

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE**

May 1, 2017

1:04 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Andy Josephson, Co-Chair
Representative Geran Tarr, Co-Chair
Representative Dean Westlake, Vice Chair
Representative Harriet Drummond
Representative Justin Parish [via teleconference and then
arrived as the meeting was in progress]
Representative Chris Birch
Representative DeLena Johnson
Representative George Rauscher
Representative David Talerico

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Mike Chenault (alternate)
Representative Chris Tuck (alternate)

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 197

"An Act relating to the duties of the commissioner of natural resources; relating to agriculture; and relating to community seed libraries."

- MOVED CSHB 197(RES) OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 218

"An Act relating to the state veterinarian and to animals and animal products."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 197

SHORT TITLE: COMMUNITY SEED LIBRARIES

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) JOHNSTON

03/24/17	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/24/17	(H)	RES, FIN
04/10/17	(H)	RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124

04/10/17 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --
 04/12/17 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
 04/12/17 (H) Scheduled but Not Heard
 04/13/17 (H) RES AT 5:00 PM BARNES 124
 04/13/17 (H) -- Continued from 4/12/17 --
 04/17/17 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
 04/17/17 (H) Scheduled but Not Heard
 04/19/17 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
 04/19/17 (H) Heard & Held
 04/19/17 (H) MINUTE(RES)
 04/26/17 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
 04/26/17 (H) Heard & Held
 04/26/17 (H) MINUTE(RES)
 04/28/17 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
 04/28/17 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --
 05/01/17 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124

BILL: HB 218

SHORT TITLE: STATE VETERINARIAN;ANIMALS;PRODUCTS
 SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) TARR

04/07/17 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 04/07/17 (H) RES
 04/12/17 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
 04/12/17 (H) Scheduled but Not Heard
 04/13/17 (H) RES AT 5:00 PM BARNES 124
 04/13/17 (H) -- Continued from 4/12/17 --
 04/14/17 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
 04/14/17 (H) <Bill Hearing Postponed>
 04/17/17 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
 04/17/17 (H) Heard & Held
 04/17/17 (H) MINUTE(RES)
 05/01/17 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124

WITNESS REGISTER

REPRESENTATIVE JENNIFER JOHNSTON
 Alaska State Legislature
 Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Speaking as the sponsor of HB 197,
 explained an amendment to the committee substitute for HB 197,
 Version O.

TERRANOVA TASKER, Staff
 Representative Jennifer Johnston
 Alaska State Legislature
 Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: On behalf of Representative Johnston, sponsor, explained the purpose of an amendment to the committee substitute for HB 197, Version O.

ROB CARTER, Manager
Plant Materials Center
Division of Agriculture
Department of Natural Resources
Palmer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the hearing of HB 197.

ROBERT GERLACH, VMD, State Veterinarian
Division of Environmental Health
Department of Environmental Conservation
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided a PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Office of the State Veterinarian," dated 5/1/17, and answered questions during the hearing of HB 218.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:04:54 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR GERAN TARR called the House Resources Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. Representatives Tarr, Birch, Rauscher, Drummond, Westlake, Josephson, and Parish [via teleconference and then arrived as the meeting was in progress], were present at the call to order. Representatives Johnson and Talerico arrived as the meeting was in progress.

HB 197-COMMUNITY SEED LIBRARIES

[1:06:49 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR TARR announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 197, "An Act relating to the duties of the commissioner of natural resources; relating to agriculture; and relating to community seed libraries."

CO-CHAIR TARR stated the committee substitute (CS) for HB 197, labeled 30-LS0493\0, Wayne, 4/24/17, was adopted at a previous the hearing of the bill on 4/26/17, and there is a forthcoming amendment.

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REPRESENTATIVE JENNIFER JOHNSTON, Alaska State Legislature, sponsor of HB 197, explained a forthcoming amendment would remove concerns regarding seed sellers' names and addresses attached to the seed packs.

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TERRANOVA TASKER, staff to Representative Jennifer Johnston, Alaska State Legislature, further explained the amendment is in response to concerns raised at a previous hearing about having one's personal name and address written in a library log or on [seed packet] labels. The amendment would also remove any buyer/seller language to keep the recorded information consistent with noncommercial seed-sharing. Ms. Tasker reported a seed library in Pennsylvania keeps a check-out log with names and phone numbers, which is not uncommon for a seed library. In addition, Legislative Legal Services, Legislative Affairs Agency, and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) advised her that the removal of the personal name and address limits some accountability.

