



Montana Board of Livestock Meeting Minutes

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

April 24, 2025

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

Board Members Present

Gene Curry (cattle producer)

William Kleinsasser (swine producer)

Alan Redfield (cattle producer)

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

Staff Present

Mike Honeycutt, EO

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski, MT State Vet

Brian Simonson, Deputy EO

Dr. Greg Juda, Director, MVDL

Donna Wilham, Adm. Asst to EO

Alicia Love, Meat, Milk & Egg Bureau

Evan Waters, Centralized Services

Jay Bodner, Brands Enforcement

Rick Corder, Centralized Services

Mike Spatz, Centralized Services

Dale Haylett Centralized Services

Lindsey Simon, Centralized Services

Tom Shultz, Centralized Services

Brendan Boots, Centralized Services

Public Present

Ellie Brighton, MSGA

Hannah Feaser, Headwaters Livestock

Dalin Tidwell, USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services

Scott Perkins, Headwaters Livestock

Edward O'Brien, MT Public Radio

Barry McCoy, Dillon Livestock

Brandon Blackstock

Dannielle McCoy, Dillon Livestock

Jim Sitz

Brittney Jones

Dayna Swanson, Treasure State Strategies

Kon Peters

Makae Nack, Dillon Livestock

Ben Reed

Rylan Roberts

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

(0:12) 8:00 AM

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

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

(0:12) 8:00 AM

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

- William Kleinsasser, Swine Representative, Augusta

- Mr. Kleinsasser reported that calving and branding were done and hopefully, seeding would be finished by the end of the week. He added that futures took a hit with the tariffs but were slowly recovering
- Lily Andersen, Dairy & Poultry Representative, south of Livingston
 - Ms. Andersen reported that they had been getting some nice moisture and were getting ready to farm. She just returned from attending the Dairy Farmers of America Annual Meeting in Kansas City where they forecasted that milk prices would continue to not be great for the next few months
- Eric Moore, Cattle Representative, Miles City
 - Mr. Moore reported that temperatures had been cold, in the 20s at night. Moisture was an issue because storms were hit and miss. Not a lot of grass was growing. With the tariffs, the cattle market was still “on fire” and very, very strong
- Alan Redfield, Cattle Representative, Paradise Valley, south of Livingston
 - Mr. Redfield reported that they had 14 inches of heavy, wet snow and several inches since, over two inches of moisture in the past two weeks. With the cold, he reported that grass wasn’t growing and they were still feeding hay and they couldn’t farm because it was too wet
- (1:48:58) 9:49 AM Greg Wichman, Sheep Representative, Hilger, North of Lewistown
 - Mr. Wichman reported that, with the good moisture, the grass was green and they were on the downhill slide with lambing and calving was going good
- Gene Curry, Cattle Representative, Valier
 - Mr. Curry reported that moisture had been found out in the crop fields, during soil testing, as deep as the probe would go, meaning they would have moisture to seed into, a good start for their crops. He added that their winter wheat looked really good. They were not quite done with calving, and it had been a wonderful season

BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

(7:44) 8:08 AM

(7:44) 8:08 AM – BOARD APPROVAL OF PAST MEETING MINUTES

Gene Curry requested approval of the past BOL meeting minutes, noting that with the two ZOOM members that were currently on, they did have a quorum

MOTION/VOTE

(7:50) 8:08 AM

Alan Redfield moved to approve the minutes from the Montana Board of Livestock March 6, 2025 meeting. William Kleinsasser seconded. The motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS

(8:40) 8:09 AM

(8:40) 8:09 AM – UPDATE ON GOVERNOR’S OGSM STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT AND EXECUTIVE OFFICER STRATEGIC GOALS

Mike Honeycutt reported that the monthly Ops Review meeting with the Governor was held on April 15, 2025:

- Even with the cattle inventory, slaughter figures were very strong, almost matching 2024 numbers and ahead of 2023 numbers. And, the market numbers were robust, with about the same throughput as in 2023 and 2024. Mr. Honeycutt said that it was hard to find a plant in Montana that was not operating as much as they could possibly go, which was an inverse of what was being seen on the national scene
- Revenue was greater than expense and the expense was still less than the appropriated budget. Per capita just started coming in the past couple of months
- There were 12 vacancies in the DOL, but four of those were planned ones, to save money or make decisions about in the future
 - The vacant Assistant Brands Administrator position was being repurposed into a third Regional Investigator position, and had not yet been hired
- Every bill submitted by the DOL to the 2025 Legislature had been signed by the Governor. BOL members, Board of Milk Control members and LLB members had all been confirmed by the Legislature
 - Mr. Honeycutt said that there was a reduction from eight to four in the number of extra positions in Meat and Poultry Inspection in the HB2 Section C funding, but everything else asked for had remained intact and the DOL was waiting for it to be finalized
- Close to 900 Yellowstone Bison had been removed from the Park this past season
- Brian Simonson had been handling the LLB business, including claims, the grant program and their upcoming meeting, since their Director position was vacated in October 2024
- Mr. Honeycutt said he shared with the Governor impacts on the DOL because of USDA staffing losses, including Eric Sommer of NASS and those in Veterinary Services
- The elk surveillance done in the Crazy Mountains was completed, with no finding of more elk in that area that were positive with Brucellosis
- The Animal Health area of the DOL was starting to retire the USAHerds software system and move to CoreOne
- A hybrid Sanitarian position, that would cover mostly Egg, but also help in Milk, was moving forward. The voluntary HPAI testing by the dairy industry had not found any of that disease in dairy cattle in Montana
- Mike Spatz reported that the DOL was sitting in line with the rest of the State Agencies as far as turnover, but was excelling in time to hire. He added that the Glasgow area vacancies had been a struggle to fill

