
OPEN DISCUSSION - ARE WE EFFECTIVELY REDUCING INTERACTION BETWEEN DOMESTIC AND WILD SHEEP?

MODERATOR: KEVIN HURLEY, WYOMING GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

KEVIN HURLEY: I'm uncomfortable trying to moderate a discussion on disease sitting in front of people that know far more about this topic than I. I won't attempt to interject anything but will start this discussion.

As a starting point, we've asked a question. Are we effectively reducing the interaction between wild and domestic sheep? There are a number of efforts underway. The BLM has established a set of guidelines. The Forest Service is developing a white paper or strategy which, according to Tim Schommer, is about to be signed off at the upper echelons in the Forest Service.

Keeping in mind our management focus for this conference, we wanted to pose that question and hear people's experiences and opinions. Are we effectively reducing that interaction?

VIC COGGINS, OREGON: In Oregon, we have really changed the picture on potential problems with domestics, because most of the domestic sheep bands are now gone from Hell's Canyon. A lot of the problems were just economics. When we first started with wild sheep transplants in the 1970's, we were making a lot of mistakes. We were putting bighorns in on domestic allotments and we didn't have much success with them. The allotments are virtually gone due to buy-outs and court cases and such. I'd say we're a whole lot better off than we were. We have the brochure out that FNAWS has sponsored. Not that we couldn't have a problem because you always have to be vigilant, but we're much safer now as far as domestic sheep.

JON JORGENSEN, ALBERTA: We don't have a big problem with domestic sheep in Alberta. It's not a big industry in our province. But recently we have run up against a situation where domestic sheep are being used for range enhancement and range improvement in certain circumstances, and are also being used for weed and brush control in reforestation efforts. We've had to deal with these issues because we've had proposals for using domestic sheep in these types of situations where they're getting pretty close to our bighorn ranges.

What we've done is work with the Public Lands and Agriculture group, to develop a set of guidelines similar to what you folks have done here in the states, and we've had pretty good "buy-in," although it hasn't been signed off yet. We've had the "buy-in" and the agreement with the local folks, but it's kind of stalled right now and we're hoping that it will get signed off on.

It essentially identifies a "no domestic sheep buffer zone" between our easternmost extent of bighorn ranges. Outside of that, there's another area that has been identified where domestic sheep could be used in certain situations under a prescribed set of protocol to try and reduce the potential interactions that might occur.

HURLEY: Jon, in the "no domestic sheep buffer zone," what miles or kilometers are you using?

JORGENSEN: We're trying for about nine miles. We ended up settling for something in the five to seven mile range. Not quite as much as we would have liked, but that's what we've ended up settling on.

HURLEY: Helen, I know you're really involved in British Columbia with using domestic sheep on these reforested areas to allow conifers to come back. What luck have you had, or how is the "buy-in" there in BC?

HELEN SCHWANTJE, BRITISH COLUMBIA: Basically the biologists doing the Environmental Assessment reviews of the proposals from the forestry companies or Forest Service have been given a guideline of something in the neighborhood of ten kilometers, or some barrier dividing wild sheep and goat populations from the domestic sheep used for vegetation management. Generally speaking, most places where vegetation management using domestic sheep is economical are nowhere near a wild sheep and goat range.

There are a few places where there's been a bit of slip up and most of those cases have been where there's traditional use of domestic sheep on private property nearby anyway. Probably one of our biggest problems is what do you do with the small farmers and the people that are using that range, because it belongs to them.

That's where the educational effort comes in. I heard recently about one area in the southern interior where wild sheep seemed to have disappeared and the rumor I've heard is there's a farmer who purposely got domestic sheep to get rid of the wild sheep. I don't know whether that's true or not, but we'll be looking at that this summer.

HURLEY: We've been threatened with that a couple of times. You've mentioned the educational effort. I'm curious what other states and provinces have done with that issue on private lands? How are you dealing with that? How are you trying to get that word out to the private landholders?

CRAIG FOSTER, OREGON: I guess I'll jump in here and talk about California bighorns. Vic has the Rocky Mountain bighorns and the rest of us have California bighorns. From the educational standpoint, one of the things that all our biologists do not do is put wild sheep any place where we think there may be a conflict with domestics. We have a distance of 10 miles or so.

On the education side, any time I might have a conflict because I've got a farm flock, I go to the landowner, talk about the problem and hand them the FNAWS pamphlet. If they see one of my wild bighorns near their domestic sheep, I want it dead. Shoot the bighorn before it goes home.