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CO-CHAIR TARR moved to adopt Amendment 2, labeled 30-LS0493\0.2, Wayne, 4/28/17.

[There was no Amendment 1.]

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CO-CHAIR JOSEPHSON objected for discussion purposes. He referred to difficulties related to accountability if personal identifiers are removed from the bill, and asked whether personal names and addresses would still be logged by the library [if Amendment 2 was adopted].

MS. TASKER expressed her understanding [the effect of] Amendment 2 [would be] that the seed library does not have an obligation to keep personal information; based on how seed libraries operate, one must be a member of the library, thus the amendment leaves recording personal information "wholeheartedly in their hands."

CO-CHAIR JOSEPHSON relayed he was contacted by an Anchorage resident who said HB 197 is not necessary and regulates private trades or exchanges.

MS. TASKER stated the bill was proposed because all seeds in the state are treated as commercial seeds, and there is no private seed exchange allowed by current applicable statute and code. Therefore, the bill gives seed libraries, and others through a personal exemption clause, the right to exchange seeds in or outside of the community seed library, as long as the exchange remains in the noncommercial realm.

CO-CHAIR TARR further described Amendment 2 as follows:

But it still does have the, ... deletes the language that says, "that it's harvested from a plant grown outside the state unless the seed is in the original packaging into which it was imported."

CO-CHAIR TARR said Amendment 2 reflects an amendment and a conceptual amendment that were proposed in a previous hearing.

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CO-CHAIR JOSEPHSON removed his objection to Amendment 2 and, there being no further objection, Amendment 2 was adopted.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON expressed support for the work done by the sponsor.

REPRESENTATIVE PARISH questioned the purpose of changing the requirement for seeds harvested from plants grown out-of-state.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSTON explained seed libraries requested the change so that the libraries could accept donations that are received from sources such as The Home Depot.

REPRESENTATIVE PARISH asked how HB 197 would interface with proposed [HB 19] regarding seeds treated with neonicotinoid pesticides. He asked whether it is common for seeds offered for sale by commercial sources to be pretreated.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSTON said she did not know; however, seed libraries provide a good and social function, and she assured the committee that seed libraries would be familiar with this issue.

CO-CHAIR TARR restated two issues are deleted by amendment to the bill: plants grown outside the state, and seed in its original packaging. She directed attention to language that

would be deleted from the bill on page 4, lines 12 and 13, which read:

(1) that is harvested from a plant grown outside the state unless the seed is in the original packaging in which it was imported into the state;

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ROB CARTER, manager, Plant Materials Center, Division of Agriculture, Department of Natural Resources, explained many seeds shared through community seed libraries and amongst individuals are difficult to produce in Alaska, such as biannual plants that must be overwintered prior to setting seeds for harvest. Consequently, certain seeds are imported and shared with other growers in the state, which improves crop diversity within regions of the state. However, during this process it is common for seeds to be repackaged by the buyer or others, and the requirement that seeds remain in the original package would limit the possibility for crop diversity, which provides a foundation for food security and production.

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REPRESENTATIVE PARISH restated his question about the correlation between proposed bills HB 197 and HB 19, as related to seeds that are treated with neonicotinoid pesticides.

MR. CARTER said [HB 19] relates specifically to the chemical use of neonicotinoid pesticides and includes an exemption for plants confined within a greenhouse, as well as for certified pesticide applicators. He pointed out the majority of seed treatments for crops that are traded in seed libraries - nonlarge agronomic species such as wheat, barley, and corn - tend not to be neonicotinoids. Mr. Carter stressed [HB 19] is specific to treatments applied to plants or seeds in the ground, and not on crops traded within seed libraries such as carrots and broccoli, which are traditionally treated with a fungicide or seed protectant.

REPRESENTATIVE PARISH posited if a seed was offered for trade at a seed library and it was discovered the seed had been treated with neonicotinoids, would the responsible party be the seed library, or the individual who offered the seed to the library.

MR. CARTER opined HB 197, in its current form, places the liability upon the library. He characterized a seed library as

a multitude of individuals hosted in a common place, and for the integrity of the library, individuals would self-police, as no seed library would want to jeopardize its event or its collection. He spoke in favor of this provision of the bill.

