

Strategic Plan
For The
Wyoming Livestock Board

Fiscal Years 2024-2025



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INTRODUCTION

The Wyoming Livestock Board (WLSB) was created in Wyoming Statutes Title 11 Chapter 18. The WLSB is the agency responsible for livestock issues which is provided for in the Wyoming Constitution; Article 19, Section 1. Legislature to provide for protection of livestock and stock owners. The section states: The legislature shall pass all necessary laws to provide for the protection of livestock against the introduction or spread of pleuro-pneumonia, glanders, splenetic or Texas fever, and other infectious or contagious diseases. The legislature shall also establish a system of quarantine, or inspection, and such other regulations as may be necessary for the protection of stock owners, and most conducive to the stock interests within the state.

Wyoming Quality of Life Results Statements:

- Wyoming has a diverse economy that provides a livable income and ensures wage equity.
- Wyoming state government is a responsible steward of State assets and effectively responds to the needs of residents and guests.
- Wyoming natural resources are managed to maximize the economic, environmental and social prosperity of current and future generations.
- Wyoming values the unique aspects of its western heritage, providing residents and visitors expanding access to cultural, historical and recreational experiences.
- Advanced technologies and quality workforce allow Wyoming business and communities to adapt and thrive.

Our Contribution to Wyoming Quality of Life:

- WLSB works in collaboration with other state agencies such as the Wyoming State Veterinary Laboratory, the Department of Agriculture, the Game and Fish Department, the Department of Health, law enforcement agencies, the Wyoming Board of Veterinary Medicine, and the Department of Homeland Security as well as USDA/Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and other federal agencies to protect the livestock industry, all other domestic animals, and general public from animal disease and theft.
- The WLSB educates producers and the public about diseases, disease prevention, and risk mitigation efforts, and animal identification requirements, monitors and inspects animal imports and exports for compliance with movement requirements, investigates disease outbreaks and conducts disease traces and epidemiology, investigates alleged infractions of state law and agency rule, and brings violators to the attention of the judicial system.
- The WLSB protects the livestock industry by verifying livestock ownership through recorded brands and brand inspection. The recorded brand is a preferred method of animal identification in Wyoming, used by over 88% of production livestock producers. Brand Inspectors use recorded brands to verify ownership and issue title documents on livestock transactions and verify livestock ownership on interstate and intrastate livestock movements. This also enables the WLSB to recover lost or stolen livestock.
- The recorded brand is the bedrock of the system as well as a tangible part of Wyoming's western heritage. Brands are renewed on a staggered system in which a portion of the registered brands are renewed every two years. This has improved the efficiency of the renewal system and has decreased the number of abandoned brands.
- Disease tracing is a primary duty of the agency. Currently this is done using a variety of paper and electronic records from information gathered by each agency unit. The agency has developed an integrated electronic management system using current animal health, brand inspection, and enforcement records, and is now able to perform the majority of animal trace backs involved in

disease outbreaks more efficiently and timely. With the use of advanced technologies, the WLSB contributes to the health and stability of Wyoming's livestock industry and in turn, rural communities will thrive. The ability to trace livestock back to their original herd is becoming a necessity for foreign and domestic trade and to monitor animal disease events.

- By doing these things, the WLSB is vital in maintaining the economic vigor and marketability of the livestock industry through implementing and enforcing livestock brand, ID, and health programs. This in turn maintains Wyoming's western heritage, provides the public with cultural, historical and recreational experiences, and ensures that some private lands may be left undeveloped for scenic and environmental benefits.
- WLSB provides customer service to livestock owners in the state in an attempt to carry out our mission while operating as a responsible steward of State assets.

Basic Facts

WLSB operates with a 2023-2024 Biennium Budget, amounting to, \$19,230,380. Of that amount, \$4,765,146 is from general fund, \$500,840 is from federal funds, \$2,255,212 pass through dollars collected on behalf of County Predator Boards, and \$11,709,182 is producer-generated revenue from the Brand Recording and Inspection activities of the agency (earmarked "brand fund"). Brand Fund balance as of July 25, 2023, was \$10,729,194. WLSB has four operational units (administration, animal health, brands, and law enforcement) and is currently authorized for 17 full-time positions, 60 full-time and 36 part-time At Will Employment Contract (AWEC) Brand Inspectors, and 1 full-time federally funded AWEC.

Primary Functions of the Wyoming Livestock Board

- **Prevention/Education.** Our goal is to prevent the introduction of disease into livestock populations. We strive to be proactive. Many of our programs and rules are directed at surveillance and preventing disease introduction into the state's livestock. We work with individual livestock producers on a voluntary basis to develop herd plans to prevent the introduction of Brucellosis; we provide producer education opportunities to prevent disease and provide law enforcement education for animal welfare issues; and we routinely offer and participate in meetings to educate producers about specific disease issues. We also provide education about our brand program and help deter theft and loss by acting as an independent third party to verify ownership of livestock.
- **Surveillance.** We conduct surveillance for reportable diseases to identify and contain them if found. Surveillance is done in collaboration with livestock producers, private veterinarians and other agencies including the Wyoming State Veterinary Laboratory, the Wyoming Department of Health, and USDA APHIS. Brucellosis herd plans have a surveillance component. We also conduct law enforcement surveillance to assure people are obeying the regulations pertaining to livestock movements and advise and consult with local agencies on animal care/cruelty standards.
- **Response.** We have implemented and plan to continue advancing computerized management systems to provide efficient and timely response capability for all our units. Computerization enables more effective coordination of intra-agency and inter-agency disease response. Animal health personnel work with local, county, state and federal agencies, as well as local veterinarians, to coordinate a response if a reportable disease outbreak occurs. When a reportable disease is discovered through surveillance, we respond (often with APHIS) to control or eradicate the disease quickly. The Reportable Disease List and Response Protocols is being revised and implemented. Notification of diseases by veterinarians and the public is the first step in any response. We also work with other agencies to educate the public about disease and impacts on animals and people of the state.

