MEETING MINUTES

Oregon Veterinary Medical Examining Board
Rural Advisory Committee (RAC) – SB 1539

MEETING INFORMATION

Date: September 9, 2026
Time: 11:51 a.m. – 1:29 p.m. (Pacific Time)
Location: Virtual meeting via Zoom
Meeting Type: Public meeting (recorded)

I. CALL TO ORDER

Pete Burns, OVMEB Director, called the meeting to order at approximately 12:05 p.m. following introductory remarks and technical setup. Mr. Burns confirmed that the meeting was being recorded and would be available as a public record.

II. ROLL CALL

RAC Members Present:

- Rusty Inglis
- Adrienne Lulay
- Earl Aalseth
- Dr. Rodney Ferry
- Rawley Bigsby (joined shortly after meeting commenced)
- Dr. Gail Colburn (joined shortly after meeting commenced)
- Dr. Emilio DeBess (non-voting member)

RAC Members Absent:

- Scott Dugan
- Ryan Krabill
- Eric Steen

Non-Voting Participants/Public Attendees:

- Scott Young (public participant)
- Pete Burns (OVMEB Executive Director, facilitator)

Membership Updates: Mr. Burns reported that Ben Wustenberg declined participation in the RAC. Ryan Krabill advised that he is transitioning to a position with the Oregon Cattlemen's Association but will remain on the RAC.

Attendance Note: Mr. Burns noted that nine RAC members were present and indicated the meeting could proceed.

III. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF MEETING

Mr. Burns provided an overview of the meeting's purpose and the Board's statutory authority under SB 1539:

- The RAC is tasked with reviewing draft rule language and discussing training components for unlicensed individuals performing cattle pregnancy verification services.
- The Board's authority is **narrow**: it may define circumstances and training components but **may not** license, certify, approve specific courses, or create a licensure program.
- The meeting is a focused review of draft documents and training spectrum; it is not intended to relitigate the scope and limitations of rulemaking authority.

Mr. Burns read the relevant statutory language from SB 1539 into the record:

"An individual who has received training to verify whether cattle are pregnant and is performing pregnancy verification services on cattle within the scope of the individual's training."

IV. OLD BUSINESS

None. This was the second meeting of the RAC; the July meeting recap was provided for reference but not discussed in detail.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Review of Draft Rule Language – Definitions

1. Definition of "Pregnancy Verification"

The RAC reviewed draft language defining pregnancy verification as:

"Determining pregnancy status in cattle using transrectal palpation, ultrasonography, and validated milk, blood, or other biological testing methods. It is limited to determining pregnancy status and does not include diagnosis, treatment, medical administration, or other veterinary interventions."

Discussion:

- Dr. Rodney Ferry raised concern that the draft language appeared to avoid the term "diagnosis" and suggested that pregnancy verification **is** a diagnosis of pregnancy status.
- Dr. Ferry proposed replacing "pregnancy verification" with "pregnancy diagnosis" or clarifying that "no **other** diagnosis" is made.
- Multiple RAC members agreed that pregnancy verification constitutes a diagnosis but acknowledged that the statutory term "pregnancy verification" must be retained.
- Earl Aalseth suggested "pregnancy status verification" as alternative wording.
- Dr. Emilio DeBess noted that the Legislature used "pregnancy verification," so the RAC must maintain that language but may define it more clearly.

Consensus:

- Retain the statutory term **"pregnancy verification"** in the rule.
- Revise the draft language to clarify that the service does not include **other**, **additional**, or **any diagnosis other than pregnancy determination**, along with no treatment or other veterinary interventions.

2. Definition of "Unlicensed Individual"

The RAC reviewed draft language defining an unlicensed individual as:

"A person who is not licensed as a veterinarian but who performs pregnancy verification as allowed under ORS 686.040."

Discussion: No significant objections or suggested revisions were raised.

B. Training Specifications

1. General Training Requirements

The RAC reviewed draft language stating:

"To qualify for the exemption under ORS 686.040, an unlicensed individual must complete training that aligns with the components defined by the Board for pregnancy verification in cattle."

"Board-defined training components may include palpation, use of ultrasound, biological testing, and proper documentation."

"Individuals should maintain proof of completed training, such as certificates, course completion documents, and training attestations, and provide them to the Board upon request during a complaint-driven investigation."

Discussion:

- Rusty Inglis asked whether "proof of training" would include recognition of past experience for individuals who have been performing pregnancy checking for 10+ years.
- Pete Burns clarified that the draft includes a separate section on recognition of prior training and experience, and that individuals with longstanding experience may provide attestations, logs, or statements of their work history.
- Earl Aalseth noted that the line between new practitioners and experienced practitioners may be vague and that many people learn through on-the-job training rather than formal courses.
- Rusty Inglis emphasized that the language should explicitly recognize "proof of past experience" in addition to "proof of completed training."

2. Recognition of Prior Training and Experience

The RAC reviewed draft language stating:

"An unlicensed individual may qualify under ORS 686.040(1)(b) if they can demonstrate that, prior to the effective date of this rule, they attained the Board-defined training components necessary for pregnancy verification in cattle."

"Acceptable documentation includes historical training materials, employer or veterinarian attestations, or other records verifying acquisition of the required competencies."

Discussion:

- Pete Burns explained that this section is intended to allow experienced individuals to demonstrate competency through attestations from colleagues, employers, or veterinarians, or through logs of their work.
- The group agreed that this provision addresses the concern raised by Rusty Inglis regarding recognition of experience.

