grant money left. \$95,000 had also been voted on by the LLB to send to Wildlife Services. \$62,000 had been spent on Animal Heath software and \$190,000 of ARPA money for equipment at the MVDL
- Mike Honeycut pointed out the one-time-only \$863,048 amount listed under Budgeted Funds, which were monies secured for helping get the MVDL moved into their new space

PREDATOR CONTROL

(2:40:29) 11:34 AM

(2:40:29) 11:34 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, introduced himself and updated the BOL on the latest activities of USDA Wildlife Services:

- Mr. Tidwell said that this was the slower time of year for predations with hunting season over and the bears starting to sleep, but they were gearing up for their next flying season
- The Glendive Specialist position had been filled, but non-lethal Range Rider positions had yet to be filled. With the retirement of their Budget Analyst of 20 years, Mr. Tidwell said he would be filling her spot, as the Federal hiring freeze was still in place on Administrative staff
- Mr. Tidwell shared how their operating expenses for staff, fleet and equipment had risen over the years, but how they stretched the dollars so they could keep their services available to the public
- Mr. Tidwell reported IR numbers for payable predators, from 2021-2025: Black Bear-26, 30, 45, 25, 22; Grizzly Bears-181, 137, 112, 149, 133; Mountain Lions-

58, 47, 35, 49, 27; Wolves-105, 98, 88, 58, 80, 82 (Wolves IRs were given for 2020-2025)

(3:08:39) 12:02 PM LIVESTOCK LOSS BOARD (LLB) REPORT TO THE BOL

Brian Simonson, Deputy Executive Officer, introduced himself and said that he would give the synopsis for the LLB with information from Leslie Doely:

- Mr. Simonson reported that LLB paid loss claims to seven producers for 10 losses
- At the November 20, 2025 LLB meeting, the new grant cycle was approved with around \$380,000 available for prevention grants. The cycle was currently open and would end January 30, 2026, with awards granted at the next LLB meeting at the end of February. There was a possibility of opening a second grant cycle
- Mr. Simonson presented Leslie Doely's revamped depredation statistics, complete with maps and charts
- Mike Honeycutt and Brian Simonson reported that it did not appear in statute that Vet bills for injured guard dogs could be covered by Loss claims, but could be applied for by grant monies

(3:13:48) 12:07 PM LUNCH

(3:13:50) 12:59 PM RECONVENE

Gene Curry called the meeting back to order

ANIMAL HEALTH & FOOD SAFETY DIVISION REPORTS

(3:14:00) 12:59 PM

(3:14:00) 12:59 PM – MEAT, MILK & EGG INSPECTION BUREAU

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

(3:14:23) 1:00 PM General Updates

(3:14:23) 1:00 PM Update on FDA Check Rating Results

This agenda item was postponed until after the introduction of Dr. Kelsey Martin

(3:14:41) 1:00 PM – ANIMAL HEALTH BUREAU

(3:14:41) 1:00 PM Introduction of Dr. Kelsey Martin (Item moved from Animal Health Bureau Agenda)

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski requested that the introduction of newly-hired Dr. Kelsey Martin happen now, due to trying to get some people out of town because of the weather:

- Dr. Kelsey Martin introduced herself, sharing that she had joined the Animal Health Bureau three weeks ago and was based in the Bozeman area. Dr. Martin was hired as a Program Veterinarian and would provide additional support to managing all the reportable disease programs, ADT, alternative livestock and other responsibilities as they would come up

(3:16:52) 1:03 PM – MEAT, MILK & EGG INSPECTION BUREAU (Continued)

(3:16:52) 1:03 PM Update on FDA Check Rating Results

Alicia Love reported on the FDA Re-Check for Milk BTU that had just been completed:

- Ms. Love said that the DOL passed the Re-Check, showing that there was considerable improvement in sanitation violations, but still a little room for improvement on water supply protection. The Sanitarian Supervisor would be tasked with seeing through the enforcement SOP so that there was effective communication between the office and team when issues arose
- Change of ownership requirements of both dairy and meat establishments was discussed by Ms. Love, Mr. Honeycutt and the BOL
- Ms. Love reported that two Federal on-site audit were coming up in Meat and Milk in 2026

(3:23:07) 1:08 PM – VETERINARY DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY

Greg Juda, Lab Director for the Montana Veterinary Diagnostic Lab in Bozeman, introduced himself

(3:23:30) 1:09 PM Out-of-State Travel Requests

(3:23:48) 1:09 PM AAVLD Auditor Training

Dr. Greg Juda requested that the BOL approve out-of-state travel for Casey Ming, new Quality Manager for the MVDL to attend AAVLD Auditor Training in February 2026 in Las Vegas:

- Mr. Ming's trip expenses would come from NAHLN annual grant funding. Dr. Juda said that Mr. Ming was unable to attend the AAVLD annual meeting, so some of those funds could be diverted to cover the travel expense

MOTION/VOTE

(3:25:51) 1:11 PM

Eric Moore moved to approve out-of-state travel for Casey Ming to attend the Annual AAVLD Auditor Training in Las Vegas, Nevada on February 4, 2026. William Kleinsasser seconded. The motion passed.

(3:26:24) 1:11 PM NAHLN HL7 Messaging Symposia

Dr. Greg Juda requested that the BOL approve travel for Dr. Steve Smith and Mary Horner-Richardson to attend a NAHLN HL7 Messaging Symposium in San Diego in March:

- Although Mary Horner-Richardson attended an event in September, both an advanced and a basic track were being offered. Dr. Juda said HL7 Messaging was an important component for resulting out reportable diseases in conjunction with notifying the NAHLN Program Office when that occurred. A NAHLN grant would cover travel expenses

MOTION/VOTE

(3:28:56) 1:14 PM

William Kleinsasser moved to approve out-of-state travel for Steve Smith and Mary Horner-Richardson, if available, or two MVDL personnel, to attend the NAHLN HL7 Messaging Symposia Event, hosted by Colorado State University and being held on March 3-6, 2026 in San Diego. Eric Moore seconded. The motion passed.

(3:29:20) 1:14 PM Rocky Vista University Veterinary School Collaboration

Discussion

Dr. Greg Juda brought forward an introductory discussion regarding a potential collaboration between the MVDL and Rocky Vista University Veterinary School, a private Health Science University, with medical schools in Denver, CO, Ivins, UT and most recently, Billings, MT:

- Dr. Steve Smith, Lead Pathologist from the MVDL, and Bob Murtaugh, founding Dean at Rocky Vista University, joined the conversation and were available for questions regarding the MVDL hosting two-week rotations for third-year Veterinary students from Rocky Vista University within the MVDL
- Rocky Vista University's Billings campus had a Veterinary Education Building under construction and was currently on the accreditation pathway to hopefully have students enrolled by July 2027, with a plan for 125 students/class. The first time students would be eligible to be in the rotation would be Summer 2029
- Dr. Smith explained that the new Lab building had space for the students, as the rotation would only be about four students at any one given time. Mr. Murtaugh said that Rocky Vista would fund the FTEs needed at the Lab that would be educators for their students. Mike Honeycutt said that new FTEs for this would be, at least in the first biennium or two as the DOL worked through this, modified State positions, not permanent positions

(4:05:47) 1:50 PM New Lab Complex Update (Non-Agenda Item)

Dr. Greg Juda updated the BOL on progress of the new Lab Complex:

- Dr. Juda reported that truckloads and truckloads of equipment had continued to arrive and he expressed his thankfulness for the funding received to be able to put all the pieces in place when the doors opened on April 26, 2026. Mike Honeycutt said he had conversations already with the Governor's Office and MSU President Dr. Tessman regarding the celebration of the Lab opening

(BOL Meeting was muted from 4:10:27 to 4:11:23)

(4:11:43) 1:57 PM – ANIMAL HEALTH BUREAU (Continued)

(4:56:45) 1:44 PM Request for Travel Authorization to Participate in Either a Domestic or International USDA Review Team

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski requested that the BOL approve travel for herself, either domestic or international, to be part of a USDA Review Team:

- Mike Honeycutt said that Dr. Zaluski served twice on Review Teams while at the DOL, once to Indiana and Michigan for the TB Whitetail Deer Program and once to Central Europe as part of an ASF Review Team
- Dr. Szymanski said that USDA would pay for the travel, but the State of Montana would pay her salary and per diem while she was gone

MOTION/VOTE

(4:15:52) 2:01 PM

William Kleinsasser moved to approve out-of-state travel for Dr. Tahnee Szymanski to participate in a single potential future USDA program review team that could be either domestic or international. Lily Andersen seconded. The motion passed.

