

June 4, 2025, Board Report

Office of the Director



Nevada
Department
of Agriculture

Industry / External

- Attended weekly/monthly calls regarding the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N1 detections in Dairy Cows with industry leaders, affected state agencies, as well as the following agencies and organizations:
 - Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)
 - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
 - National Association of State Animal Health Officials (NASAHO)
 - National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA)
 - National Governors Association (NGA)
 - U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
 - U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
 - U.S. CattleTrace
 - National Cattlemen's Beef Association
- Attended the following meetings:
 - Beef Quality Assurance Advisory Committee
 - Council on Food Security
 - NASDA Food Systems and Nutrition Policy Committee
 - NASDA Animal Agriculture Policy Committee
 - NASDA briefing on waters of the United States
 - Sagebrush Ecosystem Council
 - Western Governors' Association Sage Grouse Task Force
 - Western States Federal Rules virtual discussion
 - Monthly coordination meeting with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and the Nevada Department of Wildlife.
 - Quarterly meetings with BLM; the College of Agriculture, Biotechnology and Natural Resources (CABNR); and USDA-Wildlife Services.
- Discussed key resource management priorities with senior state and federal agency leadership at the Nevada Natural Resource Leadership Breakfast.
- Delivered opening remarks at the National Extension and Research Administrative Officers Conference.
- Participated in the CABNR Meat and Animal Science Working Group.
- Attended the Change of Command ceremony at Naval Air Station Fallon.
- Honored recent graduates of the Nevada Farm 2 Food Accelerator program.
- Attended the Nevada Junior Livestock Show board meeting and show and sale to support youth livestock projects and foster agricultural education and development.
- Engaged in meetings with the Governor's staff and leadership of state natural resource agencies regarding BLM's multi-state sage grouse review.

Partner Coordination

- Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

- Executed a cooperative agreement allowing for the continued treatment of Mormon crickets and grasshoppers throughout the state.
- Submitted comments regarding the draft Environmental Assessment of the Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Suppression Program.
- BLM
 - Completed installing a section of public safety fencing in south Reno, a critical step for resolving public safety concerns in and around the Virginia Range area.
 - Submitted comments regarding the following BLM projects:
 - Proposed creation of the Bullfrog Herd Management Area Plan.
 - Proposed creation of the Callaghan Complex, enabling the combined management of the Bald Mountain, Callaghan, South Shoshone, and Hickison Herd Management Areas.
 - Proposed range improvements, including increasing water availability and improving livestock distribution, at the Washburn Allotment.
 - Lahontan Wild Horse Gather Preliminary Environmental Assessment.
- Churchill County
 - Provided a data-based framework to assist in the accurate compensation of grazing permit holders affected by the U.S. Navy's expansion of the Fallon Range Training Complex.
 - Initiated an interlocal agreement with Churchill County to streamline data collection for groundwater and expand testing to include heavy metals.
- Idaho State Department of Agriculture
 - In response to the ongoing shortage of the brucellosis RB51 vaccine, the NDA entered into an agreement to temporarily allow the movement of cattle unable to be vaccinated for brucellosis between Nevada and Idaho for grazing purposes.
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works
 - Incorporated feedback from producers and other stakeholders in comments advising the federal regulatory definition of waters of the United States.
- USDA Forest Service
 - Submitted comments to ensure noxious weeds are addressed and livestock permittees are considered in the South Schells Restoration Project, targeted at reducing fuels, restoring vegetation, and improving streams and riparian areas.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
 - Submitted comments regarding the proposed listing of the monarch butterfly and the bleached sandhill skipper under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).
 - Submitted comments regarding FWS's proposal to rescind the regulatory definition of "harm" in ESA regulations.

Executive

- Met with United States Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins to discuss the following topics:
 - Expediting the Environmental Assessment process to accelerate treatment of Mormon crickets and grasshoppers.

- Obtaining the final cooperative agreement from the USDA-Food Safety and Inspection Service to allow Nevada producers and processors to begin small and midsize processing for in-state sales.
- Confirming the onboarding of two NDA employees as collaborators with USDA-Wildlife Services to preserve vital support for Nevada ranchers.
- Enhancing and streamlining disease response through optimized collaboration between the NDA and USDA.
- Clarifying Nevada's utilization of the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program and advocating for restored or alternative funding for the Home Feeds Nevada program.
- Submitted appropriation requests to secure federal funds for Fiscal Year 2026 to continue two programs that are crucial for the productive management of rangelands:
 - Virginia Range Feral/Estray Horse Safety Initiative; and
 - Surveillance and treatment of Mormon crickets and grasshoppers.
- Attended Governor Lombardo's Natural Resources Sub-Cabinet meeting.
- Welcomed a delegation from Africa during an official visit organized by the U.S. Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program, focusing on topics related to agriculture resilience and food security.
- Collaborated on a draft policy resolution on biosecurity and invasive species management for the Western Governors' Association.
- Following enactment of Assembly Bill 171, issued a statutory report to the Legislature regarding the temporary suspension of the cage-free egg law.
- Coordinated with lawmakers regarding measures being proposed during the 83rd Legislative Session, including:
 - Assemblymember Anderson
 - Assemblymember Considine
 - Assemblymember Flanagan
 - Assemblymember Gray
 - Assemblymember Koenig
 - Assemblymember La Rue Hatch
 - Assemblymember O'Neill
 - Assemblymember Watts
 - Senator Doñate
 - Senator Taylor

Internal

- Welcomed Blane Merkley as the NDA's Industry and Global Trade Coordinator.
- Joined Governor Lombardo in honoring outstanding state employees, including two from the NDA: Chad Sestanovich, Administrator of the Division of Animal Industry, and Ciara Ressel, Public Information Officer.