
-----Original Message-----

From: Teresa <tbeck@mtaonline.net>
Sent: Tuesday, March 20, 2018 7:11 AM
To: Rep. Andy Josephson <Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov>; House Resources <House.Resources@akleg.gov>
Subject: HCR23, DO NOT Support

Dear Representatives,

HCR 23 seems like a grand plan to protect wild animal populations for all to enjoy and of course everyone can agree that there is reason to do that. However, the DANGER is the back story on why they want to add the last line to its content that includes DOMESTIC ANIMALS. The ADF&G and Board of Game want to be able to stretch their powerful arm over the State Veterinarian Office and the Department of Agriculture to push their agenda on being "perceived as protecting Alaska's wildlife". Alaska's agricultural development and our food security is under attack by these departments and specifically outside organization (Wild Sheep Foundation WSF) justifying laws based on issues that have happened in the lower 48 (WHEREAS there is more population density of domestic livestock near wildlife populations).

***** Alaska has no where near the exposure of domestic livestock to wild populations.

***** They have claimed to find the Mycoplasma Ovi organism in Alaskan wild sheep and goats. These were healthy hunted animals. This means the animals have already been exposed to the organism. It is already endemic in their wildlife population. This finding is being misconstrued as a new justification for their argument.

***** Please be careful of outside interest groups with deep pockets putting more pressure and regulation on our very small Alaska Agricultural Producers in the name of protecting Alaskan wildlife. Let the state veterinarian office and the department of agriculture do their jobs.

Please DO NOT support HCR 23.

Sincerely,

Teresa Beck DVM

An Alaska licensed veterinarian since 1996

Sent from my iPhone

To Representatives Drummond & Josephson:

Thank you for your interest and concern regarding both the raw milk issue as well as the wildlife protection issue. I'd like to bring a couple of things to your attention regarding HCR 23.

First and foremost, we along with other domestic sheep and goat producers in Alaska are in unanimous agreement that the health and well-being of Alaska's wildlife is of paramount concern. Our state would not be what it is today without the abundance of our native species. However this particular resolution has the obvious and unmistakable stamp of the Wild Sheep Foundation, whose sole concern is to use their vast resources to further their own hunting agenda at the expense of all other interests. Clearly the "wildlife" that spurred the creation of this resolution are Dall's sheep, the "foreign pathogen" referred to is *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae*, or *M. ovi* for short, and the "domestic animals" are sheep and goats. So I will focus my comments on what is the obvious underlying intent of the resolution.

The livestock community, with the support of DNR, the State Vet's office, and ADF&G has been actively engaged in dealing with the WSF for the past two years now. Our first inkling of the *M. ovi* issue was when Dr. Gerlach notified producers on December 23, 2015, that a proposal (Prop 90) had been filed seven months prior (in May of 2015) requesting that the Board of Game remove sheep and goats from the Clean List, essentially making them illegal to own in Alaska. It came as quite a shock to hobby farmers, small-scale meat and dairy producers, and 4-H participants that their farming activities were in danger of turning them into outlaws. With very short notice a letter-writing campaign was launched, which sent a very clear message to the Board of Game that this was a much larger issue than they might have imagined. Due to an overwhelming public response, the BoG wisely chose to defer any action and allow the livestock community a reasonable period of time to respond and take definitive action.

The Alaska Farm Bureau immediately formed a working group where all affected parties could discuss reasonable solutions to what is best described as a "potential problem" in Alaska. Bear in mind that any Bighorn Sheep statistics you've been shown from the lower 48 describe a scenario which is 180 degrees different from the situation in Alaska. (Open-range grazing of huge commercial herds in proximity to wild sheep habitat, vs. small hobby-sized herds which are contained with fencing on private property, far removed from wild sheep or goat habitat.) Through a grass-roots effort aided by the Alaska Farm Bureau and the State Vet, we have organized a testing program which has provided data for a science-based prevalence study of *M. ovi* in domestic herds. Voluntary participation has netted a sampling of nearly 30% of Alaska's domestic sheep and goats thus far, and the effort is currently on-going. Continued education and outreach, with no funding or assistance from any government or NGO organization is being sustained through social media and personal contact. This level of active engagement from the farming community convinced the Board of Game to unanimously vote to "Take No Action" on the proposal at their November 2017 meeting, while encouraging producers to continue their efforts to expand the prevalence study.

