



Montana Board of Livestock Meeting Minutes

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

June 27, 2025

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

Board Members Present

Gene Curry (cattle producer)

Alan Redfield (cattle producer)

William Kleinsasser (swine producer)

Lillian Andersen (dairy & poultry)

(Jake Feddes, Eric Moore and Greg Wichman attended the meeting by ZOOM.)

Staff Present

Mike Honeycutt, EO

Donna Wilham, Adm. Asst to EO

Lindsey Simon, Centralized Services

Evan Waters, Centralized Services

Mike Spatz, Centralized Services

Rick Corder, Centralized Services

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski, MT State Vet

Dr. Greg Juda, Director, MVDL

Alicia Love, Meat, Milk & Egg Bureau

Jay Bodner, Brands Enforcement

Brendan Boots, Centralized Services

Tom Shultz, Centralized Services

Public Present

Cheryl Curry

Robert & Eileen Sain, A-S Processing

Dalin Tidwell, USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services

Kathleen Verderber

Samantha Howard

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:

- Alan Redfield, Cattle Representative, Paradise Valley, south of Livingston
 - Mr. Redfield reported that they got the cattle and calves on mountain pasture this week, that they were done with AI and should be cutting hay now
- William Kleinsasser, Swine Representative, Augusta
 - Mr. Kleinsasser reported that it was pretty dry on the home front and that it only took a day and a half to do the hay crop, as there wasn't much to cut. Their wheat and barley were not looking too bad, but they were waiting for rain. He added that prices were sky high in the pork world and that China just opened up three more ports the day before to receive US pork

- Lily Andersen, Dairy & Poultry Representative, south of Livingston
 - Ms. Andersen reported that their cows were in the mountains now and that some of their hay was cut and baled. She said she was spending most of her time fighting old irrigation pipe
- Eric Moore, Cattle Representative, Miles City
 - Mr. Moore reported that moisture was spotty, especially north of Miles City up to the Hi-Line, and he expected that the dryland hay crop would be spotty as well. He thought there would be a lot of Dakota hay moving west, as that country had phenomenal moisture and expected that feed around his area would be fairly cheap. He said that the prices at the first video sales were sky high and he said a lot of cattle were going to leave the country for the Midwest or parts of Canada
- Greg Wichman, Sheep Representative, Hilger, North of Lewistown
 - Mr. Wichman reported that they had a shower the previous night but that some pretty wicked hail storms, with baseball and even softball-size hail, had gone through the country causing some serious damage, but those storms had missed them. Haying was in full swing, but the hay was “not too shiny.” The grass though, was looking pretty good
- Gene Curry, Cattle Representative, Valier
 - Mr. Curry reported that although they were quite dry, the weekend before, west of Valier, they had 1 ¾ inches of rain, the most that had fallen since last Fall. The dryland hay wouldn't get cut, because there was nothing there and the irrigation water was short and was going to be shut off August 1st. A sow Grizzly Bear and two cubs were in one of their irrigation ditches and earlier in the Spring, there had been another sow spotted in the same area

BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

(9:04) 8:09 AM

(9:04) 8:09 AM – BOARD APPROVAL OF PAST MEETING MINUTES

Gene Curry requested approval of two past BOL meeting minutes and the minutes from one BOL hearing:

MOTION/VOTE

(9:34) 8:10 AM

Lily Andersen moved to approve the minutes from the Montana Board of Livestock May 27, 2025 Hearing. Alan Redfield seconded. The motion passed.

MOTION/VOTE

(10:07) 8:10 AM

Alan Redfield moved to approve the minutes from the Montana Board of Livestock May 28, 2025 Meeting. William Kleinsasser seconded. The motion passed.