NEW BUSINESS/EXECUTIVE OFFICER UPDATES

(28:38) 8:29 AM

(28:40) 8:29 AM – HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATES

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

(29:40) 8:29 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 seven positions and had four internal promotions, had hired two new people and had three vacated positions since the last meeting
 - Interviews had been held for the vacant Meat and Poultry Inspector Supervisor position in the NW Montana area, but, it had been decided to continue to interview through that process to find a really strong Management candidate. Fred Woelkers was hired as the “hybrid” Sanitarian, who would be doing both Milk and Egg work
 - An offer had been made for the VDL’s vacant Quality Manager position. The resignation of the Veterinary Microbiologist Section Head at the VDL opened up a position that would be posted today. Reegan Stark was hired as the Front Office Lab Tech
 - Interviews for the Brands area had been set up the following day for Sidney and the Roving position for Eastern Montana. The Glasgow Market Supervisor position had been filled by Jordanne Pruitt, who had been promoted to that position from the Miles City area. Congratulations were given to Wes Seward, Jeff Jergens and Jake Eshelman, who were hired as Livestock FTO Lead Worker positions

(34:47) 8:35 AM HB13 – State Employee Pay Plan

Mike Spatz reported on the HB13 State Employee Pay Plan that was just passed by the Legislature and would go into effect July 23, 2025 and July 22, 2026:

- The Pay Plan would be a \$1/hour or 2.5% increase for State employees, whichever was greater, and also included increases in travel and meal rates. Also included were increases of 2.5% in State contributions to employee health care and increases in the Live Life Well incentive. One note to make was that there was going to be an increase in the amount that employees would have to pay for dependents on their health insurance coverage of about \$4 on every \$100 of health insurance

(37:09) 8:37 AM General Updates

(37:14) 8:37 AM Employee Performance Reviews 1st Quarter Goal Setting With Employees

Mike Spatz reported on the mandatory mid-year check-ins between staff and Managers:

- Mr. Spatz said that as part of the performance improvement process, the mid-year check-in should include a discussion of progress and goals and if there are any changes to be made in goals and responsibilities. The information is documented and monitored in the State Department of Administration Talent System

- Gene Curry congratulated Eric Moore and Greg Wichman on their recent confirmations by the Legislature

(42:17) 8:42 AM – LEGAL COUNSEL UPDATE (May Require Executive Session)

Lindsey Simon, Agency Legal Counsel, introduced herself

(42:34) 8:42 AM – Litigation Update

(42:34) 8:43 AM – Bison Lawsuit Update

Per BOL request, Lindsey Simon gave a summary of the Federal court case that the DOL was involved in with the Governor's Office and FWP regarding Yellowstone National Park's recent Bison Management Plan:

- The Governor's Office, DOL and FWP filed a lawsuit on December 31, 2024 challenging the Bison Management Plan, based on violations of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). One cause of action was based on the National Park Organic Act and the effect on rangeland within the Park
- A hearing had been heard the previous week in Butte in front of Federal Judge, Brian Morris, which was mostly a procedural process because a number of Native American Tribes and Conservation Groups, including Cottonwood Environmental Law Center, had moved to intervene as defendants in the lawsuit. Even though it appeared that the Fort Peck, Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes had been granted intervention, Ms. Simon said that we were waiting for an order from Judge Morris on the others' requests so that the case could move forward
 - The Cottonwood Environmental Law Center was also seeking to add the USDA APHIS and the US Forest Service as defendants, Ms. Simon saying they essentially needed all three of them in there as they want to stay the proceeding that was filed while the lawsuit that they filed back in 2018 could proceed

(50:08) 8:50 AM – Litigation Update

Lindsey Simon reported on litigation going on in the Meat, Milk & Egg Inspection Bureau:

- Ms. Simon reported that the DOL had filed a civil injunction action against Travis Kamps and his assumed business name, Montana Mobile Livestock Slaughter, with Mr. Kamps being served with that lawsuit, she believed, on April 15, 2025
- Mr. Kamps was currently in jail in Gallatin County, but had 21 days to file an answer to that injunction
- Mike Honeycutt said he felt the Agency needed to do some sort of public outreach around unlicensed practice, especially with Farmers' Market season coming, to educate the public on what to look for on product to be assured it had been inspected
- Lindsey Simon said that there were no civil penalties in our statutes, that she was aware of, at least for Meat establishments for unlicensed practice, but there were criminal penalties. Alan Redfield suggested that a request for substantial civil penalties for those violations be put into the statutes at the next Legislative Session

(1:07:50) 9:08 AM Administrative Rules Needed to Implement Mont.

Code Ann. 2-3-103

Lindsey Simon requested that the BOL approve proceeding with rulemaking for the proposed public participation rules that she had presented at the last BOL meeting:

- Miss Simon reminded the BOL that having those public participation rules in place was a statutory requirement, and per the request of the BOL, she drafted a rule for the BOL, modeled after the public participation rules of the Department of Labor and Industry
- Ellie Brighton, MSGA commented that she thought that MSGA would be fine with the rule that had been presented

MOTION/VOTE

(1:11:35) 9:12 AM

Alan Redfield moved to adopt proposed rule changes associated with MCA 2-3-103(2) for public participation, as presented by Lindsey Simon, after putting them out for public comment. William Kleinsasser seconded. The motion passed.

