

# Nevada Board of Agriculture

## Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 9, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.



Nevada  
Department  
of Agriculture

**Meeting Location:** Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA)

4780 E. Idaho Street

Elko, NV 89801

775-753-1360

**Video Conference:** NDA

2300 E. St. Louis Avenue

Las Vegas, NV 89104

702-668-4590

NDA

405 S. 21<sup>st</sup> Street

Sparks, NV 89431

775-353-3601

## Agenda

### 1. Open meeting-Chairman Snyder called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.

A. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Moment of Silent Reflection

C. Virtual Attendee Reminders

D. Roll call – Total Attendees (38)

- Board of Agriculture (11):

- Jim Snyder
- Tom Baker
- Mackenzie Campbell
- Hank (James) Combs
- Debbie Gilmore
- Varlin Higbee
- Heather Lackey
- Brooke Neubauer
- Pete Paris
- David Ruf
- Craig Schank

- Deputy Attorney General Richard Yien (1):

- Department of Agriculture (17):

- J.J. Goicoechea
- Doug Farris
- Cathy Balcon
- Monica Barbosa
- Heather Countryman
- Jake Dawley
- Julieanna Hendrix

- Patricia Hoppe
- Ian Knight
- Blane Merkley
- Julia Miller-Ketcham
- Bob Ragar
- Ciara Ressel
- Shawna Sabo
- Ray Saliga
- Chad Sestanovich
- Bill Striejewske
- Public Attendees (9):
  - Doug Busselman
  - Jim DeChambeau
  - Letty Elias
  - Eugene Lee
  - Gary L. McCuin
  - Alex Tancheck
  - 17029607202
  - 17756363350
  - 17759345528

## 2. Public Comment

*The Nevada Department of Agriculture received no public comments in advance of the meeting.*

- **Public Comment**

- Alex Tancheck of Silver State Government Relations, speaking from the Sparks office, expressed gratitude to the Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA) for assuming regulatory responsibilities regarding hemp through the passage of Senate Bill 466 of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Session. He stated that there is a strong interest from stakeholders in seeing the development of a clear and well-defined regulatory framework around hemp. He added that the framework should refer to the Farm Bill where appropriate and allow businesses to continue developing hemp-derived products within clearly defined testing requirements and compliance guidelines. He said he looks forward to working with the NDA as regulations are developed.

## 3. Minutes

A. \*Approve June 4, 2025, meeting minutes (***for possible action***)

- Board Member Combs moved to approve the minutes of the June 4, 2025, meeting.
- The motion was seconded by Member Lackey and passed 11-0 (2 absent).

## 4. Board Management

● Board Member Updates on Represented Industries (***for information only***)

- Brooke Neubauer, representing Supplemental Nutrition, shared insights on her work with the Just One Project in Las Vegas. In August, the organization surveyed 1,066 residents receiving services through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). Of those surveyed, 90 percent reported relying on

TEFAP to maintain food security, and 86 percent said that missing a TEFAP distribution placed them in the position of choosing between buying food and other essentials, such as utilities and medication. Member Neubauer emphasized that although TEFAP is intended to be a supplemental program, many residents, particularly those living at or below the poverty line, depend on it as a primary food source. Currently, more than 125 organizations throughout southern Nevada distribute TEFAP food. She said that Nevada has the fourth-highest grocery prices in the United States, underscoring the critical role of TEFAP and similar programs.

