



Montana Board of Livestock Meeting Minutes

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

January 28, 2026

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

Board Members Present

Alan Redfield (cattle producer)
Greg Wichman (sheep producer)

William Kleinsasser (swine producer)
Jake Feddes (cattle producer)

(Gene Curry, Eric Moore and Lillian Andersen attended meeting by ZOOM)

Staff Present

Mike Honeycutt, EO
Brian Simonson, Deputy EO
Donna Wilham, Adm. Asst to EO
Lindsey Simon, Centralized Services
Evan Waters, Centralized Services
Dale Haylett, Centralized Services
Rick Corder, Centralized Services
Mike Spatz, Centralized Services

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski, MT State Vet
Dr. Brenee Peterson, Animal Health
Dr. Emily Kaleczyc, Animal Health
Dr. Kelsey Martin, Animal Health
Dr. Greg Juda, MVDL
Jay Bodner, Brands Enforcement
Alicia Love, Meat, Milk & Egg Bureau
Leslie Doely, Livestock Loss Board

Public Present

Karli Johnson, MT Farm Bureau
Ellie Brighton, MT Stockgrowers Association
Kali Wicks, MT Milk Producers Association

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

(0:00) 8:00 AM

Vice-Chairman Alan Redfield called the meeting to order at 8:00 AM

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

(0:00) 8:00 AM

Vice-Chairman Alan Redfield called the meeting to order and requested introductions:

- **William Kleinsasser**, Swine Representative, Augusta
- **Jake Feddes**, Cattle Representative, Manhattan
- **Greg Wichman**, Sheep Representative, Hilger
- **Eric Moore**, Cattle Representative, Miles City
- **Lily Andersen**, Dairy & Poultry Representative, south of Livingston
- **Alan Redfield**, Cattle Representative from Paradise Valley, south of Livingston
- **Gene Curry**, Cattle Representative, Valier

- BOL members reported on happenings in their area of the state, with a common theme of the unusual winter, warmer temperatures and a lack of snow. Positives were reported in the cattle market, high futures for swine and some pick up in the wool market

BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

(8:38) 8:09 AM

(8:38) 8:09 AM – BOARD APPROVAL OF PAST MEETING MINUTES

Alan Redfield requested approval of the minutes of the last BOL meeting, held on December 17, 2025

MOTION/VOTE

(8:45) 8:09 AM

William Kleinsasser moved to approve the minutes from the Montana Board of Livestock December 17, 2025 meeting. Greg Wichman seconded. The motion passed.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE UPDATES

(9:08) 8:09 AM

(9:08) 8:09 AM YNP Bison/EIS/IBMP Operations Update

- Mike Honeycutt reported that the lack of snow in the Yellowstone Park area had left limited opportunity for trapping and hunting opportunities of bison because of not many leaving the Park. Dr. Tahnee Szymanski reported that two quarantine facilities would have room for more bison if they would come to the trap, as one had recently graduated animals and another would have eligible bison to transport the following week
- Mr. Honeycutt reported that, even though the State of Montana's challenge to the recent EIS adopted by Yellowstone National Park was still active, there was no update or real progress to report on it

(15:08) 8:15 AM Legislative Interim Update

- Mr. Honeycutt reported that he expected the DOL to be on the calendar of the Economic Affairs Interim Committee in the Spring or Summer for an Agency Oversight appointment. He reminded the BOL that with the upcoming 2027 Legislative Session, deadlines were being set for any Legislative or budget concepts so they could be internally vetted and refined and then brought to the BOL for their approval before being put forward to the Governor's Office of Budget Program Planning (OBPP)
- Although the DOL did not have any active performance audits to report on to the Audit Committee that met the previous week, Mr. Honeycutt said the DOL was continuing to track the follow up of the Financial Audit findings from two years ago, regarding the timeliness of deposits

(22:42) 8:23 AM Update on Governor's OGSM Strategic Management and Executive Officer Strategic Goals

