

January 15, 2018

Members of the Joint Appropriations Committee:

Wyoming Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association (WVATA) asks the Joint Appropriations Committee to approve the exception request by the Department of Agriculture, as recommended by the Governor, to restore the \$400,000 cut in general funds from the 2017 supplemental budget bill, not biennialize this cut, and for an additional \$250,000 in operating funds.

We offer four reasons in support of this request:

- 1. Wyoming State Fair (WSF) has broad and diverse participation from across the state. Every county is represented by FFA (53 programs) and 4-H members.**
 - The WSF is 4-H and FFA's state championship for showing livestock, static exhibits and many other contests. For FFA it is an extension of our classroom learning.
 - 2,000-3,000 members compete with static exhibits
 - 800+ 4-H and FFA members exhibit livestock
 - WSF is the largest culminating event in comparison to average athletic state tournament participation of 450 students.
 - Through participation in the State Fair, students learn and reinforce skills such as responsibility, decision-making, record-keeping, public speaking and leadership.
- 2. Wyoming State Fair is a state qualifying event for FFA members and is sanctioned by the Wyoming High School Activities Association.**
 - State fair showcases FFA members' Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE). These projects range from entrepreneurship, job placement or internship, and research and are an extension of our classroom learning.
 - 57.5% of Wyoming students' SAE projects are animal related, which directly ties to the WSF.
 - The statewide economic impact from SAE's and agricultural education was \$8 million in 2016.
- 3. Financial and in-kind contributions from agriculture industry (private and nonprofit sectors) augment General Fund appropriations for the state fair.**
 - See additional handout
- 4. Wyoming FFA chapters, 4-H clubs and families support the State Fair through existing participation fees such as daily gate admission, parking permits, campground and dorm fees, meal tickets, stalling and open class entry fees.**
 - In 2017, a family of four (2 parents and 2 active FFA/4-H members) spent approximately \$1,200 in fees and permits to eat, sleep and show one sheep and one steer in the junior livestock events. This does not include any optional entertainment, on-grounds shopping, etc.

The WVATA supports the efforts of the Department of Agriculture to streamline fair operations. WVATA recognizes the need to identify new and diverse income streams through better utilization of the Wyoming State Fair campus. Through these efforts we are supported by these organizations: Wyoming Association of Extension 4-H Agents, Wyoming FFA Association, Wyoming 4-H, Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts, Wyoming Association of Fairs, Wyoming Association of Vocational Agriculture Teachers, Wyoming Pork Producers Council, and the Wyoming Stockgrowers Association.

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