- Tom Baker, representing Semi-Range Cattle Production, reported that conditions have become increasingly dry, with desert and range areas looking particularly affected. He noted that while the cattle market remains strong, producers are growing concerned about feed availability and how to manage stocking decisions moving forward. As a result, the feeder hay market has improved in his part of the state and into Utah, with many producers anticipating the need to provide more supplemental feed this winter.
- Mackenzie Campbell, representing Petroleum, reported that the last quarter has gone well for the petroleum industry. She expressed appreciation to the NDA for sponsoring Assembly Bill (AB) 29, which standardized the posting of diesel and unleaded fuel prices at convenience stores. She noted that next week, the Energy and Convenience Association of Nevada (ECAN) will be traveling to meet with members and non-members to answer questions about AB 29. They will also be visiting Sparks to meet with the Division of Measurement Standards, giving the ECAN board an opportunity to learn more about NDA's operations. She thanked NDA for hosting the upcoming visit.
- David Ruf, representing Nursery Stock, reported that the nursery industry appears to be doing well, with no recent issues or calls of concern. However, he highlighted the Division of Plant Health and Compliance's board report and the recent discovery of a non-native weed, *ventenata*, in Washoe County. Classified as a Type A weed, *ventenata* poses a significant threat by potentially displacing cheatgrass and oversaturating rangelands, which could reduce feedstock potential by up to 50 percent. Ruf emphasized the importance of addressing the weed early to prevent it from becoming a broader issue—not only for the feed industry and fire risk across the state, but also for homeowners and the nursery industry, given its aggressive nature.
- Hank (James) Combs, representing General Agriculture, said he is glad the legislative session has concluded. He also noted the seasonal change as temperatures begin to cool.
- Craig Schank, representing Veterinary Medicine, reported that corn harvesting is underway in Churchill County. He noted that water availability has been strong due to good storage levels and expressed hope for a wet winter. Additionally, he said that he recently visited Utah State University, where he met with the Dean and Associate Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine. The university has accepted two Nevada students into its inaugural veterinary class, though the original agreement allowed for seven. Due to delays in application distribution, some students had already committed to other programs, but expectations are

higher for next year's enrollment. Member Schank also mentioned that Roseman University in southern Nevada is seeking accreditation from the American Veterinary Medical Association to open a veterinary school. The timeline for opening is still uncertain and depends on the approval process. He highlighted the ongoing shortage of rural veterinarians, noting a 15 percent decline in large-animal veterinarians over the past decade. This issue has gained national attention, prompting US Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins to announce the Veterinary Shortage Action Plan, which expands debt relief for students entering rural practice. He emphasized that high student debt often leads graduates to choose small-animal practices, and he hopes that expanded relief programs will encourage more students with agricultural backgrounds to pursue large-animal veterinary careers. He concluded by asking Director Goicoechea about the process for identifying veterinary shortage areas.

- Director Goicoechea stated that he and State Veterinarian Dr. Pete Rolf recently met to discuss nominations. Through this program, specific counties can be nominated as veterinary shortage areas, with a focus on species such as cattle, sheep, and swine to support food production needs. These nominations are submitted regularly to the USDA, which determines whether to designate them as official shortage areas. If approved, efforts are made to attract veterinarians to those regions. Director Goicoechea noted a successful example in Ely, where a USDA-approved nomination led to the establishment of a large veterinary practice in White Pine County. Lincoln and Lander Counties are being nominated for the upcoming year as both counties are experiencing significant veterinary shortages. While the nominations are county-specific, the Director noted that the intent is for their impact to extend into surrounding areas experiencing veterinary shortage, including Eureka, Humboldt, Elko and Nye Counties as well as portions of northern Clark County.
- Heather Lackey, representing Pest Control, noted that it has been a quiet period with no recent concerns or questions on pest control from the public, which she considers a positive sign. She mentioned that the quarter has been busy with work addressing individual pest issues and ensuring public safety. As residents begin seasonal cleaning of sheds and workshops, she emphasized continued awareness around hantavirus risks. She said she remains focused on public education and prevention efforts.
- Varlin Higbee, representing Semi-Range Cattle Production, reported that recent storms have brought some moisture, though it remains uncertain whether it arrived early enough to support sufficient feed growth before livestock turnout. He noted that producers with year-round grazing are facing challenges in certain areas, while those who received rain may see feed growth continue into November or December, depending on when hard freezes occur. Some operations are in good shape; however, others may need to purchase hay due to poor range conditions.
- Debbie Gilmore, representing Specialty Crops, said that US Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins is leading a reorganization effort, which includes a proposal to shut down the Beltsville, Maryland USDA lab, a major center for

