

Idaho State Department of Agriculture

IDAPA 02.04.21 Rules Governing Importation of Animals (Meningeal Worm)

July 1, 2014

Dr. Scott Leibsle, Facilitator

Present: Gary Queen, Rose Lake Elk Ranch; David Miller, Idaho Elk Breeder's Association; Greg Golightly, Idaho Elk Breeder's Association; Shawn Schafer, North American Deer Farmers Association; Steve Nadeau, Idaho Fish and Game; Dennis Stevenson, Office of Administrative Rules; L. Gail Ansley, Idaho Elk Breeder's Association; Kathy Jones, Idaho Elk Breeder's Association; Rulon Jones, Idaho Elk Breeder's Association; Sean Costello, OAG/ISDA; Cody Burlile, ISDA; Stan Boyd, IEBA; Jeff Siddoway, Elk Breeder; Brian Oakey, ISDA; Scott Leibsle, ISDA; Bill Barton, ISDA; Miranda Juker, ISDA; Deb Lawrence, ISDA; Angel O'Brien, ISDA.

AGENDA ITEMS

WELCOME

Scott Leibsle convened the meeting at 10:00 a.m., welcoming all in attendance in person and via phone. Attendees introduced themselves. Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) was petitioned by the Idaho Elk Breeder's Association to eliminate section 605 pertaining to the meningeal worm endemic region. As the rule currently stands, there is an import restriction on domestic cervidae being imported from areas known to be endemic with the meningeal worm. The petition has asked ISDA to consider removing that restriction, thereby allowing the import of domestic cervidae east of the 100th meridian. Two comments have been received and posted on our website; one from a private reindeer farmer in Minnesota and Idaho Fish and Game.

Shawn Schafer asked where the comments are posted.

Dr. Leibsle directed the group to the current rulemaking page, scrolled down to importation of animals rule and clicked the "written comments" link.

Dr. Leibsle provided a PowerPoint presentation on the projection screen entitled "2014 Rulemaking presentation" to assist in navigation of the requested changes to the rule. The presentation can be found on ISDA's current rulemaking webpage.

Rulon Jones asked about the history of the rule.

Dr. Leibsle stated that the date shown in the rule (5-3-03) was when the meningeal worm import restriction became part of the rule.

Mr. Jones asked why the restriction was added in 2003.

Dr. Barton stated that it was certainly before any of the current division employees were with the Department of Ag. The endemic area for meningeal worm has historically been the northeastern part of

the United States and is more prevalent in white-tailed deer but can be acquired by moose, elk, and sika deer. Other cervidae are susceptible to it. The Southeastern Cooperative of Wildlife Disease Study is a sub-unit of the University of Georgia. They track a lot of different disease trends predominantly east of the Mississippi. At some point there was enough concern that elk could be imported possessing the meningeal worm that this section made its way into our import rule. It is not in the cervidae rule. It came sometime after the domestic cervidae rule.

Mr. Jones asked if there were any other restrictions on other industries as far as livestock.

Dr. Barton stated that he did read one report where there were reports of meningeal worm being contracted by cattle. It is not regulated on any other level.

Mr. Schafer stated that in North Dakota they had the same rule, and it was removed about eight years ago. He stated that what needs to be truly regulated is the snail mollusk, the intermediate host. The elk, reindeer, alpacas, sheep or goats that are infected by it can't transmit it and move it. But the mollusk even in white-tailed deer can spread the eggs without the intermediate host. If you don't have that mollusk in your area, it's a dead end.

David Miller stated that the adult stages of the meningeal worm can be treated with the Ivomec (Ivermectin) and it will kill the adult stages of the meningeal worm.

Mr. Queen asked if there have been any cases found in the state of Idaho.

Dr. Leibsle answered not to his knowledge in domestics and referred the same question to Idaho Fish and Game.

Mr. Nadeau answered that it has not been identified by surveillance across the board and they have not found any yet. They are conducting intense surveillance on moose particularly where they are in contact with white tails, but it hasn't crossed that "imaginary line". Fish and Game would be very concerned if it did because as far as he knows the mollusks are present in the State. Currently there are plenty of white-tailed deer that are with moose in the eastern part of the state, and the *P. tenuis* has decimated many moose populations. *P. tenuis* can be endemic in a population of moose and cause a certain mortality level. It is currently happening in Minnesota where they have closed all moose hunts. Fish and Game's concern is keeping the *P. tenuis* out of the State of Idaho.

Mr. Jones asked if nobody else is regulating it, why are they taking the brunt of it if it's very unlikely. He stated they can regulate the use of wormers.

Dr. Leibsle asked Mr. Jones if he was suggesting that the department implement a rule requiring an annual or some degree of de-worming within the herd to prevent disease.