3. Testing as a Possible Requirement

Discussion:

- Dr. Rodney Ferry suggested that a written test could serve as a way for experienced practitioners to demonstrate competency without repeating unnecessary coursework and could help differentiate between training programs of varying quality.
- Dr. Ferry noted that other jurisdictions (e.g., New Mexico, Alberta) require testing and that some training providers (e.g., ReproScan) offer testing as part of their programs.
- Pete Burns stated that the Board's legal authority to administer or require a test is most likely limited, but agreed to investigate the question.
- Adrienne Lulay questioned what a written test could meaningfully assess in terms of competency for hands-on work.
- The discussion trended away from testing and toward defining adequate training components.

Consensus:

- No decision was made to require testing.
- Pete Burns will investigate the Board's legal authority to administer or require testing and report back.

4. Hands-On Training Requirement

Discussion:

- Dr. Gail Colburn stated specifically that online training alone is **not sufficient** and that hands-on training is essential.
- Multiple RAC members agreed that practical experience with cattle, including exposure to both pregnant and open animals, is critical.

- Dr. Rodney Ferry emphasized that even advanced training courses recommend follow-up hands-on experience with an experienced practitioner.
- Earl Aalseth noted that trainees need exposure to non-pregnant animals to recognize "normal versus different."

Consensus:

- The RAC agreed that **hands-on training must be part of adequate training** and that online-only training is insufficient.

5. Discussion of Training Hours and Components

Discussion:

- Dr. Emilio DeBess urged the group to focus on defining specific training components, such as hours of lecture, anatomy/physiology content, and practical experience.
- Dr. Rodney Ferry suggested **40 hours of hands-on experience** with an experienced pregnancy tester (approximately 8–10 days of work).
- Adrienne Lulay proposed a more compact model: a **2.5-day course with approximately 10 hours of actual cow work**, similar to artificial insemination training programs.
- Earl Aalseth suggested **4–5 hours of lecture** covering anatomy and basic principles, plus **3–5 laboratory sessions** with hands-on work, noting that some trainees can perform 35-day and 60-day pregnancy checks after this level of training.
- Rusty Inglis cautioned against setting overly specific hour requirements, noting that the Board's authority is limited and that enforcement will be complaint-driven.
- Dr. Rodney Ferry acknowledged that skill development varies greatly among trainees and that it is difficult to set a single standard.

Consensus:

- No final numeric recommendation was adopted.
- The RAC agreed to focus on defining a **spectrum of adequate training components** (lecture, anatomy/physiology, hands-on work, ultrasound, biological testing) without mandating specific programs or exact hour requirements.

6. Review of Existing Training Programs

Discussion:

- The RAC reviewed examples of existing training programs, including:
    - Oregon State University (OSU) calving schools and extension programs
    - University of Idaho / ReproScan courses
    - Other ultrasound and pregnancy testing training providers
- Dr. Rodney Ferry noted that many listed programs are restricted to veterinarians, veterinary students, or specific locations, making them inaccessible to many producers.
- Rusty Inglis emphasized the need for local training options in Oregon and suggested that OSU extension stations could provide hands-on training if instructors are available.
- Dr. Emilio DeBess and others agreed that the RAC should focus on establishing foundational training components rather than endorsing specific programs or locations.

Consensus:

- The RAC's product should define **components of adequate training**, not endorse named programs or providers.

C. Complaint-Driven Enforcement and Practical Realities

Discussion:

- Pete Burns explained that the Board will generally become involved only if a complaint is filed, and that documentation and training expectations are intended to help individuals demonstrate compliance in the event of an investigation.
- Rusty Inglis and others observed that, in practice, ranchers are more likely to stop using a poor practitioner than to file formal complaints.
- Pete Burns noted that the Board can take disciplinary action against unlicensed individuals, primarily through civil penalties, though enforcement is more challenging than with licensed individuals.

- Adrienne Lulay emphasized that the rules should provide a minimum standard and a "jumping off point" for individuals who want to pursue training, while recognizing that ranchers will ultimately make their own judgments about whom to hire.

D. Recordkeeping

Discussion:

- Dr. Rodney Ferry suggested that individuals performing pregnancy verification services should keep at least minimal records so that, if animal health issues arise later, herd information and work performed can be reviewed.
- Examples suggested included: owner information, date, class/age of cattle, vaccine history (if vaccines were given), and percentage pregnant/open.
- Pete Burns indicated that the Board may have more ability to **request or recommend** recordkeeping than to mandate detailed record requirements.

Action Item:

- Dr. Rodney Ferry agreed to email Pete Burns a suggested list of minimal record requirements.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Scott Young, a public participant, introduced himself as someone who follows policy on both the veterinary and pharmacy sides. Mr. Young did not provide formal public comment but expressed interest in discussing the Board's relationship with the Board of Pharmacy and inspection processes. Pete Burns invited Mr. Young to reach out by email.

VII. ACTION ITEMS

1. **Pete Burns** to work with **Adrienne Lulay** to develop draft language describing the training spectrum, including categories, hours, and hands-on requirements, and circulate it to the RAC for feedback.
2. **Pete Burns** to investigate the Board's legal authority to administer or require a test as part of training requirements.

3. **Adrienne Lulay** to obtain the relevant Oregon State University curriculum (through Catherine) to help inform the training criteria.