agricultural research. There is a national movement underway to preserve the lab's operations. She reported that hobby beekeepers are experiencing a strong harvest season, with significantly more honey produced than last year. Honey prices, particularly on the West Coast, are notably high. Member Gilmore also highlighted Hives for Heroes, a national program that connects veterans and first responders with beekeepers. An upcoming Hives for Heroes event in Yerington will aim to increase participation from southern Nevada, where interest in beekeeping is high but mentorship is lacking. She also mentioned an agritourism event hosted by University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) Cooperative Extension, which will support specialty crop producers, including lavender growers. In relation to veterinary discussions, she noted that beekeepers rely on certain antibiotics, such as those used to treat American foulbrood, and some universities are now incorporating beekeeping into veterinary curricula. Lastly, she raised a question about the impact of expanding solar fields on agriculture and expressed interest in understanding whether these developments pose challenges or offer potential benefits to the agricultural community.

- Pete Paris, representing Semi-Range Sheep Production, reported that lamb prices have increased but still lag significantly behind cattle prices. While the industry welcomes the price increase, rising costs in fuel and other commodities are making it difficult for sheep producers to stay afloat. He noted that the ongoing drought has had a severe impact, with lambing percentages dropping last winter and expected lower lamb weights this summer. Member Paris explained that typically, sheep fare better than cattle during droughts due to their ability to graze on sagebrush, but even black sage currently offers no nutritional value. As a result, many producers may need to rely on alfalfa or other feed sources. Member Paris also raised concerns about ongoing legal challenges facing the sheep industry, with some operations being targeted by advocacy groups alleging mistreatment of workers. These lawsuits, some reaching up to \$200,000, are creating a snowball effect and adding significant pressure to an already struggling industry. He emphasized that the challenges are not limited to Nevada but are affecting sheep operations across the western US.
- Chairman Snyder, representing Row Crops, reported that in Lyon County, the third crop harvest is approximately 75 to 80 percent complete, with corn harvest beginning soon. Summer vegetable harvest continues. Irrigation water availability has been adequate in his area, with storage levels at 64 percent. While the livestock sector is performing well, he noted that the crop sector is struggling and likely will continue to face challenges.

## 5. Director's Report

### A. Report – J.J. Goicoechea, Director (*for information only*)

- The Director stated that while highly pathogenic avian influenza detections are currently low, cases have been identified in northern states as waterfowl begin migrating south. He emphasized the importance of continued biosecurity, especially considering the novel D1.1 strain that was first detected in Churchill County. One operation remains under quarantine. Additionally, the Director and Dr. Rolf recently spoke at a biosecurity workshop in Elko. While the workshop

was focused on foot-and-mouth disease, the event was timely given concerns about avian influenza and New World screwworm.

