



Montana Board of Livestock Meeting Minutes

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

August 13, 2025

Quality Inn

2036 Overland Avenue, Billings, Montana

Board Members Present

Gene Curry (cattle producer)

Alan Redfield (cattle producer)

Jake Feddes (cattle producer)

Greg Wichman (sheep producer)

William Kleinsasser (swine producer)

Lillian Andersen (dairy & poultry)

Eric Moore (cattle producer)

(William Kleinsasser left the meeting at 2:51 pm) (5:54:52)

Staff Present

Mike Honeycutt, EO

Brian Simonson, Deputy EO

Donna Wilham, Adm. Asst to EO

Lindsey Simon, Centralized Services

Evan Waters, Centralized Services

Mike Spatz, Centralized Services

Rick Corder, Centralized Services

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski, MT State Vet

Dr. Brenee Peterson, Animal Health

Dr. Greg Juda, Director, MVDL

Alicia Love, Meat, Milk & Egg Bureau

Jay Bodner, Brands Enforcement

Tom Shultz, Centralized Services

Brendan Boots, Centralized Services

Public Present

Dalin Tidwell, USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services

Doug Ekberg, USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services

Taylor Brown, Northern Ag Network

Colter Brown, Northern Ag Network

Colton Young, Northern Ag Network

Don Woerner, DVM

Bob Simonson

Patricia Klanke, Drake Law Firm

Michelle Dietrich, Ag. Legal Services

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

(0:07) 8:00 AM

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

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

(0:07) 8:00 AM

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

- Eric Moore, Cattle Representative, Miles City
 - Mr. Moore reported that in July, depending on where you were, there was between 3.5 and 6 inches of rain and some hail that took corn acres. Dryland hay was just adequate because the alfalfa and cool season

grasses were headed out by the time the rain came, but there was lots of grain hay and silage

- Greg Wichman, Sheep Representative, Hilger, North of Lewistown
 - Mr. Wichman reported that the rain had been adequate but farmers were “pulling their hair out” because they hadn’t been able to get their grain harvested. There was lots of grain hay and a lot of hay headed north out of their country. Sheep market was doing alright and people weren’t complaining about the calf prices
- Lily Andersen, Dairy & Poultry Representative, south of Livingston
 - Ms. Andersen reported that there was a lot of hay to sell in their area. They were getting ready for their second cutting. Their calves had been sold
- William Kleinsasser, Swine Representative, Augusta
 - Mr. Kleinsasser reported they had 3 inches of rain in the last 3 weeks, but it came a little too late and, even though harvest was now wrapped up, it was low yields and low quality. He was expecting though, that with the adequate moisture, it would be nice for seeding winter wheat. The live market rate was the highest it had been in years
- Jake Feddes, Cattle Representative, Manhattan
 - Mr. Feddes reported that they had not gotten rain and that he had not seen the Gallatin Valley that brown with not much water left in the Gallatin River. Feeding would be starting early, but, there was a lot of hay to do that. Weaning weights would be low, but the calf market had never been higher. He said there weren’t enough calves to sell and buyers were calling every day, looking for calves. He scheduled his first shipping in about three weeks
- Alan Redfield, Cattle Representative, Paradise Valley, south of Livingston
 - Mr. Redfield reported that they got a bumper hay crop and that high mountain grass was good. He said he put up more hay on his first cutting than he had ever done
- Gene Curry, Cattle Representative, Valier
 - Mr. Curry reported that they had a couple inches of rain in July and August and that it looked greener now than it was in May. His son’s yearlings that had been pastured in Butte were sold. He said it had been a little drier down there. But, the pasture they used at Belt looked really good and the mountain pasture they used looked okay

BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

(8:00) 8:08 AM

(8:00) 8:08 AM – BOARD APPROVAL OF PAST MEETING MINUTES

Gene Curry requested approval of the minutes of the last BOL meeting, held on June 27, 2025:

MOTION/VOTE

(8:06) 8:08 AM

Greg Wichman moved to approve the minutes from the Montana Board of Livestock June 27, 2025 meeting. Jake Feddes seconded. The motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS

(8:39) 8:09 AM

(8:39) 8:09 AM – UPDATE ON GOVERNOR’S OGSM STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT AND EXECUTIVE OFFICER STRATEGIC GOALS

Mike Honeycutt reported that he and Brian Simonson met with Governor Gianforte and Chief of Staff Chris Heggem on July 15th for their first OGSM meeting this fiscal year:

- Mr. Honeycutt said that the four dashboards he reported on were a little bit fiscal year-end (No Audio/Visual from 9:35 to 11:18)
- Slaughter figures for both State-inspected and custom exempt facilities in the fourth quarter were driven much by poultry, Mr. Honeycutt said, thanks to the Hutterites. He added that the Governor was happy with the numbers coming through the markets, and that had kept DOL staff very busy
- Expenses were below the budget and revenue was greater than expense at the end of the fiscal year, with the DOL closing a little over \$14 million in liquid cash
- Four new positions, received from the Legislature, were added to Meat & Poultry, appearing like a lot of vacancies. But, Mr. Honeycutt said that they were pretty full-staffed in that area of the DOL. The Brands Enforcement area of the DOL still had some vacancies to fill, as some vacancies had been filled in-house, leaving another vacancy to fill. The VDL had been challenged by salary, trying to fill the Veterinary Microbiologist position that still remained vacant
- The quick response and clean-up of the interstate when a truck rolled over hauling weiner pigs was reported as a high to the Governor. The DOL was close in maybe discontinuing HPAI surveillance in the dairy industry with no cases having been reported. LLB Prevention Grants were granted. The new brand lookup tool had been launched. The New Lab incinerator purchase and install contracts were completed
 - William Kleinsasser commented that the rollover preparedness plan and the way it was handled was like a storybook ending and was handled very well. Dr. Tahnee Szymanski said that there were some really good lessons learned from the incident for the future. Jakes Feddes suggested writing a report on how it was handled and the best practices to follow and distribute that information to county agencies for ideas on what to do if that ever happened again. Mike Honeycutt said to also distribute a plan to all partners who would be involved in those type of situations
- The New Lab completion date had been pushed out to April 2026
- The new six-month horizon had begun with new items to get done. One item was to hire the new Meat & Poultry positions. Revisions to Grade B Dairy Operations Rules were being worked on by Lindsey Simon and the DOL dairy staff. Per Eric Moore’s suggestion, a plan for “Value-Added” would be addressed that would not just be for meat processing, for adding value to the industry. The

goal would also be to focus on the NADPRP grants. A distribution plan was also being looked at for the additional RFID tags purchased by the DOL at the end of the fiscal year. Brands Enforcement's goal was for six targeted truck stops and utilizing Service Now to help in auditing Local Inspection Books. Also, Jay Bodner was working on a pilot plan for Local Inspectors to use electronic inspections. Animal Health hoped to get the Core One software implementation completed within the next six months

NEW BUSINESS/EXECUTIVE OFFICER UPDATES

(32:10) 8:32 AM

(32:13) 8:32 AM – HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATES

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

(32:32) 8:32 AM - Staff Openings/Recruitment Updates/General Updates

Mike Spatz said he would be sharing with the BOL some recruiting, staffing and general updates:

- Mr. Spatz reported that the DOL was recruiting for six positions
 - That number had been knocked down by one, Mr. Spatz said, with the formal offer of acceptance for the Assistant State Veterinarian position, with a start date of September 8, 2025. Mike Honeycutt said the position would be filled by a previous employee who had left the DOL for USDA
 - Interviews were scheduled for the Compliance Specialist position in Meats. Interviews were scheduled for the District 15 Livestock Investigator position. Although interviews had been held for the vacant District 14 position, they did not find the right applicant. A verbal offer had been made to an applicant for the Veterinary Microbiologist Section Head, but they declined, because of pay-related issues, Mr. Spatz said
 - Mr. Honeycutt said that if there continued to be salary issues in hiring the Veterinary Microbiologist Section Head, that help might be sought from the Budget Director's Office
 - Mr. Spatz reported that there was also a staff Veterinarian position open to replace Dr. DeGroot, who was now officially separated from the DOL. The LLB agreed to the level of staffing to fill the previous incumbent's position with a half-time person at a lower rate of pay. As of September 1, 2025, Mr. Spatz said that notice was received for a Market Supervisor position in Lewistown. He added that Brands did have two new hires in the Billings and Miles City markets
 - Mid-year check-ins were at 98% due to technical items and some out of the office on medical leave. Also happening was an enterprise-wide employee engagement survey. Mr. Spatz also reported that notice had been received of a slew of minor language changes to take place in some policies related to pay, pay processes, travel, training assignments and sick leave that would need to be updated in the Handbook

(47:57) 8:48 AM – LEGAL COUNSEL UPDATE (May Require Executive Session)

