



Montana Board of Livestock Meeting Minutes

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

January 24, 2025

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

Board Members Present

Alan Redfield (cattle producer)

Eric Moore (cattle producer)

William Kleinsasser (swine producer)

Lily Andersen (dairy & poultry)

(Gene Curry, Jake Feddes and Greg Wichman attended the meeting by ZOOM. Greg Wichman departed from the meeting at 12:02 pm)

Staff Present

Mike Honeycutt, EO

Brian Simonson, Deputy EO

Donna Wilham, Adm. Asst to EO

Evan Waters, Centralized Services

Lindsey Simon, Centralized Services

Mike Spatz, Centralized Services

Rick Corder, Centralized Services

Dale Haylett, Centralized Services

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski, MT State Vet

Dr. Greg Juda, Director, MVDL

Dr. Brenee Peterson, Animal Health

Dr. Heidi Hildahl, Animal Health

Jay Bodner, Brands Enforcement

Brendan Boots, Centralized Services

Tom Shultz, Centralized Services

Public Present

Dalin Tidwell, USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services

Jeremy & Janelle Plummer, Lower Valley Processing

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

(0:09) 8:04 AM

Vice-Chairman Alan Redfield called the meeting to order at 8:04 AM

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

(0:09) 8:04 AM

Vice-Chairman Alan Redfield called the meeting to order and addressed the first order of business, introductions:

- Eric Moore, Cattle Representative, Miles City
 - Mr. Moore shared that they only had some snow and a lot of ice. He said there was still a fair amount of old crop feed around and that people were enjoying high prices at the cattle markets
- Lily Andersen, Dairy & Poultry Representative, south of Livingston

- Ms. Andersen shared that even though they hadn't gotten snow this morning, they were getting it now
- William Kleinsasser, Swine Representative, Augusta
 - Mr. Kleinsasser reported that they had four inches of new snow and that calves were starting to hit the ground. He said their annual Pork Producers Council meeting the previous week had an excellent turnout and very good speakers
- Jake Feddes, Cattle Representative, Manhattan
 - Mr. Feddes reported that they were about 75 heifers in on their calving and that the cattle markets were strong with some reporting that there was interest in selling unborn calves for Fall delivery. He said it was snowing and with his Mom starting chemo the previous week and his Dad taking care of her, he was doing the calving and feeding
- Gene Curry, Cattle Representative, Valier
 - Mr. Curry reported that he was in Yuma, but that at home in Valier there was a little bit of snow and lots of wind, some of which had blown things apart and had blown lids off of bins
- Greg Wichman, Sheep Representative, Hilger, north of Lewistown
 - Because Mr. Wichman was not yet online, Mike Honeycutt reported that Mr. Wichman was having a tough time at home with 8 ft. and 10 ft. snow drifts and that they were getting more snow there today. Alan Redfield added that he had spoken with Mr. Wichman the day before and that the snow was blowing so hard he couldn't see across his yard. (29:44) Greg Wichman came online and said that they had been battered by snow and wind and that he had just dug his daughter out of a snowbank so she could get to work
- Alan Redfield, Cattle Representative, Paradise Valley, south of Livingston
 - Mr. Redfield reported that their snow bowl was still quite white and quite deep and that the day before he had hauled some cattle. He said he was coming home with empty pods, and the wind was blowing so hard around Greycliff he was wondering if the cattle pods would stand upright

BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

(6:03) 8:10 AM

(6:03) 8:10 AM – BOARD APPROVAL OF PAST MEETING MINUTES

Alan Redfield requested approval of the past BOL meeting minutes

MOTION/VOTE

(6:08) 8:10 AM

Lily Andersen moved to approve the minutes from the Montana Board of Livestock December 19, 2024 meeting. William Kleinsasser seconded. The motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS

(6:30) 8:11 AM

(6:30) 8:11 AM – UPDATE ON GOVERNOR’S OGSM STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT AND EXECUTIVE OFFICER STRATEGIC GOALS

Mike Honeycutt reported that there was no January OGSM meeting, but he had prepared a report for the BOL:

- Quarterly slaughter numbers at the end of December were still strong and on par with Fiscal Year 25. Budget numbers showed that expenses were way under budget with the liquid cash number in State Special Revenue just under \$14 million. Most vacancies in the DOL were in Brands, with a few openings in the markets, post Fall Run, but the law enforcement staff were pretty stable. Market cattle movement was pretty healthy with more cattle going through the markets consigned than in 2024
- With the positive traction coming from the decision made by the BOL regarding North Dakota and exemption of ID for feeder heifers, Mr. Honeycutt said that the BOL might need to look at some other states needing that exemption as well. The Montana HPAI Milk Sampling Program was still continuing to knock out negative results. Another positive was that FWP was able to get a good number of elk to Brucellosis test in the Crazy Mountains area
- Alicia Love, according to Mr. Honeycutt, was working on repurposing a vacant Sanitarian position with a “hybrid” Sanitarian who would be able to support the expanding Egg Plant and the Milk Sanitarians as well, which would help the Milk budget
- With fewer Federal funds available in Animal Health, the DOL would be looking at fund switches to State funding to assure that programs could continue to be maintained, such as Emergency Preparedness and the DSA. To offer more options for Animal Health, USAHerds software was being phased out and being replaced by CoreOne
- The Brands area of the DOL continued to work on the Google AI project. Also in Brands, the vacant Assistant Administrator position would be repurposed into a third Regional Supervisor position, which would cut the geography down of the current Eastern Area Supervisor and also was a cost savings to the DOL
- Mr. Honeycutt reported that the Cattle Committee bill moving through Legislature was amended so that ballots to vote on issues would be mailed to per capita fee payers

NEW BUSINESS/EXECUTIVE OFFICER UPDATES

(30:45) 8:35 AM

(30:54) 8:35 AM – HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATES

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

(31:07) 8:35 AM Staff Openings, Recruitment Updates

Mike Spatz updated the BOL on Staff Openings, Recruitment and General Updates in the DOL:

- Mr. Spatz reported that the DOL was recruiting for six positions, five in Brands and one in the MVDL, a Diagnostic Lab Accessioner. Interviews were held for two positions, the Roving Market Inspector and the Sidney Market Inspector, but with the pool so small, it was decided to repost those
 - It was discussed to possibly fill the full-time Roving Market Inspector position instead with two half-time people. Eric Moore said he might have a lead on someone for that Rover position
- The Ramsay Market Inspector interviews were scheduled for the following week with a good pool of applicants to choose from. Billings had a big pool of applicants to be looked at to get that area fully staffed as well
- The hybrid Sanitarian position, once it came online, would be the same pay as the existing Sanitarians in the field but the pay would be coded between the Milk budget and the Egg budget, whatever was driving the work they were doing

(38:04) 8:42 AM General Updates

(38:04) 8:42 AM Progress of Year-End Performance Evaluations

Mike Spatz updated the BOL on the Year-End Performance Evaluations in the DOL:

- Mr. Spatz said 92% of the staff had completed their evaluations and 75%-80% of the management evaluations were complete, with six more days to have them in

(39:03) 8:43 AM Overview of Workforce Metrics

Mike Spatz reported that the Workforce Metrics report from the Department of Administration showed that the DOL fell in line well within where the State wanted them to be:

- DOL headcount was at 128; voluntary exits were at 1% above the State average; average days to fill were 10 days below the State average; about 150 courses had been taken by DOL staff through LinkedIn Learning
 - Mike Honeycutt explained that LinkedIn Learning did not carry the specialized training needed by some of the DOL Law Enforcement people or the Meat and Milk Inspectors or the Veterinarians who needed to get their CEUs through another means

(51:14) 8:55 AM – LEGAL COUNSEL UPDATE (May Require Executive Session

Lindsey Simon, Agency Legal Counsel, introduced herself, reporting that she did not have any action items:

- Ms. Simon said that the DOL was part of a lawsuit that the Governor's Office had filed over the Yellowstone National Park Bison Management Plan

(52:24) 8:56 AM – EXECUTIVE OFFICER UPDATES

(52:33) 8:56 AM YNP Bison/EIS/IBMP Operations Update

Mike Honeycutt expanded on Lindsey Simon's report that the DOL had filed a lawsuit against the recent decision on the EIS by Yellowstone National Park:

- Mr. Honeycutt said that the DOL cited in the lawsuit that the issue they had with the EIS was that maybe Brucellosis wasn't looked at enough and didn't consult

with the State enough on the issue. Some of the conservation groups that filed a lawsuit as well said that their issue was that there was not enough weight given to the National Academy of Sciences report from 2017 which talked about the effects of elk on the landscape being the primary vector of the potential spread of Brucellosis to cattle within Montana. They also took issue with not taking into account the current cost of managing those bison or with the petition under review to make Yellowstone Bison an endangered species and what type of management plan would be rolled out

- The next IBMP meeting was scheduled to be held in Bozeman in April, with FWP taking over as the Lead Partner. It was hoped that the weather would change to drive some of the bison out of the Park, because Mr. Honeycutt said that population could get up to 6500 by next year if there were no removals

There was discussion about the ramifications of FWP finding Brucellosis in the elk that they would be trapping this year and how some producers in that area were concerned how that could possibly expand the DSA:

- Dr. Tahnee Szymanski shared about the hard work that's been done to keep the quality of the Brucellosis program high which, in turn helped keep the confidence of our trading partners as well. Mr. Honeycutt and Mr. Redfield talked about how manmade changes on the landscape, such as wildlife bridges and reintroduction of wolves into Yellowstone Park can and did cause movement of elk
- Dr. Szymanski reported that a group of bull bison moved to Fort Peck from Yellowstone Park in January 2024 just tested negative for Brucellosis the previous week and would be moved out of Fort Peck, with some going to Canada

(1:14:25) 9:19 AM Session Planning and Legislative Update/Interim Committee Updates

Mike Honeycutt updated the BOL on 2025 Legislative Session bills that affected the DOL:

- Mr. Honeycutt said the Montana Cattle Committee bill, being carried by Representative Ler, received Executive action this past week, passed out of its Policy Committee and should be going to the floor because, with a zero net impact, it wouldn't have to go through Appropriations. He added that the bill amendments required that ballots be mailed to all per capita fee payers, that it exempts them from using the money for lobbying, they can't use the money from the fund to pay their own legal expenses and refund payments were put into buckets of time
 - Gene Curry shared, regarding the Montana Cattle Committee, that currently, there was somewhere over \$10,000 in the account set up to pay expenses for whatever the working group had. So far, a website had been developed and some brochures printed. He added that money for a referendum would have to be in the account before proceeding with the referendum, but that the bill would have to be passed through the House, the Senate and signed by the Governor into law before they would be able to pursue a referendum. Mike Honeycutt said that if there was no cash in

the State Special Revenue account for the Montana Cattle Committee, even with authority given, no expenditures could be done

- Jay Bodner reported that SB78, SB79 and SB80, the three DOL bills being carried by Senator Kassmier, were heard in Senate Ag the day before with no opposition and good support from some Ag groups
- Mike Honeycutt said he was monitoring SB96 which had been heard and sought to Restrict Local Jurisdictions, Counties and Cities from Enacting Ordinances Against Working Animals, because some people might not understand the purpose of those animals. LC415 was also being monitored by Mr. Honeycutt who expected a request for a fiscal note as it would allow the LLB to reimburse for black bear predation, to which he said he didn't see a problem with that fiscal note unless reimbursements for bees or chickens were added to the current species reimbursement list
 - Mike Honeycutt said he had been engaging with Calli Michaels of MWGA and providing information to her regarding goat numbers per county in case a bill came forward that would add goats as a species a county could request a predator petition for, similar to cattle and sheep petitions currently in place
- Representative Kmetz's bill banning mRNA Vaccines in Montana for Animals was a bill that Mr. Honeycutt said the DOL would like to be in a position to oppose as putting that bill into law would remove tools out of the toolbox that could be existential to the livestock industry if there was a major animal health crisis nationwide

(1:58:49) 10:03 AM RECESS

(1:58:50) 10:21 AM RECONVENE

CENTRALIZED SERVICES DIVISION REPORTS

(1:58:58) 10:21 AM

(1:59:02) 10:22 AM – FISCAL BUREAU

Brian Simonson, Chief Financial Officer for the DOL and Deputy Executive Officer, commented that it made him feel better when the fiscal year and calendar year were the same...so, 2025