(1:13:32) 9:14 AM Out-of-State Travel Request – Western Ag Law Conference

Lindsey Simon requested BOL approval for out-of-state travel for her to attend the National Agricultural Law Center's 30th Annual Western Water Ag and Environmental Conference in Reno, Nevada on June 19-20, 2025:

- Mr. Honeycutt requested that Miss Simon attend this conference, which historically, the Department of Agriculture Legal Counsel had attended. And, attendance would give Miss Simon the ability to meet and interact with colleagues from other states and give the DOL a presence there

MOTION/VOTE

(1:16:57) 9:17 AM

William Kleinsasser moved to approve out-of-state travel for Lindsey Simon to attend the Western Ag Law Conference in Reno, Nevada on July 19 – 20, 2025. Lily Andersen seconded. The motion passed.

(1:17:39) 9:18 AM – EXECUTIVE OFFICER UPDATES

(1:17:48) 9:18 AM YNP Bison/EIS/IBMP Operations Update

It was coming to the end of the season of managing Yellowstone Bison and their migration in the Park. Mike Honeycutt reported on the season nearly ended and what would be happening going forward:

- Just shy of 900 bison had been removed from the Yellowstone population this year and 97 of them qualified for the bison transfer program, where they would be housed at the Park's Stephen's Creek facility, go through a Brucellosis quarantine and if certified Brucellosis-Free, would be transferred by the Park to Tribal restoration programs through the Intertribal Buffalo Council

- 25 of the 900 bison were taken by Tribal treaty hunting. The remaining of those bison were consigned to Tribes for the Tribal Food Transfer Program. That Tribe was exclusively the CSKT
- The window of time between May 15th and June 15th was where it was attempted to keep bison off the areas where cattle would be coming in to graze, which might require hazing them back into the Park
- This was the first year of the Park's Bison Management Plan which allowed a population of up to 6,000 bison in the Park, meaning that they had to more aggressively manage removals this year because the current population was close to that number
- The BOL made tentative plans to meet in Yellowstone Park this summer to tour the areas that were spoken about so frequently in BOL meetings and then hold a BOL meeting in conjunction with that Yellowstone tour

(1:38:06) 9:38 AM 2025 Session Planning and Legislative Update

Mike Honeycutt updated the BOL on the 2025 Legislative Session:

- Mr. Honeycutt reported that SB78, SB79 and SB80, our three Agency bills submitted for this Legislative Session had all passed and had been signed by the Governor
- Mr. Honeycutt reiterated that in HB2, all of the DOL requests, both base budget and the additional requests, except for the request for eight new Meat and Poultry Inspection staff, which was cut down to four additional staff, made it through the process. He added that, for the first time, general fund will contribute with the fees that were paid by dairy licensees and also that because a fund shift request by the DOL had been given, some of the Federal funding had been moved to State funding
- Architecture and Engineering with the Department of Administration had put some money into HB5, that would be generic for all three partners in the new Lab Complex. Mr. Honeycutt said that the DOL was also in HB4 this year, which includes the budget amendments, moving money around within the department and requiring Legislative approval
- It appeared that a resolution to support beef producers would get through the Legislative process. The Mandatory COOL resolution had moved out of the Senate and to the House. The Montana Cattle Committee main policy bill was tabled, but there was still a study bill out there which would study the viability of a Montana Cattle Committee and a State Marketing Program and funding for a State Marketing Program
- Mike Honeycutt shared about the value of Eric Moore's support of helping producers acquire the RB51 vaccine during a shortage time and said that Senator Curdy also saw a problem there and felt that a letter needed to be sent to Congress to urge USDA to do something about it
- The 12-Day Rule was tabled in Session. The LLB bill was going to get signed that would add black bears as a predator that damages could be paid when the predate on livestock. It also looked as though domestic bison would be added as a species that could claim LLB reimbursement for predation by certain species. The Lab-Grown Meat Ban was also passed

(1:51:18) 9:51 AM RECESS

(1:51:26) 10:10 AM RECONVENE

CENTRALIZED SERVICES DIVISION REPORTS

(1:51:37) 10:10 AM

Brian Simonson, Central Services Division Administrator introduced himself

(1:52:06) 10:10 AM – FISCAL BUREAU

(1:52:08) 10:10 AM Per Capita Fee Collections Update

Brian Simonson gave, what he said would be his final report under Per Capita Fee Collections:

- Per Capita Fee Collections were about 5% over the amount reported the previous year, with about three-quarters of a million dollars' worth of collections still to happen. A reminder was given to the BOL that per capita fees had been increased by 2% for this period
- Cattle head count numbers were 2% over this time last year. Chickens were 11% more than last year, even though there were fewer reporters. There were 200 reporters lost on cattle per capita but there was a gain of 40,000 cattle
- William Kleinsasser reported that there was a two-year waiting list to get chicks, but that the Colonies were committed to building more chicken barns that could add 500,000 to 600,000 birds with eggs going directly to South Dakota. He said there was always an expansion of swine going on and that should easily be 10,000 sows
- Mr. Simonson said that come September, he expected to be somewhere between \$300,000 to \$500,000 short of what the expense number would be, which he said would probably warrant another minimal increase in per capita
- Mike Honeycutt reminded the BOL that per capita only applied to most livestock nine months of age and older, adding that chickens were different

