



Montana Board of Livestock Meeting Minutes

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

September 17, 2025

Fairfield Inn & Suites

1629 W Park Street, Livingston, Montana

Board Members Present

Gene Curry (cattle producer)

Alan Redfield (cattle producer)

Jake Feddes (cattle producer)

William Kleinsasser (swine producer)

Lillian Andersen (dairy & poultry)

Greg Wichman (sheep producer)

(Eric Moore attended the meeting by ZOOM. Eric Moore and Jake Feddes departed from the meeting after lunch)

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

Rick Corder, Centralized Services

Dale Haylett, Centralized Services

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski, MT State Vet

Dr. Brenee 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

Brendan Boots, Centralized Services

Public Present

Dalin Tidwell, USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services

Kali Wicks, Treasure State Strategies

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:

- Jake Feddes, Cattle Representative, Manhattan
 - Mr. Feddes reported that they had been shipping yearling calves for the last 10 days and most were coming in heavy and the prices were good. He anticipated that the market would stay good for a while because he hadn't seen a lot of replacement heifers being kept. Bull calves were

getting ready to wean and put into the feedlot and try and get the cows fat for winter

- Lily Andersen, Dairy & Poultry Representative, south of Livingston
 - Ms. Andersen reported that they were getting ready to ship calves. They still had some barley left to combine for the milk cows and they were still working on second cutting
- Alan Redfield, Cattle Representative, Paradise Valley, south of Livingston
 - Mr. Redfield reported that their hay had been done since September. They did the precondition on calves the previous week. There was an inch of rain the previous weekend. Some hunters had to be rescued from a grizzly bear the night before, but, Mr. Redfield said that must not have deterred them too much, because they had showed up again that morning
- William Kleinsasser, Swine Representative, Augusta
 - Mr. Kleinsasser reported they had a nice rain of about seven to eight tenths the day before. They were in the middle of seeding winter wheat and had shipped cattle the previous week, and those cattle weighed up pretty heavy. He said it was very, very promising, as pigs were still around 78-79 cents
- Gene Curry, Cattle Representative, Valier
 - Mr. Curry reported that they had enough rain the day before that it could be seen on the deck, but there were still water issues up in their country. They were still seeding winter wheat and still had canola and a few patches of barley to combine. The hay was baled, but not picked yet. He added that they sold their calves just two days earlier and they sold well
- Eric Moore, Cattle Representative, Miles City
 - Mr. Moore reported that they had lots of rain, but it had dried up some in September, which helped so that harvest could get done. No calves had moved yet, but there were a lot of yearlings moving, with the price of them the day before at the Miles City Market being probably 10 to 15 higher than the week prior, with the index off three. A killing frost had already arrived east of Baker and into the Dakotas that Mr. Moore thought would affect the corn basis and change the feed costs a little bit
- (30:36) 8:31 AM Greg Wichman, Sheep Representative, Hilger, North of Lewistown
 - Mr. Wichman reported that they started dry, but got moisture, which provided regrowth for their calves and sheep to graze, which hadn't happened in a few years. The lamb market was steady and there had been a little bump in the wool market. He had sold his rams for good money at the Ram Sale

BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

(7:54) 8:08 AM

(7:54) 8:08 AM – BOARD APPROVAL OF PAST MEETING MINUTES

Gene Curry requested approval of the minutes of the last BOL meeting, held on August 13, 2025

MOTION/VOTE

(8:00) 8:08 AM

Alan Redfield moved to approve the minutes from the Montana Board of Livestock August 13, 2025 meeting. William Kleinsasser seconded. The motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS

(8:47) 8:09 AM

(8:47) 8:09 AM – UPDATE ON GOVERNOR’S OGSM STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT AND EXECUTIVE OFFICER STRATEGIC GOALS

Mike Honeycutt reported that there had not yet been a meeting with the Governor this month, but he could comment on the dashboards that were tracked:

- Mr. Honeycutt said that cattle movement through commission companies was down 1%-2% over last year and they were still seeing robust activity for commission companies, with a lot of cattle moving through that way
 - Jake Feddes said he was surprised to see that the markets were continuing to put that number of cattle through. Mike Honeycutt said that there was no segregating on his dashboard of the number of out-of-state cattle moving through the markets
- Slaughter figures for both State-inspected and custom exempt facilities were typical and on line for where they were a year ago
- With it being so early in the fiscal year, Mr. Honeycutt said that the budget dashboard didn't tell a whole lot. A big chunk of DOL revenue showed up during per capita fee collection time, which wasn't until February or March
- Mr. Honeycutt reported that this fiscal year started out with a lot of disease work in cattle, poultry, horses and maybe dairy, because of the concern of poultry disease crossing over to dairy
- Even with no OGSM meeting being held as of yet this month, Mr. Honeycutt said that there would be a Cabinet meeting the following week

NEW BUSINESS/EXECUTIVE OFFICER UPDATES

(15:02) 8:15 AM

(15:02) 8:15 AM – LEGAL COUNSEL UPDATE (May Require Executive Session)

Lindsey Simon introduced herself and said she would give the BOL an update on some of the DOL litigation:

- The unlicensed practice injunction action in Gallatin County was still pending as the defendant was still in jail. Ms. Simon said she was working on getting a motion for a default judgment to the Judge

- There had been a Tort claim that made it to Federal court, involving an incident in Stillwater County. A DOL employee had been dismissed from that case, meaning that it was over for the DOL, but, possibly not for the County defendants
- Ms. Simon said a new Tort claim came in that was still with Risk Management Tort Defense and had not made it to the court system. That claim, too, could be denied by Operation of Law if it was not accepted or denied within 120 days
- The DOL was involved in two Federal lawsuits with the Governor's Office
 - A judicial review action, based on the American Prairie Reserve grazing permits, was currently in Federal District Court, but, the merits of the claim were not before that Court at this time
 - The DOL was also party to the Yellowstone National Park Bison Management Plan Federal lawsuit that was still pending
- Ms. Simon reported that there had been no comments received on either the Public Participation rules, the Meat Inspection Labeling changes rules or the five Brand Inspection requirement rule changes that had been submitted
- Mike Honeycutt reported that the Final Order had officially been served to Ms. Howard, the attorney for A Bar S Processing

(33:31) **8:34 AM** Mike Honeycutt reported that there would be no HR Updates as Mike Spatz had told him there was not a lot to contribute that hadn't already been in the BOL's weekly reports

(35:52) **8:36 AM – EXECUTIVE OFFICER UPDATES**

(35:52) **8:36 AM Session Planning and Legislative Update**

Mike Honeycutt reported that we were in the Legislative Interim Committee time of year:

- September 16th was the first meeting of the Section C Interim Budget Committee with the focus being on Fiscal Year end numbers, and Mr. Honeycutt said that the DOL stood out because of being at a 90%-95% utilization rate of their budget...while a lot of other agencies were in the 70% range
- Mr. Honeycutt said he shared with the Committee about the year-end purchase of RFID tags to help producers offset some costs, demonstrating to them that the DOL was returning value back to the producers. Also shared were reports on disease issues dealt with by the DOL, during the past year, per capita and revenues, cattle inventory, distribution of Predator Control grants and Predator Control activities and DOL vacancies
- Mr. Honeycutt explained to the BOL that in a past Legislative Session, the Livestock Loss Board was given the ability to apply a multiplier, but they had chosen to not do so, as of yet

(49:59) **8:50 AM Red Tape Initiative**

Mike Honeycutt reported that the Lieutenant Governor had been meeting with agencies regarding reducing red tape and regulatory burden and had recently met with some DOL staff and himself to discuss that issue:

- Although the DOL was in the top third of State agencies in terms of modifying and repealing of statutes and rules that were "old," the Governor's Office wanted

agencies to continue with that task and also focus on the readability of administrative rules, structuring them for better understanding, to a lower grade level of readability. Lindsey Simon said that the Governor's Office had provided a spreadsheet with the current reading level of all DOL rules