HURLEY: You're giving them permission?

FOSTER: I'm telling them to call me. If they cannot find me, kill it and then call me. It gets a little racy, but we're dealing with small farm flock situations here. We don't have a lot of open range issues. I guess our agency's feeling is we'd rather have one dead bighorn than take the risk of an all-age die-off.

HERB MEYR, IDAHO: We're using the brochure that FNAWS came out with also. We're also working on buying out sheep allotments on both Forest Service and BLM lands so we can transplant sheep.

In a lot of cases they're converting to cattle instead of sheep and reducing the AUMs. I personally have held public meetings at the county courthouse to talk about a possible transplant of bighorn sheep in the area and the effect of domestic sheep. A few weeks ago we also had a meeting with the County Commissioners and people from the local press that put the article in the paper, on the concerns about interactions.

A buffered zone of ten miles might be good in some areas, but not if it's contiguous habitat like a long mountain range; if it's not adequate and the sheep can move all the way down, you need natural barriers. Last

year at the conference in Whitefish, somebody had a paper on a collared young ram that was going 25 miles out and cruising around. I think they can cover a lot of area if it's contiguous habitat.

With these farm flocks, ranches are getting divided and people are getting ten sheep or whatever in there. On our field tour last year, we were looking at bighorn sheep at the Canadian border. Below the bighorns on the ridge line was a farm flock. There was a lot of talk about fencing for the private land. I don't know if people have done double fencing or something, so there isn't any interaction.

When I drove home, all the way down the Bitterroot Valley and through Idaho, there were farm flocks all the way from Challis down to Salmon. We've lost our bighorn sheep herds in those areas and this winter the bighorns are coming down and interacting with the domestic sheep. We have a problem with that. I think we've learned a lot about allotments and we're not making the mistakes we did 15 or 20 years ago.

SCHWANTJE: At one point in time we had 40,000 domestic sheep on our forestry lands "doing vegetation management" and it snow-balled on us. We didn't have a lot of control.

The idea of domestic sheep getting out in the wild, affecting other species as well as wild sheep, was a concern to us. One of our focuses, besides developing these guidelines for wild sheep, was to try to encourage the domestic industry to improve the health of domestic sheep. We worked with the domestic industry and other provinces as well as British Columbia. We have healthier domestic sheep now. I don't know if it raised awareness in domestic sheep ranchers.

AMY FISHER, NEW MEXICO: That's a really interesting point, Helen. I wanted to jump to what Herb was saying about the farm flocks. We're seeing an increase of those in New Mexico. I'm thinking perhaps we're missing the bet by going to the owners of these flocks after they get them and their kids are really involved in raising these little guys through 4-H. Maybe we need to go to the organizations like 4-H and slowly and persistently, perhaps, change the emphasis on domestic sheep.

You know, maybe there's a new sexy domestic that we can get these kids to love. Pot belly pigs were big at one time. Llamas might be a concern. There was a little bit of a scare with Johne's disease. Maybe we can put our heads together and identify some domestic that kids can get just excited about that won't cause harm to wild sheep.

DAVE HACKER, NEW MEXICO: I'd like to pick up on something that Amy said. If you look at agricultural commodities in general (in the southwest, anyway), the number of livestock on the range is down from what it has been. A lot of these guys are tired of taking a beating in the market right now. Maybe this is a good opportunity to take advantage of it, based on economics.

HARLEY METZ, COLORADO: I'm with the Colorado BLM, a 4-H leader and a sheep hunter. A situation we're dealing with right now in Colorado, is that BLM can use our buffer systems and our guidelines to help with this, and we are retiring allotments. We've got a number of livestock operators that we have worked with in our sheep areas to voluntarily retire their sheep privileges. We have worked closely with them to convert to cattle. If the area was suitable for cattle, we've actually even got guidelines to keep the cattle out of the riparian areas as well.

Our land pattern in Colorado puts us in a position where we cannot control what's going on with private land other than through education. What's happening nationwide is all these small farm flocks are coming in. From a 4-H leader standpoint, our problem is cattle. They'll make it to the county and state fairs, but are just too big

for kids to pick up. They're not going to be very competitive. Pigs are another problem. They're just not as sexy. Lambs are relatively competitive. They're cheap, pretty easy to take care of, and pretty docile.