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CO-CHAIR JOSEPHSON moved to report the committee substitute for HB 197, Version 30-LS0493\0, Wayne, 4/24/17, as amended, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal note. There being no objection, CSHB 197(RES) was reported out of the House Resources Standing Committee.

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The committee took an at-ease from 1:27 p.m. to 1:31 p.m.

HB 218-STATE VETERINARIAN; ANIMALS; PRODUCTS

[1:31:30 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR TARR announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 218, "An Act relating to the state veterinarian and to animals and animal products."

CO-CHAIR TARR said the bill was proposed in response to a request from the Division of Agriculture, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), to have more access to, and a closer working relationship with, the state veterinarian.

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ROBERT GERLACH, DMV, State Veterinarian, Division of Environmental Health, Department of Environmental Conservation, provided a PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Office of the State Veterinarian," dated 5/1/17. Dr. Gerlach paraphrased from the mission statement of the Office of the State Veterinarian (OSV) as follows [original punctuation provided] [slide 2]:

The Office of the State Veterinarian is responsible for the prevention, control and eradication of animal diseases in all animals in the state including livestock and pets, safeguarding the health and food production capacity of the State's livestock, reindeer, and poultry and preventing the transmission of animal diseases to humans.

DR. GARLACH directed attention to slide 3 which listed the five program functions of OSV:

- 1. One Health concept focusing on the impact of disease, import regulations for animals, disease surveillance and investigation, import of veterinary biologicals, and emergency response to an animal disease outbreak or hazard, such as housing people with their pets and animals during times of fire or flooding
- 2. Dairy program looks at sanitation at dairy farms and milk facilities, to assure dairy products are safe for human consumption
- 3. Reindeer slaughter by reindeer producers within the state
- 4. Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), Produce Safety Rule which is a federal program to address the production of safe and wholesome produce within the state
- 5. Fish monitoring program, which is looking at the impact of disease not on just an animal, but on the impact of a disease or environmental contaminant on the environment in which the animals live, and how the transport of contaminants to Alaska can impact water quality.

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REPRESENTATIVE PARISH asked which department inspects for paralytic shellfish poisoning.

DR. GARLACH answered the Food Safety and Sanitation Program, Division of Environmental Health, DEC.

REPRESENTATIVE BIRCH recalled previous discussions regarding [the lack] of veterinarians available to serve rural Alaska, and inquired as to Dr. Garlach's interaction with the [Board of Veterinary Examiners, Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing, Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development].

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DR. GARLACH said OSV works with veterinarian licensing only regarding the duties and professional responsibilities of licensing. To address the needs of areas underserved by veterinarian care, OSV supports the work of the National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials to lobby for [federal] programs by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture

(NIFA), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), so states can recognize underserved or remote areas and offer veterinary education loan repayment programs in the amount of \$75,000 to \$100,000 to veterinarians who serve in underserved areas. Dr. Garlach identified five underserved areas in Alaska. To qualify for the loan repayment program, veterinarians provide services to the identified areas, and 30 percent of their duties need to be supporting food-producing animals. In further response to Representative Birch, he said OSV works with agencies such as Alaska Rural Veterinary Outreach Inc., and Alaska Native Rural Veterinary, Inc., and also coordinates with Arctic Care 2017, provided by the military in Kodiak, to ensure volunteers and clinics do not negatively impact veterinarians who have practices in underserved areas. Regarding licensing, OSV has satisfied concerns about licensing authority for veterinarians who may be brought into the state during an emergency.

CO-CHAIR TARR questioned what functions of OSV are more closely aligned with agriculture and DNR, and which are more closely aligned with DEC; she also asked if there are staffing issues.

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DR. GARLACH said his programs are focused on disease and the impacts of disease on animal health, and on the risks of animal disease to animal resources; programs of the Division of Agriculture often promote the expansion of the production of food. He characterized these activities as separate with respect to disease and its impact on animals, their food products, and the environmental impact. In fact, many diseases can be spread by carcasses and animal waste, which would contaminate the environment and impact other uses of the land.

REPRESENTATIVE WESTLAKE asked if there are policies in place to intervene in a case similar to the anthrax that was found in caribou in Russia.