MOTION/VOTE

(10:51) 8:11 AM

Alan Redfield moved to approve the minutes from the Montana Board of Livestock June 13, 2025 ZOOM Meeting. Lily Andersen seconded. The motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS

(11:12) 8:11 AM

(11:15) 8:11 AM – UPDATE ON GOVERNOR’S OGSM STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT AND EXECUTIVE OFFICER STRATEGIC GOALS

Mike Honeycutt reported that there was no Ops Review meeting held this month, adding that next month would start a new six-month scenario and he said he would keep the floor open until mid-July for any more targeted goals the BOL would like to see addressed for the next cycle:

- Mr. Honeycutt reminded the BOL of a recommendation made in May from Eric Moore to keep some targets on and around preparation and planning for emergency preparedness and some of the roll out and communication for foreign animal disease

NEW BUSINESS/EXECUTIVE OFFICER UPDATES

(13:43) 8:14 AM

(13:58) 8:14 AM – HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATES

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

(14:04) 8:14 AM - Staff Openings/Recruitment Updates

Mike Spatz updated the BOL on Staff Openings and Recruitment in the DOL, adding that there were also some requests to hire to address:

- Mr. Spatz reported that the DOL was recruiting for three positions, had two vacated positions, hired one new person and had received notice of one future resignation around the beginning of August, since the last meeting
 - The Veterinary positions needed to be filled in Animal Health. The VDL was getting close to some second-round in-person interviews for the Veterinary Microbiologist Section Head. There were a lot of good applicants to fill the District 14 Investigator job. With minor restructuring in the Meat, Milk & Egg area of the DOL, they were going to request hiring a Sanitarian Supervisor position
 - One of the Billings Market Inspector positions had been filled and the Northwest Meat Inspector Supervisor position had been filled by Jeremy Leavitt. Wes Seward had been promoted into the Central District Area Supervisor position

(17:35) 8:18 AM Requests to Hire

Mike Spatz said there were two requests to hire he would be presenting that day

(17:41) 8:18 AM Assistant State Veterinarian

Mike Spatz explained that the Veterinarian Supervisor position had originally been established to fill the void when there was trouble recruiting for an Assistant State Veterinarian. The request today was to recruit for an Assistant State Veterinarian to assist Dr. Szymanski:

- Dr. Szymanski said she felt it was a good time to recruit for an Assistant State Veterinarian because, with Federal layoffs and some taking deferred retirement, there might be some Veterinarians who would be seeking jobs

MOTION/VOTE

(21:06) 8:21 AM

Alan Redfield moved to approve posting the job opening for Assistant State Veterinarian. William Kleinsasser seconded. The motion passed.

(22:07) 8:22 AM Sanitarian Supervisor/Backup EIAO (Meat, Milk & Egg Inspection Bureau)

Mike Spatz presented to the BOL a request to hire for a new position in the Meat, Milk & Egg Bureau, a Sanitarian Supervisor:

- Mr. Spatz explained that the Sanitarian Supervisor would act as a backup for the current EIAO, doing FSAs, and investigation and compliance work in the milk plants. They would also be a Supervisor for the existing Sanitarians, which would relieve the current Bureau Chief of some direct reports
- Mike Honeycutt explained that the ability to pay for this position, which would utilize a long unfilled Supervisor FTE in the Milk Inspection Program, was made possible by the fund switch executed in our HB2 budget that brought in some general fund authority for the Milk Inspection unit

MOTION/VOTE

(33:05) 8:33 AM

Lily Andersen moved to approve the hire and advertising for a Sanitarian Supervisor in the Meat, Milk and Egg Inspection Bureau. William Kleinsasser seconded. The motion passed.