Mr. Jones stated that most of the breeders have to de-worm or have some type of parasite control. He does it anyway. He stated that a lot of them do not like government, but because they are in this business, government is in their business a lot. He stated that by rule, parasite control has to happen before the animals are imported.

Cody Burlile stated that the portion on the parasite control in the import rule was removed about two years ago, so the Department is no longer requiring parasite control.

Mr. Nadeau stated that their wildlife vet indicated a test was available briefly, but is not available currently, leaving no commercially available diagnostic test. Treatment of infected animals with anthelmintics can reduce or temporarily eliminate larval shedding, but because the adult worms are not killed, larval shedding will continue after treatment. He is not aware of other drugs that are available that would kill the meningeal worm. This information came from Fish and Game's wildlife vet.

Mr. Schafer asked if Mr. Nadeau was strictly referring to white tailed deer or elk. Elk do not shed larval. The while tailed species is the only species that can shed larval.

Mr. Nadeau asked if effected elk can shed larva.

Mr. Schafer answered that they cannot.

Dr. Leibsle asked Mr. Schafer for any documentation that indicates that elk would be a dead end host for the meningeal worm.

Mr. Schafer answered that he would get it. He stated that the only host species is the white-tail deer, but in all the other species, it cannot complete the lifecycle. It cannot shed.

Gail Ansley asked if there are any regulations for llamas and sheep.

Dr. Deb Lawrence answered that it pretty much kills them.

Mr. Schafer said it is the same with the elk, mule deer, it kills them also. He continued that there are a lot of alpaca and llama being raised back east and they do the ivermectin regiment and the reason it works for them is because the worm doesn't go to the brain like it does in the white-tail deer and the meninges. It's more in the central nervous system where the ivermectin will get control.

Mr. Nadeau asked if the ivermectin will kill the adult worm.

Mr. Schafer corrected him by stating it was the larval stage. Unless you have the gastropods, and he wasn't sure if Idaho does, they would have to come along and eat that poop and then go through two molts, an L2 and L3 in that snail and then that snail must be eaten by an elk or mule deer.

Mr. Nadeau stated he would check on the gastropod.

Mr. Schafer stated that if we have a lot of white-tail and gastropods here, the odd are we also have P. tenuis.

Mr. Nadeau was under the impression that we have it in the northern part of the state.

Dr. Leibsle reiterated to Mr. Schafer to get him the citation of the literature he referred to earlier in the

meeting.

Mr. Nadeau asked if the industry petitioned to have this section of the rule removed.

Dr. Leibsle brought the petition and the PARF up on the projection screen to help answer Mr. Nadeau's question. The reasoning based on the PARF for the requested rule change was because the parasite is no longer a significant concern to the industry.

Mr. Queen stated that it has never been a concern to the industry.

Dr. Leibsle asked the group if there were any more comments.

Mr. Jones commented that he was watching the news and heard how much money the federal government was putting into rural economic growth, and he thought if the government would just stay out of the rural environment, he believes we would all be a lot better off. He continued that this is a big thing for Idaho's rural community. He employs a lot of people in Idaho. He tries to do 300 hunts a year in Idaho. You need an elk to be five years old to really be a trophy animal. To get 200 bulls each year you are looking at about 450 cows. Now that the federal government has stepped in and taken away a lot of their ability to do business, they're in a bad situation. They will buy every animal in the State of Idaho and there isn't a fraction of enough. They cannot compete against Montana and our neighboring states, Saskatchewan. They have been regulated so much that he doesn't see how they can stay in business without this rule change. It is a real issue that will put them out of business.

Mr. Nadeau asked if domestic cervidae includes white tail.

Dr. Leibsle answered that Idaho does not allow farmed white tailed deer. It includes reindeer, fallow deer and elk.

Mr. Burlile stated that the importation of white tailed deer actually falls back to Fish and Game.

Dr. Leibsle stated that if anyone is not comfortable speaking in an open forum, the comment period is open for another week and you can submit written comments that will be added to the rulemaking record and they will be taken into consideration. Comments close for this rule one week from today, July 1.

Jeff Siddoway stated that we have all watched the decline of the elk industry in the State of Idaho. We used to have about 8,000 plus head and now we are down to about 3,500 or so. For those who have the shooter operations, it is beginning to get harder and harder to find a supply of elk for the ranches. If the elk is a dead host to the meningeal worm, and there hasn't been a problem in our state, and it sounds like we're the only industry that is being regulated on that level at all. If the real danger is in the forage and not in the animal itself, then he cannot see why we wouldn't drop this rule and allow the importation from our eastern neighbors.

With no other comments regarding the import rule, Scott Leibsle adjourned the meeting at 10:35 a.m.
Respectfully submitted by Angel O'Brien