My recommendation would be maybe rabbits or chickens. I don't know how to do it other than look at proper fencing. When we wrote our latest plan with the Colorado Division of Wildlife, we got all of the landowners together and tried to educate them as best we could.

Part of the plan is that the Division of Wildlife said they would immediately respond to any sightings of sheep in those areas. We looked at beefing up the fences where we could also. We did not allow anybody to shoot bighorns on sight, because if that would be the case, I think they'd be buying a lot more sheep and opening the gate.

HURLEY: I would like to raise a question. Lee Howard from Utah FNAWS and Jim Karpowitz from Utah Department of Wildlife Resources, are my heroes. These guys have taken the lead on allotment buy-outs and I commend them for their efforts. A lot of places are following suit. Wyoming just completed our first one. Jim, what are you doing on private lands in Utah?

JIM KARPOWITZ, UTAH: I want to say something about that because our Utah chapter of FNAWS has been really aggressive in doing a lot to help us reduce the problem with domestic sheep. I was just counting in my head; I think they've done 12 buy-outs of domestic sheep operators or conversions to cattle from sheep, and they've spent hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Lee Howard can tell you how many hundreds of thousands of dollars, but they've raised a lot of money and they've done a lot of good. But we still have a lot of problems with domestic sheep allotments near bighorn sheep populations, and I'm quite frustrated with the inability of the federal agencies, both the Forest Service and the BLM, to be able to do something about that.

There's now a tendency to rely on FNAWS to solve those problems for them. It's not because there aren't good people in the BLM and Forest Service that have tried. There's just not much progress being made within those agencies and it still is the single most limiting factor to expansion of our sheep populations and security for our existing populations.

Without FNAWS and what they have done, we would have real problems in Utah. They've done a lot of good and we appreciate it. They'll do a lot more because they're raising a lot more money. I can also see, in terms of this private land situation, them offering incentives to private people to do something other than raise domestic sheep, and I fully expect them to be involved in that, too. They're also doing some private land purchases to eliminate that.

HURLEY: You raise a good question, Jim, and I'll ask Tim Schommer and Melanie Woolever from the Forest Service to respond to that.

MELANIE WOOLEVER, COLORADO: The Forest Service talked about it last year at the meeting in Montana, and is putting together the paper you've mentioned. It's going to help our district and forest biologists address this issue. There's been a lot of resistance by the leadership of our agency to address it. The livestock industry has traditional power within our agency and in the Legislatures in the states in the West. They're very effective and it's been one of those things that has been pushed aside unless the situation was critical.

Tim and I have been working on a white paper, a process paper, to help our folks start addressing that issue. It's a collaborative process to bring all the players together and start working on workable solutions. We're not wanting to put the livestock industry out of business. They own base property that we'd rather see in their hands than condos or 5 - 40 acre ranchettes.

We're trying to figure out ways to keep them on the landscape, but keep wild sheep healthy. The paper mentions a lot of things including buffers and topographic barriers. There are all kinds of other things such as time and duration of use, and changing class of livestock. We have lots of vacant allotments because the wool subsidy went away and the sheep industry is struggling. There's opportunity to move wild sheep around.

The problem is we're pretty short-funded on the range and you have to do NEPA analysis. Whenever you restock the allotments, there are some financial challenges. We've been working very closely with the range people in our agency and they have an understanding of the problem, and by and large, are willing to help.

We still have state wool growers associations. Utah has one of them. As a matter of fact, they're the only one that when we send in a draft document for review, they send back a stack of documents this high. "There really isn't a problem, all old literature, we haven't been able to demonstrate that there is a conflict or a problem in the loss of bighorn sheep." Tim and I are planning to go meet with them and see if we can help them understand the problem and help them want to work with us.

But I think you're going to see some aggressive moves. There are some challenges that we're starting to address. I think you'll see some progress and if you don't, you need to let Tim and me know. If you have any places where you need help and you're not getting enough response, let us know and we'll see what we can do to be part of the solution.

The other thing that's happening in the Forest Service is that we're undertaking our second round of forest plans. Those forest plans are supposed to be revised every ten years, and we're on the brink of revising them. In that process, we have guidelines on some kinds of things you might want to insert in the plans on standards and guidelines, such as standard procedures when sheep allotments become vacant, and how to address them if it's an urgent enough situation to move animals.