- The Director highlighted the passage of AB 333 of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Session, which returned the Nevada State Fairgrounds in Washoe County to state control. Plans are underway to relaunch the Nevada State Fair next June, with the Nevada Junior Livestock Show Board moving its dates to coincide with the event. The fair will be followed by the Reno Rodeo, making June a key month for agriculture in Nevada. The Director emphasized the importance of agricultural education and outreach and noted that biosecurity will be a major consideration for the event.
- The Director stated that he and Deputy Director Doug Farris presented to the Washoe County Board of Commissioners to clarify the agency's statutory responsibilities and ongoing fencing projects related to Virginia Range feral and stray horses. The goal is to reduce vehicle collisions by completing fencing from I-80 to Jumbo Grade. He thanked Administrator Sestanovich for his work keeping the program running despite limited resources.
- In reference to Member Gilmore's question regarding the impact solar and renewable energy projects have on agriculture, the Director encouraged board members to subscribe to the State Clearinghouse for regular updates on projects. He stated that the NDA actively defends agricultural interests in these developments, advocating for responsible siting that does not displace range operations. He affirmed that the agency is in regular communication with project proponents and the Governor's Office and is pushing back on projects that threaten agricultural viability.
- The Director noted that the department has onboarded 12 new employees through AB 466 of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Session, which transferred a food safety program from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to the NDA. These staff are now integrated into the department, with the new staff assigned to Sparks, Pahrump, Ely, Elko, and Winnemucca.
- The Director discussed ongoing efforts to align hemp regulations with USDA standards, particularly regarding THC thresholds in products. He emphasized the need for clarity as companies seek to incorporate hemp into food, beverages, and cosmetics. Legislation is expected next session to address these issues, and the department is working closely with the Cannabis Compliance Board to prepare. He raised concerns about illicit hemp products with intoxicating concentrations being sold in retail settings, particularly items that may appeal to children. The department is increasing enforcement in this area and plans to revise existing regulations inherited through AB 466 to support more effective oversight.
- The Director also shared highlights from a recent trip to Washington, D.C., where he met with Dr. Martin Makary, Commissioner of the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The visit allowed the Director to stress the importance of ensuring that federal health initiatives consider agriculture. Another key concern that was discussed was the potential closure of the FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM), which could delay the approval of new antibiotics critical for

both livestock and beekeeping. The Director advocated strongly for maintaining the CVM and appointing a permanent director at the center to ensure continued access to essential veterinary products and to support public and animal health.

- The Director noted that the Legislative Commission granted an extension to amend the trichomoniasis testing regulations in Chapter 571 of the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC). Dr. Rolf is expected to present them to the State Quarantine Officer for adoption.
- He addressed the recent statewide cyberattack, describing it as a major incident that required an immediate and sustained response. Despite the attack, essential services such as brand inspections and petroleum compliance continued without disruption. The Director praised the NDA's IT team, led by Jake Dawley, for their exceptional work in maintaining operations under difficult circumstances.
- In reference to Member Schank's previous statement regarding veterinary schools, the Director expanded on education efforts. He noted plans to visit Texas Tech University to study its recruitment and admissions model, which emphasizes selecting students with strong agricultural backgrounds who are likely to return to rural practice. He expressed support for similar strategies in Nevada, including potential partnerships with Utah State and the proposed private veterinary school in southern Nevada. He also mentioned renewed discussions about establishing a small veterinary school within Nevada, with strong backing from UNR President Brian Sandoval.
- On drought conditions, he noted that the Ely District is the only one to issue a drought letter so far, which affects winter grazing across Lincoln, Nye, and White Pine Counties. He acknowledged the challenges dry winters pose for livestock conception rates and lamb production, but added that hay demand remains strong, particularly in southern Nevada.
- The Director also addressed the emergence of New World screwworm, referencing a recent human case in Maryland linked to international travel. He emphasized the seriousness of the parasite, which aggressively feeds on living tissue. While the parasite is unlikely to establish in northern Nevada due to winter temperatures, Dr. Rolfe has distributed guidance to veterinarians and developed a tiered response plan.

B. Review of Chapter 446 of the Nevada Administrative Code – Director Goicoechea (*for information only*)

- The Director provided a brief overview of NAC Chapter 446, which includes a comprehensive set of food safety regulations inherited from DHHS through AB 466 of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Session. These regulations, previously under the State Board of Health, now fall under the jurisdiction of the Nevada Board of Agriculture. The NDA will begin reviewing and updating these regulations this fall and into the winter. Board members were encouraged to begin reviewing the materials. The Director emphasized the technical nature of the content and asked members, particularly those with medical backgrounds, to provide feedback ahead

of upcoming workshops. He emphasized that the current rules remain in effect until new regulations are adopted. He also explained that these regulations primarily apply to retail food establishments, such as restaurants and grocery stores, in counties not covered by local health authorities—specifically, areas outside of Clark County, Washoe County, and the four counties served by Central Nevada Health District.