Most producers are now at least aware of the issue, and those who have not yet tested their herds are being encouraged to do so by other breeders. Peer pressure alone has driven other bio-security health testing within the community to a nearly universal compliance level, and is starting to have the same effect with *M. ovi* testing. The biggest concern for producers is the extremely high cost of testing for *M. ovi*. Fortunately the Farm Bureau was able to create a grant to pay for vet calls for all of the collection visits during the initial phases of the 2017 study, but those funds have now been exhausted.

Because the WSF did not achieve their first hoped-for success with the Board of Game (who, to their credit, took the broader spectrum of scientific facts into account when considering their decision) they have now taken their single-minded crusade to the legislature, as they have repeatedly promised to do. HCR 23 is the first step on WSF's well-planned and well-funded agenda, with their stated goal of requiring mandatory, legally-enforced, state-wide testing of all sheep and goats. Before throwing your full weight of support behind this resolution and what will promptly follow on its heels, you need to think through the logistics and costs of such a program. Who will pay for the testing (as high as \$300 per animal, including lab costs and vet fees)? Who will pay for enforcement? What agency will oversee the record-keeping, and guarantee individual confidentiality? No state agency currently has the budget or staff to pay for all of the associated expenses, or send agents from farm to farm demanding to see "Your papers, please."

I am asking you to look at the larger picture before acquiescing to the innocuous-sounding requests of the WSF lobbyists. I wish the farming community had the financial resources to meet WSF on their own turf, but their funds come from a large and deep-pocketed national organization whose goal is to use Alaska as a precedent setter to accomplish their nation-wide agenda. We can't compete for your attention at that lobbying level--our only hope is that you will recognize the underlying objectives in WSF's long-range plan for Alaska and the western United States.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzy Crosby
Cottonwood Creek Farm
Wasilla, Alaska
907-863-1276
packnmilk@ak.net

KENAI LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

Email: Kenai_LIO@akleg.gov

Phone: 907-283-2030 / Fax: 907-283-3075

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

NAME: Nancy Field
REPRESENTING: Chairman, FiberFest
BILL # or SUBJECT: HCR 23 Protect Wildlife from Foreign Pathogens
COMMITTEE: House Resources DATE: 3-21-18

I strongly oppose (as do many members of the local fiber guild) HCR 23. It is a bill that would severely hamper the cottage industry of fiber production by putting costly and unnecessary expenses on the local business people. Small business cannot afford the additional costs associated with this legislation. These businesses typically DO NOT interact with Dall Sheep or Mountain Goats. Our animals are pets, which give us fiber that we sell to offset increased cost of living expenses.



Nancy Field, FiberFest chairman

Wrk #907 262-4440

35202 Kenai Spur Hwy #1,

Soldotna, AK 99669

From: Jeff Judd
Sent: Thursday, March 15, 2018 10:46 AM
To: Rep. Andy Josephson <Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov>
Cc:
Subject: House Resolution No. 23

Representative Josephson. Good morning. I am writing you this morning to provide information related to Resolution No.23, i.e., A Resolution supporting enhanced efforts to protect wildlife and domestic animals in the state from infectious diseases, foreign pathogens, and nonendemic parasites. My wife, Tina, as well as others support the intent of this resolution, but we believe that some background information would be helpful to you and other members of the legislature on this issue. If my assumption is correct, this resolution is being requested by the Wild Sheep Foundation as a result of their concern over a bacteria known as "Movi" and its possible impact on the wild sheep and goat population. The domestic farming community in Alaska acknowledges this issue and as Alaskans we share a desire to protect Alaska's wild species.

It is especially important that the legislature understand that the domestic farming community has been actively engaged and working with the ADEC, State Veterinarian's Office, ADF&G, Department of Agriculture, and the Farm Bureau on assessing the prevalence of Movi in both the domestic and wild sheep and goat population. ADEC, working with scientists at the USDA, have been completing a prevalence study , and working to understand the science behind Movi, its various genetic strains, and impact on both domestic and wild populations. As you might know, Movi in of itself does not cause a wild sheep or goat to become sick. It is only when combined with other stressors that it may trigger the animal to become sick. And recent scientific studies are proving that domestic and wild populations can actually shed the bacteria, and perhaps even via exposure to the bacteria, develop an immunity to the bacteria. We believe, as do the scientists that are working on studying this issue that it is important to understand the science behind the bacteria and its impacts, and whether it actually impacts the wild thin horn sheep and goat population. As of yet, Movi has only been proven to have impacted big horn sheep in the lower 48.