I think we're taking some pro-active steps. If we're not moving fast enough in areas where you've got trouble, you need to alter things and get them addressed. The people pushing the hardest to get issues addressed are the timber people and the livestock people.

HURLEY: My follow-up is directed to Tim, but really to everybody. Call on these two for help. We had some difficulty consummating this first deal in Wyoming, and Tim and Melanie and some other people in the Forest Service really leveraged the local folks to get that off dead center.

DICK WEAVER, NEW MEXICO: This will change the subject. A tip from experience. You can save yourself a lot of grief on spreading contagious ecthyma accidentally if you know where you bought your alfalfa. We gave a herd of sheep contagious ecthyma by buying alfalfa from a field that had been pastured by domestic sheep.

TIM SCHOMMER, OREGON: I work for the Forest Service in Oregon and Idaho, and I also work at the national level. I look at the incompatibility problem from a historical standpoint. If you look at the 1970's, we, as a group, put reintroduced bighorn sheep in a lot of areas right on top of domestic sheep. In general, the problem was most of us didn't have a clue what we were doing.

In the 1980's, Nike Goodson came out with a paper that she was beat up pretty good on, concerning the incompatibility between the two species. A lot of people challenged her and it proved out through the 1980's that she was right. I spent a tremendous amount of my personal career trying to get the acknowledgment of the disease problem to people all over the West. It's not just this group that needs to be educated. There's still a lot of people that are in denial, mainly the permittees and a lot of the land managers that I have to deal with. That was really elevated in the early 1990's by the DNA fingerprinting that a lot of people in here were involved in. I think we've got most of the people convinced that it's a problem and we need to keep domestic and wild sheep separated. That's been a huge undertaking especially with our land managers.

That's really some tremendous progress. In my opinion, we're starting to understand how to develop or reduce risk of disease transmission in site specific situations on national forests.

The paper we're coming out with is going to help do that. I personally went out to a lot of forests in the West and tried to help them with acknowledgment of the problem, to develop collaborative approaches, and then site specific solutions. That's what we tried to put in this paper.

What it boils down to is each situation is different on the ground. You've got to develop solutions that match that piece of ground, and I spend a lot of my time trying to do that on national forests. I guess, Jim, I'd just like to say if you've got an area that needs some help, we'd be glad to talk to you or anybody else. I feel really good about where we're going and I think in the 21st Century we'll do a lot more effective separation of the two species, get buyouts, and feel good about it.

HURLEY: Cal McCluskey from BLM.

CAL McCLUSKEY, IDAHO: Let me touch on a couple of items here. Melanie mentioned the Forest Service is going through their planning process again. We've been through this at numerous levels and pretty much covered our agency with land use plans. Many of those have decisions already in them that provide opportunities when allotments are vacated, we will revisit whether or not we will allow that class of animal to be changed in there or even purchased. We've had a number of allotments where we have eliminated domestic livestock raising because of the conflicts with wild sheep.

You need to work with the local field office managers to know where those areas are, making sure they're on your radar screen, and try to take advantage of opportunities that come along.

We're not in the business of putting the livestock industry out of business, so our basic policies are always going to be that we're going to deal with willing sellers and individual ranchers or permittees that want to voluntarily change their class of livestock. We have, in a few instances, cancelled permits or required permits to change class of animals due to conflicts. Those are usually minor situations and they usually involve protracted legal fights that can take years to resolve.

The idea of buying out lands has been mentioned a couple of times. We've worked with just about every nonprofit organization you can think of in doing that. You've heard about a few of the examples this week with the number of the earlier discussions with FNAWS and some of the other organizations.

However, one of the things that we're always under scrutiny about from Congress, particularly the western delegation, is that they don't particularly like to see more land in federal ownership out west. So what we're generally looking for are opportunities that don't really expand federal ownership, but to have that ownership

be in a conservation easement in the hands of either a nonprofit organization or conservation-minded ranchers like Ted Turner.

I want to mention BLM has state level Memorandums of Understanding between the state wildlife agencies in every state in the West. There are certain kinds of mandatory things that we ask our states to ensure in those. We've also recently asked that we revisit every one of those MOUs because a number of them are getting quite dated.

This is a perfect opportunity for those of you with the state wildlife agencies to raise these issues specifically and to develop mechanisms and procedures to work with BLM at the local level. Where there are issues that involve wild sheep, we have those in place. I just wanted to remind people to take advantage of that.