(34:26) 8:34 AM General Updates

Mike Spatz reported on several general updates that affected the DOL:

- Mr. Spatz said that the HB13 pay increases for State employees would be effective on June 28, 2025
- The Governor, according to Mr. Spatz, had notified State workers the day before that they were working on a centralization of Human Resources, IT and Procurement positions within the Department of Administration to standardize policies and centralize functions. Mike Honeycutt explained that the Governor had a desire to get the 19 Constitutional State Agencies to operate more like one larger business, not 19 separate State Governments

(48:23) 8:48 AM – LEGAL COUNSEL UPDATE (May Require Executive Session)

(48:23) 8:48 AM – Litigation Update

(48:23) 8:48 AM – Robert Sain d/b/a A-S Processing – Custom Exempt Meat Establishing Licensing Action Final Order

With the absence of Lindsey Simon, Agency Counsel for the DOL, Mike Honeycutt announced that Miss Verderber would be here today to represent the BOL in a licensing action, final order situation:

- Miss Verderber explained that this was regarding the matter of Robert Sain's doing business as A-S Processing, regarding the recommended decision to revoke the licensing by the Montana DOL. She provided the BOL with the proposed Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, written by the Hearing Examiner after a hearing took place and other pertinent materials provided by the DOL and Lindsey Simon and from Miss Howard, who represented Robert Sain
- Miss Verderber said that after an oral argument from Miss Howard was given, the BOL would have three options
 - Accept the proposed Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law as the Hearing Examiner had decided it
 - Reject the proposed Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law from the Hearing Examiner
 - Accept with certain proposed changes and exceptions by either party, the proposed Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law
- Miss Howard presented her oral arguments to the BOL, with the presence of Robert and Eileen Sain, ending with a request to the BOL to deny the DOL's Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law and prevent the revocation of the Sain's custom exempt license
- Miss Verderber gave a synopsis of the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, per the request of Gene Curry
- Alicia Love, Bureau Chief for the Meat, Milk & Inspection Bureau, per the request of Gene Curry, gave insight on the situation and her feelings on a workable solution. She suggested a possible re-inspection within 30 days by the assigned Inspector
- BOL members expressed their concerns, adding that the safety of Inspectors was very important, and also recordkeeping and following of regulations put in place by USDA was what kept the food supply chain safe. If there was a recall, or if someone got sick or even died from adulterated meat, some BOL members said that the problem didn't go back to the producer, it would affect the entire industry that raised beef. One BOL member said that he wanted to make sure that our regulatory agencies and oversights were there to help people succeed and not play "gotcha"
- Gene Curry ruled as the Chair to have a re-inspection of the facility within 30 days and then defer until the next BOL meeting a decision, and base the decision on the results of that inspection

(1:45:33) 9:46 AM – EXECUTIVE OFFICER UPDATES

(1:45:45) 9:46 AM YNP Bison/EIS/IBMP Operations Update

Mr. Honeycutt reported that there was nothing really to report on Yellowstone Park Bison. He said that it was the slow season for the Interagency Bison Management Plan and that there was nothing moving on our legal proceedings at the present time

(1:46:24) 9:47 AM 2025 Session Planning and Legislative Update

Mike Honeycutt explained that the reason the Session Planning and Legislative Update segment remained on the agenda was because there was still one more thing outstanding to address:

- Mr. Honeycutt reported that the Governor had signed HB2 the previous week, executing about \$380 million worth of line-item vetoes, the majority of which had spending authority in them, but were outside of the HB2 budgeting process. He added that none of the line item vetoes affected any of the DOL base budgeting that we were seeking
- The DOL, Mr. Honeycutt said, was starting to execute some of those budget requests passed by the Legislature, including moving forward with getting more help to the Milk area, because of the approved fund switch. The DOL would also begin moving forward with the four new Meat Inspection positions, focusing primarily on Eastern Montana
- Mr. Honeycutt announced that there would be no Financial Report at this meeting, as staff was working on fiscal year end procedures, and there probably wouldn't be a final report on fiscal year end until August

(1:52:09) 9:53 AM Annual Plan Review with State Fund (Non-Agenda Item)

Mike Honeycutt reported that the DOL did its Annual Plan Review with State Fund this past week and it was not really a good Plan Review:

- Mr. Honeycutt explained that although the DOL had been doing good for several years, this year, there were a few incidents that increased the DOL's experience and risk profile, meaning there would be a 4.8% increase in the DOL's Workers' Compensation premiums in the next year. He said that even though the DOL was a dangerous agency with Law Enforcement, people driving a lot of road miles, people working around chemicals and sharp objects, people working around meat plants and at the markets with live animals, the majority of the claims ended up being office-based due to slips and falls on stairways and ice or cumulative trauma injuries
- The DOL planned, Mr. Honeycutt said, a recommitment to safety and ergonomics and trying to figure out what preventative mitigation the DOL could put in place to make sure that those incidents don't happen again. He added that the premium was the secondary concern, but the real concern was making sure employees went home in the same condition they came to work in every day

(1:57:27) 9:57 AM RECESS

(1:57:34) 10:30 AM RECONVENE

BRANDS ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

(1:57:40) 10:30 AM

Jay Bodner, Brands Division Administrator, introduced himself

(1:58:06) 10:37 AM Draft ARM Rule – Electronic Signatures on a Bill of Sale

Jay Bodner explained that the BOL voted to allow Electronic Signatures on a Bill of Sale back in April, but he needed approval from them on the ARM rule drafted to include permission for those type of signatures:

- Mr. Bodner said that in working on an ARM rule draft, Lindsey Simon, Agency Legal Counsel, Rick Corder, CIO and himself, came to the conclusion that it would be relatively difficult and costly to verify the signature. He said that a relatively straightforward rule was drafted that simply stated that the DOL does accept electronic bills of sale and referenced a statute
- The BOL, staff and Rick Corder discussed the pros and cons of an electronic versus a wet signature, including search capabilities, verification, fraud and convenience, coming to the conclusion that electronic was the way of the future

MOTION/VOTE

(2:08:35) 10:42 AM

Alan Redfield moved to put out for public comment, the proposed draft of new ARM Rule 32.18.209 to Accept Electronic Signatures on a Bill of Sale, as presented by Jay Bodner. William Kleinsasser seconded. The motion passed.

(2:10:31) 10:44 AM ARM Rule Repeal – ARM 32.18.401 and ARM 32.18.403 -Brand Inspection Stamp

Jay Bodner explained that the two rules he was presenting for repeal had been identified in our original Red Tape. And, with the recent passage of SB78, which repealed some statute language requiring stamping carcasses and the quarters, these rules, attached to that statute, were no longer needed

MOTION/VOTE

(2:13:18) 10:47 AM

Lily Andersen moved to approve putting out for public comment, the proposed repeal of ARM 32.18.401 and ARM 32.18.403, Brand Inspection Stamp and Quarters to be Stamped, as presented by Jay Bodner. Alan Redfield seconded. The motion passed.

(2:14:13) 10:48 AM Livestock Auction Market – Out-of-State Cattle Report

Jay Bodner said that this report had been requested during the May BOL meeting to see what out-of-state cattle were sold through Montana's livestock markets:

- From July 1, 2024 through June 17, 2025, there were around 57,000 out-of-state cattle that made it through Montana markets. Nearly 50% of the cattle were from North Dakota and went through the Sidney market. Jay Bodner said that it averaged around 700,000 animals that go through the Montana markets each year

(2:22:38) 10:56 AM Brands Enforcement Division Update

(2:22:42) 10:56 AM Staffing

Jay Bodner complimented Mike Spatz on his Staffing Update, presented earlier, but had some additional information to add to that report:

- Wes Seward, the Central Area Supervisor, would be relocating into his new area, Mr. Bodner said, and would be pulling double duty from his previous District Investigator job as well until the transition was made to his Supervisor position
- Mr. Bodner provided a map of how the state was divided into areas for the Western Area Supervisor, the Eastern Area Supervisor and now the Central Area Supervisor
- It was also announced by Mr. Bodner that Gary Anderson, Market Inspector out of Miles City would be retiring at the end of the month after 57 years with the DOL