The domestic community participated in a Town Hall forum at the last annual State Board of Game meeting, and the domestic community is actively participating in a Working Group which includes representatives from ADEC, State Veterinarian's Office, ADF&G, Department of Agriculture, the Farm Bureau, and the Wild Sheep Foundation in an effort to work together as Alaskan's to find reasonable, effective solutions to both assess the risk, and if appropriate, reduce the risk even further.

As you may have also heard from those involved in the studies, and from Alaska's

domestic owners, conditions in Alaska vary greatly from those conditions in the lower 48 where Movi has been a more significant issue. We do not have public grazing lands adjacent to, or within, wild population areas. We already restrict the use of goats or sheep as pack animals for hunting purposes. Our domestic animals are generally localized in urban areas, not in mountainous area where wild populations exist. And the number of domestic animals in Alaska is limited, with estimates being in the several thousand range. After a significant volunteer effort by the domestic sheep and goat community over the past year, the prevalence study conducted by ADEC/USDA has shown that only ~4% of the domestic goat and sheep population tested positive for Movi (the percentage being slightly higher than 4% for sheep, and lower than 4% [~2%] for domestic goats.

As you likely have recently learned, ADF&G recently announced that testing results from a limited number of wild sheep and goats concluded that a small number of those wild animals tested positive for Movi exposure. They reported that the strain detected has NOT been tied to the genetic strain found in domestic animals. We simply do not know where or when the wild animals may have been exposed. It frankly could have been 100 years ago during the early days of colonization of Alaska when there were 10 times the number of domestic animals that supported the military and colony pioneers. It is also possible that the wild sheep were exposed from other wild animals that carry the bacteria, or the strain detected in the recent wild sheep is simply endemic to the wild sheep population. It is important to note that none of the wild sheep or goats were actually sick according to the ADF&G – a sign perhaps that they actually have developed an immunity to the bacteria which could actually make the wild sheep population stronger and less susceptible to the Movi bacteria in the future.

In summary, there is a great deal of science to be learned and an effort is underway and ongoing within ADEC and the USDA. The domestic community is actively participating and wishes to be part of a reasonable solution where appropriate. We are however frustrated that the Wild Sheep Foundation continues to violate the trust and agreement with the Working Group premises by continuing to push for legislative solutions before the scientific studies and risk assessment are completed, and attempting make end arounds during the very period they have agreed to work with the Working Group to find mutually agreeable solutions. It is unfortunate that this special interest group, largely made up of rich, out of state hunters, has the power and money to hire lobbyists to further their goals at the legislative level ahead of the science actually being completed and breaking from the premises and promises they have made to the Working Group members

I would be happy to discuss this issue more with you should you have the time.

Sincerely,
Jeff Judd
Wasilla, Alaska

From: knik07
To: [House Resources](#); [Rep. Andy Josephson](#)
Subject: RE: Against granting more authority to agencies! Please read this!
Date: Monday, March 19, 2018 8:03:29 PM

I would like to add my concerns to the email below. By granting this additional authority to ADFG, BOG, DEC and any other agency, it appears agencies can now skip the public comment process. I think this violates the rights of user groups who may be impacted by decisions made by these agencies. The decisions of agency staff may be well intended, but can be overzealous and uninformed at the same time. This additional authority could be abused and user groups will have no recourse. Thank you for your consideration.

Linda Nuechterlein

Sent via the Samsung Galaxy S® 5 ACTIVE™, an AT&T 4G LTE smartphone

----- Original message -----

From: knik07 <knik07@gmail.com>
Date: 3/19/18 8:34 PM (GMT-07:00)
To: House.Resources@akleg.gov, rep.andy.josephson@akleg.gov
Subject: Against granting more authority to agencies! Please read this!

By granting more authority to government agencies you are just playing into the hands of The Wild Sheep Foundation! They are up to no good! Go to this website and read this first - very carefully!

www.packlamas.org

Make sure you understand what you are doing!