(57:30) 8:58 AM Ag Labor Summit in January

Mike Honeycutt reported that an Ag Labor Summit had been scheduled in Billings in January:

- The Summit focused around issues with ag labor in the state of Montana, and Mr. Honeycutt said that the DOL had chosen to help sponsor that event, not only giving us a table, but a spot on the agenda as well. He said that Mike Spatz and himself would probably be the ones taking the lead on that from the staff side

(1:01:15) 9:01 AM MSGA Stockgrowers College

Mike Honeycutt reported that the Montana Stockgrowers Association Stockgrowers College was scheduled to be held at their Annual meeting in December:

- To attain a presentation spot at Stockgrowers College, the DOL submitted a \$1500 sponsorship, but were still working on topics for that event

(1:02:26) 9:03 AM New Travel and Expense System

Mike Honeycutt reported that the State of Montana was putting a new electronic travel and expense system in place that all State employees were going to have to use, but BOL members, would not be in the system, at least for now:

- Mr. Honeycutt further explained that the decision for putting the new system in place came from the Department of Administration Accounting Bureau who wanted one system for consistency and efficiency to assure that expenses were being tracked and monitored across State agencies

(1:04:07) 9:04 AM Recission of BLM Conservation and Landscape Health Rule

Mike Honeycutt reported that recission of the BLM Conservation Landscape Health Rule was up for comment:

- Mr. Honeycutt explained that when that rule rolled out a couple years ago, the DOL, along with other affected State agencies, commented with concerns about moving away from multiple use of public lands and moving more towards recreation and conservation. The DOL wanted grazing to be a priority on public lands and that wide swaths of public land not just be available for recreation or conservation. He added that he was sure that the DOL, along with other affected State agencies would be commenting again on that rule

Mike Honeycutt reported on the Department of Administration (DOA)/DOL HR meeting recently held at the DOL:

- Mr. Honeycutt said that he thought the DOL was going to see a dual reporting system on HR, meaning that our HR person would have accountability to both the DOL and the DOA's State HR, with the spirit and intent to make sure things were being done consistently across State agencies. Performance Management, discipline and payroll for employees would now be done across the board

- His hope, Mr. Honeycutt said, was that the outcome of the changes would provide a consistency in pay bands and rates so that agencies were not competing with each other for talent. He added that there has been more of an approach to view each of the State's different agencies as subunits of a larger enterprise, as a business, operating together, not operating as 13 different businesses
- Mr. Honeycutt said they did share at the meeting that dual reporting was fine, but that there still needed to be someone in HR and in IT as well, who understood that particular agency because there was specificity to the type of work each agency did

(1:21:10) 9:21 AM USDA Reorganization

Mike Honeycutt reported that the USDA had rolled out a reorganization plan and moving agencies back out to different regional hubs:

- Mr. Honeycutt explained that to pare down and make things more efficient, some Forest Services offices in the state would be closed and revert to a regional headquarters. Already, the USDA NASS State Statistician retired in Montana, and now the DOL dealt with someone in Denver regarding county-level livestock numbers. The USDA Veterinary Services in Montana was changed as well, and the DOL had been able to hire staff who no longer worked there

(1:25:13) 9:25 AM YNP Bison/EIS/IBMP Operations Update

Mike Honeycutt reported that the next IBMP meeting looked to be a virtual one being held at the end of October:

- Mr. Honeycutt explained that the reason the next IBMP meeting might be a virtual one was because pretty much every partner sitting around the table was in litigation with each other, which restricted what could be talked about outside of operational level things

Lindsey Simon explained that there were six causes of action in regards to the litigation against the most recent EIS:

- Ms. Simon said that five of the actions were based on the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and various alleged violations of the procedure for doing an EIS and a sixth having to do with the effect on the range in Yellowstone
- Mike Honeycutt said basically, one of the causes of action was that the State did not get the opportunity to provide feedback on potential alternatives to put on the table that the State believed was required of Federal agencies in working with cooperators before the EIS was even formed and went out to the public
- Mr. Honeycutt said that there were some conservation groups who had actually challenged the EIS as well, saying that the Park did not properly analyze science when developing their potential alternatives

