



2024
IDAHO WOOL GROWERS
ASSOCIATION POLICY

OCTOBER 31, 2024
2118 W Airport Way | Boise, Idaho 83705

LAMB AND WOOL COMMITTEE

Chair: Brett Wilder (2024)

WOOL CONTAMINATION

The IWGA urges all wool growers to follow the manufacturer's recommendations for the use of sheep paint, not altering the branding paint in any way, and IWGA urges wool producers to be aware of polypropylene contamination and to take those steps necessary to assure that wool clips are free from this type of contamination.

SUPPORT OF U.S. SHEEP STATION

The IWGA supports a close working relationship between the Agricultural Research Service and the University of Idaho on collaborative research projects that benefits Idaho and the nation's sheep industry.

The IWGA is adamantly opposed to any effort to close the station and calls on the industry to design research programs that address the current problems of the industry.

UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO SHEEP PROGRAM

The IWGA support adequate funding to maintain and expand sheep research programs at the UI. The IWGA supports the University of Idaho Sheep Center and encourages the University to continue to prioritize the invaluable research and services it provides the sheep industry in Idaho and the west.

UI CALS AG RESEARCH & EXTENSION SYSTEM

The IWGA supports the University of Idaho Agricultural Research and Extension System. The University of Idaho Agricultural Research and Extension System funding is identified by the IWGA as a high priority for the State of Idaho, its counties and Idaho's agriculture industry. Cooperative opportunities and partnerships can be fostered to further enhance Idaho's Agricultural Research and Extension System.

COMMODITY SALES

The IWGA supports the expansion of Idaho agricultural markets, domestic and foreign. The IWGA supports trade missions abroad to better inform producers and the hosting of foreign delegations to our state in efforts to increase our market shares.

DEVELOPMENT & IMPLEMENTATION OF LAMB INSURANCE PRODUCT

The IWGA supports the development and implementation of a lamb insurance program. An insurance program would grant lamb producers stability and allow for the industry to set a stronger foundation for the next generation of producers. With no futures market or active insurance products to help producers hedge against price swings, lamb producers have had to weather the storm completely on their own.

The IWGA supports efforts to improve data availability for the US sheep industry.

WOOL MARKETING ASSISTANCE LOAN & LOAN DEFICIENCY PAYMENT

The IWGA supports a re-examination of the wool loan rate and an adjustment to provide an effective risk management tool for sheep producers. The IWGA supports efforts to allow forfeiture of wool under the LDP program.

LAMB MARKET IMPORTS

The IWGA supports all efforts to protect and strengthen Idaho's sheep industry.

ANIMAL HEALTH AND GENETIC STAKEHOLDERS COMMITTEE

Chair: Dillan Henslee (2024)

SCRAPIE

The IWGA supports all Idaho wool growers to acknowledge and comply with the current scrapie program to control and eliminate this disease.

BLUETONGUE VACCINE

The IWGA supports a Bluetongue vaccine available to the Idaho Sheep Industry.

ANIMAL CARE

The IWGA supports the rights of wool growers to raise their sheep in accordance with commonly accepted husbandry practices.

The IWGA opposes any legislation, regulatory action or funding, whether private or public, that interferes with commonly accepted animal husbandry practices and livestock harvesting. The IWGA opposes legislation that would give any non-regulatory organizations the right to establish standards for the raising, marketing, handling, feeding, housing or transportation of livestock and production animals and any legislation pertaining to livestock care that would pay bounties to complainants. The IWGA opposes requiring a licensed veterinarian for docking, dehorning, castration, embryo transfer, artificial insemination and any other routine livestock healthcare management practices.

ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION

The IWGA supports the right of the owner to choose among the acceptable methods of identification and to leave their animals unidentified prior to movement from the premises of origin.

STATE VETERINARIAN

The IWGA supports the Animal Health Division of the Idaho State Department of Agriculture and prefers that the division be administered by a licensed veterinarian.

VETERINARY STUDENTS

The IWGA supports any effort to incentivize or prioritize veterinarian students to study ~~large agriculture~~ agricultural animal medicine and then to practice in Idaho.

HEALTH INNOVATION

The IWGA supports the research and innovation of new technologies to combat and prevent new and existing diseases that present threats to animal health and food security.

LIVESTOCK TRANSPORTATION

The IWGA calls for states, with help from the federal level, if necessary, to become uniform in their implementation of health rules on the transportation of livestock.

POISONOUS PLANT RESEARCH

The IWGA supports the USDA/ARS Poisonous Plant Research Laboratory to conduct research on the problem of poisonous plants spreading throughout the state of Idaho, and IWGA requests the Congress of the United States to provide adequate funding to support this research.

SHOW LAMBS TAIL DOCK

The IWGA opposes surgical docking, a practice that leads to incidental rectal prolapse. The IWGA opposed forced exercise and feeding of unnatural (i.e. liquid) and unregulated (non-scientificallly studied supplements) diets. The IWGA urges state and county livestock shows prohibit such practices.