-Phil Nuechterlein

Sent via the Samsung Galaxy S® 5 ACTIVE™, an AT&T 4G LTE smartphone

From: Amy Seitz <amy.seitz@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 18, 2018 12:13 PM
To: Rep. Geran Tarr <Rep.Geran.Tarr@akleg.gov>; Rep. Andy Josephson <Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov>; Rep. John Lincoln <Rep.John.Lincoln@akleg.gov>; Rep. Harriet Drummond <Rep.Harriet.Drummond@akleg.gov>; Rep. Justin Parish <Rep.Justin.Parish@akleg.gov>; Rep. Chris Birch <Rep.Chris.Birch@akleg.gov>; Rep. DeLena Johnson <Rep.DeLena.Johnson@akleg.gov>; Rep. George Rauscher <Rep.George.Rauscher@akleg.gov>; Rep. David Talerico <Rep.David.Talerico@akleg.gov>
Cc: Bryce Wrigley <bjwrigley@gmail.com>
Subject: Friday hearing follow up - movi issue

House Resource Committee members,

I wanted to follow up after Friday's committee meeting regarding the movi topic - specifically the offer from Wild Sheep Foundation discussed on their offer to cover costs of testing and mitigation.

When the Sheep & Goat Working Group first started looking at the study we are currently doing, WSF did offer funding to help pay for veterinary costs and they also mentioned they would pay for culling and replacement of any positives. Because of this assertion, the group moved forward with initiating this testing program; since veterinary costs would be the biggest hindrance in getting participation and having funding assistance would help greatly. However, when we got to the table it was apparent that there were many strings attached with WSF's offer to fund the testing.

We still proceeded with the study since we needed to have real data regarding the prevalence of movi in Alaska and learn more about this pathogen before a decision could be made on the best path forward. The Farm Bureau contributed funds to help with vet costs, some private veterinarians offered their time without charge or at a reduced price, and sheep and goat owners also had to put in some money. Had WSF helped with covering testing costs for this study, we would have seen more participation from Alaska's sheep and goat producers.

What are the strings attached to WSF money? Mandatory testing, registration, mitigation of positives (killing, exporting, permanent quarantine), and import requirements. Some may think this doesn't sound bad if WSF is going to cover the costs, but we have many concerns over these demands.

For all of these, personal information would be going through the Office of the State Veterinarian and there is no confidentiality over these records. This exposes our sheep and goat owners to the possibility of harassment and/or negative scrutiny. WSF has made it clear they want access to these records so they can help manage the situation.

We do not know enough about the pathogen to say that disposing of every positive animal in the state would resolve the issue. There have been positive test results in white tailed deer and bison, which indicates other ungulates can carry movi. We do not know if something can trigger the bacteria, so would mandatory testing have to be done annually? This would really make things expensive and not just for producers - how much will it cost the state to enforce this? WSF hasn't indicated that their funding is guaranteed in

perpetuity.

Adding movi testing to import requirements is problematic because this is a complicated bacteria. The current study takes 3 nasal swabs, preferable 1 month apart, and a blood test. Very few of the animals tested so far have had all 3 nasal swabs come back positive. There is some information that most healthy animals can pick up the bacteria, expel it and never be “infected;” others might carry it while in close proximity to a chronic shedder, but when removed they expel the bacteria and never become “infected,” and then there are the chronic shedders.

Nasal swabs simply indicate if the bacteria is in the nasal cavity at detectable levels. The blood samples will show if the animal has built up antibodies due to a reaction to the bacteria. So do we say that one positive nasal swab means an animal can’t be imported? Or would it require a positive blood sample and nasal swabs? If import requirements were 3 nasal swabs, that would add at least a couple months to the age of the animal before importation. Since it is logistically difficult transporting sheep & goats through Canada, many producers choose to fly them up. Additional growth on the animal will most likely result in having to buy a larger kennel and pay substantially more due to the weight of the sheep/goat. There is also the matter of finding a seller who is willing to let a potential buyer back out of the sale if any test results come back positive for movi.

As you can see, there are many issues and concerns with the strings WSF has attached to their money. They have been saying \$600,000, however, we are quite certain it’s going to cost a lot more than that. WSF hasn’t said they would cover the cost no matter what the expense, and there is also no guarantee that they won’t pull the funding like they did with the offer to help with the study we already have in progress.