(1:31:12) 9:31 AM BOL YNP Tour Discussion (Non-Agenda Item)

Highlights of the previous day's tour of Yellowstone National Park by three BOL members and some DOL staff, were discussed

(2:06:57) **10:07 AM RECESS**

(2:07:02) **10:21 AM RECONVENE**

CENTRALIZED SERVICES DIVISION REPORTS

(2:07:09) **10:22 AM**

Gene Curry announced that the Brands Enforcement report would be skipped at this time and the BOL would move right into the Fiscal Bureau report

(2:07:21) **10:22 AM FISCAL BUREAU**

Brian Simonson, Deputy Executive Officer, introduced himself

(2:07:44) **10:22 AM Per Capita Fee (PCF) 2026 Rate Setting**

Brian Simonson reported that September was the time of year that the BOL set the per capita fee rate so that those numbers could be reported to the Department of Revenue in time enough for them to send out notices:

- Mr. Simonson said that in 2024, per capita rates were increased across the board, except for chickens, by 2%. In 2023, the bison per capita fee rate was reduced by about a third, but then increased for the other species, except for poultry, by 2%. To keep the increase to an even penny, poultry was increased by 10% that year
- MCA restricted raising per capita fee rates to 110% of a three-year average of collections, which would be, this year, about a 6% maximum raise of fees, Mr. Simonson explained. He said that the Department of Revenue also took 2% of the collections for their services for the DOL
- Mr. Simonson showed the trends in the livestock industry, which illustrated that cattle over the last three years steadily increased from a big drop in 2021-2022, and then jumping by nearly 40,000 more cattle reported in 2025 than in 2024. Chickens increased by nearly 8%, or 113,000 in 2025 compared to 2024. Mike Honeycutt reported that cattle were the overwhelming driver on per capita fees
- Horse numbers seemed underreported in the state and the BOL discussed ways to get horse owners educated about paying per capita fees
- In discussing the basic revenue and expenses for per capita fee, Mr. Simonson said, essentially, that revenue as is, was about \$6 million, and that there was about \$7 million in a safety net. He said that expenses for 2024-2026 were about \$6.5 million - \$7 million, and so, we were eating into our reserves, primarily driven by payroll increases enacted by the Legislature because of natural inflationary forces. Also, interest income from the savings at the Board of Investments were less because of less money in that safety net

MOTION/VOTE

(2:45:08) **10:59 AM**

Greg Wichman moved to raise per capita fee rates by 3% for all species except for poultry, which would be raised by a penny. Alan Redfield seconded. The motion passed.

(2:55:04) 11:09 AM August 31, 2025 State Special Revenue Report

Brian Simonson reported on the August 31, 2025 State Special Revenue, explaining that there was less than a month of real revenue in it:

- Mr. Simonson explained that for Budgeted Funds, September was the time of year that adjustments were being made all over and there would be some massaging of those numbers
- Field and Market Inspections, for the most part, looked the same for this early in the Fiscal Year. Per Capita Fee and Milk & Egg were also normal
- Although the VDL was running a little behind, Mr. Simonson said that Dr. Greg Juda insisted that was a timing issue, so there would be a turnaround in those numbers

(2:58:08) 11:12 AM September 2025 through June 2026 Budget Projections Report

Brian Simonson reported that there was nothing crazy on this report, even though there were more Supply expenses than usual for this time of year:

- Contract expenses were a little high and the IT charges at the beginning of this Fiscal Year were pretty hefty
- Per Capita Fee numbers were getting pumped up, showing \$422,000 more in Salary numbers over last year with a salary increase, across the board, for DOL employees and the addition of four additional Meat Inspectors, authorized by the Legislature. Total Personal Services jumped to \$672,000 over last year
- While the Contracts budget hardly changed, the Supply budget increased \$463,000, with about half of that from the VDL because of increased supply costs. Rent costs went up by nearly \$150,000 due to new lease vehicles for the new positions in Meat. Brand Inspection only increased \$27,000. Per Capita Fee increased \$679,000 year-over-year from last year's budget with the driver being payroll and over \$200,000 in EPP approved ongoing expenses. With the general fund infusion, Mr. Simonson said that Milk Inspection went down \$150,000.
- \$1.8 million was requested from the Feds for the Meat & Poultry program, but \$1.2 million was received. The Federal Umbrella number had also gone down by \$79,000