ANIMAL DAMAGE AND PREDATOR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Chair: Cody Chandler (2024)

ANIMAL DAMAGE CONTROL

The IWGA supports all legal predator control measures, including lethal and non-lethal control practices that are available to producers that will help prevent losses. The IWGA supports the ADC Board in controlling predators.

WOLF MANAGEMENT

The IWGA supports the delisted status of the Canadian Gray Wolf in the state of Idaho. The IWGA supports federal and state funding for wolf control and wolf management programs. Additionally, the IWGA supports reimbursement to sheep ranchers for losses and harm caused directly and indirectly by the wolf. The IWGA supports depredation payments to be made to sheep for validated and confirmed cases along with probable cases. The IWGA supports efficient management efforts by the Wolf Depredation Control Board to adjust the population to the Idaho Fish and Game Wolf Management Plan.

The IWGA opposes efforts to relist the Canadian Gray Wolf.

GRIZZLY BEAR

The IWGA supports the delisting of the grizzly bear and that all management of the species be conducted through the Idaho Fish and Game Commission Idaho Fish and Game. The IWGA supports paying compensation to state and local agencies when any assistance in the management and control is needed from such agencies. Compensation to state and local agencies should be paid regardless of whether a request has been made by a federal agency for assistance until such time as the current grizzly bear policy can be changed to allow less conflict with humans and livestock, namely the delisting of the grizzly bear and transfer of management to individual states' authority. The IWGA supports euthanizing any known problem bear that has threatened human safety.

The IWGA opposes the reintroduction of grizzly bears into any area of the State of Idaho.

AGENCY ACCOUNTABILITY

The IWGA supports requiring the US Fish & Wildlife Services and Idaho Fish and Game to coordinate with county officials on all predator management related activities.

LANDOWNER RIGHTS

The IWGA supports the right of landowners to protect themselves, their families, livestock and properties from all predators, including grizzly bears and wolves, without legal retaliation.

DEPREDATION FUNDING

IWGA supports funding of state depredation funds that compensate large carnivore (wolf and grizzly) depredations.

PUBLIC LANDS COMMITTEE

Chair: Blake Ball (2024)

IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE (INS)

The IWGA urges Idaho's Congressional Delegation to work closely with the Department of Homeland Security-Department of Labor and Congress to implement legislation and/or rules that will require INS to more actively pursue those individuals that "jump contract" and return them to their home country. The IWGA urges our Congressional Delegation and ASI to work with H-2A labor associations in assuring that appropriate statutory or regulatory language be adopted that will maintain industry specific rules pertaining to the sheep industry in the H2A program. IWGA supports the addition to the H2A program of a "In time of need" regulation that will allow foreign workers to come in quickly, when needed, for the production of food and fiber. The IWGA supports the inclusion of the "industry specific procedures" provisions in any immigration bill being considered by Congress.

The IWGA opposes any additional fees, such as asylum fees, imposed on employers for retaining legal labor under the H-2A program for their operation.

IWGA supports a grace period to allow producers to come back into compliance before fines are implemented by the Department of Labor.

GRAZING

The IWGA believes grazing to be an essential tool for maintaining sustainable rangeland, improving watersheds, wildlife habitat, reducing wildfire potential, and supporting rural communities' economies. The IWGA supports the protection of grazing on public lands as a viable economic solution for managing agencies of rangeland by reducing forage minimizing costs for fighting catastrophic wildfires. The IWGA supports "Best Management Practices" by all state and federal agencies, land grant colleges and research facilities on how grazing affects habitat for all wildlife. The IWGA supports "Rangeland Management Plans" that use current science-based information developed by the Idaho Department of Lands, BLM, Forest Service, and NRCS including the development of a certification process recognized by these agencies which would allow grazing permit holders to submit voluntary forage monitoring data to be used in the creation and development of said plans.

The IWGA supports outcome-based grazing.

The IWGA opposes the reduction or curtailment of any grazing activity for the creation or recognition of wildlife corridor, the U.S. Forest Service ruling that will prevent transferring grazing permits for head or less, the mandatory forage monitoring by livestock permittees on federal lands as proposed by the Federal Land Management Policy Act and the termination or curtailment of permittees because of livestock proximity to bighorn sheep, bison, sage grouse, wolves and grizzlies. The IWGA opposes the purchase or retirement of grazing permits or allotments by any state or federal agency, group, or individual whose sole purpose is to not allow any further grazing.

LIVESTOCK TRAILS

The IWGA urges established livestock trails parallel to and across expanding highways be maintained and not restricted and that trailing be recognized as a valid use of transportation corridors. The IWGA supports the continued use of existing driveways as well as the reopening of several key livestock driveways to help relieve wool growers of financial stress and to help reduce the spread of foot-rot and other diseases that are more easily communicable because of trucking.

NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL

The IWGA calls on all federal, state, and local land management entities to coordinate with one another for the effective control of noxious weeds. The IWGA supports the legislative effort to increase funding to the Idaho State Department of Agriculture to a sufficient level for effective noxious weed control so long as the legislative initiative equitably proportions the cost burden to all citizens of the state.

FEDERAL GRAZING FEE RATE

The IWGA supports a fair and equitable formula to determine grazing fees on federal lands.