## 6. Division of Administrative Services

### A. \*Review and potential adoption of a proposed Concealed Carry Policy at the Nevada Department of Agriculture (*for possible action*)

- Deputy Director Farris reviewed the proposed policy regarding concealed carry by non-sworn NDA employees. He explained that while some staff have valid concealed carry weapons (CCW) permits and have expressed interest in carrying while at work, there has historically been inconsistency in how these requests were handled. To ensure clarity and legal compliance, the department consulted with the Attorney General's Office and the Department of Administration, both of which have existing procedures for concealed carry. The proposed policy affirms that while employees with valid CCW permits have the legal right to carry, they do so in a personal capacity and outside the course and scope of their employment. The department will not be responsible for the firearm or any consequences arising from its presence in the workplace. Any unlawful display or use of a firearm is strictly prohibited.
- Member Combs moved to adopt the policy. Member Higbee seconded the motion.
- The motion passed 11-0 (2 absent).

### B. Board Update – Cathy Balcon, Administrator (*for information only*)

- Director Goicoechea thanked Administrator Balcon and her fiscal team for their work closing the department's budgets, noting that the Governor's Finance Office recently acknowledged the NDA for its outstanding work. He credited Administrator Balcon's leadership and her team's efforts for significantly strengthening the department's financial operations.
- Administrator Balcon reported a successful closing, with all Fiscal Year 2025 budget accounts finalized with a positive balance. Her team is currently preparing for Fiscal Year 2026.
- The trade and marketing team is recruiting for the 2026 Nevada Craft Beverage Passport and has submitted grant applications through the USDA and US Small Business Administration.
- The communications team rolled out cultural competency training, while also managing 31 public records requests this year.
- Administrator Balcon commended the division's IT staff for their work during the recent cyberattack and for successfully onboarding new food safety staff.
- Administrator Balcon also shared a closing spreadsheet summarizing revenue and expenditures across all budget accounts, noting that most funding sources are tied to fees and grants that will carry forward into Fiscal Year 2026.

- Ciara Ressel reported that the new agriculture license plate is still in the road testing phase, with minor design adjustments being made to improve character readability. While there is no official release date set, the plate's launch is expected toward the end of the year.

## 7. Division of Animal Industry

### A. Board Update – Chad Sestanovich, Administrator (*for information only*)

- Administrator Sestanovich announced the recent retirement of Deputy Administrator Will Dawson and introduced Bob Rager as the new Deputy Administrator.
- Deputy Administrator Rager introduced himself—he has approximately 35 years of experience in construction, engineering, and administration, including 13 years in state service across various agencies. He is a licensed civil engineer in Nevada and Washington, as well as a licensed water rights surveyor. His academic background includes a bachelor's degree in environmental resources with a focus on range and forestry. He shared that he grew up in rural Nevada, living in communities such as Austin, Eureka, Gabbs, and Tonopah. He expressed appreciation for the warm welcome he received from the NDA team and looks forward to a smooth transition and contributing to the department's work.
- Administrator Sestanovich emphasized the division's resilience during the recent IT outage, noting that inspections and lab operations continued without major disruption.
- He reported that the integration of 12 new employees from DHHS is progressing well, with several food safety staff already training in meat and poultry inspection. He noted that agricultural police officers will be involved in the program's hemp-related enforcement and training.
- Emphasis was placed on the need for compliance with the Animal Disease Traceability rule requiring Radio Frequency Identification tags for brucellosis vaccinations. Administrator Sestanovich acknowledged producer concerns about the process and cost, particularly among year-round operators, but clarified that the tagging process remains largely unchanged—veterinarians still administer the tags, and the department provides them once a premise ID is assigned. He encouraged continued communication to address concerns and streamline compliance.
- Administrator Sestanovich acknowledged the loss of Jerry Chapin, who served as a brand inspector for 47 years. Dennis Bieroth, another longtime brand inspector in Mountain City, recently retired. Efforts are underway to fill those vacant positions, as well as a new Brand Inspector II position to serve the Reno–Fallon–Carson City area.
- The Agricultural Police Officer supervisor, Ian Knight, is departing the agency, with a new supervisor set to begin this month. Administrator Sestanovich thanked Knight for his work with the department.
- The Predatory Animal and Rodent Control program is fully staffed, and Administrator Sestanovich commended the team for their work.
- Longtime Veterinary Diagnostician Dr. Keith Forbes retired after 21 years of service. Recruitment is underway to fill that vacancy.