(1:59:12) 10:22 AM Aerial Hunting Public Notice

Brian Simonson reported that January was the month when pilots renewed their licenses in the DOL's aerial hunting program where landowners gave permission for those pilots to harvest coyotes or red foxes on their property:

- 15 pilots had signed up the day before, Mr. Simonson said, and that he would be giving a report at the next BOL meeting of harvest numbers and the numbers and locations of pilots

(2:00:13) 10:23 AM December 31, 2024 State Special Revenue Report

Brian Simonson reported that there was nothing unanticipated in this part of the report because most of the numbers were looking the way they should:

- Mr. Simonson said that the Field and Market Inspection numbers were down 5%. Per Capita Fee numbers would increase as people began to pay. Milk Inspection and Egg Grading were coming in as expected. The Lab Fees were up \$15,485 compared to last year, on pace to meet their \$1.5 million budget goal

(2:02:09) 10:25 AM January 2025 Through June 2025 Budget Projections Report

Brian Simonson reported on the expenditure projections in the DOL for the remainder of the fiscal year:

- Mr. Simonson reported that Overtime had gone negative, but it was Fall Run and there were some Milk Inspection vacancies affecting that. Personal Services looked pretty solid, with positive projections showing just over \$200,000. The \$115,399 in Contracts were a solid number mostly coming from Shielded Egg authority. The \$127,000 negative in Supplies were dominated by the MVDL costs of supplies that had gone up considerably in the last couple of years. Earlier spending caused Repair and Maintenance to show a negative \$26,000. The General Fund positive \$147,000 number was because of reduced spending in the LLB, but Meat was projected to be about a negative \$100,000 in General Fund due to Federal cuts. Total Budgeted Funds were projected to be \$212,000
 - Dr. Greg Juda said that all of the lab supplies were increasing in cost by 3% to 4% and it might be a time to increase testing costs as well
- Mike Honeycutt explained that the \$87,000 positive number in Milk Inspection Fees were budgeted authority not necessarily cash. Brian Simonson added that we were still projecting to be about \$50,000 short in Milk Inspection revenue versus expenses

(2:12:12) 10:35 AM December 31, 2024 Budget Comparison Report

Brian Simonson said there wasn't a lot to talk about in this report, but he reminded the BOL that in this report, a positive number meant we were spending more and a negative meant that less was being spent:

- Mr. Simonson said we were underspending overtime compared to last year. Some of the Operations numbers, such as Rent and Contracts, and Budgeted Funds/General Fund, were different from the previous year because of earlier spending, bills being paid more quickly this year than last year. LLB claims were spending General Fund dollars faster than last year and the MVDL spent more in supplies than the previous year. Meat and Poultry Inspection also was heavier in staff than last year, affecting General Fund dollars
- Mr. Simonson said there were three new grants added to the Statutory Appropriations and Budget Amendments page...Milk Inspection Equipment, Personal Protective Equipment for HPAI and training for Milk Inspectors

PREDATOR CONTROL

(2:23:12) 10:46 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 activities in the USDA Wildlife Services program in the state:

- Mr. Tidwell reported that the Federal hiring freeze had impacted replacing the vacated Beaverhead County Wildlife Specialist position, but they would be able to transfer an existing employee to cover those duties until things got settled on the hiring
- Wildlife Services was in the process of developing an EIS after a judge ruled that be done, but, Mr. Tidwell said they were still maintaining their current grizzly bear and predator work. He invited the DOL to be a cooperating agency in the development of that EIS
- Mr. Tidwell said he heard that Phillips County was intending to pass their cattle petition this year. The Aviation Maintenance Contract mechanic was able to find a suitable location in Lewistown to keep his shop going there. Although there was no specific grizzly bear damage to report, Mr. Tidwell said that coyote work was ramping up for the season, adding that for the past fiscal year, there were right at 9,500 coyotes taken by them in the state

(2:31:18) 10:54 AM LLB Predation Claims Report and General Updates

Brian Simonson, Livestock Loss Board Representative, updated the BOL on Livestock Loss Board activities:

- Mr. Simonson reported that there were nine claims that came in and were processed since the last BOL meeting
- Mr. Honeycutt shared that there could be changes to the LLB and its membership since George Edwards' retirement in October and so the DOL was in a holding pattern on moving forward with filling that position

ANIMAL HEALTH & FOOD SAFETY DIVISION REPORTS

(2:37:19) 11:00 AM

(2:37:19) 11:00 AM – ANIMAL HEALTH BUREAU

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

(2:37:53) 11:00 AM Disease Updates

(2:38:00) 11:01 AM Brucellosis

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski reported that there continued to be two infected herds within the boundary of Montana's Disease Surveillance Area (DSA):

- A low-value suspect that had been picked up in Gallatin County in December was retested and had now been classified as negative, allowing that herd to be released from any additional followup

- Dr. Szymanski reported that two recent slaughter traces in Montana resulted in one trace touching two herds up in northcentral Montana, one of which completed the entire herd test. In the other herd, there was one low-value suspect found that the producer had slaughtered with cultures pending at NVSL, and all other animals in that herd tested negative. 450 animals were tested in the second herd with another 150 that were on feed, pending slaughter. Those 150 would be tested at slaughter. The others tested negative
 - The second slaughter trace was found around Christmas time in Teton County from a cow sold into Idaho where she stayed for about a year, calved and then was slaughtered, tested and was classified as a reactor. The original herd she came from in Montana all tested negative and so that trace was closed for Montana, but Idaho was in the process of testing that herd
- Dr. Szymanski said that the shortage of RB51 vaccine had been very painfully felt in the GYA states, and she recommended that Veterinarians go directly to the manufacturer of the vaccine to request it. She also advised the Veterinary community to work off of the middle of the calving window and do a rolling average of the age of a group of calves so that it would give you to the middle of calving to get a group of calves done, assuming that the average of them was going to be at the 12-month mark

(2:43:36) 11:06 AM Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski updated the BOL on HPAI issues around the state and nation:

- Dr. Tahnee Szymanski reported that we were nearly through two full rounds of testing all licensed dairies for HPAI in Montana, with test results being negative. She was hopeful, that after communication with some non-licensed dairies, that they would potentially come into surveillance as well
- HPAI had been detected in cats across the United States, both domestic cats and big cats in sanctuaries with potential sources of exposure being raw milk, raw pet food and raw turkeys fed to big cats. The number of cases of HPAI in domestic poultry had increased over the past couple of weeks, with lots of detections in those states where migratory birds fly over. But, reports in Montana of sick birds had only been occasional with no additional detections.
 - With California losing 70% of their layers due to HPAI, Dr. Szymanski said that if the outbreak didn't lay down over the summer, vaccination would be used as a tool to save flocks, which would have big trade implications, as poultry exports would be lost. And if beef or dairy cattle were vaccinated it would affect that industry as well
- Dr. Szymanski reported that there were no additional allocations of free EID tags from other states to Montana, and the Federal budget hold up in Washington DC was holding up USDA's budget as well keeping them from being able to purchase those tags for distribution to states

(3:07:00) 11:30 AM Animal Disease Traceability Update and Discussion

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski said that after the BOL removed the requirement for feeder heifers to move from Montana to North Dakota and from North Dakota to Montana

without official ID, she had received feedback from eastern Montana regarding purchasing feeder heifers from South Dakota as well:

- Dr. Szymanski said that the only state that had the officially identified feeder heifer requirement was Washington, except for if those cattle were going to a specific list of feedlots in Washington

MOTION/VOTE

(3:10:32) 11:33 AM

Eric Moore moved to approve that Montana accept sexually-intact feeder cattle, under 18 months of age, without an individual ID, from all states except Washington. William Kleinsasser seconded. The motion passed.

