



American Dairy Goat Association

ADGA registry, based on original import records, is your warranty of good breeding and worldwide acceptance

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November 9, 2017

RC 028

Alaska Board of Game
PO Box 115526
Juneau AK 99811-5526

RE: Proposal 64

On behalf of our members currently residing in Alaska, and those who may choose to move there in the future, we ask that you take no action on Proposal 64. The requirements of the proposal are overly burdensome and we do not see a sound basis for enacting.

We do not believe that removal of domestic goats from the 'Clean List' would provide benefits to the State and its citizens nor is it warranted based on evidence to date. Goat breeders in Alaska maintain their herds in privately owned fenced pastures to efficiently manage them and protect them from predators. Thus, they do not share habitat with Dall Sheep.

To our knowledge, there has never been a single documented case of *Mycoplasma Ovipneumoniae* (*M. ovi*) transmission from domestic sheep or goats to Dall sheep in Alaska. Additionally, the Animal Disease Research Unit in Pullman WA has developed a testing protocol for determining the prevalence of *M. ovi* in goats. While testing was underway, the WSF's head vet, Dr. Tom Besser published the following statement in the summer 2016 edition of Wild Sheep Magazine: "This expected low prevalence of carriage of *M. ovipneumoniae* by pack goats is currently being tested through a program sponsored by the USDA Agricultural Research Service Animal Disease Research Unit in Pullman, WA. If that low prevalence is confirmed, and unless new information to the contrary arises, I believe that *M. ovipneumoniae* test-negative pack goats represent a negligible risk for triggering pneumonia outbreaks in bighorn sheep and that it would be reasonable to take this into account when setting public lands policies." Additionally, another 334 domestic sheep and goats in Alaska have been tested for *M. ovi*. Of that number, less than 2% (a total of six animals - four sheep and two goats) tested positive. This extremely low prevalence helps to support a position to take no action on Proposal 64.

Alaskan goat breeders maintain their herds to produce their own food source of milk and milk-related products and meat, as well as fiber. Removing their ability to produce their food will be a hardship for their families. For some people, goat milk is the only milk they can consume due to their inability to digest cow milk, and for some babies, this source of milk can be critical to their health and wellbeing. This proposal would cause economic burdens to Alaskan sheep and goat owners and supporting feed and service industries, as well as budget impacts to the State of Alaska.

We ask that you consider following the positions of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, the office of the State Veterinarian, the Division of Agriculture, and the Department. of Law and **TAKE NO ACTION** on Proposal 64.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Saum
President, ADGA