(2:27:37) 11:01 AM Enforcement Compliance Truck Stops

Jay Bodner reported on the most recent compliance truck stop conducted by the Brands Enforcement staff:

- Mr. Bodner said the annual Blackfeet Checkpoint Truck Stop started on May 28, 2025 and ran pretty consistently through June 8, 2024, including weekends. Jeff Jergens was working by himself in many cases, but in coordination with the Blackfeet. Mr. Bodner said that there were very few infractions. Stats for those days were: Cows 755, Pairs 7400, Bulls 133, Horses 137, Goats 24, Lambs 18 and Pigs 12. He added that the first week of the truck stop coincided with the Montana High School Rodeo in Kalispell, and 45 horses were checked in conjunction with that event

(2:35:13) 11:09 AM GlideFast Updates

Jay Bodner gave a forecast of upcoming projects with ServiceNow:

- Mr. Bodner said that the Brand Search component was completed, up and running. The next ServiceNow venture was the Audit Book Inspection Assignment which was currently provided through the old Fort Supply system that was being integrated into ServiceNow. He explained that District Investigators were audited once a year, Local Inspectors were audited, and if any District Investigator resigned, their books were automatically audited

PREDATOR CONTROL

(2:40:22) 11:14 AM

(2:40:22) 11:14 AM LLB Predation Claims Report and General Updates

Mike Honeycutt said that with Brian Simonson on vacation, he would be giving the Predation Claims Report for the LLB:

- Mr. Honeycutt reported that since the last BOL meeting held in May, there had been 18 individual predation claims made, representing 32 animals. All of the claims were for depredations that had occurred since January of 2025

- The LLB had scheduled their next meeting for July 28, 2025 in Helena with one of their main focuses being reviewing the 13 prevention grant applications. The LLB would also be presented some staffing options to consider to fill the vacancy they had since last year
- Mr. Honeycutt also announced that the two new pieces of legislation passed, adding Bison to the species of prey list covered by LLB funds and also adding Black Bear to the predator list covered by LLB funds, would become effective on July 1, 2025

(2:46:11) 11:20 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, said he had a quick, positive update to share with the BOL:

- Mr. Tidwell said that after Wildlife Services was facing a potential stand down for their aerial program and a potential hiring freeze due to government restructuring, earlier in the year, as of that morning, they were given the official word that they would not be standing down their aerial work and could proceed as normal. And so, they would be doing more essay writing, working to justify replacing vacancies and Mission Critical positions that had been lost. He said that they just hired a young man who had been working in New Mexico for Wildlife Services, who agreed to move to Garfield County as a full-time Trapper Specialist, starting in mid-September. Their next priority was to fill the airport position out of Great Falls and the Specialist position out of Glendive covering Prairie, Wibaux and Fallon Counties
- Mr. Tidwell explained that those counties who did not have a cattle petition were not responded to with aircraft immediately like in those counties that did have petitions and that Wildlife Services did their best in those counties without a petition to bring guys in and do the work on the ground when there was a problem
- Mr. Tidwell shared some specific Grizzly Bear activity areas: A Grizzly in Centennial Valley had killed four calves in the past year or so and would be removed if it killed any more; a Grizzly on the Ennis Valley floor was found on a carcass, but the kill remained unconfirmed; a Grizzly had killed pigs on the Front and a neighbor had a calf that had been bit, so if there was more conflict, there would be an ask to remove the bear. Mr. Tidwell said that wolf activity had been ongoing with a battle out of Dillon that had just been finished up and five wolves were collared and removed out of the Lincoln area after seven calves were killed. The Blackfeet Tribe requested that a wolf be killed up on the reservation rather than collar it. And, in the Northwestern part of the state they were working to collar some wolves up there. There had also been, according to Mr. Tidwell, flareups of coyote activity and they had been flying almost every day to deal with that