DR. GARLACH said OSV is statutorily responsible for all animals in the state with respect to disease. He works with other partners such as the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADFG) to address concerns, for example, the interaction of wildlife with domestic animals related to the transmission of disease pathogens. In Russia, livestock was infected with anthrax and drastic measures were taken to control the spread of disease.

REPRESENTATIVE PARISH asked whether veterinary biologicals include antibiotics for domestic livestock.

DR. GARLACH advised veterinary biologicals are products like vaccines and other disease agent biologicals that prevent and treat disease, but they do not include antibiotics or other drugs used in a normal veterinary practice.

REPRESENTATIVE PARISH asked if Dr. Garlach is responsible for overseeing the use of antibiotics in domestic livestock.

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DR. GARLACH said he is responsible only in regard to new regulations from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. As part of the Food Safety Modernization Act, the Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) states that any antibiotic given to livestock or to animals that produce food for human consumption - because of the concern of antibiotic resistance - must be accounted for by a veterinarian when applied in feed or water. In further response to Representative Parish, he said Alaska does not have large livestock operations that use antibiotics for growth promotion. In Alaska, antibiotics are used to treat disease and properly maintain health; he pointed out he is concerned about legislation that restricts the use of antibiotics and thereby compromise humane care, although using antibiotics to promote growth is inappropriate.

DR. GARLACH returned attention to his presentation and noted OSV is responsible for a diversity of programs and initiatives; to do so with a small staff, OSV relies on many collaborative state partners such as the Division of Agriculture, (DNR), ADFG, the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), the Department of Military & Veterans' Affairs, and the University of Alaska (UA). Federal partners include the following: USDA, veterinary and wildlife services, and the Food Safety Inspection Service; FDA; the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI); the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Department of Commerce; the Centers for Disease Control, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; U. S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Dr. Garlach said all of these agencies allow OSV to communicate with agents in the field and serve Alaskans and animal health; for example, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, the U.S. Geological Survey, and the Bureau of Land Management, DOI, supported tracking mortality events that led to the discovery in Fairbanks of the first case of avian influenza in Alaska's wild bird population [slide 4].

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CO-CHAIR TARR inquired as to whether OSV is involved with the Board of Game (BOG), ADFG, issue related to goats and sheep.

DR. GARLACH said subsequent to the proposal before BOG, introduced by the Wild Sheep Foundation, he corresponded with ADFG on regulations and facilitated a working group with members from the Alaska Farm Bureau, Inc., sheep and goat owners and producers, the Wild Sheep Foundation, OSV, the Division of Agriculture, and ADFG.

DR. GARLACH returned to the One Health concept which is an efficient approach to animal disease and traceability. Research in the medical and veterinary fields has shown that many diseases and stressors that can cause diseases are shared by animals and people, and veterinarians have more background on this relationship; in fact, OSV can look at an outbreak - such as pneumonia that can be transferred to wild sheep and goats - and determine risks. He pointed out the transmission of a disease agent, in order to transmit disease, must be in sufficient quantity, and have other factors. [OSV] can address health issues for animals, impacts of disease on the health of wildlife, the safety of food products, and impacts on public health. Dr. Garlach noted about 1,500 diseases can be transferred between animals and humans, and stressed over 75 percent of emerging human diseases are zoonotic [slide 5].

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REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER asked whether Dr. Garlach spoke to reversing the decision on sheep and goats.

DR. GARLACH said he is encouraging the aforementioned working group to gather information to determine whether there is a risk of transmitting a disease agent to wild sheep and goat populations in the state. In further response to Representative Rauscher, he explained the issue is complex; in fact, 20 years ago wild sheep "die offs" were blamed on mannheimia haemolytica, but further study revealed that to be incorrect. It is now suspected mycoplasma ovipneumonia caused die offs in wild sheep populations. Because Alaska has a small livestock population, it is unknown whether mycoplasma ovipneumonia exists in Alaska's domestic sheep and goats, or whether there is a risk to wild sheep and goats, and he cautioned against taking action unless a problem is identified.

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER asked what is needed to reach a conclusion.

DR. GARLACH advised OSV has designed a study with the Agricultural Research Service, USDA, and the Washington State Animal Disease Diagnostic Lab, Washington State University, in which sheep and goat producers in Alaska can voluntarily sample their sheep. This is a blind study that identifies farms by code to guarantee confidentiality. In further response to Representative Rauscher, he said the study is being organized now, and offers to participate will be presented to sheep and goat owners beginning [mid-March 2017].