(3:12:47) 11:35 AM NADPREP Grant

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski explained her plan on becoming active with a recent NADPREP grant received by the DOL:

- USDA, Dr. Szymanski said, had indicated that a stop movement order would be executed for a detection of FMD, ASF or Classical Swine Fever. Using an FMD outbreak as an example for Montana, Dr. Szymanski said that “killing your way out of it” would not be a realistic choice because of the number of locations and animals impacted. If the FMD detection was early and limited to a single location, depopulation would be heavily the tool relied upon in that case. In every case, the response to the disease should not be worse than the actual disease itself
- Dr. Szymanski said that regarding wildlife in the midst of an FMD outbreak in Montana, FWP had a plan as well.
- Stop movements, Dr. Szymanski explained, gave time to learn about the scope and size of the outbreak, get controls in place to stop the spread of the disease and get some level of commerce back and resuming
- Montana’s Response Plan was not a finalized document, Dr. Szymanski said, but the NADPREP grant just received would help the DOL to continue to move forward with planning that had an emphasis on communication guidance and how a stop movement would be managed in the case of a disease outbreak. That goal was hoped to be accomplished by the summer of 2026
- Mike Honeycutt shared about the Emergency Preparedness Planning he and staff had gone through already, working with some industry people and DES. He said there was still a lot to work through, but that components of the plan had been built to be ready. Dr. Szymanski said many gains had been made in communication, which helped with the first spring of HPAI in Montana and having to work with APHIS and Public Health and the Veterinary industry

(3:40:35) 12:03 PM LUNCH

(3:40:36) 12:58 PM RECONVENE

ANIMAL HEALTH & FOOD SAFETY DIVISION REPORTS (Continued)

(3:40:39) 12:59 PM

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski, State Veterinarian and Animal Health Bureau, introduced herself

(3:40:52) 12:59 PM – ANIMAL HEALTH BUREAU

(3:40:52) 12:59 PM Proposed ARM Amendments – ARM 32.3.435-Testing Within the DSA

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski explained that the proposed changes in the rule was a small change in the time frame of Brucellosis testing dates for DSA animals that would accurately reflect what our practice was on the landscape:

- The proposed dates to change, Dr. Szymanski said, were in regards to the risk period for transmission of Brucellosis to cattle, currently listed as January 15-July 15. Her request was to extend the duration of the testing period for Brucellosis in the DSA by 30 days beyond that risk period, to August 15, to allow for a more accurate detection of the disease beyond the risk period

MOTION/VOTE

(3:44:27) 1:03 PM

Gene Curry moved to publish proposed amendments for public comment to ARM 32.3.435 – Testing Within the DSA, as presented by Dr. Tahnee Szymanski. Lily Andersen seconded. The motion passed.

(3:45:29) 1:04 PM – MEAT, MILK & EGG INSPECTION BUREAU

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski reported that with Alicia Love out today on a vacation that had been scheduled several months prior, she would be presenting the Meat, Milk & Egg segment of the meeting today

(3:45:40) 1:04 PM Out-of-State Travel Requests

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski said that there were three out-of-state travel requests Alicia Love wanted her to present to the BOL

(3:45:54) 1:05 PM National Conference of Interstate Milk Shipments (NCIMS)

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski explained that the NCIMS Conference was where milk regulations and rules were discussed:

- Dr. Szymanski said that the travel would be partially covered by the FDA Milk & Shellfish Grant Program for 2025 and the remaining would be split between the Milk Program and the Laboratory's travel fund

MOTION/VOTE

(3:48:00) 1:06 PM

Eric Moore moved to approve out-of-state travel for Alicia Love, Erin Burns and either Alex Dachs or Job Greenall to attend the National Conference of Interstate Milk Shipments (NCIMS) in Minneapolis, Minnesota on April 11 – 16, 2025. William Kleinsasser seconded. The motion passed.

(3:49:15) 1:07 PM FD375: Dairy Farm Sanitation & Inspection Course

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski requested that the BOL approve travel for Alicia Love and Job Greenall, DOL Sanitarian, to attend FDA training at a Dairy Farm Sanitation and Inspections Course to be held April 8 – May 2nd, 2025 in Fresno, California:

- The majority of the travel would be covered by the FDA Milk & Shellfish Grant Program with the registration fees covered by Milk funds

(Lily Andersen stepped out of the room at 3:50:36)

MOTION/VOTE

(3:50:30) 1:09 PM

Eric Moore moved to approve out-of-state travel for Alicia Love and Job Greenall to attend the FDA training course, FD375 Dairy Farm Sanitation & Inspection, in Fresno, California on April 28 – May 2, 2025. William Kleinsasser seconded. The motion passed.