Performance Measure #1 is Communication, Education & Outreach:**Story Behind the Performance**

One of the primary functions of the WLSB staff is to provide educational and information sharing opportunities and to keep the livestock industry updated on issues of importance. Toward that goal, we sponsor, participate in, or give presentations during numerous meetings, conference calls, webinars, and seminars each year. These meetings include producer education meetings on Brucellosis, Trichomoniasis, traceability, disease surveillance, law enforcement, livestock identification and other relevant topics. Many interagency meetings are attended to coordinate efforts with the Wyoming State Veterinary Laboratory, Wyoming Department of Health, Wyoming Department of Agriculture, USDA-APHIS, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, UW Agricultural Extension, Department of Transportation, and others in response to disease issues including Brucellosis, Big Horn Sheep/Domestic sheep interactions, zoonotic diseases, and emergency response. We also hold meetings with Wyoming licensed livestock auction markets to assure knowledge of and compliance with WLSB animal health and brand statutes and rules. WLSB personnel participate in interstate and /or national meetings to foster coordination with other states, and provinces, USDA-APHIS, and national organizations to help maintain marketability of Wyoming livestock.

It is vital to the agency's ability to successfully serve the livestock industry that all WSLB staff communicates both effectively and efficiently with each other, with the public we serve, and with all those with whom we collaborate.

Plans to Improve Performance over the Next Two Years

Our goal is to improve internal and external communication as part of our agency's responsibility to protect the livestock industry from theft and disease. Providing information and education to the livestock industry will help to increase awareness and acceptance of our WLSB rules and governing statutes which in turn helps improve compliance. Expanded communication and a more thorough understanding by the public/livestock producers lead to a more efficient use of staff time and agency resources. Our goal is to decrease the need for compliance actions by placing an emphasis on educating first.

The Animal Health Unit is working toward development of an on-line or electronic import permitting system that would provide real time information on cattle, sheep, and swine being imported into the state. We are also encouraging veterinarians to learn and implement their use of electronic certificates of veterinary inspection which could enhance our ability to rapidly trace in disease outbreaks. We will also further develop our Emergency Management and Response plan and capabilities to better enable us to serve the livestock industry.

It is vital to the credibility of the agency and its staff that our governing statutes, rules, regulations and board orders are implemented and enforced in a consistent manner throughout the state. The policies by which we operate should be compiled in a manner which is easily accessible and read. The policies should be reviewed periodically by the agency and the Board to insure their relevance and appropriateness. All agency rules are under constant review for necessary updates.

Education and Outreach efforts will be offered on topics of relevance to the current issues. Additionally, educational efforts focused toward law enforcement personnel throughout the state will be provided. It is important that the livestock producers of the state have local officers well-schooled on livestock law.

Performance Measure #2 is Program Management & Oversight:

The fluctuation in the number of brands re-issued per year is due to the fact that a certain percentage of brands are renewed every two years. Traditionally 78 to 80% of Brands are rerecorded in each renewal. The renewal years are always higher because of late renewals and new brands being added to the abandoned brand list. The Agency has worked with Brand Inspection staff, and livestock industry groups to try to minimize the number of brands that go abandoned in each renewal. In the past renewal period approximately 79% of brands have been rerecorded.

Story Behind the Performance

The WLSB is a regulatory agency tasked with serving a wide array of clientele. The WLSB operates as a service agency on one hand yet much of what we do is in a regulatory, enforcement capacity. In carrying out our functions, we strive to conduct our business in a professional, consistent, and efficient manner while working to provide education and outreach to minimize enforcement actions. Each unit within the agency is tasked with streamlining processes and documenting all processes for consistency of implementation and information given to the public.

Proposal to Improve Performance over the Next Two Years

The WLSB currently oversees eighteen (18) sets of rules and will continue to streamline. All agency rules have recently been reviewed and revisions made where appropriate.

One of the main focuses for the agency for the next two years is to evaluate the agency, its operation, programs, and personnel to determine ways the agency can improve service to the public without adding more personnel or costs and ways that agency processes can be simplified or improved through our computerization effort. Operations and duties are going to change during the process of going to an integrated, electronic system for management of Livestock Board operations. It will be important for us to evaluate the necessary shift in duties and make the necessary adjustments to remain effective.

The WLSB veterinary staff conducts risk assessments on cattle herds in the Designated Surveillance Area (DSA) and other areas where there may be risk of exposure to Brucellosis from infected elk. Mitigation plans are developed with cattle producers to help mitigate exposure risks and to help educate them about Brucellosis testing, identification, and vaccination requirements in our Chapter 2 Brucellosis rules. The number of risk assessments conducted outside the DSA is expected to increase due to the suspicion of Brucellosis infected elk in Big Horn County and the potential for herds outside the DSA to be exposed to the disease. Brucellosis sero-positive elk have now also been found on the Wind River Indian Reservation (WRIR) and we are working with the tribes, Governor's Office, and the select Tribal Committee to mitigate risks for cattle producers there. The number of herd plans overall has remained steady as producers with herd plans recognize the benefits of having a Brucellosis Mitigation Plan. The Brucellosis Area of Concern on the west slope of the Big Horn Mountain range was rescinded by the board and Governor in 2020.