(3:07:15) 11:22 AM August 31, 2025 Budget Comparison Report

Brian Simonson reported that there was \$63,000 less spending this year than last, probably driven by DOL vacancies:

- Termination payouts were \$30,000 more than last year at this time. Repair and Maintenance was up by \$36,000 because the VDL was doing some maintenance they hadn't done at this time last year. The CWD grant and ADT grant, both Federal grants, had not come on the books yet, but should be in place post-October. The \$395,000 listed for HB10 was a \$180,000 reduction from last year. Mr. Simonson said that about half of the NAHLN ARP Award of \$1 million had been spent on the new incinerator, and so that was why that number had gone down

PREDATOR CONTROL

(3:10:39) 11:25 AM

(3:10:39) 11:25 AM LLB Predation Claims Report and General Updates

Brian Simonson updated the BOL on LLB Predation Claims and General Updates since the last BOL meeting:

- Mr. Simonson said there were 19 claims and 31 losses processed since the last BOL meeting. Three lost sheep in Judith Basin County were added to the list, taken by a black bear, the latest predator to be tracked by the LLB
- The Program Specialist position for LLB had been posted, and so far, there were 10 applicants

(3:16:51) 11:31 AM Update on Activities of USDA Wildlife Services – (Presented by Dalin Tidwell, Montana State Director)

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

- Michael Uphues was the newly-hired Wildlife Specialist out of Garfield County, Mr. Tidwell said, and interviews for the Glendive-area position, covering Fallon, Wibaux, Dawson and Prairie Counties, would be wrapped up this week
- Mr. Tidwell shared that with a changing of personnel at the Law Enforcement Support Office (LESO), another qualification process on the 6962 Charlie, military leased helicopter was done, assuring it would qualify for the law enforcement program. He said the qualification went well and was now established with the new LESO staff
- Record numbers of coyotes had been taken this Fiscal Year, Mr. Tidwell said and he would bring final numbers to the BOL once the Federal Fiscal Year was complete
- There had been a flare-up of wolves south, on the Gravellies country, but they were able to get a handle on it. Mr. Tidwell added that since about April, Wildlife Services had removed about 34 wolves across the whole board

(3:24:30) 11:39 AM LUNCH

(3:24:35) 12:15 PM RECONVENE

Gene Curry called the meeting back to order

BRANDS ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

(3:24:40) 12:15 PM

Jay Bodner, Brands Division Administrator, introduced himself

(3:25:04) 12:15 PM BRANDS ENFORCEMENT DIVISION UPDATE

(3:25:04) 12:15 PM Field Inspections for Cattle Discussion (Non-Agenda Item)

Jay Bodner explained the graph he had given to the BOL tracking cattle field inspections done by District Investigators and by Local Brand Inspectors:

- Mr. Bodner said that Fiscal Year '21 and '22 was a big year, with some drought. And, even though those numbers had dropped down, the market numbers stayed pretty strong

(3:26:49) 12:17 PM Livestock Hauler Check Stations

Jay Bodner explained that even though he had already reported on some of the livestock hauler check stations earlier in the summer, that August was when the majority of their check stations occurred:

- On August 8, 2025 there was a truck stop at Greycliff that ran in conjunction with the Bozeman Stampede Rodeo. There were 30 stops, 14 verbal warnings, 3 written warnings and 3 Notice to Appear. The high wind was an issue and it continued to blow their signs down and so, Mr. Bodner thought a lot of folks just didn't see the signs. A variety of trailers just drove right past the check station
- On August 15, 2025 there was a truck stop held at the Wibaux scale. There were 17 stops, 3 violations of horses with no CVI, one without a Coggins and then a suspected DUI that was turned over to the Montana Highway Patrol
- On August 21, 2025, there was a check station set up in Miles City that ran in conjunction with the Miles City Fair. There were 14 stops and 9 written warnings, most of which were to those who didn't pull off and had to be run down with chase trucks. There were 20 horses and 116 cattle
- On August 21, 2025 there was a check station set up in Drummond. There were 26 trailers, 32 horses, 4 Notice to Appear, a couple of those for passing the check station and one without a Health Certificate
- On August 28, 2025, there was a check station set up at the Feeley Rest Area near Dillon. There were 8 semis, 11 horse trailers, 7 written warnings, 2 Notice to Appear and a couple non-title inspections and one passed by and had to be caught and was found to have an expired Coggins. One roping horse was quarantined due to no paperwork, tested, then released. One did not have legal license plates and was turned over to the Montana Highway Patrol
- Mr. Bodner said that it would be difficult to have check stations during the Fall Run season due to shortage of workers, but added that the DOL's enforcement staff did pull over livestock trailers at times in addition to doing the more formalized check stations where there is an entire crew present

(3:44:44) 12:35 PM Staffing

Jay Bodner updated the BOL on the current staffing situation in the Brands Enforcement Division:

- Mr. Bodner reported that the new District 15 Investigator hired for the Kalispell area was Jason Kimball who had started on September 15, 2025. Starting on October 14, 2025 would be Blaine Buchanan, a new District 14 Investigator for the Great Falls area

- Recognition was given to Shawn Hando, Eastern Area Supervisor, who would be receiving his 20-year pin

(3:46:23) 12:37 PM Audit Compliance

Jay Bodner updated the BOL on how the Book Audits for inspections were going, adding that there was a 45-day window for that to be finalized:

- All book audits had been sent out except for District 14. Jason Kimball was also handed his District 15 audit so he could work his way through that as he learned the job and would give him a chance to go out and meet all of his Local Inspectors
- Mr. Bodner said that ServiceNow was live, and even though the audits were being tracked from the Helena office through that app, eventually the staff would be able to plug those numbers in themselves. He said that it was a fairly tedious task to pull those audits this year because of doing them out of two systems, but once that system was up and running, it would be able to be done with the touch of a button

ANIMAL HEALTH & FOOD SAFETY DIVISION REPORTS

(3:50:27) 12:41 PM

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski, State Veterinarian, introduced herself and also introduced the new Assistant State Veterinarian, Dr. Emily Kaleczyc. Dr. Szymanski also recognized Alicia Love, Meat, Milk & Egg Bureau Chief, for the webinar she had given on conflict de-escalation not only to incoming staff, but to several groups around the country, with last week's presentation being attended by over 2,000 people

(3:53:19) 12:44 PM – VETERINARY DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY

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

(3:53:19) 12:44 PM Out-of-State Travel Request – American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD) Annual Meeting

Dr. Greg Juda requested that the BOL approve out-of-state travel for himself and three MVDL staff to attend the AAVLD annual meeting, being held in Aurora, Colorado from October 30-November 3, 2025:

- Dr. Juda explained that funding for the travel expenses would be covered by the NAHLN FY25 grant. Dr. Juda said that he had given Dr. Jonathan Sago a choice of whether he wanted to attend AAVLD or attend the ACVP Meeting, being held a week later, which would add continuing education credits for him to keep his Board certification for Pathology. There was a chance, as well, that Dr. Steve Smith might not attend, based on his workload at that time

MOTION/VOTE

(3:56:06) 12:46 PM

Greg Wichman moved to approve out-of-state travel for Dr. Greg Juda, Dr. Steve Smith, Dr. Jonathan Sago and Casey Ming to attend the International Symposium

for the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD), scheduled for October 30-November 3, 2025 in Aurora, Colorado. Alan Redfield seconded. The motion passed.