(4:16:39) 2:02 PM Request to Remove Washington State from Requirement for Official ID for Feeders

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski requested permission to remove Washington State from our traceability memo requiring official ID for feeder cattle coming into Montana:

- Eric Moore voiced concern about giving Washington any “freebies” that Montana was not getting from them
- Dr. Szymanski said that Washington was having conversations about doing away with import requirements centered around Brucellosis vaccination. As a GYA state, the DOL perspective was that animals going into Washington were not at risk of being exposed to Brucellosis and that every reactor found in the Brucellosis program had been a vaccine, and so, she would be hesitant to put a bangs vaccination requirement on females coming back this way, because of what we’ve communicated, historically, to other states
- Dr. Szymanski further explained that currently, Montana doesn’t require official ID on sexually intact animals coming into Montana for feeding purposes, except for Washington State. And so, except for some private entities there, Washington State does not require official ID on feeders going into Washington channels. She was requesting that Montana reciprocate and remove our requirement for sexually-intact animals, less than 18 months, coming into Montana from Washington, for feeding purposes

MOTION/VOTE

(4:19:10) 2:05 PM

Eric Moore moved to reciprocate exactly Washington’s import requirement for us. There was no second given.

MOTION/VOTE

(4:24:35) 2:10 PM

Alan Redfield moved to approve removing Montana’s import requirement of requiring Official ID for sexually intact animals, less than 18 months of age, coming into Montana from Washington, for feeding purposes. Eric Moore seconded. The motion passed.

Emily Kaleczyc, Assistant State Veterinarian, introduced herself

(4:29:21) 2:15 PM Request for Out-of-State Travel to Texas for TB Testing

Emily Kaleczyc requested that the BOL approve travel for Dr. Brenee Peterson and Dr. Kelsey Martin to Texas to help with herd testing at a Tuberculosis-affected dairy, with upwards of 100,000 animals:

- Dr. Kaleczyc said the request for that help had not yet come, but, could possibly happen sometime in January. This would be an opportunity for both Veterinarians to get certified in doing the comparative cervical test, because right now, other than USDA personnel, Dr. Szymanski and herself were the only two Veterinarians able to do those comparative cervical tests
- Dr. Szymanski said that the expense should be covered by the Federal Cooperative Agreement under Zoonotic

MOTION/VOTE

(4:33:00) 2:18 PM

Lily Andersen moved to approve out-of-state travel for Dr. Brenee Peterson and Dr. Kelsey Martin to assist in five days of TB testing at dairy complexes in Texas in January/February 2026. William Kleinsasser seconded. Eric Moore voted no. The motion passed.

(4:33:39) 2:19 PM Program and Disease Updates

(4:33:39) 2:19 PM Brucellosis – Fall Testing and Epidemiological Investigations, BRUH Meeting in Bozeman

Dr. Emily Kaleczyc updated the BOL on Brucellosis activity in the state:

- Dr. Kaleczyc said that testing had been completed on the affected herd that had been identified back in July, with no additional animals found, and the herd was released from quarantine. An annual herd test found a Brucellosis sero-positive first-calf heifer from Gallatin County that was taken to the MVDL for necropsy last week. There was a high level of confidence it was a single introduction from elk. The bulls, who were not part of the herd, were set to be tested the following week by Dr. Peterson
- Mike Honeycutt shared that at the recent Montana Stockgrowers convention, he had received high praises from three different Southwest Montana producers, for Dr. Brenee Peterson's work with them. Dr. Szymanski said, we were very fortunate to have her
- Dr. Tahnee Szymanski said that the DOL would be getting additional data from FWP regarding sero-prevalence of elk in an elk capture study south of Gallatin Gateway, associated with a high number of elk vehicle collisions
- Dr. Kaleczyc reported that they expected an elk capture on the Crow Reservation in February or March, as the MOU had been fully signed

(4:43:27) 2:28 PM EHV-1 – Status of Multi-State Outbreak and Sunset of Emergency Official Order

Dr. Emily Kaleczyc updated the BOL on Equine Herpes Virus (EHV) and Equine Herpes Myelencephalopathy (EHM):