(3:03:06) 11:36 AM LUNCH

(3:03:13) 12:31 PM RECONVENE

Gene Curry called the meeting back to order

ANIMAL HEALTH & FOOD SAFETY DIVISION REPORTS

(3:03:22) 12:31 PM

(3:03:28) 12:31 PM – MEAT, MILK & EGG INSPECTION BUREAU

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

(3:03:39) 12:31 PM General Updates

(3:03:44) 12:31 PM Update on Hiring for Northwestern Supervisor

Alicia Love reported that a new Northwest Supervisor for Meat Inspection had been hired, with his first day having been on June 23, 2025. She said she expected him to be a great asset to the DOL as he had expertise in HACCP and Food Manufacturing Processes

(3:04:10) 12:31 PM Out-of-State Travel Request

(3:04:10) 12:31 PM Fred Woelker's SES Training

Alicia Love requested that the BOL approve out-of-state travel for Fred Woelkers, District 1 Sanitarian, to be able to finalize his Egg Grader Training, allowing him to be able to work independently in the Egg Plant

MOTION/VOTE

(3:04:40) 12:33 PM

Alan Redfield moved to approve out-of-state travel for Fred Woelker, District 1 Sanitarian, to attend USDA Egg Grading Training in Seattle, Washington. Tentative dates are July 27 – August 3, 2025. Lily Andersen seconded. The motion passed.

(3:05:13) 12:33 PM Rule Change Proposal to ARM 32.6.715 – Label Review

Alicia Love requested that the BOL allow them to update some of the DOL's Meat Labeling Laws to make things a bit easier for the industry and more closely align with the USDA:

- Ms. Love explained that the language change in the current rule would allow some level of assurance to the public be put on the label that the claims are validated, such as Heritage raised, Angus beef or regeneratively farmed, as those claims usually mean paying a higher ticket price on those products. Kaylee Hiel, Label Specialist for the DOL, said that those claims are validated or verified to the DOL by an affidavit or certificate from the producer swearing that the animals providing the meat were raised in that particular way

MOTION/VOTE

(3:18:38) 12:47 PM

Lily Andersen moved to approve putting out for public comment, the proposed changes to ARM 32.6.715 – Label Review, as presented by Alicia Love. William Kleinsasser seconded. Eric Moore voted no. The motion passed.

(3:20:27) 12:48 PM – VETERINARY DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY

Dr. Greg Juda, Director of the Montana Veterinary Diagnostic Lab in Bozeman, introduced himself

(3:21:06) 12:49 PM Operational Update

(3:21:10) 12:49 PM Veterinary Microbiologist Search

Dr. Greg Juda reported on the progress being made in replacing Dr. Erika Schwarz, Veterinary Microbiologist, who left the VDL on May 2, 2025:

- Dr. Juda said that interviews with four candidates had been conducted by the Interview Committee, made up of Dr. Juda, Dr. Szymanski, Dr. Sago and Dr. Smith. One preferred candidate was scheduled to fly to Montana the following Monday for a site visitation and follow-up interview opportunity

(3:23:32) 12:52 PM AAVLD Audit Response

Dr. Greg Juda reported that there was an AAVLD Audit response due the following Monday in response to findings they had during their site visit:

- Dr. Juda said that they had made substantial progress addressing the findings and that the Accreditation Committee would be meeting at the end of July and bring a response to the VDL. He added that he was very encouraged by the work of the new Quality Manager on this issue

(3:26:43) 12:55 PM Building Construction Update

Dr. Greg Juda shared the most recent report and photos provided by Kevin Lacey, LPW Architecture, on the progress of the new lab construction:

- Dr. Juda said that the report noted that there was permanent primary power and gas line had been run to the building, although they still needed to get gas and electrical across an irrigation ditch on the east side. Exterior windows were installed. There had been some restricted access to Necrospy in the current Lab due to working on placement of a retaining wall on the south side of the building. Masonry was going up on the exterior of the building. Much interior work on all three Labs continued as well. Dr. Juda added that dirt work had restarted and he anticipated parking lots and curbing being put into place by sometime in August
- Dr. Juda explained that although the 42,000 lb. incinerator had been paid for utilizing an ARP funding pool from NAHLN, it wasn't anticipated having to pay for install costs of \$24,000, which were to get the incinerator off the truck and into the building. Swank agreed to pick up that cost. They had always been on the

hook for the plumbing, electrical, anything that had to be connected, once the incinerator was put into place