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON relayed she has heard concerns about animals that are registered out-of-state as a function of OSV, and that proprietary information on herds, and owners of herds, could be made available to anyone under the [federal] Freedom of Information Act[s].

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DR. GARLACH confirmed that one who imports livestock into the state needs to have an import permit and a health certificate; the health certificate reveals disease testing information and the permit reveals the source of the animal and its destination. He agreed this information is proprietary and does not need to be made public; however, the information does need to be held by the state should a threat occur. [OSV] proposed the state hold the information and only share the information with partners when it is appropriate and necessary to preserve animal resources. In further response to Representative Johnson, he said the information is important marketing information that could be used by a competitor, and should be protected.

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER asked if zoonotic meant the transfer of disease from human to animal, but not the reverse.

DR. GARLACH said zoonotic is both ways, for example, swine influenza was transferred from people to pigs. He restated 75 percent of emerging diseases are zoonotic and can be transferred back and forth between animals and humans. Dr. Garlach turned attention to a graph on slide 6 illustrating the number of permits and the number of animals imported into Alaska during fiscal years (FY) 2014-2016; one permit is required for each shipment of animals. He pointed out the number of poultry shipments imported into the state has increased greatly, which

increases the risk of introducing disease. In response to the increase, OSV has converted to an electronic records tracking system, which was important two years ago to locate a shipment of poultry that was imported from a farm infected with avian influenza; the electronic system for tracking and traceability allowed OSV to identify the destination of the poultry, contact the farmer, test other animals on the farm, confiscate eggs, and prevent the possible introduction of disease into the state. In response to Co-Chair Tarr, he said the rise in imported poultry is due to a national trend for raising backyard poultry for the production of meat and eggs and for educational purposes.

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REPRESENTATIVE BIRCH asked if [slide 6] reflected animal imports statewide.

DR. GARLACH said yes, and added some animals are shipped to remote areas and OSV relies on its partners to respond and serve farmers throughout the state. In response to Representative Rauscher, he explained the import numbers of hatching eggs and chicks are obtained from hatcheries, and the import numbers of other animals are provided by shippers and from Customs and Border Protection. If a permit has not been obtained, OSV notifies the veterinarian who issued the health certificate.

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER observed many animals are being imported into Alaska.

DR. GARLACH directed attention to slide 7, and noted one of the more disturbing outbreaks in the state is brucellosis because each species is affected by a specific strain of brucellosis, but the strains can be interchanged. Twenty percent of the cases founds in humans is associated with recreational and subsistence hunting; for example, through hunting caribou or processing reindeer in Alaska, although it is uncommonly found in reindeer due to herd health management. However, Alaska has problems in domestic animals, and in wildlife, especially with endemic rabies found in Arctic fox. If there is human exposure to rabies, animals are tested by DHSS in Fairbanks, but the level of risk from rabies in wild animals is unknown. He described a program that will utilize a rapid disease test to allow testing of wildlife and thereby try to understand the distribution of rabies in the state. Dr. Garlach noted about 1-4 percent of foxes trapped in the state test positive for rabies.

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REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER inquired as to whether the herpes virus in domestic rabbits is zoonotic.

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DR. GARLACH said no, and described an outbreak of an extremely rare virus.

REPRESENTATIVE DRUMMOND asked how rabies is transmitted from an animal to a human.

DR. GARLACH stated rabies is transmitted either through a bite or scratch, because the rabies virus infects the brain and spreads to salivary glands; another pathway is through exposure to infected tissue. In further response to Representative Drummond, he said DHSS maintains a record of humans who have been exposed to rabies by wild animals. In further response to Representative Drummond, he said an error on slide 7 lists "Pet Foods" but should list "Pets"; salmonella and chemical contaminants sometimes transmit to domestic pets and humans through treats and raw foods.

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REPRESENTATIVE PARISH asked for the economic impact of the aforementioned incident that led to the destruction of [hatching] eggs.

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DR. GARLACH said one dozen eggs that had been purchased and shipped from Idaho were destroyed. In further response to Representative Parish, he said if an outbreak of avian influenza had occurred, the highest cost would have been to the family farm and perhaps a health risk to the farmer; the response from OSV would have been to identify the disease agent, and determine if there has been contact with wild birds and other poultry.

