

The Need for Rep. Mike Simpson's "Domestic Sheep" Provision

Some states or Congressional districts may not have many sheep producers, although all states do have a number of people who make at least a portion of their living from raising sheep. However, even if you do not view your constituents as sheep producers, it is virtually certain that some of them are employed in jobs which are in part dependent upon a healthy domestic sheep industry in the United States. In urging you to support Rep. Simpson's language in the Interior and Related Agencies FY 2012 appropriations bill that will limit the expansion of recent Forest Service decisions to remove domestic sheep because of the potential spread of disease from them to bighorns, please consider:

- Ultimately, 42 percent of all sheep grazing on western National Forests would be affected by the decision to limit grazing, even as scientists are making great strides on a vaccine that would protect bighorns from any disease transmission.
- That 42 percent represents fully 23 percent of all the domestic sheep in the country. If we were to lose that much sheep production, then we would see the closure of meat packers and processors, woolen mills, textile manufacturers, leather works and even pharmaceutical manufacturers that use lanolin and other sheep by-products throughout the nation.
- Fully 20 percent of the country's wool production is purchased by the military for uniforms that are flame-resistant, durable and odor free despite limited laundry capabilities.
- Each 1,000 sheep produces 18 year-round, full time jobs, not only in the sheep industry directly, but also in the ancillary industries, including those noted above.

Finally, bighorn sheep are not in any immediate danger. In fact, bighorns and domestic sheep have shared the same landscapes for many years, with no proven transmission of disease between the two species in natural range conditions. Representatives of the sheep industry, bighorn enthusiasts and scientists are continuing to work together on long term strategies to maintain appropriate separation between the two species and on a vaccine to further limit possible disease transmission. Rep. Simpson's language provides five years for this work to continue. Without the certainty provided by this language, the agencies and the courts will undoubtedly expand the initial restrictions on the Payette National Forest in Idaho to other western states, resulting in the unnecessary loss of a significant portion of American agriculture and one that will have impacts across the country, including your state.

Minnesota

Number of Sheep and sheep operations: 81,000 head of sheep / 2500 sheep operations

Lamb processors and packing houses:

There are nine meat packing plants in Minnesota of varying size and varying products.

Woolen mills:

St. Peter Woolen Mill

101 West Broadway

St. Peter, MN 56082

(507) 934-3734

spwoolen@hickorytech.net

Bemidji Woolen Mill

301 Irvine Ave NW

Bemidji, MN 56601

1-888-751-5766

www.Bemidjiwoolenmills.com

Faribault Woolen Mill

1819 2nd Avenue NW

Faribault, MNB 55021

1-800-448-9665

Military bases (the military buys 20 percent of the domestic wool production, making fire resistant uniforms):

- Military
 - Installations (1 total)

Coast Guard Marine Safety Office - Duluth

Personnel Totals

- **Army** 321
- **Navy & Marine Corps** 320
- **Air Force** 221
- **Coast Guard** 1,185
- **Active Duty Military** 862
- **Reserve and National Guard** 24,219
- **Total Personnel** 26,266

- Fire Personnel

Minnesota Professional Firefighters <http://mpff.org/>

Pharmaceutical companies (using lanolin and other by-products)

There are 271 pharmaceutical companies in Minnesota.

Key Points:

1. Even though your state or Congressional District may not have domestic sheep operations, there are impacts to meat packing and processing, woolen mills and clothing manufacturers, and pharmaceutical companies from a 23% reduction in domestic sheep numbers.
2. Domestic sheep and bighorns have existed together on the same range for years—there is no danger that bighorns will be eliminated from disease. Research is underway to minimize any danger of disease transmission and Rep. Simpson's measure will buy the time for those efforts to bear fruit (five years).