



U.S. SHEEP EXPERIMENT STATION (USSES)

In FY 2025 Congressional recognition of USSES' unique role in ensuring valuable livestock, rangeland and wildlife research efforts and an irreplaceable field laboratory continue is appreciated.

This 100-year-old research station has long resulted in beneficial results, particularly for the nation's sheep industry. ZUSSES' 48,000 acres of land provides a unique and exclusive site for collaborative large-scale integrated livestock, wildlife, and rangeland research.

USSES unique mission and justification for additional investment:

A \$1,000,000 increase for new research and collaborative efforts. This research would lead collaborative science-based efforts that will ultimately allow domestic and wild sheep sharing common landscapes while preserving domestic sheep-ranching livelihoods and enhancing wild sheep population viability.

With the support of both the sheep ranching and the wild sheep conservation communities, this USSES-led research program will widely applied solutions impacting the Intermountain West. The research would:

- focus on elucidating domestic sheep phenotypes and genotypes with reduced to no shedding of *M. ovipneumoniae*, and
- test landscape-scale remote herding technologies/strategies for reducing wildlife-domestic sheep interaction on shared landscapes.

Headquartered at the USSES in Dubois, USSES researchers would design the research in collaboration with the University of Idaho and consider input from sheep-ranching and wild-sheep stakeholders.

Problems associated with *M. ovipneumoniae* have often put wild sheep conservationists and domestic sheep producers at odds, resulting in the closure of domestic sheep grazing allotments on public lands. Currently, the only management tactic employed to prevent potential pathogen transmission between the sheep and other species with endemic *M. ovipneumoniae* is geographical and/or temporal separation, which has led to conflicts over public land use and the loss of grazing opportunities for domestic sheep producers. Better long-term solutions are needed to allow for both species to share the landscape.

The research enabled by the proposed increase would ultimately reduce and possibly eliminate conflicts between the agriculture and conservation communities. Such an accomplishment would benefit both the livelihoods of sheep ranchers and enhance wild sheep conservation, benefiting rural communities and their continued viability.



Appropriations Bill

Agriculture

Agency

Agricultural Research Service

Account

Salaries and Expenses

FY2025 Requested Amount

\$5.141 million

Description

ARS is the principal in house research agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Congress first authorized federally supported agricultural research in the Organic Act of 1862, which established what is now USDA. That statute directed the Commissioner of Agriculture “to acquire and preserve in his department all information he can obtain by means of books and correspondence, and by practical and scientific experiments.” The scope of USDA’s agricultural research programs has been expanded and extended more than 60 times since the Department was created.

The 100-year-old research station has demonstrated an impact on all of agriculture, especially the nation’s sheep industry. Its 48,000 acres of land provides a unique location and is exclusively positioned for collaborative large-scale integrated livestock, wildlife and rangeland research.

The mission of the USDA, ARS, Range Sheep Production Efficiency Research Unit, U.S. Sheep Experiment Station is to develop integrated methods for increasing production efficiency of sheep and to simultaneously improve the sustainability of rangeland ecosystems.

Proposed FY2025 Report Language

The Committee recognizes that the U.S. Sheep Experiment Station is a valuable asset for grazing lands and sheep industry genetic research, and the repository of over five decades of sage grouse research and data. The station is not only valuable for the domestic livestock industry, but also the Western region’s wildlife interface. The Committee provides an additional \$1 million to enhance the viability and multi-species health resulting from wildlife and domestic sheep interaction on shared landscapes and urges ARS to continue engaging collaborators to ensure the station functions as an agricultural research facility while also evaluating opportunities through a domestic livestock / wildlife collaboration.

Authorization

The Agricultural Research Service (ARS) was established on November 2, 1953, pursuant to authority vested in the Secretary of Agriculture by 5 U.S.C. 301 and Reorganization Plan No. 2 of 1953, and other authorities.

President’s FY 2025 Budget Request

TBD