Mike Honeycutt announced that there would be two license revocation processes to address in the Legal Counsel area

(48:14) 8:48 AM – *In re Big Sandy Meat Shop LLC d/b/a Hi-Line Packing* – Custom Exempt Meat Establishment Licensing Action Final Order

Mike Honeycutt reported that Big Sandy Meat Shop, LLC, doing business as Hi-Line Packing, a custom-exempt processor in Malta, had already been through a hearing regarding the license revocation and that the BOL had received a recommended order from the Hearings Administrator who had presided over the hearing:

- Michelle Dietrich, of DOJ Legal Services, served as the BOL Counsel in the day's process. She briefly reviewed the case to the BOL and explained to them their options in making their final agency decision. Neither Legal Counsel for Big Sandy Meat Shop nor the Business owner were present at the BOL meeting
- Lindsey Simon, DOL Counsel, said that she would prefer that the BOL make all of their decisions based on the Administrative Record, as considering anything outside of that would put their decision at risk of being overturned

MOTION/VOTE

(56:20) 8:56 AM

Alan Redfield moved to accept, in full, the Hearing Examiner's proposed decision and adopt it as the final order regarding the custom exempt meat establishment license of Big Sandy Meat Shop LLC d/b/a Hi-Line Packing. Lily Andersen seconded. The motion passed.

(1:01:02) 9:01 AM – *In re Robert Sain d/b/a A-S Processing* – Custom Exempt Meat Establishment Licensing Action Final Order

Mike Honeycutt reported that a decision regarding the proposed Final Order from the Hearings Examiner to revoke the license of Robert Sain, doing business as A-S Processing in Scobey, had been postponed by the BOL at their previous meeting:

- Mr. Honeycutt said that the re-inspection of the facility that had occurred since the last meeting was not part of the Record of the proposed Final Order
- Patricia Klanke of the Drake Law Firm, would be representing the BOL as outside Counsel. Neither Counsel for the Business nor the Business Owner were present at the meeting, as Ms. Klanke reported that after the re-inspection had occurred, they basically said they didn't want to participate anymore
- Lindsey Simon said that this process with A-S had started in October of 2024 and that she would like to have a Final Order from the BOL and then address any compliance issues after that

MOTION/VOTE

(1:07:53) 9:08 AM

Jake Feddes moved to adopt the proposed Findings and Conclusions as the final order regarding the custom exempt meat establishment license of Robert Sain d/b/a A-S Processing as presented and discussed. Greg Wichman seconded. The motion passed.

With the license revocation, it was decided to remove A-S Processing from the list of licensed custom exempt establishments on the DOL website, but that they still held a retail license through their County Sanitarian. Lindsey said the Federal Meat Inspection Act still gave Compliance Investigators the authorization to routinely go into retail shops that sold meat for the purpose of compliance surveillance activities

(1:22:13) 9:22 AM – EXECUTIVE OFFICER UPDATES

(1:22:33) 9:22 AM YNP Bison/EIS/IBMP Operations Update

Mike Honeycutt reported that there was not a huge update at this time of year, but that the State's case was still open regarding the EIS, even though there had been no movement on that:

- Mr. Honeycutt explained that for the first time in about two or three years, the DOL had to engage in the lethal removal of a Yellowstone National Park Bison, a bull, about four miles west of the Zone 2 Tolerance area, explaining that "all the boxes had been checked" in deciding to lethally remove the bison
- Because the Department of Justice (DOJ) was closing down its Agency Legal Services Bureau, if outside Counsel was needed for the DOL, they would be relying on possibly Department of Labor staff or outside law firms, such as the Drake Law Firm that had been used in the Meat license cases
- The next IBMP meeting was scheduled for October 14, 2025.
- Mike Honeycutt said that the Park had roughly a population of about 5,500 to 6,000 bison, at last count, putting them in the most aggressive posture for population management. The current EIS Yellowstone was operating under wanted that number to remain under 6,000. Jake Feddes said that the cold, snowy winter that was predicted could mean a larger out-migration of the bison. Dr. Szymanski said that there was a good-sized group of females that would graduate from quarantine this winter, leaving space to quarantine new animals
 - Dr. Szymanski said that they go up to the Fort Peck facility once every three years and that it was a great facility that did everything we needed it to do