We also have another process going on right now. Due to some litigation that was settled a little over a year ago, we're in the process of going through a review of all of the ten-year grazing permits that come up for renewal.

They now have to be evaluated using an interdisciplinary process and NEPA procedures have to be completed on each of those. We're looking at over 4,500 permits that need to be revisited and reauthorized, or at least looked at for reauthorization over the next two years. I think there are about 22,000 permits on BLM lands. There again, this is another good opportunity to get your input into that process, because part of the objectives of this whole thing is to look at conflicts between wildlife and other resources on public lands and the livestock grazing that's going on. So don't miss that window of opportunity. It will only come along once every ten years.

In addition to the BLM guidelines, however, I wanted to mention a couple of other things. We've had very little controversy with those, particularly from the sheep industry. I think one of the reasons was the manner in which we approached developing them. We invited industry to the table to participate in that process. Some might say that watered them down and it probably did. At the same time, we've had virtually only one or two instances that I'm aware of where we actually had some complaints from state sheep industry organizations. When they found out that their national organization was at the table that basically muted any concerns that they had. So I consider it a success.

The other thing we did though, in addition to just writing the guidelines and issuing them, was to ask the states to do a number of things to implement them. We gave them about nine months to do a number of follow-up actions that we hadn't done the first time we developed guidelines in 1992. Those actions included such things as making sure that every range conservationist that was employed was aware of the guidelines, and that each permittee that grazed domestic sheep in the vicinity of wild sheep, received a copy from the field office. Of course, the state wildlife agencies at the local level received copies.

Recreational specialists within BLM had some concerns related to domestic goats, pack goats, that sort of thing. We also make sure that they received copies of the FNAWS brochure that you all are aware of.

This past year, I got a phone call from a gentleman who grazes sheep at Mile Post 158 in British Columbia. He somehow or another got my name off the Internet. Actually what he was interested in was our guidelines. He had gotten a copy of the FNAWS brochure. He was one of these gentlemen that grazed sheep in a forest area for forest management, and he said that there was a wild sheep herd in the vicinity. He was very concerned and he wanted to learn more about this issue. So I thought we're making progress.

DUNCAN GILCHRIST, MONTANA: British Columbia pays the cost of printing those brochures. They had no idea how much it would cost. Brown McMillen donated the paper. The Wild Sheep Society in BC paid for the printing, which I think was \$25,000.

JIM BAILEY, NEW MEXICO: I've got a question for the Forest Service people. Maybe Melanie can answer it. When an organization purchases the base property with the intention of retiring an allotment or changing the classification from sheep to cattle or whatever, what is the legal basis for the permanence of that retirement? Do we have a binding contract or do we in fact really have a promise that might go challenged in court someday?

WOOLEVER: Just getting wild sheep established would solve all this. It depends on how the allotment was retired or if it's retired. Let's say that you bought the sheep and you bought the base property and have a grazing permit on National Forest Service lands. You get the permit and, let's say, you want to sell the livestock and you don't want the permit. You can take up to three years non-use. If you keep it, you have to keep livestock during the time or you can take three years non-use. After that time, you have to use it or waive it back to the government. In that time, there needs to be some sort of agreement made on the part of the agency on what they'll do with the allotment.

If it's in the forest plan that there's conflict and if it becomes vacant, that solves your problem. That's where we're heading to get those stipulations and guidelines in the forest plan. If it's a forest allotment, it will be analyzed and evaluated for closure. If you're in that situation, it's good. If you're not covered, then you've got to get commitment from the line officers that they'll keep it vacant at least for the time. If it's held vacant, it will move to the bottom of the priorities and somebody will come in and ask for it and they'll say, yeah, when we get to it NEPA workwise, we can do it.

Bonnie Pritchard is our resident legal agent, she'll correct anything I said.

BONNIE PRITCHARD, CALIFORNIA: Melanie was pretty accurate. However, when a purchaser of base property comes into the Forest Service, the seller of that property waives the property back to the government. It's at the government's discretion whether to reissue that permit again. It doesn't necessarily go over to them.

What we've done in California with so-called buy-outs is the Forest Service itself doesn't recognize the value placed on a permit. What we've been doing, working with private foundations with dollars, is to make agreements with that permittee who wants to receive those dollars. They then write a letter or waive the permit back to the government by stating that they no longer have a need for it.