- Mike Honeycutt reported that for the three Labs, up to this point, there had been about \$1.5 million of change orders that had been approved, and so the \$50 million new Lab project was now up to \$51.5 million
- Project timeline, Dr. Juda said, had been pushed by 60 days, which he said might provide a warmer time of year to move

(3:52:50) 1:21 PM Out-of-State Travel Request

(3:52:57) 1:21 PM – Instrument Training at North Dakota VDL

Dr. Greg Juda requested that the BOL approve out-of-state travel for a Bacteriology Lab Technician to go to the North Dakota Veterinary Diagnostic Lab for hands-on training on a piece of lab equipment that measured antimicrobial sensitivity:

- Dr. Juda explained that the MVDL had gotten this piece of equipment about a year ago, had passed NAHLN Proficiency Testing, but had been in constant contact with the North Dakota VDL who had been coaching MVDL staff through a lot of troubleshooting with this “finicky” instrument

MOTION/VOTE

(3:54:25) 1:22 PM

Lily Andersen moved to approve out-of-state travel for one of the MVDL Lab Technicians to attend instrument training at the North Dakota Veterinary Diagnostic Lab in Fargo, ND, in August or September 2025. William Kleinsasser seconded. The motion passed.

(3:56:46) 1:25 PM – ANIMAL HEALTH BUREAU

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

(3:57:15) 1:25 PM Animal Health Updates

(3:57:24) 1:25 PM – New World Screwworm

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski reported on the most recent updates regarding the New World Screwworm:

- Dr. Szymanski said that USDA had announced \$18 million to work on the US’s response capabilities to the New World Screwworm, including developing a fly facility in Mexico and a sterile fly distribution center in the US, as the sterile flies currently being used to battle the Screwworm came out of a facility in Guatemala
- Dr. Szymanski said that even though there were still about 200 new cases a week, it seemed they hadn’t made any further north progress, so she felt the sterile fly efforts had been effective so far in the most northern detections
- A New World Screwworm National Working Group had been working on what structure would look like in the case of a detection in a state. Montana was working on a draft emergency rule that would provide restrictions of all warm-blooded species coming into Montana from a state or zone that was affected

- A report Dr. Szymanski received while attending the Western States Annual Meeting two weeks previous showed that in Central America, detections of New World Screwworm were found to be 84% in cattle, 6% in canine, 4% in porcine, 3% in equine, 2% in ovine and 1% in other, with the #1 site of the Screwworm entrance into the animal being in the umbilicus of newborn calves

(4:02:52) 1:31 PM Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski reported that it had been almost 14 days without a detection of HPAI in the poultry industry and all states were considered to have no active HPAI cases on the dairy side of things either:

- Dr. Szymanski explained that this could be the summer lay-down on the disease, but with Fall migration coming, we would see how that affected wild birds then. She said the Montana was still doing milk testing, but nationally, if the virus had really laid down in our dairies, she suspected that in the next couple months the testing might be discontinued altogether

(4:06:24) 1:34 PM Brucellosis

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski reported that there was nothing really to report from the local landscape in Montana regarding Brucellosis:

- Dr. Szymanski said that the day before, a group of 41 individuals from the DOL, USDA, USGA, MSU, U of M, State Agencies in Idaho and Wyoming that deal with Brucellosis, came together on a call that had an interest in reviving the Brucellosis Elk Research Group (BERGR) to share updates on research that was happening, give presentation about what was working on the local landscape and share knowledge regarding Brucellosis

