



C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER
GOVERNOR

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Western Governors Association
1600 Broadway Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to express my concern to you regarding certain actions taken by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to close down the Agricultural Research Services (ARS) United States Sheep Experiment Station (USSES) in Dubois, Idaho.

The sheep industry in Idaho has a large economic impact and this decision made by USDA will not only impact Idaho's sheep industry, but the sheep industry throughout the West. In addition to conducting important research on the interactions between domestic sheep and bighorn sheep, the USSES researches disease and genetic markers, sheep breed evaluations and production for nationwide meat-sire and wool-sire evaluations.

USSES also works on a variety of projects to study rangeland, wildfire and habitat. This year it planned to study the response of sage-grouse habitat to grazing management, post-fire shrub recovery because the area has a 70-year fire history in sagebrush communities, and sage-grouse leks and post-fire recovery. The station studied sage-grouse leks and their relationship with fire in sagebrush communities for a 40-year history of the effects. It also planned to study control and management of toxic lupines in sagebrush communities.

ARS made this closure decision without first communicating with Idaho. It is important that the Western Governors Association hold federal agencies accountable when their decisions affect the economies of our states.

I ask for your support in preventing a closing of the Dubois USSES to send a strong message to the USDA that we will not tolerate when decisions are made without our involvement. Thank you for your timely and positive consideration.

As Always – Idaho, "Esto Perpetua"

C.L. "Butch" Otter
Governor of Idaho

CLO/sg