

LOUISIANA LIVESTOCK BRAND COMMISSION BOARD MEETING

December 1, 2017

10:00 AM

**Veterans Memorial Auditorium
5825 Florida Boulevard, 1st Floor
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70806
Proceedings**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Mike Strain, DVM.

PLEDGE

Robert Pitre led the pledge of allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken by John Walther

Members present:

Commissioner Mike Strain, DVM, Sheriff Bud Torres, Sheriff Austin Daniels, Henry Capdebosq, John Vogt, Robert Pitre, Vic Blanchard,

Members absent:

James Leleux, Sheriff Stephen Prator, Calvin LeBouef, Honorable Todd Newsom, Charles Garrett and James Arceneaux

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

Commissioner Strain spoke on electronic theft

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Vic Blanchard made a motion to approve minutes as written it was seconded by Henry Capdebosq. No comments, additions or deletions. Motion passed unanimously.

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REPORTS OF OFFICERS, BOARDS AND COMMISSION

John Walther started with the introduction of staff. He introduced the new Brand Program Manager Mr. Scott Perry and the new Brand Officer Mr. Jessie Bellard. He talked about Janet Leblanc leaving the department and introduced Dawn Bellelo as filling in until her position can be filled. He also introduced Emily Andrews as our new General Council.

John Walther spoke on the Equine Herpes outbreak at the New Orleans fairgrounds. The virus spread because of a lack of bio security.

Commissioner Strain commented that it was Equine Herpes Virus Myeloencepalopathy and that you have to quarantine and break the transmission cycle. It started with a single infected horse at the fairgrounds. He hopes to one day have a vaccine.

John Walther spoke on the annual spring training for hurricane season. He spoke on the effects from Hurricane Harvey on Southwest Louisiana and also the evacuation of Texas citizens into Louisiana.

John Walther spoke on the sale barns having very big runs leading up to the fall. The cattle numbers are increasing in Louisiana. Monitoring livestock is the main line of defense against cattle theft.

OLD BUSINESS

Scott Perry introduced the Livestock Brand Commission enforcement staff. He spoke on conferences they attended during the year. He spoke about the Mississippi Delta Agriculture Theft Task Force. He mentioned that the department will be hosting the Southern States Livestock and Rural Enforcement Association conference in October of 2019.

At the request of John Walther, Commissioner Strain gave a legislative update on the Ag Tax Exemptions that were protected this year and also an overview of the budget that was protected. He spoke about traveling the state with Governor

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Edwards and meeting with over 600 to 700 farmers where the Governor committed to help protect agriculture for overzealous taxation. He spoke about a possible special session after Mardi Gras. He spoke about dedicated and undedicated funds.

NEW BUSINESS

Scott Perry gave an update on all the brand cases and sale barn totals from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017.

Sheriff Austin Daniels asked about the task force and how information is shared with other sheriff departments. Scott Perry said that they can be added to the distribution list.

John Vogt asked about order buyers. He asked what the alternative is to ear marks. Scott Perry described how the Fort Supply database works for traceability. Commissioner Strain commented on microchipping being unique.

Commissioner Strain asked for discussion on the order buyers. John Walther commented that they are to register with the department as Livestock Dealers and they are required to have a bond. They are also required by law to keep records on all of their transactions. The large operations are audited and the small operations are inspected to make sure they are complying with record keeping.

Sheriff Bud Torres asked about the general consensus of the industry about microchipping. Commissioner Strain commented that under the federal law they either have to have a metal ear tag, a microchip or a unique brand that is recognized between the two states. He spoke about the Food Safety and Modernization Act and traceability.

Vic Blanchard asked John Walther how Louisiana can get a brand fee like Texas. John Walther said that it would have to be an act of the legislature and that it has not been popular with the other user groups. Commissioner Strain commented

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that it would have to be put in our budget and that it has not been something that was acceptable to the livestock industry because it is a fee.

Sheriff Woods of Jefferson Davis parish commented about making a regulation on microchipping and brands. He said if you can't sell to the sale barns without a microchip to make that regulation to where they have to. He said industry needs to come to the 21st century.

John Walther spoke on the brand renewal preparation. The brands renew in 2019. Brands are renewed every five years. Currently the department is using a spreadsheet system that is antiquated. He is looking into an electronic data management package for all animal health issues. It will give us the ability to have online renewals and online payments. It will be an improvement for the next renewal period.

Commissioner Strain suggested getting with LAFA to talk about marketing money about branding your livestock. Brands are still an important part of what the department does.

Sheriff Austin Daniels spoke on squeeze chutes and microchipping.

John Vogt asked about damage from needle injections. Commissioner Strain commented that it is a button tag that is in the ear. It is tamper proof so that you cannot remove it. John Walther commented that USDA has set a target of 7 years from now to have all cattle electronically ID'd.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Vic Blanchard asked John Walther to comment on the feral swine transport permit. John explained the regulations for feral swine transport and holding. The purpose under the Board of Animal Health authority is disease control with an added benefit is to limit the movement of the feral swine and try to limit their release on other areas. There is a registration for hauling and one for holding feral swine. The swine can only go to approved USDA or State Inspected

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slaughterhouses or holding facilities. Commissioner Strain commented that the feral swine continue to be a problem and that we are probably capturing or killing between 350 and 375 thousand head and that we are still not gaining ground. They can be hunted day and night except during deer season you can't hunt them at night. Vic Blanchard commented that you can hunt them at night with a permit. Commissioner Strain commented that we need additional control methods to control them.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Commissioner Strain asked for a motion to adjourn. Robert Pitre made a motion to adjourn; it was seconded by Vic Blanchard. Motion passed with no objections.