(3:51:10) 1:09 PM FD372: Plant Sanitation & Inspection Course

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski requested that the BOL approve travel for Job Greenall, DOL Sanitarian, to attend FDA training at a Milk Plant Sanitation and Inspection Course to be held March 3 – 7, 2025 in San Antonio, Texas:

- Dr. Szymanski said that Job Greenall had not been able to attend this training before and it would be a great opportunity for him. The majority of the travel would be covered by the FDA Milk & Shellfish Grant Program

(Lily Andersen returned to the meeting at 3:51:51)

MOTION/VOTE

(3:51:58) 1:10 PM

Gene Curry moved to approve out-of-state travel for Job Greenall to attend the FDA training course, FD372 Milk Plant Sanitation & Inspection, in San Antonio, Texas on March 3 – 7, 2025. Eric Moore seconded. The motion passed.

(3:52:47) 1:11 PM Proposed Amendment of ARM 32.8.101 – Scope of Rules

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski requested that the BOL approve changes to ARM 32.8.101- Scope of Rules, that would update the rule to change citations from the 2019 PMO to the 2023 PMO:

- Lindsey Simon explained that you cannot proactively adopt changes that hadn't yet taken place, and so that was why the BOL could not pre-approve the next PMO to come out in 2027

MOTION/VOTE

(3:53:51) 1:12 PM

Lily Andersen moved to adopt proposed amendments, as discussed, to ARM 32.8.101 – Scope of Rules. William Kleinsasser seconded. The motion passed.

BRANDS ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

(3:56:00) 1:14 PM

Jay Bodner, Brands Enforcement Division Administrator, introduced himself and requested an agenda change, moving the proposed ARM Amendments to the front of his presentation

(3:56:46) 1:14 PM PROPOSED ARM AMENDMENTS

(3:56:46) 1:14 PM ARM 32.18.202-Adjoining County Grazing Permits/ARM 32.18.208-Deeded Land Grazing Permits

Jay Bodner said that the two Grazing Permit rules being addressed had been brought to the BOL earlier in July, but after review by DOL Counsel, it was found that those rules were wrong and needed to be changed for clarity of interpretation:

- Jay Bodner explained that the Deeded Land Grazing Permit rule had been adopted after the Adjoining County Grazing Permit rule and one of those did not include the statute language that the animals must be branded with the permittees' brand, which must be registered in Montana, unless the animal was classified as a virgin breeding female or nursing calf. And so, language was added to both rules so that the statute would line up with both rules for clarity to producers and Brands staff

MOTION/VOTE

(4:07:49) 1:26 PM

Lily Andersen moved to approve proposed changes to ARM 32.18.202-Adjoining County Grazing Permits and to ARM 32.18.208-Deeded Land Grazing Permits, as presented, by Jay Bodner. Eric Moore seconded. The motion passed.

(4:08:31) 1:27 PM ARM 32.2.404-Brands Enforcement Division Fees

Jay Bodner explained that the proposed changes to ARM 32.2.404-Brands Enforcement Division Fees, was to simply strike the requirement for a fee to be charged for Lifetime Horse Inspection books for Local Inspectors that met the DOL requirements, adding that the issue was discussed at the last BOL meeting:

- Mr. Bodner said that part of meeting the DOL requirements was that Local Inspectors who had an interest, would need to take a test before receiving those books with no charge

MOTION/VOTE

(4:09:37) 1:28 PM

Gene Curry moved to adopt proposed changes to ARM 32.2.404-Brands Enforcement Division Fees, regarding Lifetime Horse Inspection Books, as presented by Jay Bodner. Eric Moore seconded. The motion passed.