(2:07:27) 10:26 AM March 31, 2025 State Special Revenue Report

Brian Simonson said that there were eight to nine months of revenue realized on this report:

- Even though we were through about 70% of the year, the DOL had collected 80% of this year's budgeted revenue. In the Brands area, the Livestock Dealer Licenses had started a month earlier than usual with people paying or registering. The Market Inspections, on the other hand, were almost \$9,000 in the black even though they were slow compared to this time last year
- Mr. Simonson said that the Per Capita Fee number represented an entire fiscal year's worth of collection, with FY24 being a bump in the fee collection and an anomaly, ahead of FY25
- The Milk Inspection numbers hadn't really changed and were to be expected because of fewer dairies and less production. Egg Grading numbers were still missing some deposits from 2024. The Diagnostic Lab Fees were showing

\$20,000 ahead of last year. The Voluntary Wolf Donation Funds collected \$67,000 so far, with \$30,000 of that coming in March

(2:14:05) 10:32 AM April 2025 Through June 2025 Budget Projections Report

Brian Simonson said that not a lot of month-to-month changes on this report:

- With a lot of payouts and vacancies this year, the \$96,000 Total Personal Services as still a solid number and in the black. Contracts, projected to the \$150,00 to the positive, were supported by a lot of Federal Disease budget amendments, less testing in the DSA and authority in the Egg Program
- The VDL was \$114,000 in the hole due to being in the red with Supplies, but Lab Fee revenue would compensate for that by the end of the year. Less spending for the DSA and in LLB helped contribute to the \$103,000 positive number for General Fund
- The \$112,000 figure shown in Milk Inspection was authority left, not cash. It was expected to be \$24,000 short of expenses over revenue by the end of the year, but Mr. Simonson said that amount was in savings and if HB2 general fund did go through, there would be a \$150,000 infusion of funds each year of the biennium
- Final numbers, Mr. Simonson said, showed \$160,732 projected authority over expenses for the end of the year with \$200,000 more to add in carry forward before the end of the year
- Mike Honeycutt reported that revenue numbers at the VDL were roughly 40% to 50% greater than they were prior to Dr. Juda joining us, with direct fees on the increase for about five to six years in a row. Dr. Tahnee Szymanski said that she had gotten more positive feedback about the VDL over the last year than she had ever experienced with the Lab, but said if the BOL members heard feedback out in the country, to share that in real time with herself or Dr. Juda in real time to better help troubleshoot the issue

(2:26:04) 10:44 AM March 31, 2025 Budget Comparison Report

Brian Simonson went over some highlights of the Budget Expense Comparison Report:

- Total Personal Services were showing \$660,000 more than this time last year, which correlated to pay increases across the board. Contracts, showing \$45,000, correlated to less testing this year in the DSA. Rent, showing \$102,000 correlated to increased personnel in the Meat & Poultry Inspection Bureau. There was shifting of older vehicles to newer vehicles and snow tires, which accounted for that \$82,000 over last year in Repair and Maintenance
- As of March 31st, the DOL had 70% of the budget expended, which Mr. Simonson said was tracking pretty well for this time of year. Mike Honeycutt pointed out that even though the DOL had spent nearly \$687,000 more than last year, at this point, it was just 5% more than last year, which counted the DOL as very conservative comparative to some other government entities
- \$3.7 million was the total HB10 expenditures which included a little over a million in statutory appropriations in it

(2:32:11) 10:52 AM Introduction and Conversation with Department of Agriculture Director, Jillien Streit (Non-Agenda Item)

Gene Curry introduced Department of Agriculture newly-appointed Director, Jillien Streit, from Chester, Montana, who shared about her family's farm in Chester, her vision for the Department of Agriculture and her offer to work hand-in-hand with the DOL on whatever it would be that the Department of Agriculture could assist with in the DOL

PREDATOR CONTROL

(2:50:37) 11:09 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 felt it was important to have a direct talk with the BOL as his last presentation he felt left them hanging in a spot of, what's next:

- With the Federal Executive Orders and the DOGE, Mr. Tidwell explained that Wildlife Services did not know for about three months how they would be restructured. He gave direct credit to the State of Montana for their efforts and support and willingness to share the value of their program and was able to announce that the Wildlife Specialists, Biologists and Pilots were all deemed "Mission Critical" positions and were able to be rehired to four-year cycle positions. Many of the staff had taken advantage of the Deferred Resignation options and right now, there was a hiring freeze in place, and so some of the positions remained vacant and travel cards were reduced to a \$1 spending authority
- Mr. Tidwell shared about issues with the rotor blades for the 95 Tango helicopter and said they were in a bit of a delay on finding other blades, but he was working on getting an interim machine brought in from the Aviation Training Center in Cedar City
- To protect the poultry industry, Mr. Tidwell said that the Secretary of Agriculture had called upon Wildlife Services to be part of the Wildlife Biosecurity Assessments program where Wildlife Specialists or Biologists go to a commercial poultry facility and assess where at that facility there could be wild interface between wild birds or mammals with the poultry that could create transmission of HPAI. Another Tier of that program would be where Wildlife Services could help with control of any overabundance of sparrows or ducks on a settling pond. He hoped that Wildlife Services would be able to work with Dr. Szymanski and others to help make that program available to those interested in participating in it. He added that a separate wild bird sampling had been going on and would continue for data collection
- Dr. Tahnee Szymanski said that when the Spring migration started this year, in the Southern Tier of the US, there was a lot of concern with HPAI because some of the biggest layer facilities in the country broke. But, it seemed like the transmission had slowed down and was down from what had been tracked the previous two years of the outbreak
- It was announced by Mr. Tidwell that they were able to get some increased surveillance funding for Feral Swine