- Trichomoniasis testing has been minimal over the summer due to livestock turnout, but preparations are underway for fall testing. Most quarantine hold orders have been lifted, and the department is hopeful for improved conditions compared to last year.

**Chairman Snyder called for a break at 10:46 a.m.**

**Chairman Snyder called the meeting back to order at 11:02 a.m.**

## **8. Division of Food and Nutrition**

### **A. Board Update – Patricia Hoppe, Administrator (*for information only*)**

- Administrator Hoppe reported that despite the recent cyberattack, all food deliveries for the department's distribution programs were completed without disruption, thanks to the efforts of warehouse staff and drivers. However, the state-hosted school nutrition system remains offline. Though its restoration timeline is currently unknown, a manual claims process has been implemented to ensure timely payments to school food authorities.
- Staff is coordinating with the Governor's Finance Office to monitor American Rescue Plan Act funding, ensuring all awards are properly tracked and fully spent.
- Lastly, the work program transferring \$800,000 to the Home Feeds Nevada program has been delayed due to the cyberattack.

## **9. Division of Measurement Standards**

### **A. Board Update – Bill Striejewske, Administrator (*for information only*)**

- Administrator Striejewske noted that despite the recent statewide network outage, the division was able to maintain customer service. Inspectors continued working in the field, completed their inspections, and generated certificates without major disruption. He expressed appreciation to the NDA's IT team, acknowledging their hard work in keeping systems running. Although the internal database used for weights and measures functions was down for a few days, it has since been restored. The petroleum technology program, which uses an external cloud-based system, remained fully functional throughout the outage.
- Administrator Striejewske expressed enthusiasm regarding hosting the upcoming ECAN board meeting in Sparks and emphasized the division's strong, long-standing relationship with the industry. Additionally, he stated the division has been distributing information about AB 29 and will work with ECAN to support any outreach efforts.
- Livestock inspections scheduled out of the Sparks and Elko offices have been completed, with a few rechecks ongoing as requested by ranches. Inspections from the Las Vegas office will begin in the coming weeks and are expected to continue into early October. Favorable weather conditions and minimal equipment issues contributed to a smooth inspection season. Communication efforts were effective in ensuring all parties were prepared, and staffing was not a concern.
- The division is fully staffed. With a full team in place, the division is well-positioned to provide services throughout the state and manage the growing number of licensed

devices.