WSF has started their own “movi free” testing program; while specific details are not available unless a person is willing to sign a contract, one of the stipulations is that WSF has the right “monitor” that persons farm.

Since it continues to be brought up and was discussed in Friday’s hearing, I want to make sure the House Resources Committee knows that the money offered by WSF is certainly not a blank check. Additionally, no one is talking about how much it is going to cost the state to enforce a mandatory testing and mitigation program.

Thank you,

Amy Seitz, Executive Director

Alaska Farm Bureau, Inc
907-252-5064

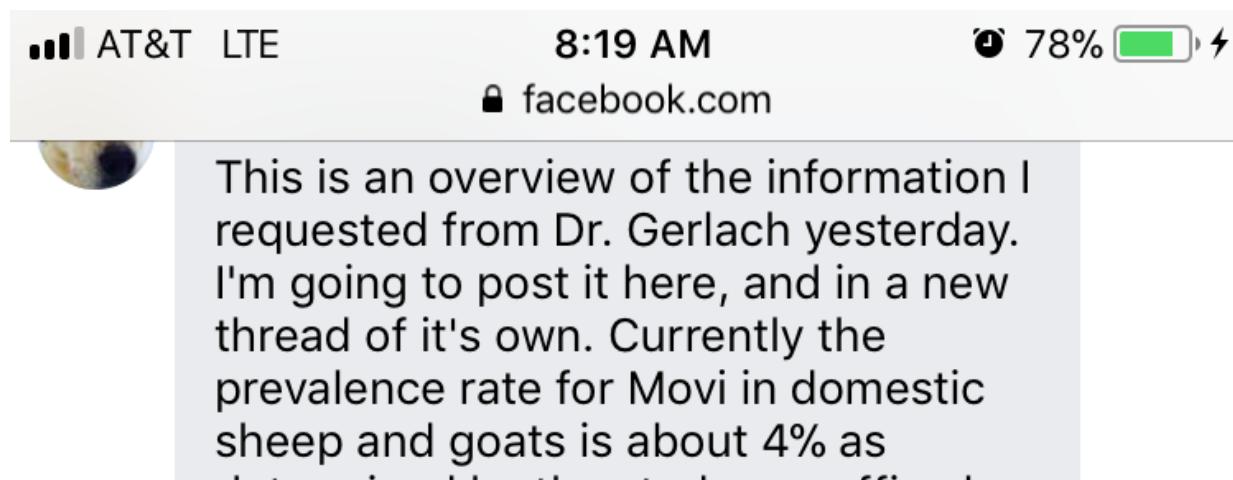
From: ti tho <tianateke@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 21, 2018 8:37 AM
To: House Resources <House.Resources@akleg.gov>
Subject: HR23 & HB315 re: M. Ovi

HR23 The very same language was used in F&G Prop 90 in 2016 to try and force THEM to use “enhanced” measures to eliminate M. Ovi by eliminating the right to possess domestic sheep and goats. We have now discovered that M. Ovi is and has been, a comensural, endemic, and inactive agent present in the entire eastern half of the state from the north slope down to the north side of the Talkeetna’s. They want to slam our necks in the barn door of a horse that left decades ago.

Producers are still taking action to reduce the 3% detection rate of M. Ovi in domestic sheep and the 1% detection rate for M. Ovi in domestic goats. Testing, altering contact protocol, quarantines, treatments, education, and breeding for resistance.

HB315 will enable us to work directly with our OSV instead of through anonymized studies. AND protect us from vegan liberation groups and other militant special interest activist groups from Outside.

Here is a reply from our state vet on the most recent press release from f&g



determined by the study our office has sponsored. The initial results from ADFG show 4 positive of 136 Dall Sheep submitted by hunters (3%) and 2 positive with 3 highly suspect out of 39 Mt Goats submitted samples from live capture goats that were collared for ID (12%) prevalence. These animals were not showing any signs of illness. There has been no reports of morbidity/mortality, decreased birth rates, or declines in these populations from ADFG surveillance and monitoring, hunters or outdoor enthusiasts hiking in the areas.