(1:46:21) 9:46 AM RECESS

(2:05:44) 10:06 AM RECONVENE

CENTRALIZED SERVICES DIVISION REPORTS

(2:05:54) 10:06 AM

(2:06:01) 10:06 AM FISCAL BUREAU

Brian Simonson, Deputy Executive Officer, introduced himself

(2:06:09) 10:06 AM Predator Control Aerial Hunting Allocations

Brian Simonson reported that it was the time of year to determine how much of the statutory \$575,000 appropriation would go to Wildlife Services for predator control aerial

hunting and how much would go to the three counties, Powder River, Carter and Richland, that did not participate in their program:

MOTION/VOTE

(2:15:34) 10:15 AM

Greg Wichman moved to approve authorizing \$513,112 for the annual payment for Wildlife Services Predator Control aerial hunting and the \$49,393 payment, divided between the three counties that did not participate in Wildlife Services aerial hunting program. Alan Redfield seconded. The motion passed.

(2:19:53) 10:20 AM June 30, 2025 State Special Revenue Report

Brian Simonson said that he would be reporting on the May/June State Special Revenue Reports, which were essentially end-of-year reports:

- Mr. Simonson said that the two revenue streams that didn't meet their budget projections for FY25 were Field Inspections and Milk Inspections
 - Field Inspections were short \$12,000 compared to this time last year and \$40,000 under what was budgeted. But, to counter that, Market Inspections were around \$60,000 more than budgeted, about \$53,000 more than at this time last year
- Per Capita Fees were \$100,000 more than at this time last year and \$529,000 more than was budgeted, which cut into the reserves
- The Legislature's additional general fund help subsidize Milk Inspection fees for Montana's shrinking milk industry. But, Egg Inspection, Mr. Simonson said, still had more money than they needed
- The Diagnostic Lab Fees were \$16,000 more than at this time last year and the Lab Fee budget was sitting at about a half million dollars for capital improvement

(2:24:10) 10:24 AM June 30, 2025 Budget Comparison Report

Brian Simonson reported on end-of-year budget comparisons, adding that, being the end of the year, there would be no budget projections this time:

- All within regulations, Mr. Simonson reported that there had been some moving around of numbers to close the fiscal year in a positive fashion
- Mr. Simonson Reported that there was \$566,000 more spent in Supplies than last year, with \$275,000 of it being the tag purchase at the end of the fiscal year. The increase in Rent of \$129,000, compared to last year was because of the addition of four Meat Inspectors and their vehicles. The \$105,000 in Repair and Maintenance was due to software enhancements in the Brands Division. The \$122,000 in Other Expenses, Mr. Simonson attributed to indirect increases year-over-year. Per Capita Fees were almost a million dollars more than this time last year with the addition of the tag purchase and bigger allocations for pay. Mr. Simonson added that it was a tight budget year compared to usual
- There was \$174,000 shifted from the LLB to Wildlife Services for prevention services before the end of the fiscal year. \$395,000 in HB10 dollars would be carried into this fiscal year. \$442,000 was still left from the NAHLN money that would be spent on equipment for the new Lab

PREDATOR CONTROL

(2:35:03) 10:35 AM

(2:35:18) 10:36 AM LLB Predation Claims Report and General Updates

Brian Simonson reported the latest on the Livestock Loss Board claims and general updates:

- Mr. Simonson said there were 20 claims processed since on July 28, 2025
- One claim was for black bear in Lewis and Clark County. In this calendar year, Mr. Simonson said there were a total of 69 losses processed for a total of \$107,000
- The LLB awarded \$216,000 in grants at their last meeting and approved the part-time Specialist job description. Also at their last meeting, the LLB awarded \$95,000 to Wildlife Services. A future meeting date hadn't been decided yet, but, Mr. Simonson thought that they might address some rule changes and adding an additional grant cycle

(2:45:55) 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, welcomed everyone to Billings and updated the BOL on the latest activities of USDA Wildlife Services:

- Although the Federal Government was still restructuring, Mr. Tidwell said they had gotten permission to fill some vacancies, adding that they were able to fill their Air National Guard position at Great Falls, the Trapper/Wildlife Special position out of Garfield County was selected and was set to start on September 7th, but, the applicants received for the position out of Glendive were not sufficient and that job would be re-announced. Also authorized were A1 hires, which Mr. Tidwell said would allow them to announce four Range Rider positions and their Grizzly Bear Summer Seasonal position for next year. Montana was one of two in the Western Region authorized to hire a new Disease Biologist, and one was hired out of California
 - Mr. Tidwell said that by September and October, they would be fully staffed for this year
- With the Federal restructuring, Mr. Tidwell reported that ATOC, the Aviation Safety Training Center, had been renamed to ASC, the Aviation Safety Center and would be located out of Norman, Oklahoma
- Regarding the helicopters, Mr. Tidwell said that 95 Tango was good to go on a new set of blades, the 765 had a nick found on the spline of the transmission shaft that would need to be replaced
- Mr. Tidwell said it was announced that USDA Wildlife Services had been picked to be the ones who understand the USDA's Wildlife Biosecurity assessments in regards to Avian Influenza, but also how to manage it
- Mr. Tidwell explained that for commercial bird facilities, producers could voluntarily sign up to have Wildlife Services enter their premises and assess

