



STATE OF IDAHO

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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NEWS RELEASE

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ISDA WILL NOT ASK LEGISLATURE TO CREATE STATE VETERINARIAN POSITION THIS YEAR

(BOISE) The Idaho State Department of Agriculture announced today that it will not ask the Legislature to separate the duties of the state veterinarian and administrator of the Division of Animal Industries.

The administrator of the Division of Animal Industries will continue to oversee animal health issues while the department works with industry groups and other stakeholders on a workable proposal.

Last summer, the department began work on a proposal that would change requirements for the division administrator and create a separate lead state veterinarian position under state statute. Under current law, the administrator of the Division of Animal Industries must have a veterinary degree, but there is no official state veterinarian under Idaho Code.

The administrator oversees a staff of department veterinarians, works on animal health issues and handles the day-to-day administration of a division with nearly 50 people.

"I believe it is time that we have one person focused solely on animal health issues and one person focused solely on the day-to-day administration of a large, complex division of the Idaho State Department of Agriculture," Department Director Pat Takasugi said. "However, several industry groups have asked us to do additional work on the mechanics of this proposal. Therefore, we will withdraw our legislation and continue our dialogue in the coming months. I'm hopeful we can reach a consensus that will produce better legislation and better administration for the livestock industry and the citizens of this state."

Takasugi said Dr. Greg Ledbetter, interim animal industries administrator, will provide his own insights as a proposal is drafted for possible consideration in 2007.

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