

**ALASKA SHEEP AND GOAT DISEASE WORKING GROUP
FACILITATOR'S FINAL REPORT TO ALASKA BOARD OF GAME - MARCH 14, 2019
PREPARED BY HEATHER BERGMAN, PEAK FACILITATION GROUP**

RC0021

- **PURPOSE OF THE GROUP**

The goal of the Working Group was to find mutually agreeable solutions that protect Alaska's wild sheep and goats from transmission of M. Ovi while minimizing the impact on domestic producers and owners.

- **MEMBERSHIP**

- Members selected by the Wild Sheep Foundation: 6
- Members selected by the Alaska Farm Bureau: 6
- Members selected by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game: 2
- Observers from State of Alaska available to answer questions: ~4

- **PROCESS**

- **Meeting 1: December 16, 2018**
 - Develop protocols
 - Identify interests
 - Identify areas of convergence and divergence in perceptions of science and data
 - Brainstorm "what if" ideas (ways to address the interests)
 - Agree to meet again or not (*Agreement to meet again.*)
- **Meeting 2: January 5 and 6, 2019**
 - Review additional information on science data collected by two members
 - Explore "what if" ideas to determine whether/how they address the identified interests
 - Agree to meet again or not (*No agreement to meet again.*)

- **OUTCOME: List of Interests**

- Protect wild and domestic Caprinae from M. ovi
- Protect Alaska-grown and harvested Caprinae for food security
- Minimize the regulatory and financial impacts on the domestic community related to M. ovi
- Increase understanding of livestock management strategies regarding M. ovi
- Preserve traditional lifestyles and the culture of farming and hunting regarding Caprinae
- Respect private property
- Preserve access to the backcountry for disease-free pack goats

- **OUTCOME: Evaluation of High-Priority "What If" Ideas against the Interests**

The Working Group prioritized several "what if" ideas for discussion. Through a robust conversation, they determined that each of the ideas listed below met at least three of the identified interests (above), and most were determined to be neutral with regard to the other interests. Developing import protocols and adding M. Ovi to the reportable disease list were the only items viewed as potentially detrimental to an interest (limiting regulatory impacts on domestic producers). The "what-if" ideas discussed were:

- Develop protocols for domestic and wild Caprinae interface/contact
- Develop an outreach and education program for domestic owners
- Help farmers understand and form a biosecurity plan for individual farms
- Develop protocols for farms to get certified as respiratory pathogen-free and receive assistance for testing costs while ensuring that personal private records are confidential
- Develop a goat certification program recognized by State agencies to allow disease-free goats access to the backcountry
- Develop import protocols for M. ovi-free animals at the border and/or in quarantine after entry
- Add M. ovi to the reportable disease list

- **OUTCOME: No Final Agreement**

The Working Group did not come to a final agreement. Discussions deteriorated when the group explored the final prioritized “what-if” idea: “Consider M. Ovi-free as a desired outcome.” The Wild Sheep Foundation understood that idea to include multiple regulatory policies and actions, whereas the domestic owners/producers viewed it as a concept and laudable goal with no specific policies or actions implied. Further discussion indicated that the additional policies and actions viewed to be included and to be critical by the Wild Sheep Foundation were not acceptable to the domestic producers/owners.

- **FACILITATOR OBSERVATIONS**

- ***Participant interviews prior to the first meeting indicated that negotiations would be challenging, but there was hope for a positive outcome.***
 - Most participants were skeptical that the Working Group would come to an agreement but indicated an openness to compromise, collaboration, and creative problem solving.
 - Many participants indicated that there was a lack of trust among participants due in large part to how the conversation began in 2017 and the lack of outreach and collaboration associated with those early efforts.
- ***Participants had different perceptions of the science and different degrees of comfort with risk and uncertainty.***
 - Lack of consistency in testing methodologies and associated discrepancies over testing results hindered discussion. There was limited agreement on what the science showed.
 - In the absence of clear science, some in the group saw an opportunity to act fast and prevent a potentially catastrophic natural resource problem before it starts, whereas others saw an opportunity to be slow and deliberate in developing policies that did not unnecessarily or arbitrarily create equally catastrophic economic and lifestyle impacts on the agricultural community.
- ***Participants in both caucuses believed that they had conceded substantial ground.***
 - The wild sheep caucus indicated a willingness to phase in several of their preferred policies to give the agricultural community time to do outreach and slowly increase acceptance. This slower, less certain approach was viewed as a big concession. They also indicated a willingness to provide financial assistance to offset the cost of some of the proposed measures to lower the impact on the agricultural community.
 - The domestic caucus indicated a willingness to accept certification programs and import protocols despite concerns about confidentiality. Any agreement on new regulations was perceived as a big concession. They were also willing to do education and outreach to raise awareness about the need for and benefits of these programs.
- ***Similar interpretations of the broader political landscape in Alaska may have been the primary obstacle to agreement.***
 - People negotiate and find agreements when they believe that doing so is the best chance they have at meeting their interests.
 - Negotiations generally do not go well when participants believe that they have a good “back-up plan” if negotiations fail.
 - Both caucuses appeared to believe that if negotiations failed, either the Alaska Legislature or the State of Alaska would support their respective positions.
 - This perception kept both groups from having an incentive to negotiate further and cede additional ground on the remaining options and ideas.
- ***No one participated in bad faith.***
 - As indicated above, most participants came to the table skeptical but willing to try.
 - Neither side moved as far as they could have; both sides moved outside their comfort zones and beyond previously stated positions.
 - The wild sheep caucus stated they did not want to meet again, while the domestic caucus was willing to continue to work.
 - Stopping negotiations if you do not intend to negotiate further is not an indicator of bad faith; it is an indicator of a failed negotiation.