- Regarding Investigative Reports: Grizzlies were up to 15 IRs; Wolves 25 IRs; Mountain Lion 11 IRs; Black Bear 2 IRs
- Mike Honeycutt said that it would be an incredible burden if the DOL was ever to have to fully take over what Wildlife Services does for the DOL and their research so far showed that it would cost the DOL \$5 million to do what they do for us. He added that the DOL has signed on as a cooperator with the Wildlife Services EIS to help provide input and shape the EIS as it went forward

(3:21:00) 11:39 AM LLB Predation Claims Report and General Updates

Brian Simonson reported on LLB Predation Claims for the past month and updated the BOL on LLB activities:

- Mr. Simonson said that the LLB's next meeting would be held on April 30, 2025 in this conference room. Options to fill Mr. Edwards' vacant position was on the agenda to be discussed
- 10 claims had been processed since the last BOL meeting, three for Grizzlies and seven for Wolves, submitted from three producers. \$250,000 remained in the claims fund until June 30, 2025. Mr. Simonson said he had changed the format of the claim form a little bit
- Four out of five LLB members were confirmed or reconfirmed with one new person, Jordan Mannix from Helmville
- Grant forms had gone out three weeks ago, but there had been no applicants

(3:30:37) 11:49 AM LUNCH

(23:30:41) 12:50 PM RECONVENE

Gene Curry called the meeting back to order

ANIMAL HEALTH & FOOD SAFETY DIVISION REPORTS

(3:30:46) 12:50 PM

(3:30:53) 12:50 PM – MEAT, MILK & EGG INSPECTION BUREAU

Alicia Love, Bureau Chief of the Meat, Milk & Egg Inspection Bureau Chief introduced herself, adding that he had a light agenda

(3:31:05) 12:50 PM Out-of-State Travel Request

(3:31:05) 12:50 PM National Association of Dairy Regulatory Officials Conference (NADRO)

Alicia Love requested that the BOL approve out-of-state travel for herself and a Sanitarian to attend the NADRO Conference in Burlington, Vermont on July 14-17, 2025:

- Alicia Love explained that the conference was for State Program Regulators to discuss issues and potential legal changes that might be coming

MOTION/VOTE

(3:33:57) 12:54 PM

Lily Andersen moved to approve out-of-state travel for Alicia Love and a Sanitarian, to attend the Summer 2025 National Association of Dairy Regulatory Officials (NADRO) conference in Burlington, Vermont on July 14 – 17, 2025. Alan Redfield seconded. The motion passed.

(3:36:43) 12:57 PM Report on the National Conference on Milk Shipments (Non-Agenda Item)

Alicia Love reported on the NCIMS Conference she attended the previous week in Minneapolis:

- Ms. Love explained that the conference included Federal counterparts, State Agencies and Industry to discussed proposed changes to the Pasteurized Milk Ordinance (PMO). Although the conference had very few Federal representatives present, one of the proposed changes for the PMO regarded storage of pain medication for calves, which Ms. Love thought was very common sense

(3:39:50) 12:59 PM – VETERINARY DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY

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

(3:40:47) 1:00 PM Operational Update

(3:40:47) 1:00 PM FY24 Grant/FY24 ARP Grant

Dr. Greg Juda updated the BOL on the status of ongoing and upcoming NAHLN Grants:

- Dr. Juda reported that they had spent almost the entirety of the FY24 grant that started on June 1, 2024 and would end May 31, 2025, for \$256,300
- Dr. Juda reported that the FY24 ARP grant that was for \$1 million had several purchase orders put in during the last month to State Procurement for equipment items that would be utilized in the new Lab facility. The incinerator purchase for \$550,000 had already been made utilizing that grant also. He said that the MVDL and labs across the country had received a one-year extension to utilize those funds

(3:51:14) 1:11 PM FY25 Upcoming Grant

Dr. Greg Juda reported on the upcoming FY25 NAHLN grant:

- Dr. Juda said that they had been notified the day before that each Level 2 Lab in the country that was part of NAHLN would get an annually-appropriated amount of \$150,150 plus distribution of NAHLN Farm Bill funding of \$128,800 for the next year, which was an increase of about \$20,000 from the previous year

(3:56:32) 1:16 PM Building Construction Update

Dr. Greg Juda explained that this field report was from March 18, 2025:

- Dr. Juda reported on the progress inside and outside of the new Lab Complex building. Dirt work had begun again, he said, after being hampered by five inches of snow that had melted and caused a lot of mud. Also, work continued inside, even though the incinerator had not yet been delivered
- A meeting had been held the previous week, Mike Honeycutt said, regarding management of the new Lab Complex, as the DOL would be considered the owners of the building. Dr. Juda was pleased with MSU's response at the meeting to come in as a very willing Partner and their offers to help with snow, landscaping and custodial services. Dr. Juda said his primary concern was that MSU would allow the VDL to keep the Lab's main phone number, something that was denied about two years ago
- "Substantial" completion date of the new Lab Complex was for February 27, 2026