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DR. GARLACH directed attention to slide 8 and said the dairy program is required by the Grade "A" Pasteurized Milk Ordinance, FDA, and regulates the health of the cows, as well as the production of raw milk and pasteurized products and the testing of equipment. He said the Alaska dairy industry is very "high-

tech" and the farmers are very competent and provide a safe product for consumers. [OSV] is closely tied with the Environmental Health Laboratory, Division of Environmental Health, DEC, which conducts the testing on milk products and brucellosis surveillance. He stressed that the state is testing about once a month, but the farmers and processing plants test every batch of raw milk prior to the pasteurization process.

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REPRESENTATIVE BIRCH asked about the dangers of consuming raw milk.

DR. GARLACH acknowledged there is a nationwide increasing interest in the consumption of local products, produce, meat, raw milk, and products made from raw milk. He reported from 1998 to 2011, a Center for Disease Control (CDC) study found of all foodborne illnesses reported in the U.S. that were associated with dairy products, 80 percent were associated with raw milk products. A subsequent study from 2009 to 2014, reported outbreaks associated with raw milk have risen from 80 percent to over 95 percent, or about 750 illnesses reported per year, of which 22 percent required hospitalization. Dr. Garlach explained, even with proper procedures, bacteria can be shed directly into the milk by the cow. In further response to Representative Birch, he said in the U.S., five diseases associated with raw milk are Salmonella, Campylobacter, E. coli, Listeria, and Cryptosporidium. In Europe, tuberculosis and brucellosis are also found to be associated with raw milk and raw milk products; brucellosis in humans is a devastating disease.

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REPRESENTATIVE BIRCH inquired as to field methods that would pasteurize raw milk.

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DR. GARLACH explained pasteurization is a heat treatment and through a specific regiment of boiling and high temperatures kills pathogens. Grade "A" dairies use a high-pressure, short-time-period pasteurization method to remove pathogens.

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CO-CHAIR TARR noted not all store-bought food is free of foodborne illness.

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DR. GARLACH agreed and stated 5 percent of illnesses caused by dairy products are through pasteurized products that are approved. Any food product has the potential to transfer disease and the goals of the programs through OSV are to decrease the risk to low as possible.

CO-CHAIR TARR observed Alaska residents can access raw milk through herd-sharing, and asked whether there have been illnesses reported from products in Alaska.

DR. GARLACH stated the sale of raw milk is not allowed in Alaska, but state regulations allow a person who owns an animal to use its milk, and thus people can buy shares in a cow or a goat, and obtain a certain amount of product from that animal. In Alaska, there have been three known outbreaks associated with cow-share operations. He then directed attention to slide 9, and explained OSV manages a reindeer slaughter program which provides regulatory oversight of the commercial slaughter and processing of reindeer, to ensure wholesomeness and quality of reindeer for commercial sale within the state. Meat inspection in Alaska is within the purview of USDA since 1999.

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REPRESENTATIVE BIRCH asked if OSV has jurisdiction over reindeer horns.

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DR. GARLACH said antlers come under the purview of OSV if there is a disease associated with the reindeer from which growing antlers were harvested - due to the presence of blood and tissue. Growing antlers are desired products for certain Asian markets; antlers used for artifacts are outside of his authority. Furthermore, an antler exported out-of-state is under the authority of USDA.

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DR. GARLACH continued to slide 10 and informed the committee the FSMA Produce Safety Rule is a new program established by DEC and housed within OSA. The Produce Safety Rule is a federal

regulation formulated by FDA which is designed to address foodborne outbreaks of illness related to produce. In response to the regulation, the Division of Environmental Health, DEC, is working to ensure produce produced in Alaska, by farms who market quantities over \$250,000, is safe and meets certain quality standards. Although most producers in Alaska do not reach this criterion, smaller farms can participate and benefit from the program by meeting the quality standards that are set and advertised. Currently, to support this program, OSV is working with the Division of Agriculture, and the Cooperative Extension Service, University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), to inform farmers, and he described other ongoing activities related to education, outreach, and technical assistance, all with a local focus. In response to Representative Parish, he said FDA fully funds the administration of the program by a grant through DEC in a manner similar to other food safety programs.