FISH AND GAME

The IWGA opposes any private land purchase by the Idaho Department of Fish & Game until all options and alternatives have been explored to manage these wildlife resources without the purchase of these lands. The IWGA calls on state legislation to be enacted that would put in place a NO NET LOSS procedure whereby the Idaho Department of Fish & Game would put back into private ownership a like amount of land for any new land purchased in the future.

WILDERNESS/MONUMENTS

The IWGA oppose additional federal lands being designated as wilderness, or administratively decreed a protected area, where grazing and grazing related activities, including animal damage control and the ability to trail livestock on historic livestock trails, will be reduced or eliminated or where existing programs that benefit all who utilize these lands will be restricted. The IWGA calls on Congress to amend the Antiquities Act to provide for Congressional approval on all monument designations put in place by Presidential Executive Order.

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

Be it resolved that the IWGA calls on our Congressional delegation to work diligently for changes in the act that will make it fair and workable for all parties involved, and that these changes recognize economic and social impacts of listing species.

FIRE RESTORATION

The IWGA urges land management agencies to recognize livestock as a tool in fire management and control of watershed erosion and encourages said agencies to utilize sheep in fire prevention and restoration efforts. The IWGA supports all federal and state land management agencies to evaluate burned areas, on a site-by-site basis, so that a proper determination can be made as to when livestock can be returned to the area. The IWGA supports the further development of research evaluating the importance and economic impact of grazing as a fire suppression tool.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

The IWGA opposes renewable energy projects that take public grazing lands away from ranchers.

The IWGA supports renewable energy products that continue or adds grazing. The IWGA opposes renewable energy projects that reduce or discontinue grazing practices.

AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION

The Idaho Wool Growers Association supports the preservation of agricultural lands within the state of Idaho if the preservation of land is a voluntary system.

BIGHORN SHEEP / DOMESTIC SHEEP

The IWGA strongly oppose the termination or reduction of grazing permits on public lands and the removal or reduction of domestic sheep utilizing these permits based solely on the premise that bighorn

sheep that populate the same range, or close to the same range, are “at risk” from transmission of disease from domestic sheep.

The IWGA supports congressional actions that would prevent active allotments from being closed due to the presence of bighorn sheep. The IWGA also supports the opening of alternative allotments to help wool growers who have lost range because of the bighorn sheep, fire, or any other activity that has closed active allotments.

ISDA RANGE PROGRAM SUPPORT

The Idaho Wool Growers Association supports grazing on public lands and believes it is a viable tool to reduce wildfire threats, supports rural communities, and can appropriately improve watersheds. The IWGA supports the continued funding of the Idaho Department of Agriculture Range Program. The IWGA supports the Rangeland Improvement Act as a tool to improve public and private grazing lands, and IWGA supports continued funding for the act.

OPEN RANGE

The IWGA opposes any changes to Idaho open range laws.

RANGE EXTENSION TEAM

The IWGA supports the efforts of the Range Extension Team and urges the legislature and University of Idaho to continue to fund and support the range extension program. The IWGA supports the UI Rangeland Center at the University of Idaho and calls for the continuous funding of that center. The needs of state and federal land management agencies have shown that rangeland specialists are critical to the management of public range lands and the rangeland program at the U of I will go far to meet these needs.

RANGE MANAGEMENT BASED ON SCIENCE

The IWGA calls on the U.S.F.S. to recognize that micro-managing the grazing of sheep can be detrimental to, not only the animals, but the range they graze as well. The IWGA calls on the U.S.F.S. to recognize that the improvements in the watershed and plant communities brought about by well managed sheep grazing improves the range for fish and wildlife. The IWGA calls on the U.S.F.S. to utilize peer review and outside review on scientific publications that are the basis of many decisions regarding range management. The IWGA calls on research to be undertaken to determine the effects of grazing on rangelands managed by the USFS.

The IWGA opposes the concept of capability and suitability, but rather support a criterion on science-based range management practices.

RANGELAND RESOURCE COMMISSION

The IWGA supports the Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission and its activities that forward Idaho’s livestock industry in the eyes of the public.

STOCKWATER

The IWGA supports permittees watering their livestock on federal land and that by doing so shows beneficial use under state law. Furthermore, the IWGA supports that the livestock permittee holding that stockwater right because that right is appurtenant to the base property.

IDAHO WATER

The IWGA supports the prior appropriation doctrine, and that Idaho water law was established on the first in time, first in right principle.

RECREATION

The IWGA supports collaborative solutions to recreating on public lands around livestock.

SAGE GROUSE

The IWGA supports grazing on public lands as a primary method of increasing sage grouse populations by controlling the amount of vegetation that fuels wildfires. The IWGA supports the state Sage Grouse Task Force and their efforts.

The IWGA opposes any action on sage grouse protection that negatively affects grazing management on private and public lands, including reducing AUMs available to permittees.

GUARD DOGS

The IWGA supports the use of Guard Dogs/Livestock Protection Dogs for herd protection. The IWGA supports increased fines and penalties to those who knowingly and intentionally remove Guard Dogs from the herd they are protecting.