(4:08:56) 1:37 PM Animal Disease Traceability

(4:08:56) 1:37 PM Update on RFID Tag Purchase and Allocation of No-Cost Tags

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski reported on the \$240,000 in funding, approved by the BOL at the last BOL meeting, to do a one-time purchase of RFID tags:

- Dr. Szymanski said that 109,000 RFID tags were purchased with that BOL-approved funding. USDA, she said, also reported that they expected to be able to order their full 11 million tags this year, and Dr. Szymanski expected that Montana's allocation would probably be around 144,000, if that were to occur. Combining the two tag amounts, Dr. Szymanski said the DOL would have enough RFID tags for every calf in the state unless the BOL wanted to part them out a different way to assure there were enough tags going into vaccination season
- Dr. Szymanski explained that the USDA formula for tag allocation to states was based on cattle inventory with all states receiving about 9% of that inventory. But, Montana used closer to 40%-45% of the tag inventory each year because of calfhoo vaccination, Brucellosis testing and movement of animals out of state. She added that Jay Bodner had shared that around 700,000 cattle were sold through markets each year and that the DOL was tagging about 1/10 of those animals, a big chunk of which were Montana-origin cattle

- When the USDA sent Montana a new allocation of tags, she said she could bring that back to the BOL for their input on how to allocate them across the state

(4:17:23) 1:45 PM Out-of-State Travel Request

(4:17:23) 1:45 PM Tri-National Agricultural Accord Foreign Animal Disease Readiness Exercise

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski, with the encouragement of Mike Honeycutt, requested that the BOL approve out-of-state travel for her or Dr. Brenee Peterson to attend the Tri-National Agriculture Accord Foreign Animal Disease Readiness Exercise, being held in Maryland in August:

- Mike Honeycutt explained that this Tri-National Coordinating Group was a standing group of Trade Representatives from Canada, the US and Mexico who were the governing group to “grease the wheels” of the US/Mexico/Canada (USMCA) Trade Agreement. This was a unique opportunity for the DOL to make relationships, build bridges and make connections if we needed to interface with these two countries in the future because of a foreign animal disease situation
- Dr. Szymanski also shared that the remaining NADPRP meetings had been cancelled because attendance had been consistently low and Dr. Peterson shared with her that she had not really been getting novel information or feedback presented to her. Dr. Szymanski said they planned to do a restructure through the Fall and try to do more targeted meetings, possibly with State and Federal partners who would participate in a stop movement and be centered on law enforcement within the state

MOTION/VOTE

(3:27:52) 1:56 PM

William Kleinsasser moved to approve out-of-state travel for Dr. Tahnee Szymanski or Dr. Brenee Peterson, to attend the Tri-National Agricultural Accord Foreign Animal Disease Readiness Exercise in Laurel, Maryland in August 18-21, 2025. Alan Redfield seconded. The motion passed.

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski reported that the Swine Health Improvement Program (SHIP) was in the process of transitioning from being overseen by folks at Iowa State University to being a Federally-codified program, an idea that had been put on pause for a period of time due to changes in Federal programs under the Trump administration. She said that USDA had gotten approval however, to hold the Fall Delegates Meeting

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

(4:30:36) 1:59 PM

No members of the public were left online and so there was no public comment given

SET DATE FOR THE NEXT BOARD MEETING

(4:30:58) 1:59 PM

Gene Curry reminded the BOL of their conversation about holding a BOL meeting in the Bozeman/Livingston area sometime in the future, but that might be better done in a September or October time frame:

- Mike Honeycutt said that the Montana Stockgrowers Association had their T-Bone Classic scheduled for August 13-14, 2025 in Billings and the Brands Market staff would be in Billings for a meeting on the 14th, so if anyone had an interest, perhaps the BOL meeting could be done during that time in Billings
- The next BOL meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, August 13, 2025 in Billings, at a venue to be announced later

MEETING ADJOURNED

(4:39:47) 2:08 PM



Gene Curry, Chairman