preventative measures that could be taken to help protect against Avian Influenza with reimbursement of the expenses up to \$25,000 per facility

- For the Federal fiscal year, Mr. Tidwell gave IT numbers up to this point: Wolf-49 confirmed with 30 calves, 10 cattle, 5 guard dogs, 2 lambs, 2 sheep; Black Bear-15 confirmed, mostly goats, kids, lamb, llama sheep; Grizzly Bear-88 confirmed, 64 calves, 18 cattle, 1 lamb, 1 piglet, 1 sheep, 4 swine; Mountain Lion-15 confirmed, 1 dog, 4 goats, 1 kid, 4 lambs, 5 sheep
- There had been a complication, Mr. Tidwell said, in the Gravelles, because a wolf had killed three guard dogs and then wolf pups had chewed up a calf, which reset the clock on control efforts and the discussion with FWP to decide to take the whole pack or just a few at a time. He said that grizzly bears had been moving away from the Front but were picking up in the South Madison area. He added that there had been a grizzly near the Bear Paws this Spring that had been taken care of off a porch. Greg Wichman said some got in a little trouble this spring again out of Lewistown
- Eric Moore said that the Trump Administration was committed to delisting Grizzly Bears, but it would still end up getting tied up by Judge Malloy
- Phillips County passed their cattle petition, Mr. Tidwell said, and that was good because the coyotes were thick up on the Hi-Line. Doug Ekberg, who was the District Supervisor in the Eastern half of Montana, was introduced and would stay to visit with folks during a meeting break
- Mr. Tidwell said that he did not have any documented confirmed or probable kills of a domestic bison in the last 20 years, but only a harassment incident by a wolf, just south of Billings

ANIMAL HEALTH & FOOD SAFETY DIVISION REPORTS

(3:21:57) 11:23 AM

(3:21:57) 11:23 AM – MEAT, MILK & EGG INSPECTION BUREAU

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

(3:24:15) 11:24 AM General Updates

(3:24:15) 11:24 AM Summary of NADRO July Conference

Alicia Love reported on the National Association of Dairy Regulatory Officials (NADRO) conference she had just attended in Vermont:

- Ms. Love said that HPAI in raw milk cheeses was addressed at the conference, as she said the cheese aging process did not kill that disease, and raised additional questions regarding Salmonella and E.coli probabilities in those cheeses as well. Also discussed at the conference was guidance on how to address dairy colostrum, which was being sold as human food, even though the Pasteurized Milk Ordinance (PMO) said that it was not considered milk
 - Jake Feddes said that colostrum was available in a freeze-dried pill form
- Ms. Love was introduced to the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center at the conference, which provided Congressional grant funding and technical

assistance to dairy businesses. She hoped to bring Montana and other states online with this organization. Also announced by Ms. Love was that Montana had been nominated to host the NADRO conference in 2027, but added that most of the planning for that conference was handled by the NADRO Board Treasurer and that some other states said they would take time to come to Montana in July of that year to help with the conference

(3:37:08) 11:37 AM Out-of-State Travel Requests

(3:37:46) 11:38 AM Alicia Love/Two Meat & Poultry Supervisors to ASMID

Alicia Love requested that the BOL approve out-of-state travel for two of her Meat Staff and herself to attend the USAHA-ASMID Conference in Denver, Colorado on November 2-5, 2025:

- Ms. Love explained that this was a conference that the DOL attended twice a year and was a help in keeping up with trends within on-site audits and about how the Federal budget was looking for the Federal fiscal year
- Mike Honeycutt said that the DOL had always sent the Bureau Chief to this conference, but he thought it was a good idea, every couple of years, to send more people to it to deepen the knowledge within the Meat program

MOTION/VOTE

(3:39:56) 11:40 AM

Alan Redfield moved to approve out-of-state travel for two Meat & Poultry Supervisors, to attend the Fall 2025 Association of State Meat Inspection Directors (ASMID) conference in Denver, Colorado on November 2 – 5, 2025. William Kleinsasser seconded. The motion passed.

