

Montana Hemp Advisory Committee

January 9th, 2020

10:00am – 12:00pm

Conference Call

Department of Agriculture, Conference Room 225

The meeting was called by Director Ben Thomas at 10:30am

Introductions – Those in attendance were:

Committee Members via Skype:

Jackee Beck, Deer Lodge MT

Arlin Fratzke, Stevensville MT

Ross Johnson, Great Falls MT

Jeremy Anderson, Fort Benton MT

Jamie Fitterer, Bozeman MT

Bart Icopini, Forsyth MT

Ken Elliott, Wolf Point MT

Dean Nelson, Homestead MT

Ben Thomas, Director MT AGR

Kim Phillips, Helena MT -Absent

Department Staff:

Andy Fjeseth, MT AGR ADD Bureau Chief

Cort Jensen, MT AGR Attorney

Christy Clark, MT AGR

Weston Merrill, MT AGR

Kayla Moore, MT AGR

Dani Jones, MT AGR

Public Member:

Billie Heigh, Via Skype

Kate Cholewa, via Skype

Referendum Results:

- Proposed Assessment at 2% failed; 45-YES , 70-NO
 - Committee would like to repurpose assessment amount. Mailing could include letter from committee explaining what the money will be used for
 - Jackee Beck- Suggested a letter form the committee members to be included
 - Bart Icopini suggested a series of meetings- submitting ballot at the meetings
 - Ben Thomas reminded the committee that they are all over the state so those meetings could be “chaired” by a committee member
 - Assessment is voluntary, can be refunded. Can be voted Yes and still ask for a refund of assessment fees
 - Cort Jensen reminded the committee (callers) that the department is not benefitting from the assessment. If the department is the messenger, it can come across poorly
 - Benefits the universities and benefits the growers
 - What is a good time to send?
 - “Between crops and Cattle”-Dean Nelson
 - “Next couple of months, during contracts”- Ken Elliott
 - Will hold a conference call in the next 2-3 weeks to discuss

USDA Interim Final Rule:

- Ben discussed the resubmission of the state plan. The state plan will be in line for what USDA is calling for. Montana Sampling at a risk base approach, which is better for our state
- Many states are submitting responses, but not coordinating with other states, because states needs are different
- October 2020 deadline for operating on the pilot plan.
 - Really working towards getting the state plan official accepted
- Cort Jensen- USDA is working with 17028 comments and are about a week behind

Committee Appointments and Future of the Hemp Committee:

- March 15, 2020 committee terms expire
- Original appointments were made for 1 year
- Applications are on the department website

Discussion/Public Comment:

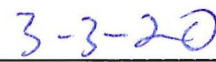
No other public comment

Adjourn:

Ben adjourned the meeting at 10:52am



Ben Thomas, MT AGR Director



Date



Dani Jones, Hail Insurance Technician



Date