

UTAH DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD
Livestock Brand Board Meeting

Tuesday, June 28, 2022, 10:00-12:00 PM
4315 S 2700 W, TSOB South Bldg. FL 2, Taylorsville UT 84129-2129
UDAF Conference room 2507

Google meet: meet.google.com/oco-rzei-qzt

Convened:

10:07 AM

Attended by:

Craig Buttars - Commissioner	Don Richards - Board member
Kelly Pehrson - Deputy commissioner	Alan Gurney - Board member
Leann Hunting - Division director	Rick O'Brien - Board member
Dean Taylor - State vet	Kent Thurgood - Board member
Phil Crowther - Elk program manager	Jim Withers - Board member
Shara Hansen - Office specialist	Rob Wilcox - Livestock investigator
Suzanne Butler - Brand recorder	Sylvia Glover - Assistant attorney general
Brent Tanner – Utah cattlemen's association	

Welcome, call meeting to order, and roundtable by Jim Withers, board member:

Jim welcomed everyone to the meeting and brief introductions were made by all who were present.

Review of brand inspection data by Leann Hunting, Director of animal industry:

Leann reviewed the Electronic Brand Inspections Summary handout. The question was posed whether the numbers are higher or lower than last year. Leann said these numbers are likely slightly lower than last year but doesn't have the exact numbers to compare. She said that everyone's cattle are leaving the State due to the drought.

Budget review by Leann Hunting:

Leann reviewed the Animal Industry Brands Administration State Fiscal year 2022 as of 6/13/2022 handout. She mentioned the Federal Safety Grant which covered the line item: uniforms & personal protective gear. She said that due to the rising cost of gas, the State compensated the Brand Inspectors in a lump sum payment as opposed to the standard payout method. The lump sum payment is not reflected on the chart. It's predicted that we'll be under budget by approximately \$24,000. Leann asked for the board's opinion on that number and whether or not they were satisfied with that number. Kent said that is more than he was expecting. Jim asked what happens to the extra money, if it goes into a State fund somewhere. Leann advised that it will go into the restricted account for the board to use in the future.

There were questions asked about how many brand inspectors there are. Per Leann, there are currently 30-ish part time inspectors and 12 full time inspectors, with eight of the 12 being post certified.

Elk program update by Phil Crowther, UDAF elk program manager:

Phil mentioned the passing of the Domesticated Elk Act in 1997 by the Utah State Legislature and that over the last 25 years, the program has grown to include 25 elk farms and 10 elk parks. When he and Dr. Dean Taylor became part of the program, Phil said there were issues with inventory and brand inspection. The ear tags used at the time were very difficult for brand inspectors to read so they weren't being properly verified. Phil said that Dr. Taylor came up with the solution of electronic RFID tags, which use a wand for scanning and verification purposes instead of reading numbers off a list. Phil said with the introduction of the electronic tags, the inventory problem has been all but resolved. Phil was questioned as to whether or not all head are accounted for during an inventory check. It was confirmed that each elk has been accounted for through the use of drones, ATVs, and access to DNR's helicopter, among other things. The program is looking forward to having records to compare and refer back to in the future.

Don asked if any other states are using electronic RFID tags. Phil said that currently only Idaho and Utah have an active elk program. Dr. Taylor volunteered that Colorado also has one elk park. The issue of Canada's honesty on import applications was brought up. Canada's quarantine requirement for CWD is currently 18 months, compared to Utah's which is five years. Per new research, Utah may be changing the timeframe to seven years in the future. Utah's import requirements of negative TB & Brucellosis tests were mentioned.

Brent mentioned that he sits on the advisory committee for Elk and wanted to thank Phil and Dr. Taylor for the hard work and excellent job they're putting into cleaning up the elk program.

Trich update by Dr. Dean Taylor, State veterinarian:

Dr. Taylor mentioned that RFID tags may become part of a brand inspection going forward. He said that if animals are screened at the gate of an event, horses could be turned away there instead of exposing all the animals in attendance. He said that some states are currently requiring each individual animal to have an ID. Utah is not at that point yet.

Dr. Taylor said there have been two trich outbreaks in Utah since he was hired. The first was in Box Elder County. The animals crossed over State lines to graze and upon return to Utah, there were positive tests. There were potentially 6000 head exposed from seven official positives. The second case was out of Summit County. There were five official positives in the second outbreak and it's unknown where the animals came from. The cattlemen say that the bulls came out of Nevada; however, because Nevada doesn't have mandatory testing, it is unknown. Dr. Taylor said he's spoken with the Nevada State Vet and she is working on the implementation of mandatory trich testing. Because Utah has mandatory testing, we are able to track the bull from a positive test through slaughter.

Alan asked what the consequences were for the Idaho outbreak and Kent asked if the owner would be liable for any neighbor's losses. It was confirmed that State law requires it.

Brent asked when would be the best time for DNR to work with UDAF and the producers to determine the best times for testing and testing management. Dr. Taylor and Brent further discussed it and agreed that the best time would be before the cattle come off the ranges in the fall. Brent said he would get started on a Trich education campaign which he would work with Dr. Taylor before implementation.

Investigation and inspection demo by Rob Wilcox, UDAF lead livestock investigator:

Rob did a presentation on two investigations he's performed and attempted to show the process of taking a credit card payment on his tablet. Swiping the card didn't work, so instead of typing in the numbers, the transaction was cancelled.

Brand recording update and demo by Suzanne Butler, brand recorder:

Suzanne explained how brands are registered and reviewed an application. She explained her process of approving a brand and how UDAF works with applicants if a brand is unavailable. A question was posed about lower-case lettering and why it's not allowed. Suzanne and Leann both clarified that in order to avoid confusion on letters such as "C" and "O", lower case lettering is not approved.

Public comment:

No one from the public was present, therefore no time was allotted for public comments. However, a question was asked about equine infectious anemia, which opened up a discussion about the Coggins testing process and requirements. Dr. Taylor mentioned that rules are not always put into place to stop people from doing things they shouldn't, but to allow UDAF the chance to hold people responsible for breaking them.

The next meeting will be held in December at the cattlemen's convention, unless something pressing comes up in the meantime.

Adjourned:

11:58 AM