(3:40:22) 11:40 AM Job Greenall FD375 Dairy Farm Sanitation and Inspections

Alicia Love requested BOL approval to send Sanitarian Job Greenall to FDA Dairy Farm Sanitation and Inspections Training In Minneapolis, Minnesota on September 9-11, 2025:

- Ms. Love explained that this training was usually paid for out of training funds provided by a grant and was required for staff to continue to be in line with Federal requirements

MOTION/VOTE

(3:41:34) 11:41 AM

Greg Wichman moved to approve out-of-state travel for Job Greenall to attend the FD375 Dairy Farm Sanitation and Inspections course in Minneapolis, Minnesota on September 9 – 11, 2025. William Kleinsasser seconded. The motion passed.

(3:42:40) 11:43 AM LUNCH

(3:50:33) 12:46 PM RECONVENE

Gene Curry called the meeting back to order

ANIMAL HEALTH & FOOD SAFETY DIVISION REPORTS (Continued)

(3:50:38) 12:47 PM

(3:50:38) 12:47 PM – VETERINARY DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY

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

(3:51:50) 12:48 PM Laboratory Fee Adjustments

Dr. Greg Juda explained the proposed testing fees changes he had submitted to the BOL for their approval:

- Dr. Juda said that although not all testing fees, such as supplies and the like for Brucella testing, were proposed for change, others were adjusted at 3% for inflationary price increases and a few increased because of cost or market analysis. He said that a “back of napkin” calculation of a 3% across-the-board price increase would bring around \$48,000 more in testing fees to the DOL per year

MOTION/VOTE

(4:02:45) 12:59 PM

William Kleinsasser moved to approve posting for public comment, adjustments in laboratory fees, as presented by Dr. Greg Juda. Lily Andersen seconded. The motion passed.

(4:06:02) 1:02 PM Collaboration with Rocky Vista University

Mike Honeycutt reported that the DOL was in negotiations with Rocky Vista University, a potential Vet school in Billings, about potentially using the MVDL for the Pathology rotation during the 3rd year of Vet school:

- Dr. Szymanski said there was incentive for the DOL to continue to move the conversation forward, but that we would not probably be back with it for about a month

Dr. Greg Juda updated the BOL on the progress of the new Lab

- Dr. Juda said that an April timeframe was now the tentative move time into the new Lab and said that from an operational standpoint it didn't really impact us and that it would make things easier in terms of possibly not having snow cover to navigate in the move
- Paving of the parking lots and driveways was set to start the following week. Swank also told Dr. Juda that when the large purchase with Thermo-Fisher arrived, it could be moved directly into the new Lab. The incinerator, was supposed to ship at the end of August, a 9 ½-month delay

(4:12:02) 1:08 PM – ANIMAL HEALTH BUREAU

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

(4:12:15) 1:08 PM Indemnity Request - Beaverhead County Brucellosis Reactor

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski requested that the BOL approve an indemnity request for a bull that tested positive at the Dillon market, had been euthanized, sent to the Diagnostic Lab and tissues had been submitted for culture:

- Dr. Szymanski reported that the bull was purchased from out-of-state, outside of the Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA) and if it did culture, they would get the whole genome sequencing results on the isolate to confirm whether the infection came from the GYA area
- Dr. Szymanski explained that the bull's owner received \$250 for a diagnostic purchase from USDA, and she was requesting that the BOL approve utilizing the indemnity fund that the Legislature created to pay for the value of the animal, which was worth more than \$250, being a 5-year-old bull, weighing 2,250 pounds, and having sold at the market for \$4235.55

MOTION/VOTE

(4:17:36) 1:14 PM

Greg Wichman moved to approve that the DOL pay indemnity of \$4,235.55 - \$250, for the euthanized 5-year-old bull from Beaverhead County, as presented by Dr. Tahnee Szymanski. Alan Redfield seconded. The motion passed.

(4:18:04) 1:14 PM Out-of-State Travel Request

(4:18:04) 1:14 PM USAHA Annual Meeting

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski requested that the BOL approve out-of-state travel for herself, the Assistant State Veterinarian and a Program Veterinarian to attend the US Animal Health Association (USAHA) annual meeting in Aurora, Colorado on October 30 – November 5 2025:

- Dr. Szymanski said that with three sessions running concurrently at the meeting, she would like to take three Veterinarians to cover all of the committees that would meet. Two subjects that would be talked about a lot, she said, would be the New World Screwworm and where we were with the HPAI investigations

MOTION/VOTE

(3:27:52) 1:56 PM

Jake Feddes moved to approve out-of-state travel for the State Veterinarian, Assistant State Veterinarian and the Program Veterinarian to attend the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) Annual Meeting in Aurora, Colorado on October 30 – November 5, 2025. Lily Andersen seconded. The motion passed.