- Mike Honeycutt shared what was reported to the Governor at the January 21, 2026 OGSM Meeting: Quarterly slaughter figures were normalizing. DOL expenses were below the appropriated budget. Market cattle movement was slightly ahead with the throughput at the Commission Companies compared to this point last year. Around 12,000 pounds of ground pork and pork sausage were delivered to the Montana Food Bank Network from the Producers Partnership. A movement of quarantined bison opened up more space at the YNP quarantine facilities. The Big Beautiful Bill provided more funding for Meat & Poultry Inspection. The FDA follow up check rating for Milk Inspection was passed. Positive comments about the DOL were received at the recently held stakeholder meetings. Low bison population removals in YNP brought concerns of future population. Weekly HPAI testing of milk would continue. Brucellosis-affected herd in Gallatin County. Faulty RFID tag issues at Canadian border
- Six-Month Horizon Goals: Prepare for three-year Federal Audit of Meat & Poultry Inspection Program. Procure and keep the salmonella testing business at Montana Egg Products. Work with the Department of Ag on innovative feed practices. Prepare for the move into the new Lab in April. Work with FWP on the elk capture on the Crow Reservation. Distribute RFID tags. Find Local Inspectors to pilot tests extending the use of Service Now in the field. Improve visual data for LLB stats and increase the number of grant applications. Get DOL website ADA compliant. Engage stakeholders, the BOL and staff for what budget needs would be

(45:36) 8:46 AM – HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

Mike Spatz, Human Resources Officer for the DOL, introduced himself and updated the BOL on Human Resources activities at the DOL

(46:09) 8:46 AM Staff Openings, Recruitment Updates

Mike Spatz reported since the last BOL meeting, there were four vacated positions, one new hire and the DOL was recruiting for 11 positions. He said interviews had been held for several positions in the DOL with strong candidates being interviewed for the Veterinarian Microbiologist Section Head position at the MVDL

- There was discussion about Sanitarians being hired in the DOL before they became Board-Certified and its effects. Also discussed was the success of DOL proactive recruitment activities at the MSGA Ag Labor Summit and the MSU Employer/Student Mingle Session

(1:11:28) 9:11 AM – LEGAL COUNSEL UPDATE (May Require Executive Session)

(1:11:28) 9:11 AM Litigation Update

Mike Honeycutt reported on the appeal made on January 16, 2026 from American Prairie with the Interior Board of Land Appeals regarding the use of seven allotments in

south Phillips County for bison. Lindsey Simon said she did not have any perspective litigation to report on that the DOL was planning to start

(1:19:47) 9:20 AM RECESS

(1:19:50) 9:30 AM RECONVENE

Alan Redfield called the meeting back to order

CENTRALIZED SERVICES DIVISION REPORTS

(1:19:53) 9:30 AM

Brian Simonson, Chief Financial Officer, introduced himself

(1:20:06) 9:30 AM FISCAL BUREAU

(1:20:06) 9:30 AM Aerial Hunting Public Notice

Brian Simonson explained the Aerial Hunting Program, giving notice that licenses to participate in the Program ran each year from February 1 to January 31, and so, he was alerting pilots now about relicensing. The program, to control coyotes in Montana, required harvest reports from participating pilots and he would present numbers from those reports at the next BOL meeting

(1:22:53) 9:33 AM December 31, 2025 State Special Revenue Report

Brian Simonson reported that this Special Revenue Report was at the halfway point of the fiscal year. Not all Fall Run info had hit the books and Per Capita Fee reports and payments were due by March 1st, and so, some numbers on this report were expected to correct themselves in the months ahead. Also affecting Milk and Egg numbers, were the timing of deposits. A shift in testing at the MVDL appeared to be the cause of less revenue showing there. Wolf donation funds were keeping pace with what they had been over the last several years

(1:27:51) 9:38 AM January 2026 through June 2026 Budget Projections Report

Brian Simonson explained that vacancies, some quite big, across the board in the DOL, made the Total Personal Services number look super strong for this time of year