(4:08:31) 1:27 PM Proposed ARM Concept Discussion (Non-Agenda Item)

Regarding the issue that was brought by Jake Feddes at the last BOL meeting regarding ARM 32.18.201-Brand Inspection, addressing inspection certificates

permitting movement of livestock identified being valid for 36 hours, Jay Bodner was wondering if the BOL wanted to discuss that issue again or have him come back with a draft concept for the BOL's consideration with proposed changes to that rule:

- To address Mr. Feddes' concerns, Mr. Bodner said the rule could simply be adjusted to list pre-slaughter inspection to an in-house facility and change the time frame from 36 hours to whatever would be appropriate. After discussion, Mr. Bodner said he would redraft that rule with the proposed changes

(4:14:21) 1:33 PM List of New Brands Issued (Non-Agenda Item)

Jay Bodner distributed a handout to the BOL with a graph, going back to 2016, giving a historical rundown of some of the new brands that had been issued and those that had been transferred

(4:15:16) 1:34 PM BRANDS ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

(4:15:16) 1:34 PM Staffing

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

- Monty Simonson, a previous DOL employee, continued to manage the Glasgow Market until that position was refilled, as it was just reposted. The Rover position was also reposted and if that wasn't successful, it might be split into two half-time positions. Interviews for the Ramsay Market were scheduled for January 29. A date was needed to be set for interviews to fill a position at BLS

(4:17:52) 1:36 PM Google AI

Jay Bodner updated the BOL on the Google AI implementation:

Mr. Bodner said that the previous go-live date of January 7th for Google AI was not a go, having run into trouble with permissions, but, February 3rd was the new official start date

(4:21:12) 1:39 PM Blackfeet Tribe Land Division Meeting

Jay Bodner reported on the meeting that the Blackfeet Tribe Land Division had with BOL Chairman Gene Curry, DOL staff Mike Honeycutt, Jay Bodner, Dr. Tahnee Szymanski, the Area Supervisor and District Investigator for that area, on December 20, 2024:

- Items discussed at that meeting were the fencing to keep livestock off the State Highway by the Reservation, animal disease, gates being left open during hunting season, cross deputization of Stock Inspectors on the Reservation and drafting of an MOU/MOA. Also talked about was the training needed for those interested on the Reservation to become a Deputy Stock Inspector before they would be given the books

(4:32:48) 1:51 PM Electronic Brand Application

Jay Bodner updated the BOL on progress being made on establishing an online brand system:

- Mr. Bodner said the Kansas online brand system seemed to be pretty good, and although they hadn't reached out to them as of yet, they did speak with the DOL

IT folks about what that would maybe look like for Montana. He said that the contractor was very close to putting the Montana brand book online and a demo was scheduled with that contractor on February 6th

(4:36:09) **1:54 PM RECESS**

(4:36:12) **2:05 PM RECONVENE**

Alan Redfield called the meeting back to order

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

(4:36:20) **2:05 PM**

- Jeremy Plummer and his wife Janelle, Lower Valley Meat Processing in Kalispell, came to appeal to the BOL regarding a letter received from the DOL Meat Inspection Bureau during Thanksgiving 2024 week, regarding Hours of Operation. Mr. Plummer said that his Hours of Operation had been pre-approved (10 hours/day, 5 days/week) and the letter said if he didn't change those hours, he would be charged overtime, adding that a cutback in hours would be devastating to him and his family
- Mr. Plummer also shared his thoughts on how the events took place during the 2024 E-coli outbreak in the Flathead. Mr. Plummer also shared about some of his frustration with the Meat Inspection Bureau
- Mike Honeycutt explained that even though Mr. Plummer said that he had 10 hours, the DOL employee may only be needed by him for four hours. The employee still had to prepare as if you'd need them for 10 hours because that was what his schedule said. That was the issue, that the DOL, according to State policy, had to pay the employee for that entire 10 hours
- Humane slaughter of animals was discussed by Mr. Honeycutt, Mr. Kleinsasser and Mr. Plummer

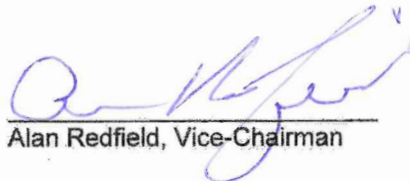
SET DATE FOR THE NEXT BOARD MEETING

(5:33:37) **3:02 PM**

The BOL scheduled the next BOL meeting for Thursday, March 6, 2025

MEETING ADJOURNED

(5:38:56) **3:07 PM**


Alan Redfield, Vice-Chairman