(4:22:02) 1:18 PM Animal Health Updates

(4:22:10) 1:18 PM New World Screwworm

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski said that despite the level of concern, the New World Screwworm had the least amount of updates associated with it at this time:

- Dr. Szymanski said that around 15 State Animal Health Officials had formed a New World Screwworm Working group to join with a USDA working group. They met twice a week to discuss all of the components of what the response in the United States would look like. She added that in the next couple weeks, Montana would have conversations to bring together counterparts who would be involved in a Montana potential response going forward

(4:26:15) 1:22 PM – Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski reported that there had been no new detections for over 30 days, at the national level, of HPAI:

- Dr. Szymanski said that they would not know until Fall migration if we were at the end of the outbreak. Regarding the National Milk Testing Surveillance Program for HPAI, Montana was considered a “Confirmed-Free” state and dairies would be switching from bulk tank testing to silo testing and continuing that probably through Fall migration and potentially backing off on it after that

(4:27:35) 1:24 PM Brucellosis

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski reported that they were still waiting for an update on the pending culture:

- Dr. Szymanski said that they were working with FWP to schedule an in-person meeting in October in SW Montana to bring together State, Federal Wildlife and Animal Health Officials from the three GYA states to have guided conversations about how to move Brucellosis management forward

(4:28:53) 1:25 PM Pacific Northwest Economic Region Annual Meeting (PNWER)

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski reported that she and Mike Honeycutt had recently attended the PNWER meeting in Seattle:

- Dr. Szymanski said that a lot of the discussion was focused on the HPAI outbreak in Washington and the corresponding outbreak in British Columbia. Mike Honeycutt said that PNWER’s Cross-Border Livestock Health Group might be struggling to find what their purpose was, recognizing that they had no authority to change international border policies regarding livestock as those were decided by Washington DC and Ottawa. The meeting did help the groups understand how regionally dependent both nations were on each other
- Dr. Szymanski and Alberta’s Provincial Veterinarian would Co-Chair next year’s meeting. Mr. Honeycutt hoped that attendees would come away from next year’s meeting with resolutions for both Provincial and State leaders

(4:36:26) 1:33 PM Update on Transition to Core One Software/EID Tags/RB51

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski updated the BOL on the transition of Animal Health software from USAHerds to Core One:

- Dr. Szymanski reported that the go-live date to the Core One software was September 8, 2025

Gene Curry wondered if the DOL could possibly acquire the extra EID tags from some Southeast US states that might be transitioning away from bangs vaccination:

- Dr. Szymanski said that with the announcement of the new Brucellosis standards and states moving to that rule, USDA had talked about looking at a different tag allocation system rather than just using cow inventory numbers from NASS. She said that in June she and some other Western State Veterinarians discussed sharing with USDA allowing that type of allocation system to provide a level of fairness to the states

Eric Moore requested an update on the RB51 supply:

- Dr. Szymanski reported that there should be adequate vaccine out there now, according to a discussion she had with her contact at the RB51 vaccine company in Colorado. She said there was an international company that produced the vaccine as well that USDA had imported from in the past.
- Eric Moore requested that there be a survey of the Veterinarians around the state to see how they were sitting with their vaccine supplies

BRANDS ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

(4:49:33) 1:46 PM

Jay Bodner, Brands Division Administrator, introduced himself and handed out a graph to the BOL, showing the yearly comparison of new brands issued and those transferred and some market numbers as well:

- Mr. Bodner said that new brands issued were 826 in 2023, 710 in 2024 and 709 in 2025. An average of about 570 brands were transferred through those fiscal years. In 2021, the record year, Mr. Bodner said that about 1000 new brands were issued and 1000 brands were transferred. The market numbers, he said, were still pretty strong
- Mike Honeycutt said that about 70% to 80% of the inspections were from Local Inspectors and the remaining 20% to 30% were done by staff

(5:00:00) 1:56 PM BRANDS ENFORCEMENT DIVISION UPDATE

(5:00:00) 1:56 PM Service Now Audit Programming

Jay Bodner gave an update on the new inspection book audit program that was being developed through Service Now:

- Mr. Bodner said that the system was now live at the Helena office, but there were two minor tweaks to be made on it. He said that this year's audit would be tedious as information was still being pulled from the previous Fort Supply system along with the Service Now system. But, by the time the transition was totally complete, next year's audits would be different and running in a really nice system
- Projects left on the "To-Do" list, according to Mr. Bodner, included lifetime horse inspections and lien renewals

(5:04:44) 2:01 PM Google AI Horse Inspections

Jay Bodner gave an update on the Google AI horse inspection status:

- Mr. Bodner explained that the Google AI cattle inspections project was a priority and had been completed and they were expanding into doing the same with lifetime and annual horse inspections
- Although the horse inspection project should only take 12 weeks, the cost was in the six-figure range and would require funding through HB10, money that couldn't be accessed until July of 2027. Mr. Honeycutt thought that just requiring everyone to get a lifetime horse inspection might be easier, but Mr. Bodner had reasons that might not be a good idea. And so, Mr. Honeycutt and Mr. Bodner decided to wait on the project for a while

(5:11:17) 2:07 PM Annual Estray Ad

Jay Bodner reported that the Brands Enforcement Division had run their annual estray ad in the Western Ag Reporter on June 17 and 24, 2025:

- Mr. Bodner explained that each estray had previously been advertised in the local papers for 10 days. The annual ad, this year, listed 150,141 unclaimed estrays. Proceeds from the sale of unclaimed animals were held by the DOL for two years in case the owner did come forward, and if not, that money reverted into the DOL's estray fund
- The BOL had a discussion with Mr. Bodner about the market check-in listing of "Mixed" calves and Mr. Bodner said he would be presenting that information to his Market Supervisors at a meeting with them the following day

(5:27:32) 2:24 PM International Livestock Identification Association

Jay Bodner reported on the International Livestock Identification Association (ILIA) meeting held on July 21-23, 2025 in Nebraska:

- Attending that meeting were Gene Curry, Shawn Hando, Wes Seward and Jay Bodner. Mr. Bodner shared that Ty Thomas, previous Assistant Administrator in the Brands Enforcement Division, was elected as President of ILIA
- Some highlights that Mr. Bodner shared from that meeting were brand identification from a phone picture, virtual fencing updates, infrared brands, cattle theft cases and cow muzzle identification
- Mike Honeycutt shared about how Montana had put more resources into regulating cattle movement and change of ownership or staffing at markets than other states and how the strength of Montana laws were why we didn't see as much theft and fraud in the cattle industry as in other states

(5:37:44) 2:34 PM Truck Stops/Brands/Transfers for FY25

Jay Bodner reported on the latest livestock truck stops conducted by DOL staff:

- Mr. Bodner said that a truck stop had been conducted at Gray Cliff, in conjunction with the Bozeman Rodeo. There were a total of 30 stops, 14 verbal warnings, 3 written warning and 3 notices to appear. There were some with no CVI and one individual had no brand inspection on horses

Jay Bodner reported on staffing in the Brands Enforcement Division:

- Mr. Bodner said that they would be posting the Lewistown vacancy as quickly as they could, but that they did have a part-time Market Inspector there that was doing well

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

(5:43:36) 2:40 PM

Just one member of the public commented when Mr. Curry requested public comment:

- Don Woerner, introduced himself as a General Practitioner from Laurel, reporting that he had not been to a BOL meeting in a long time and thought that the BOL having a meeting in Billings was a good opportunity for him to attend. He said he was semi-retired, owned his own practice and was looking for a good young person to help him, especially with range beef cattle and bison. He expressed concern about losing practitioners in rural areas, but that it was hard to make a living year-round, but it wasn't bad when treating dogs and cats

SET DATE FOR THE NEXT BOARD MEETING

(5:48:20) 2:44 PM (William Kleinsasser left the meeting at 2:51 pm) (5:54:52)

Gene Curry said that Fall was probably the best time to hold a BOL meeting in Livingston or Bozeman so that the BOL could tour the DSA:

- Jake Feddes said that September would be best month to do a meeting for him, except for September 9th. Greg Wichman said that he would not be available the 26th or 27th because of hauling cows. Alan Redfield and Lily Anderson were not available on the 24th and she suggested September 17-18
- The next BOL meeting was scheduled for September 17 or 18, with a location to be determined

MEETING ADJOURNED

(5:57:20) 2:53 PM


Gene Curry, Chairman