Once the government is again in possession of that permit, they can, as Melanie said, put it to the bottom of the list, leaving it in a vacant status. What we did to translocate bighorn sheep in the Inyo Mountains was to write a NEPA document in which the decision is a "no grazing decision" and active pursuit of bighorn sheep habitat.

HURLEY: Bonnie obviously implied that FNAWS recognized the value even though the agencies can't say there's value here or the permittee has a right, et cetera.

PRITCHARD: Just to respond to Jim's comment. Currently within the grazing administration portion of the U.S. Forest Service, there is no inherent structure that would remove grazing privileges for the reason of bighorn sheep being nearby. What Melanie and Tim are working on is a pretty progressive paper which would

establish a set of guidelines in which actions could be taken within the administrative guidelines of the Forest Service without necessarily having to go to court to win a solution.

Another comment to FNAWS is I think the relationship that we've had with FNAWS is outstanding. I know you don't like to depend on them to solve the problems, but they do solve them and we appreciate that. The fact that willing sellers do have a place to go and the Forest Service can get solutions quicker and we can get domestic sheep out of there faster has resulted in a tremendous amount of progress for us with the bighorn sheep we have in California.

DAVE BYINGTON, NEVADA: I thought it might be worth mentioning there are some differences between Forest Service and BLM in terms of regulation and policy.

In the BLM, we've gone through our Interior Board of Land Appeals on property buy-out of a livestock operation in Arizona where The Nature Conservancy has basically bought the privileges. After those privileges were basically retired by agreement or whatever, another individual from the livestock industry came in and applied for them. They were denied and that was brought before the Interior Board of Land Appeals because those grazing privileges were not withdrawn in the land use plan. The guy won his appeal and we had to address his application, not just deny it.

We are closing grazing in 85 percent of the Mojave Desert in Nevada through land use plans and we're doing that with the cooperation of Clark County. In Clark County you have to have a conservation plan. Groups are buying out these ranches, but they're not making final payment to the ranchers until the BLM has officially closed the allotment through writing an amendment to our land use plan. It's permanent closure. It's withdrawn from the grazing regulations at that point and all we need to say to anybody that would come to apply for that grazing is no, it is just closed. There are no recourses. It's basically closed.

HURLEY: I guess we covered that one, but it's a hot button issue for a lot of people, on all sides.

DAVE SMITH, ARIZONA: Is there any definite impact regarding domestic goats? We see the hobby goat herds showing up in Dolan Springs Field and places close to the Black Mountains. They're on private land. I guess this is out to the veterinarians in the group. Has there been work done that tells us how concerned we should be with domestic goats?

BILL FOREYT, WASHINGTON: We did two studies with domestic goats. We thought there might be a problem. We put domestic goats in the same pen with bighorn sheep on two separate occasions and the bighorn sheep made it. We also took bacteria from domestic goats and put them in domestic sheep and nothing happened. We put domestic sheep in with domestic goats and put the goats with bighorn sheep, and nothing happened. These are very limited data. So far we have not seen a problem. A lot of you think domestic goats are a problem, and there might be chromatid evidence in Hells Canyon. There are so many different types of bacteria, but the probability is much less than with domestic sheep.

HURLEY: Dave, you were involved with the pack goat industry before you left Idaho for greener pastures.

DAVE HUNTER, MONTANA: There was a goat involved in the scenario of the Hells Canyon die-off. Whether goats can carry organisms from domestic sheep and spread them to bighorn sheep is a big issue. Based upon Bill's work and work we've done, I would say, the jury is still out on this. To chastise an industry, especially the pack goat industry, would be a little overkill, particularly at this point in time.

I think we need to keep watching it. In the BLM guidelines, didn't we address pack goats and the pack goat issue in bighorn sheep territory? If the animals are tethered and hobbled overnight and aren't allowed to interact with bighorn sheep, and if interaction is suspected or seen, then the local Fish and Game is notified immediately.

We turn too many people against us without a good information background. If we're trying to stop goats because they're goats, if we're trying to use disease as a criteria, we might be gypping ourselves when it comes to llamas, alpacas, horses, and cattle. We haven't mentioned much about cattle. Cattle carry some major killer diseases and I think the reason we don't see more problems is because they don't go nose to nose with wild sheep.

I think we need to make sure that people understand the potential is there with goats and be responsible for their animals, period. I think we can make that work as far as goats, until we have more information.

HURLEY: Are we effectively reducing the interaction between the wild and domestic sheep? Obviously, a lot has been accomplished and a lot more needs to happen.