The initial report from ADFG indicates that there are several strains of Movi that have been identified from both domestic and wild animals. There is still more to come from this analysis as genomic sequencing is a tedious process. At this time there is no indication of any harmful effects of this pathogen on either domestic or wildlife populations. Some of this information may initially look different from what would be expected from what occurred in the lower 48. So let's compare these 2 wildlife populations:

- 1) Wild sheep populations (Big Horn sheep) across the lower 48 were at

1) Wild sheep populations (Big Horn sheep) across the lower 48 were at record lows in the 1960s, about 18,000 but have increased in numbers dramatically to over 85,000 in 2014. The habitat for these animals has decreased over this same time period due to urban expansion and anthropogenic development. The result is crowding of the growing big horn populations to a smaller habitat. Another compounding factor is the impact of drought over this area for the last 10 years that has caused a tremendous stress on these animals (heat stress, lack of water, lack of browse). The focus has been on the interaction of these big horn with domestic sheep and goat grazing on public (BLM) lands. You can imagine as habitat is diminished and grazing/browsing is decreased by drought these wild population will be having increased interaction with livestock on grazing land as the wild sheep are searching for food sources. The result of all these stressors has resulted in sporadic morbidity/mortality events in big horn populations.

2) Alaskan wild life by comparison have much broader habitat that has been maintained with less anthropogenic impact and a better

anthropogenic impact and a better grazing and food sources. There are a smaller number of domestic sheep and goats which are raised on farms confined and no grazing on public lands at this time. ADFG has carefully

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smaller number of domestic sheep and goats which are raised on farms confined and no grazing on public lands at this time. ADFG has carefully managed these wild sheep and goat populations and I stress has not reported any significant morbidity/ mortality events, decreased birth rates, or declines in these populations from its surveillance and monitoring. The situation in Alaska is very different than what is occurring in the lower 48.

As there is no indication of any immediate harm to domestic or wildlife populations, this is a time to gather more information and data about this pathogen and make decisions based on science and not fear or emotion. Rash or drastic action is not indicated such as the proposed action of culling wildlife populations that have had + tests for Movi. There have been previous attempts to control TB, brucellosis, Chronic Wasting Disease infections in wildlife populations and

even Movi infected big horn populations by culling. These have not been successful in eliminating the pathogen and resulted in a great expenditure of funds and doing more harm than good.

There is much we do not know or understand about the Alaskan situation. It would appear that we need to determine If the strains of Movi found here are different in wildlife and domestic populations, different from

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situation. It would appear that we need to determine If the strains of Movi found here are different in wildlife and domestic populations, different from the strains found in the lower 48, and if the wildlife populations here may have acclimated to these strains. Do the exposed wildlife here have an immunity to more pathogenic or virulent strains of Movi? To understand the epidemiology of this pathogen (Movi) we also need to sample other populations of sheep and goats across the state to see if they have been exposed and to determine the prevalence in these different groups. If other populations are affected how did they get exposed, what other species

of animals may be a vector or carrier of this pathogen and be capable of spreading the Movi. The questions keep piling up; we need more information so the state agencies involved in managing domestic animal health and wildlife health can make a thorough evaluation and make proper management changes.

ADFG is doing a tremendous job collecting samples for analysis and making plans for increased surveillance during the upcoming hunting season. We need to increase our surveillance of domestic livestock over 2018 and I believe that HB 315/SB 164 will help with this collection of samples and will increase voluntary reporting of sick or dead livestock. We also need to increase the outreach to

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ADFG is doing a tremendous job collecting samples for analysis and making plans for increased surveillance during the upcoming hunting season. We need to increase our surveillance of domestic livestock over 2018 and I believe that HB 315/SB 164 will help with this collection of samples and will increase voluntary reporting of sick or dead livestock. We also need to increase the outreach to livestock owners and 4H groups on how to develop a good herd health and biosecurity plan part of which will be to prevent any interaction with any wildlife species.



Here is the most recent press release that indicates that wild detection of *M. Ovi* is found at a far greater rate than the strains found domestically. Both populations show detection without infection. Asymptomatic animals at internal (in the case of hunter takes) and external examination. It would seem that without the extirpation of the fittest survivors, our Dall's have developed infective resistance.

[http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?
adfg=pressreleases.pr&release=2018_03_20](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=pressreleases.pr&release=2018_03_20)