- Dr. Greg Juda reported that construction of the new Lab complex was progressing well and no additional delays had been announced in the last few months and so they were projecting an April 2026 time frame for a potential building occupation. Paving was done, except curbing, landscaping was being worked on, epoxy floors were being put down in the labs, lights were being installed and there was still a significant amount of plumbing and HVAC work to be done
- The Serology Lab was quite busy, Dr. Juda said, picking up earlier than normal with the finding of a positive animal, and they were also ramping up for CWD and Brucella season

(3:59:02) 12:49 PM – ANIMAL HEALTH BUREAU

(3:59:02) 12:49 PM RFID Distribution Plan

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski shared with the BOL the distribution plan for RFID no-cost tags in the state of Montana:

- Dr. Szymanski reported that an additional allocation of RFID tags from USDA was not fully on hand yet. Amounts were, 235,000-240,000 orange tags and 50,000 white tags. 10,000 of the white tags were purchased out of Federal Cooperative Agreement funding and some orange tags had been purchased, based upon a BOL decision to do so this past summer
- The plan was to continue with the tag distribution program as was done the previous year for Veterinarians and the markets, which was to give a percentage of what was currently available for tags. If a Veterinarian was new in practice, they would be allocated around 1,000 tags to start. The DOL planned to hold on to about 10,000 of the tags in case there was a disease trace of some kind that happened

(4:04:47) 12:55 PM Disease Updates

(4:04:47) 12:55 PM Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

Dr. Emily Kaleczyc updated the BOL on HPAI outbreaks in Montana:

- Dr. Kaleczyc reported that Montana had the first detection of HPAI for the Fall risk season in a 5,000+ mixed bird species flock in North-Central Montana. Although the NVSL Laboratory in Iowa confirmed that it was H5 the entire genome sequence results hadn't yet been received, but, it was suspected to be of the D1.1 genotype
- The entire flock, which had been housed indoors, was depopulated and disposed of the previous week and cleaning and disinfection was now being done. Because of dairy being at that location, additional bulk tank surveillance was also being done

- Dr. Tahnee Szymanski explained that depopulation of infected flocks decreased the eventual viral load on the landscape. She added that just watching the birds die would probably be an animal welfare concern as the infected poultry were very, very sick. Mike Honeycutt said that with these type of diseases, there is concern not only for other poultry or dairy animals, but for human health as well, because of the zoonotic factor

(4:12:06) 1:02 PM Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA)

Dr. Emily Kaleczyc reported on a finding of Equine Infectious Anemia in the state, something she said was not very often seen in Montana:

- Dr. Kaleczyc explained that EIA was a viral infection of horses, spread by biting flies or dirty needles, with no treatment or vaccination and that it would eventually be fatal. The disease was endemic in horses in Mexico. Disease pools had been groups of relatively isolated horses that were under-tested, but in the last few years the US had seen increasing numbers of cases in horses involved with illegal racing activity and exposed through doping at racetracks
- Confirmation that the Musselshell County horse was infected with EIA came on August 29, 2025 from NVSL. The horse had since been euthanized and the work had been ongoing by the DOL to find all exposed horses, with more than 30 potentially-exposed horses tested in Gallatin, Fergus and Sweetgrass Counties but, no additional positives had been found

(4:16:32) 1:06 PM Brucellosis (Non-Agenda Item)

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski did a brief update on the Brucellosis disease investigation in Beaverhead County:

- Dr. Szymanski said that there was no herd test done at the time of the find because they were in the middle of their breeding season, so, when that herd came off grass in late October/early November they would do a herd test, because the detection was in a bull. She said that owners of adjacent herds had been contacted to give them a heads up that when your cows go through the chute this Fall, even if you don't usually test, this might be the year to do so, in case there was a positive found when the herd test was completed

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

(4:20:33) 1:11 PM

There was no public left online and no public in the audience that gave comment

SET DATE FOR THE NEXT BOARD MEETING

(4:20:56) 1:11 PM

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

- It was suggested to possibly hold a BOL meeting in conjunction with doing a tour of the Egg Plant in Great Falls, but it was decided to not schedule that until possibly next year

- It was decided to hold the next BOL meeting in Helena on Wednesday, October 29, 2025

MEETING ADJOURNED

(4:33:35) 1:24 PM



Gene Curry, Chairman