## 10. Division of Plant Health and Compliance

### A. Board Update – Ray Saliga, Deputy Administrator (*for information only*)

- The division held a workshop on September 3 regarding R127-23 to gather public feedback on the proposed applicator training regulation. This regulation would allow employees of licensed pest control businesses to apply pesticides for up to 90 days while they study for and complete the licensing exams. The regulation includes essential training components to ensure worker safety and effective pesticide application. During the workshop, the division received questions from the Nevada Pest Management Association and several pest control businesses. Staff are currently in communication with those stakeholders to address their comments and concerns.
- The Legislative Commission adopted changes to NAC 586, which include fee increases for pesticide product registration. These fees are paid annually by manufacturers for each pesticide product sold in Nevada. The division expects to see the impact of these changes during the January 2026 registration period.
- The Division is planning a public messaging campaign to educate beekeepers in the Southern Nevada quarantine zone about the requirement for permits when moving feral bee colonies. This campaign will run over the next few months, with enforcement—including warnings and penalties—expected to begin in 2026. These permits are necessary to ensure the safe removal of colonies, especially given the presence of Africanized bees in the quarantine zone, which pose a greater risk to the public than managed honeybee colonies.
- Bryant McDowell was welcomed as the new State Entomologist. Originally from Texas, McDowell brings extensive experience in outreach, urban pest management, and general entomology. His responsibilities will include providing expertise related to quarantines, offering identification services to industry, conducting training and outreach, and leading surveys to detect and manage invasive species.
- The pathology program completed garlic and onion field inspections for the 2025 growing season, covering more than 7,000 acres. This is the first year since 2021 that no white rot was detected in any of the inspected fields. Shipping point inspections for onions will begin this month. While there has been a slight decrease in onion exports for Fiscal Year 2025, this appears to be part of a normal cyclical trend.
- The division continues to oversee pest control activities statewide, including the Worker Protection Standard Program, which provides education and safety oversight for both farm workers and urban pest management professionals. Staff are evaluating enforcement data and recordkeeping to improve future reporting and outreach efforts.
- Ventenata has been identified on a number of properties in Washoe Valley. This invasive weed spreads quickly, offers little to no forage value, and can outcompete native species. Notices to control have been issued, and outreach is underway to engage additional landowners. The division is also working to secure funding for

herbicide purchases and plans to host a community workshop to support local control efforts. Because Ventenata seeds are only viable for two to three years, early and coordinated action could lead to successful eradication.

- The Nevada Department of Transportation continues to treat Scotch thistle along the I-80 corridor, and a fall wrap-up meeting will take place to evaluate this year's control efforts and plan for the next season.
- The NDA's representative to the Sagebrush Ecosystem Council is working with private landowners affected by wildfires in June and August. The NDA is working with other agencies and private landowners to develop a post-fire rehabilitation plan, with implementation expected in early 2026.
  - Member Ruf raised a concern regarding the potential for ventenata to become rooted in containers at the state nursery in Washoe Valley and unintentionally shipped out, possibly spreading across multiple counties without being recognized. Deputy Administrator Saliga responded that ventenata closely resembles cheatgrass in both its lifecycle and appearance, especially up until the seed formation stage. He noted that if the nursery is actively managing its weeds and removing them from containers before they drop seeds, the risk of the weed becoming a significant vector for spread should be minimal. Director Goicoechea added that a more pressing concern is the presence of yellow star thistle near the nursery. While he believes the team will be able to get ahead of the ventenata issue relatively quickly, the yellow star thistle is causing more concern. He emphasized the need to address it very aggressively and noted that there is a plan in place to manage both species.
  - Chairman Snyder mentioned that a landowner in Carson Valley is interested in including chicory on the list of noxious weeds and inquired about the listing process. Deputy Administrator Saliga confirmed that the noxious weeds list will be evaluated this winter and that chicory can be included in that discussion. He explained that there is a formal process for updating the list, which is outlined in NAC.

## 11. Public Comment

- Jim DeChambeau of Mason Valley, speaking from the Sparks office, raised concerns related to solar projects. He noted that 23,000 to 30,000 acres of solar panels have been approved in Lyon County, much of which is currently productive farmland. Additionally, nearly 6,000 acres in Mineral County—primarily rangeland and wildlife habitat—are also affected. Mr. DeChambeau inquired whether the board or department has a policy regarding the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses, particularly for solar development. He described a recent law in France prohibiting the removal of farmland for solar panels and expressed a desire to see similar legislation in the US or at least in Nevada. He emphasized the importance of preserving agricultural land, pointing out that a small percentage of the population feeds the rest, and once farmland is lost, it typically cannot be recovered.

## 12. Final Roll Call

### **13. Adjournment**

**Chairman Snyder adjourned the meeting at 11:26 a.m.**