



Montana Board of Livestock Conference Call Minutes

March 17, 2020

Montana Department of Livestock
Helena, Montana

Board Members Present

John Scully, Vice-Chair (cattle producer)

Nina Baucus (cattle producer)

Ed Waldner (swine producer)

Lila Taylor (cattle producer)

Sue Brown (dairy and poultry)

(John Lehfeltd and Brett DeBruycker were not present)

Staff Present

Mike Honeycutt, Executive Officer

Dr. Anna Forseth, Animal Health

Public Present

Rachel Cone, Montana Farm Bureau Federation

Jay Bodner, Montana Stockgrowers Association

Andy Schwab, Northern Ag Network

Barbara Jo Gollaher, Western Livestock Auction

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

11:39 AM

Vice-Chairman John Scully called the conference call to order at 11:39 AM

ROLL CALL

11:39 AM

Vice-Chairman John Scully called for a roll call of all who were present on the conference call

- BOL Members present were John Scully, Lila Taylor, Sue Brown and Ed Waldner
 - Nina Baucus was not present for the roll call, but, joined the conference call at a later time
 - Brett DeBruycker did not participate in the conference call but was available for a vote on any action items that might arise

- DOL staff present were Mike Honeycutt and Dr. Anna Forseth
- Members of the public present were Rachel Cone, Jay Bodner, Andy Schwab and Barbara Jo Gollaher

BOARD OF LIVESTOCK UPDATE ON COVID-19 PREPARATION

11:40 AM

John Scully reported that this conference call was not set up to take any action relative to changing livestock market activity, but was called to identify the DOL's COVID-19 plan of action:

- Mike Honeycutt reported on the DOL's plan during the current state of emergency that had been declared by the Governor
 - For the time being, the DOL was on normal operations
 - Internally, the DOL was trying to practice social distancing and good hygiene and that specific information on those items had already been given to staff
 - Specific to the MVDL, staff had been requested to stay as much within their area of the Lab as possible and not eat lunch together in conference rooms
 - To accommodate staff with children at home and staff considered at-risk, according to the CDC guidelines, and those staff who are caregivers to at-risk people, the DOL is working on the option of allowing them to work from home and possibly roll phone calls to their cell phones
 - All staff out-of-state travel has been cancelled and the DOL is working to limit in-state travel as much as possible, but still maintain continuity of operations
 - A public meeting scheduled in Twin Bridges On March 18, 2020 was rescheduled for April 2, 2020 and will take place as a conference call
 - The DOL was still waiting to hear if the April 8, 2020 IBMP meeting in Bozeman would be cancelled or postponed
- Mr. Honeycutt said that the DOL has had a business continuity plan in place, and had been reviewing it the past few days, in preparation for an individual meeting with the Governor's office to walk them through the DOL's continuity plan in case they request that any part of it be executed by the DOL
- Mr. Honeycutt reported on the "Priority 1 Functions" listed in the DOL continuity plan, those things considered essential services that would have to continue, even during a state of emergency
 - Market Operations would continue, as markets are kept open for business to sell cattle, a live and perishable commodity that has to move
 - The DOL will continue to service those sales to keep commerce moving
 - The MVDL will continue to function, not only for the public health tests conducted there, but for the tests done that continue to help commerce keep moving, such as the Trichomoniasis testing required for bull sales

- IT staff will be maintaining continuity of operations in all DOL systems used, Fort Supply, USAHerds, VADDS, the internal servers and networks. This is especially important if there are more staff working remotely over VPN
 - Mr. Honeycutt said it had been a wise investment made by the DOL over the last couple years when desktop versions of computers were replaced with much lighter versions containing VPN software than can be easily boxed up and taken home for remote work
- The Animal Health Import Line will continue to be maintained
- Slaughter inspection for meat and also egg inspection for the Montana Egg Products Plant will continue
- At this point in time, there have been no restrictions enacted that would require certain staff at the Helena campus to work from home
- If there is a requirement to limit the number of staff working at one time at the MVDL, to keep tests moving, there is a plan to possibly rotate the staff
- Mr. Honeycutt said the DOL plan is to continue providing services and keep commodities moving even through the COVID-19 incident
 - Although the MVDL is not doing any COVID-19 testing, it is the primary rabies tester for Montana and will continue to provide that testing
 - Testing done at the Milk Lab will continue, which is a key part of keeping that commodity moving and is considered a Priority 1 function in the DOL continuity plan
- Cross-training and cross-knowledge on certain functions in the markets, in Meat Inspection and in Milk Inspection would allow the continuation of services, even if some staff currently in those areas were required to move to a different location
- Mr. Honeycutt said that it was not in the purview of the DOL to limit attendance at livestock sale barns, but that is most likely going to be a local Health Department decision
- To keep the industry and their members up to date on the DOL's action relative to the COVID-19 virus, more BOL conference calls may be scheduled, notices will be sent out to individual segments and the Interested Parties list of contacts and an emergency rule-making authority is currently on notice

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

11:56 AM

John Scully requested any other comments people would like to discuss, from those on the conference call:

- Barbara Jo Gollaher of the Western Livestock Auction, expressed her appreciation for keeping the Brand Inspectors so that livestock sales could continue and added that they do thank them for their support
- Jay Bodner of the Montana Stockgrowers Association reported that Colorado is looking into either limiting or cancelling bull sales and may be forced to do so, and he requested that if it gets to that point in Montana that associations be given

the ability to have some interaction with the Governor before those decisions are fully made

- Mike Honeycutt said that from his standpoint, keeping live and also perishable commodities, such as meat, milk and eggs moving is a Priority 1 function in the DOL's continuity plan, even if it means doing it a different way or with a limited staff

CALL FOR ADJOURNMENT

11:57 AM

- John Scully explained that the April BOL meeting would probably be done by conference call and that the interviews for the Brands Administrator may be done the same way, or possibly by FaceTime. Those are scheduled for April 22nd and April 23rd
- Ed Waldner reported that a protocol between haulers is currently being worked on by the Montana Milk Producers to prevent spread of the virus
- Sue Brown added that they are closing their facility to walk-in traffic and taking call-in orders that are then placed in a cooler outside the door for pickup

MOTION/VOTE

12:01 PM

**Sue Brown moved to adjourn the BOL conference call. Lila Taylor seconded.
The motion passed**

MEETING ADJOURNED

12:02 PM



John Scully, Vice-Chairman