(4:16:26) 1:36 PM Review of CWD Cost Analysis for FY25 Testing Season

Per a request by the Chairman at the last BOL meeting, Dr. Juda presented the CWD Cost Analysis for the 2024 Testing Season:

- Numbers for the analysis covered the dates, July 1, 2024 to the end of March 2025. 11,475 samples were tested, an increase of about 2,000 over the previous year. Tests were \$15 each, which generated around \$172,000. Direct labor costs were slightly over that. NAHLN funding subsidized the test kits for \$40,000
- Dr. Juda explained that the three Fellows, who helped in the CWD testing, had their salary paid by a CDC stipend, and if that wasn't the case, the VDL would have had a net loss. Mike Honeycutt said that Dr. Juda, with those numbers, might be leading to a request for a CWD fee adjustment for the next testing season
- Dr. Juda reported that the State of Louisiana approached the VDL to partner with them to test an estimated 1,000 samples, as they were currently at capacity. He said that although they had not given Louisiana an answer yet, the help of the Fellows was key to sustaining the CWD program and the VDL was in the process of applying for additional ones to come to the Lab

(4:29:14) 1:49 PM Out-of-State Travel Request

(4:29:21) 1:49 PM – International Symposium for the World Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (ISWAVLD)

Dr. Greg Juda requested that the BOL approve out-of-state travel for Dr. Steve Smith to attend the SWAVLD Meeting on June 12-14, 2025 in Calgary, Alberta:

Dr. Juda explained that this meeting features leaders from labs around the world and that it was scientific-based, related to Veterinary Diagnostic Medicine, laboratory techniques and global problem solving. He added that this meeting only came to North America once every decade

MOTION/VOTE

(4:31:12) 1:51 PM

Alan Redfield moved to approve out-of-state travel for Dr. Steve Smith to attend the International Symposium for the World Association of Veterinary Laboratory

Diagnosticians (ISWAVLD), scheduled for June 12-14, 2025 in Calgary, Alberta. William Kleinsasser seconded. The motion passed.

(4:32:36) 1:52 PM – ANIMAL HEALTH BUREAU

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

(4:32:54) 1:52 PM Out-of-State Travel Request

(4:32:54) 1:52 PM – Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) Meeting

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski requested that the BOL approve travel for two people, tentatively herself and Mike Honeycutt to attend the PNWER Meeting, scheduled for July 22-24, 2025 in Bellevue, Washington:

- Dr. Szymanski said that this meeting had an Agricultural Committee, Cross-Border Livestock Health Subcommittee and Pest Committee, which oftentimes touched on feral swine and this year would continue the conversation on HPAI in dairy cattle and how that detection would be handled. Mike Honeycutt said the meeting was run by State Legislators and MLAs from the Canadian Provinces and it was important that Montana be represented there

MOTION/VOTE

(4:35:42) 1:55 PM

William Kleinsasser moved to approve out-of-state travel for Tahnee Szymanski, DVM and either Mike Honeycutt or Dr. Brenee Peterson, to attend the Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) Meeting in Bellevue, Washington in July 22-24, 2025. Alan Redfield seconded. The motion passed.

(4:36:07) 1:56 PM Animal Health Updates

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski reported recent conversations the Animal Health area of the DOL had with the National Assembly, which was all of the State Veterinarians in the United States

(4:36:47) 1:57 PM Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD)

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski reported on FMD outbreaks worldwide:

- FMD had been somewhat active across Europe this year, but then got cut off, except for recent detections in Water Buffalo, north of Frankfurt towards the northern tip of Germany where animals were euthanized within a three-kilometer zone rather than using vaccination, which would prolong the duration of the outbreak
- Israel's January outbreak was attributed to illegal movement of animals. FMD broke out in Hungary in March and they were using depopulation to deal with it. The outbreak in Slovakia, shortly after that used emergency suppressive vaccine and depopulation and thought that airborne spread of FMD was a contributing factor to the outbreak

- Dr. Szymanski said that some California slaughter plants were doing 400 foreign animal disease investigation a year because of pigs showing up at slaughter with vesicles, which could be a sign of Seneca Valley Virus or even FMD

(4:48:08) 2:08 PM New World Screwworm

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski reported that the New World Screwworm info she would be giving was mostly historical, at this point in time:

- Dr. Tahnee Szymanski reported that in September 2024, the New World Screwworm was found in Honduras, then in October in Guatemala and in November it had moved into Chiapas, one of the southern states of Mexico, which is when live animal importations were stopped into the United States, but were lifted in January 2025. Those animals, up to 1500/day that come into the United States must each be physically inspected to assure there was no evidence of wounds that might contain New World Screwworm
- Sterile Fly deployments had been limited, due to airstrip access, to 120 million flies/week. But, to limit spread of the Screwworm, the US feels it would take deployments of 200 million flies/week. Although the flies could not survive on the Montana landscape in winter, there are a lot of animals that came to Montana from Arizona in the Spring months and so Dr. Szymanski said she was reviewing Texas' response plan to the New World Screwworm

(4:48:08) 2:08 PM Discussion of Presidential Executive Order Regarding Elimination of Information Silos (Non-Agenda Item)

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski reported that On March 20th, there was a Presidential Executive Order enacted that got the attention of a lot of folks in the Animal Health realms:

- The Executive Order titled, Stopping Waste, Fraud and Abuse by Eliminating Information Silos, stated that immediately upon execution of this order, Agency Heads shall take all necessary steps to the maximum, consistent with law, to ensure the Federal Government had unfettered access to comprehensive data from all State program that receive Federal funding, including as appropriate, data generated by those programs but maintained in third-party databases
- Dr. Szymanski said the concern was that there was concern about how the information would be used and if the information was being shared more freely, would there be hesitancy on the part of program participants to participate
- Veterinary Services said, according to Dr. Szymanski that they were working very hard with this Administration, pointing out that it was very clearly defined how you protect data and that the data that they were sharing with other entities within the Federal Government had not changed. Mike Honeycutt added that with us, we have a State law that protected livestock diagnostic data

(5:04:50) 2:24 PM Brucellosis

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski reported on the DOL's progress in updating the Brucellosis compliance reviews:

- There was great success in getting those reviews up to date, as historically, they were 18 months behind. But, Dr. Szymanski said that Jac Cima, the Brucellosis

Compliance Specialist, was nearly complete with the Madison County Fiscal Year '24 compliance review and was working now on Fiscal Year '25

- Dr. Szymanski was not certain the cause of decreased testing in the DSA, but thought it might be a general level of program fatigue, or possibly because of the required move to RFID tags. She added that as long as compliance with testing requirements remained high there, it was okay for voluntary herd testing to fluctuate

(5:06:27) 2:26 PM ADT

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski updated the BOL on USDA tag allocation:

- As of right now, Dr. Szymanski said that USDA only had funding to order five million ADT tags, with Montana's allocation for the year being 120,000 tags. All of the tags had been received and 80,000 of them had been distributed to Veterinarians around the state. Dr. Szymanski said that they had tried to advise Veterinarians regarding the proper use for RFID tags, adding that the DOL had only received orange RFID tags for their no-cost allocation

(5:07:21) 2:27 PM NADPRP Meetings

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski updated the BOL on NADPRP Meetings being held around the state:

- Dr. Szymanski said that as of that day, Dr. Brennee Peterson had conducted five NADPRP meetings with variable attendance but good discussion. Although there was a break from holding those meetings during the summer, they would pick up on those again in August

(5:15:07) 2:35 PM RECESS

(5:15:14) 2:49 PM RECONVENE

BRANDS ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

(5:15:21) 2:49 PM

(5:15:21) 2:49 PM – PROPOSED ADDITIONAL SALE DATES FOR DILLON LIVESTOCK AUCTION

Jay Bodner explained that Dillon Livestock Auction was proposing adding some additional feeder sales on Monday in October, November and December. Since their original sale date was on a Thursday, the move was considered a Change in Operation and by State law, required a decision be made by the BOL to do that:

- Notices were sent out for public comment to Dillon Livestock, Montana Livestock in Ramsay and Headwaters Livestock in Three Forks and others, with one written public comment received
- Barry McCoy, Co-Owner of Dillon Livestock Auction with his wife, Danielle, had a regular sale day of Thursday and were requesting approval of the special sales during the Fall, with their primary goal to provide more opportunity for customers and to do a little better job handling the livestock, so the pens would not be so full and so the sales would not have to run until midnight

- Jim Sitz said that they had done their Sitz Influence sale at the Dillon Livestock Auction and that one year they had 2400 and were stacked to the gills and he hoped that the Auction barn could have a separate day rather than a regular sale day to do that sale. Auctioneers they used for that sale had a limited number of days available to work. He said it seemed like Gene Curry was trying to stifle commerce
- Gene Curry explained that the BOL was here to abide by the rules that were in place and it was their intention to make sure the ranchers were serviced by the facilities that we regulate
- Kon Peters, a three-year employee of Dillon Livestock Auction said that most of their buyer base came out of Utah and Idaho and that very few that bought at Dillon Livestock Auction bought at Headwaters
- Scott Perkins a 20-year employee of Headwaters Livestock Auction, Brittney Jones of Valley View, the entity that ran Headwaters Livestock Auction and Hannah Feasor, Office Manager at Headwaters Livestock spoke about how well Headwaters was doing under new ownership, and voiced concern about the close proximity of Dillon Livestock Auction to Headwaters Livestock Auction and the small buyer pool available, especially if Dillon was allowed to have a Monday sale, the same day that Headwaters held their regular sale
- Alan Redfield said he was concerned about competition with available buyers. Jake Feddes said he was concerned that no matter what type of sale Dillon Livestock Auction held on Monday, it was going to interfere with Headwaters Livestock Auction's all-class sale. He said that when the Missoula auction barn was lost, some people were now having to truck cattle 2-3 hours to get to a sale barn and that was not helping producers; it was hindering commerce by making it harder. He did not want to see the Three Forks barn cease to exist, because if they were forced to close, then producers would have to go 90-150 miles to get to a sales barn and that wasn't looking out for producers across the state
- Gene Curry said that if Headwaters started struggling and decided to sell their auction barn, what if the Goggins, who already owned two auction barns in Billings and Western Livestock Auction, bought it and then they would have a pretty good hold on the whole state. Eric Moore said that his local barns were far enough away from those markets and were mostly affected by competition with Dakota barns
- It was decided by the BOL to not make a decision on the issue that day, but to hold a hearing

SET DATE FOR THE MARKET HEARING AND THE NEXT BOARD MEETING

(6:24:38) 3:58 PM

Gene Curry requested that the BOL schedule the date of the Market Hearing be scheduled in conjunction with the date of the next BOL meeting:

- Mike Honeycutt pointed out that the MSGA Mid-Year Meeting was held the last week of May in Butte, which some of the BOL members would be participating in. He suggested holding the BOL meeting at the same hotel as MSGA was holding their Mid-Year meetings

- The BOL decided to hold the Market Hearing on the afternoon of May 27, 2025, with a location yet to be determined, and the BOL would possibly hold their regular meeting in Butte on May 28, 2025

BRANDS ENFORCEMENT DIVISION (Continued)

(6:32:08) 4:06 PM

(6:32:08) 4:06 PM – ONLINE CONSIGNMENT/TRANSPORTATION FEES

Jay Bodner requested that BOL consider eliminating the online consignment and transportation permit fees, which would include market consignment permits and sheep and bison transportation permits:

- Mr. Bodner reported that in calendar year '24, there were 7700 total consignment permits issued. On February 1, 2024, the cost of \$1/permit + \$1.24 for the transaction fee, for a total of \$2.24 was changed to \$1/permit + 5 cents for the transaction fee, for a total of \$1.05. If those fees were eliminated, Mr. Bodner said it might drive more people online, and the DOL would have a revenue decrease of \$7700, using the calendar year '24 figures
- MCA 81-3-205 basically spoke about the requirement for a permit, but that the DOL needed to establish the fee. That was done in ARM 32.2.404. Mr. Bodner suggested eliminating the online fee but charging \$1 for a written permit. He said that the BOL had already agreed to eliminate the lifetime horse inspection book fee, which was part of the same Administrative Rule. He also suggested totally discontinuing the service of downloading a CD brand book and copying a brand book, and would leave that up to constituents, because they did not get a lot of that anyway. Also in that rule was some cleanup language that was needed regarding satellite video auctions

MOTION/VOTE

(6:38:39) 4:13 PM

Alan Redfield moved to eliminate online fees for transportation permits for bison and sheep and online fees for market consignment permits (listed in ARM 32.2.404), as well as changing the Satellite Video Auction language and language regarding fees for paper copies and downloading of the Brand Book in that same Rule, as presented by Jay Bodner. William Kleinsasser seconded. The motion passed.

(6:40:55) 4:15 PM – USE OF ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES ON A BILL OF SALE

Jay Bodner requested that BOL consider allowing electronic signatures on a bill of sale:

- The subject had been discussed in the past and Mr. Bodner said allowing it would move the DOL forward in adopting technology, but there was concern from staff from the perspective of providing more opportunity for potential forgery
- Mike Honeycutt said that allowing the electronic signatures would provide some relief for individuals who purchased animals from someone out of state and those animals hadn't been rebranded and when they were taken to be resold at a market, their check was held because they didn't have any proof of ownership, or maybe they lost a bill of sale and they're trying to clear the hold

- Eric Moore agreed entirely with Mike's scenario, saying he'd rather do an e-signature and have the bill of sale match the brand inspection and get it right there at the barn. Gene Curry said he used electronic signatures and that was the way commerce was today. Lily Andersen said that it would make everything easier as she's used e-signatures as well
- Jay Bodner said he would bring back some proposed rules at the next meeting that would have some of the tenor of the BOL's discussion in them

(6:48:33) 4:23 PM BRANDS ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

(6:48:37) 4:23 PM Public Brand Search

Jay Bodner updated the BOL on where the Brands Enforcement Division was in implementing their online public brand search capabilities:

- Mr. Bodner said that since the last BOL meeting they were working on increasing the speed of the entire system by using pagination and now they were hoping that on May 9th or shortly after that, to go live on the website where it would be found on the Home Page

(6:52:39) 4:27 PM Dealer License Renewal

Jay Bodner updated the BOL on the progress of Dealer License Renewals, which had been sent out earlier than normal to make sure more time was provided for people to get those licenses renewed:

- Mr. Bodner said that the Brands Enforcement Division had sent out dealer license renewals including, 203 dealer letters that included 408 registered agents that included 12 markets and four video livestock auctions. As of April 21, 2025, Mr. Bodner said that 130 had been received back from dealers
- Because only 64% had been renewed at this point, Mr. Bodner said that the plan was to send emails to those who hadn't yet renewed, if an email was available, and also an additional letter, saying hey, you haven't renewed, please renew, if you choose

(6:54:07) 4:28 PM Staffing

Mr. Bodner shared with the BOL about the staffing situation in Glasgow:

- Mr. Bodner said that Monty Simonson had come out of retirement to help staff the Glasgow market temporarily. Mr. Simonson said he was going home for the Spring but offered to come back in the Fall, if needed. Mr. Bodner expressed his appreciation for Mr. Simonson helping and the great work he did for the DOL

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

(6:55:22) 4:29 PM

With no folks left from the public online, Gene Curry called on Ellie Brighton, who was in the audience to make comment:

- Ellie Brighton expressed her thanks for allowing her to attend the meeting, adding that she always learns something from the BOL discussion

BOL DISCUSSION ON LOCATION OF THE NEXT BOL MEETING AND MARKET HEARING

(6:56:22) 4:30 PM

The BOL continued discussion on venues for the next BOL meeting and also the Market Hearing:

- Because of the availability of the hotel meeting room in Butte, in conjunction with the MSGA Mid-Year Meeting, the preference was to hold both the Market Hearing and the BOL Meeting in Butte

MEETING ADJOURNED

(7:03:20) 4:37 PM



Gene Curry, Chairman