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REPRESENTATIVE WESTLAKE expressed support for OSV programs that provide technical assistance and implement standards specific to the different regions throughout the state.

DR. GARLACH said the last OSA program to review is a fish tissue monitoring program that was established in 2001 to address concerns raised by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regarding Alaska's recommendations for the consumption of Alaska fish. Because the state seeks scientific data to justify its recommendations, OSA monitors fish for contaminants, mercury, and persistent organic pollutants such as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs); in fact, 90 species of fish and shellfish have been sampled, and 10,000 samples have been analyzed. He reported that testing has shown extremely low levels of contamination, therefore, DHSS can issue recommendations for unrestricted consumption of many species of fish in the state. He said Alaskans are free to make their own decisions about the amount of fish they want to eat. Dr. Garlach cautioned there are restricted amounts for the consumption of salmon shark, and pike from certain areas, which have elevated levels of mercury. In addition, after the [tsunami and nuclear disaster in Fukushima, Japan] in 2011, OSA worked with FDA and tested for radiation contamination in Alaska fish utilizing a portable gamma lab housed with the Environmental Health Laboratory, DEC. Using the portable gamma lab, the state can test and measure contaminants in Alaska fish and transmit the data to the FDA lab for evaluation and reporting; the portable lab allows the state

to respond rapidly to an event, and he noted Alaska was a pilot program for the portable gamma lab. Another emerging contaminate issue is with arsenic in shellfish, which has affected Alaska's international trade partners. He stressed the importance of being able to respond rapidly to contaminants, and further described the processes of testing and developing recommendations for the state. Dr. Garlach concluded Alaska's low levels of contamination support the marketing of Alaska's seafood as beneficial to one's health [slide 11].

2:49:49 PM

REPRESENTATIVE BIRCH inquired as to whether OSV is monitoring a problem related to warming waters that has led to an affliction of the salmon in the Yukon River.

DR. GARLACH said Ichthyophonous is a parasite that affects king salmon; NOAA and ADFG are monitoring and researching the problem, as is the University of Alaska (UA).

CO-CHAIR TARR gleaned from the presentation that the important work of OSA is focused on disease prevention. In some other states, the state veterinarian is housed within Agriculture, and she asked how OSA could support the future of agriculture in Alaska.

DR. GARLACH restated OSA works with the College of Natural Science and Mathematics, Department of Veterinary Medicine, UAF, the Cooperative Extension Service, UAF, the Alaska Farm Bureau, Inc., the Alaska Farmers Union, and the Division of Agriculture to provide educational materials to producers to help them raise healthy animals and avoid disease. He opined veterinarians are a valuable resource for the state, and OSA encourages veterinarians to practice in Alaska through the aforementioned veterinary loan repayment program.

CO-CHAIR TARR questioned whether members of OSA staff assigned to the Environmental Health Laboratory could be assigned within the Division of Agriculture, "so that ... [its] mission could be more fully supported."

DR. GARLACH reviewed his job description and that of the assistant state veterinarian. His assignments and those of other OSV staff encompass many other programs such as inspections, fish monitoring work, the produce food safety and dairy programs, and the administration of federal grants. He agreed a veterinarian assigned to the Division of Agriculture

would be an asset for outreach and education for the division and for OSV.

CO-CHAIR TARR asked if Dr. Garlach envisions adding a position similar to the wildlife veterinarian within ADFG, but retaining OSV within DEC.

[2:56:15 PM](#)

DR. GARLACH was unsure, and restated his belief that veterinarians are a key component to the One Health concept, which addresses how aspects of health are interrelated. He described the structure of the state veterinarian's office in Pennsylvania.

REPRESENTATIVE PARISH asked where he would find information about contamination from heavy metals present in Alaska fish.

DR. GARLACH advised DHSS recently reopened studies of the risks and benefits of consuming marine mammals, and pointed out marine mammals carry different risks as they have a variety of food sources and methods of feeding; in addition, marine mammals may have higher levels of contamination because they are at the top of the food chain.

REPRESENTATIVE DRUMMOND asked if the UAF veterinary medicine program serves in partnership with an outside veterinary school.

DR. GARLACH said veterinary students take their first two years at UAF and then finish their last two years at the University of Colorado. During their studies at UAF, veterinary students are of great benefit to Alaska in the field of veterinary research.

[HB 218 was held over.]

[3:00:43 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Resources Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.