(1:29:58) 9:40 AM December 31, 2025 Budget Comparison Report

- Brian Simonson reported that there was a lot of overtime spending in Brands and Meat, but not as much as last year. Contract spending was over by \$213,850 compared to last year due to increased insurance costs and increased testing in the DSA. The Supply increase was due to vehicle turnovers in Brands. Rent spending, related to Motor Pool and vehicle lease charges, would correct itself to a positive number. The MVDL spent more general fund than last year. Repair & Maintenance increased due to the MALDI preventative maintenance expense at the MVDL. UPS and FedEx charges were moved into Other Expenses, increasing those numbers. The 6-month vacancy in LLB affected the Depredation Remediation numbers. Transfer numbers, most of which came from

elk collaring, came earlier than last year. There had been no real movement in Statutory Appropriations, Budget Amendments or HB10

- There was BOL discussion regarding employee payouts, benefits and the effects of remote workers on sick leave

PREDATOR CONTROL

(1:51:29) 10:02 AM

(1:51:29) 10:02 AM Update on Activities of USDA Wildlife Services – (Presented by Dalin Tidwell, Montana State Director)

Mike Honeycutt read a report sent to him from Dalin Tidwell, who was not able to join the BOL meeting due to him traveling for work

(1:56:10) 10:06 AM LIVESTOCK LOSS BOARD (LLB) REPORT TO THE BOL

Brian Simonson reported on information given to him from Leslie Doely, LLB Program Manager:

- Mr. Simonson said that since the last BOL meeting, 16 producers had applied for claims on 66 losses. Wildlife Services were essentially doing the same amount of work, but cumulative losses being reported were way down in 2025 compared to the last five years, and so, the LLB planned to do more public awareness of the program. The next LLB meeting was scheduled for February 24, 2026 and it was planned to tackle some rulemaking and grants
- A multiplier was discussed by the BOL

ANIMAL HEALTH & FOOD SAFETY DIVISION REPORTS

(2:09:09) 10:19 AM

(2:09:09) 10:19 AM – MEAT, MILK & EGG INSPECTION BUREAU

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

(2:09:55) 10:20 AM Out-of-State Travel Requests

(2:10:14) 10:20 AM Western Milk Seminar

Alicia Love requested that the BOL approve out-of-state travel for Erin Burns, Job Greenall and herself, to be able to attend the Western Milk Seminar in Tacoma, Washington on April 20-23, 2026

MOTION/VOTE

(2:10:39) 10:21 AM

William Kleinsasser moved to approve out-of-state travel for Alicia Love, Erin Burns and Job Greenall to attend the Western Milk Seminar in Tacoma, Washington on April 20-23, 2026. Jake Feddes seconded. The motion passed.

(2:11:43) 10:22 AM FD371 Milk Pasteurization Controls & Tests Course

Alicia Love requested that the BOL approve out-of-state travel for two of her staff to be able to attend training that would help further their knowledge in doing equipment tests for the Milk Program

MOTION/VOTE

(2:12:24) 10:23 AM

Jake Feddes moved to approve out-of-state travel for Fred Woelkers and Job Greenall to attend the FD371 Milk Pasteurization Controls & Tests Course in Minneapolis, Minnesota on March 17-20, 2026. William Kleinsasser seconded. The motion passed.

(2:13:15) 10:24 AM BOL Discussion of Montana Dairies/DOL Appeal Process (Non-Agenda Item)

There was BOL discussion about the trend of some dairies to produce cheese and other finished dairy products rather than fluid milk and how Alicia Love shared that she was watching trends in both Milk and Egg production, and incorporating flexibility in her staff to deal with those changes. Ms. Love and Mike Honeycutt also walked through the step-by-step Appeals Process in various areas of the DOL

(2:21:54) 10:32 AM – ANIMAL HEALTH BUREAU

(2:22:01) 10:32 AM Requests for Out-of-State Travel

(2:22:16) 10:32 AM Western States Livestock Health Association (WSLHA/Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER)/Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostician (FADD) Training

Dr. Emily Kaleczyc requested that the BOL approve out-of-state travel for various Animal Health staff to attend three different events and trainings, one of which did not have a specific date or venue determined, as of yet

MOTION/VOTE

(2:25:01) 10:35 AM

William Kleinsasser moved to approve out-of-state travel for the State Veterinarian, the Assistant State Veterinarian and two Program Veterinarians to attend the Western States Livestock Health Association Annual Meeting in Oregon in June 2026; international travel for Dr. Tahnee Szymanski, and either Mike Honeycutt or Emily Kaleczyc to attend the Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) Annual Meeting in Edmonton, Alberta on July 20-23, 2026; and out-of-state travel for Dr. Kelsey Martin to attend Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostician Training on a date and in a location yet to be determined. Jake Feddes seconded. The motion passed.