- Dr. Kaleczyc said that Dr. Szymanski had initially issued an emergency order, restricting horse health certificates to a 72-hour window to be issued before horses came into Montana
- Traces for about eight Montana-Origin horses, registered at large events in Texas and Oklahoma, had been received, and after contacting all but one of the owners, it was found that those horses had not come back to Montana and were planning to stay in those states during the winter competition season
- The outbreak, Dr. Kaleczyc said, appeared to have petered off. The last date and event where there were positive horses was in Guthrie, Oklahoma on November 18-19, 2025, and because of that, Dr. Szymanski had rescinded the emergency order and horses were coming back to Montana as usual

(4:48:14) 2:33 PM Vesicular Stomatitis Virus

Dr. Emily Kaleczyc reported that Vesicular Stomatitis had been reported in Arizona in horses, initially, on October 31, 2025 and most recently, the previous week:

- Dr. Kaleczyc explained that Vesicular Stomatitis was tracked carefully, because when found in cattle and swine, it was indistinguishable from FMD and other Vesicular diseases we cared about. It usually started in the Spring though, and there were no cases reported in Mexico, which normally happened first
- Dr. Tahnee Szymanski reported that 99% of the health certificates issued in Montana were electronic. As of January 1, 2026, all animals entering Texas and Colorado must travel on an electronic health certificate and she expected some other states to go that direction in the next couple of days as well. In hopes to get the final 1% of Montana Veterinarians to go electronic, Dr. Szymanski planned to use some available ADT money to offer those Veterinarians to do that

(4:53:19) 2:38 PM Out-of-State Travel Report from USAHA Annual Meeting

Dr. Emily Kaleczyc said that Dr. Szymanski, Dr. Peterson and herself had compiled a 14-page document highlighting presentations made during their recent attendance at the USAHA meeting:

- Dr. Kaleczyc reported that with the ongoing HPAI outbreak, and industry discussion about vaccination of birds, there were multiple presentations and discussions on vaccination for bird flu. Also discussed, were different depopulation methods for poultry houses and larger species as well. The EU Animal Health Agency presented on their two FMD outbreaks in 2025
- Dr. Tahnee Szymanski reported that there had been a detection of New World Screwworm in Nuevo Leone, and the larvae had been submitted for testing to make sure they weren't immune to the treatment of Ivermectin. She said that the new distribution facility in Mexico for sterile flies was online, giving a greater range for distribution and there was hope that Moore Air Force Base in southern Texas would open a new production facility for those flies in 2026. USDA and several State Animal Health Officials had been working on a structure of what control measures would look like if there was a detection of New World Screwworm in the US

- Dr. Szymanski also reported that she had not heard of any indication of a shortage of RB51

(5:11:10) 2:56 PM Indemnity Request – Gallatin County Brucellosis Reactor

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski requested that the BOL discuss the indemnity request for the Gallatin County reactor in an Executive Session

(5:12:05) 2:57 PM EXECUTIVE SESSION

(5:12:12) 3:05 PM RECONVENE

Gene Curry called the meeting back to order

MOTION/VOTE

(5:12:27) 3:05 PM

Lily Andersen moved to approve funding for an indemnity request for a Gallatin County Brucellosis reactor red heifer for \$4,100 minus a USDA \$250 indemnity payment. Alan Redfield seconded. The motion passed.

(5:14:35) 3:06 PM RECESS

(5:14:37) 3:11 PM RECONVENE

BRANDS ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

(5:14:43) 3:11 PM BOL Discussion Regarding “Mixed Calves” Classification at the Markets (Non-Agenda Item)

Jay Bodner said that he had a conversation with Eric Moore regarding the new software system being used at the markets and maybe looking at some possible upgrades:

- Eric Moore expressed concern that if a load of 50 heifers and 50 steers were brought into the market, they were listed as “Mixed Calves.” But, if someone bought just the 50 steers, the bill of sale still listed them as 50 “Mixed Calves.” Jay Bodner explained how the system worked and said that they had not come up, as of yet, with a great scenario of a fix for that situation, but added that the new system created convenience and more accuracy on the brand side of things

(The power went out at 3:22 PM and came back on at 3:38 PM-5:24:46)

Time Unknown REQUEST FOR OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL

Time Unknown Western States Livestock Rural Enforcement Association

MOTION/VOTE

(5:24:46) 3:30 PM

Lily Andersen moved to approve out-of-state travel for Jay Bodner, Shawn Hando, Dan Bugni and Wes Seward to attend the Western States Livestock Rural Enforcement Association annual conference in Reno, Nevada on March 3-5, 2026. William Kleinsasser seconded. The motion passed.