(2:26:55) 10:37 AM Disease Updates

(2:27:00) 10:37 AM New World Screwworm

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski and Dr. Emily Kaleczyc updated the BOL on the advancement of the New World Screwworm, now just 187 miles south of the United States border. Also discussed were measures being taken by USDA to slow, and hopefully stop the advancement and what steps the DOL would take if there was a New World Screwworm detection in Montana

(3:05:12) 11:16 AM RFID Tag and Avian Influenza Discussion (Non-Agenda Item)

- Dr. Tahnee Szymanski reported that the DOL had not yet gotten the final allocation of RFID tags for 2026, but said that we would continue to advocate for a larger allocation. Mike Honeycutt gave recognition to Austin and Christian Bray, who had been working in the Congressional Delegation and helped bring more understanding of Montana's needs to that Federal appropriations process
- Dr. Emily Kaleczyc reported that an Avian Influenza case had been reported in Carbon County the week before and then, just yesterday, a case was confirmed in Gallatin County

(3:08:42) 11:19 AM Cooperative Agreement Updates

- Dr. Emily Kaleczyc reported that there was extra money in their ADT cooperative agreement this year and was proposing to use it to purchase RFID readers for the District Brands Investigators and use the balance to purchase RFID tags to distribute to Veterinarians

MOTION/VOTE

(3:11:11) 11:21 AM

Jake Feddes moved to use the extra funding in the ADT Cooperative Agreement to purchase RFID readers for District Investigators and use the balance of the money to purchase RFID tags. William Kleinsasser seconded. The motion passed.

- Dr. Tahnee Szymanski reported on faulty RFID tags and CFIA's handling of the issue at the Canadian border

(3:21:26) 11:32 AM LUNCH

(3:21:29) 12:30 PM RECONVENE

BRANDS ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

(3:21:40) 12:30 PM

Jay Bodner, Brands Division Administrator, introduced himself

(3:22:05) 12:30 PM ARM RULE 32.18.105 & ARM RULE 32.18.106 BRAND OWNERSHIP AND SALE OF LIVESTOCK

Jay Bodner discussed the proposed changes to both ARM rules, citing what the Brands Division and DOL Legal felt was a need to tweak them, as they related to the “non-natural person” or “corporation limited liability”

MOTION/VOTE

(3:42:24) 12:51 PM

Greg Wichman moved to approve changes in ARM 32.18.105 and ARM 32.18.106, as discussed by Jay Bodner. Jake Feddes seconded. The motion passed.

(3:43:06) 12:52 PM BRANDS ENFORCEMENT DIVISION UPDATE

(3:43:06) 12:52 PM ServiceNow Updates

Jay Bodner updated the BOL on the most recent upgrades in the ServiceNow program, specifically addressing the Lifetime Horse and Rodeo card. He also shared his “To-Do” list for ‘26 and some in ‘27, including simplifying the tallies at the market, adding a comment box on the inspection, refining compliance email, doing lien renewal in ServiceNow and adding Local Inspectors into the system. He also explained how to fix the “Mixed Calves” issue brought forward by Eric Moore at a previous BOL meeting and the stray animal procedure used in the DOL

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

(4:07:18) 1:16 PM

Karli Johnson, with the Montana Farm Bureau, was the only one to give public comment, expressing her appreciation for the opportunity to listen in to the meeting and commenting on the “great” meeting held the day before between DOL staff and some of MFBF’s Senior Leadership

SET DATE FOR THE NEXT BOARD MEETING

(4:08:28) 1:17 PM

Alan Redfield requested that the BOL set the date for the next BOL meeting, adding that everybody but Jake would be starting calving by then:

- The next BOL meeting was scheduled for Friday, February 27, 2026

MEETING ADJOURNED

(4:12:34) 1:21 PM



Alan Redfield, Vice-Chairman