(5:25:22) 3:31 PM BOL Discussion Regarding Raising the Brand Inspection Fee (Non-Agenda Item)

Gene Curry asked for BOL input regarding a conversation he had with Lee Cornwell regarding having a shortage of Brand Inspectors in the northeast part of the state and possibly raising the brand inspection fee:

- Greg Wichman said that there was nothing stopping him from paying an Inspector an extra dollar or an extra \$50. Jay Bodner said that Deputy Brand Inspectors could charge mileage. Mike Honeycutt said that offering a State Health Plan would be an enticement for Deputy Brand Inspectors, but would become a management issue to hire a bunch of short-term, part-time positions where they would have to log enough hours to even qualify for those benefits

(5:30:36) 3:36 PM BRANDS ENFORCEMENT DIVISION UPDATE

(5:30:44) 3:36 PM ServiceNow Updates

Jay Bodner reported that ServiceNow had gone through a system-wide upgrade that was in the process of getting completed:

- Mr. Bodner said that a tremendous amount of testing had been done and with a few defects found, ServiceNow was not used for three Saturday sales. But, the final fixes on those defects were getting done that day. There was hope, too, that Lifetime Horse Inspections would be available in ServiceNow after the first of the year. The goal was that after the first of the year, three or four Local Inspectors would get into the system and build out from there. Eric Moore suggested possibly adding lien search capabilities as well

(5:35:19) 3:40 PM Miller Creek Feral Horses

Jay Bodner reported that a meeting was held in Missoula on December 10, 2025 regarding the Missoula County feral horses. In attendance were County Officials, Law Enforcement, Highway Patrol, Sheriff's Officers, the Landowner where the horses have been day-to-day and several DOL staff:

- Most people in the area didn't want the horses sent to slaughter, but left alone. However, if there was some action, then they wanted to know the horses were adopted to good homes. Jay Bodner said that the DOL had offered assistance, if needed, for the nine head of horses

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

(5:41:06) 3:46 PM

Gene Curry called for public comment from the two ladies in the audience who had been in attendance at the meeting the entire day:

- Calli Michaels, from the Montana Woolgrowers Association, brought forth a request from the Montana Woolgrowers Association to increase the DOL's statutory minimum given to Wildlife Services from \$350,000 to \$600,000 and then adjust it for inflation every year after that. Mike Honeycutt said that the DOL currently paid Wildlife Services \$575,000, and that he applauded Ms. Michaels for bringing the request before the BOL early
- Ms. Michaels also requested that the DOL support a Predator Control Trust Fund that she hoped the 2027 Legislative Session would create, and possibly asking the Governor's Office to find an initial lump sum to put into that fund that could be built up over time and generate interest for Predator Control. Ms. Michaels' other requests were more specific to the Livestock Loss Board and it was suggested she save those for when they met
- Ellie Brighton, of the Montana Stockgrowers Association, thanked the Woolgrowers for all their work on this and agreed that there was an opportunity for increasing funding for the valuable work that Wildlife Services did, but felt that it was a Federal appropriations issue and wanted to allow the DOL flexibility with per capita funds in case of a foreign animal disease outbreak, without having to increase per capita costs

SET DATE FOR THE NEXT BOARD MEETING

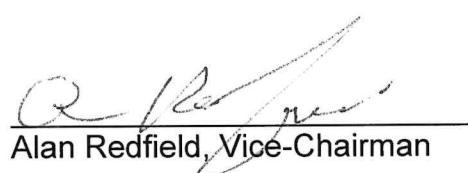
(5:57:10) 4:02 PM

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

- It was decided that postponing an off-site BOL meeting until Spring or Summer would be better than having one in January. The next BOL meeting was set for January 28, 2026 at the BOL Conference Room in Helena

MEETING ADJOURNED

(6:01:14) 4:06 PM



Alan Redfield, Vice-Chairman