



## U.S. SHEEP EXPERIMENT STATION (USSES)

In FY 2016 and beyond, Congress must preserve the USSES to ensure that valuable livestock, rangeland and wildlife research efforts and an irreplaceable field laboratory are not lost forever. The station must be funded at \$3 million in 2016. Funding for legal costs and environmental regulatory requirements must be made available above the \$3 million operational budget.

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 USSES present state and strengths include:**

- A large, high quality, intact, landscape-scale field laboratory;
- Historical and on-going high quality research and long term data;
- Significant potential for future research to benefit numerous wildlife species including those considered for listing under the Endangered Species Act;
- Location in rural areas and positive local economic impact;
- Veterinary medicine intern program nationally known and respected; and
- A model for production and management practices, including infectious diseases, for university extension and industry to utilize.

### **The USSES unique opportunities and needs for the future:**

- An expanded mission, focus, landholdings and budget that tie into other western/national priorities like fire mitigation, climate change and interactive livestock/wildlife grazing and disease issues.

To address the future needs of the station, the formation of a **Western Integrated Rangeland Research Consortium** has been proposed to perform research that focuses on productive domestic livestock enterprises while maintaining healthy rangeland systems assuring sustainable and healthy wildlife habitat.

### **Consortium Strategy:**

1. To fully utilize the irreplaceable resources and opportunities of the sheep station in ongoing and future collaborative research efforts with other ARS facilities, universities and partners.
2. Utilize USSES as a large, nationally unique, field laboratory to add value and management application to research efforts at other USDA-ARS facilities and improve recruitment and retention efforts by co-locating scientists in larger research communities.
3. Maintain the USSES-Dubois location as a worksite for research projects, which would be locally managed by an ARS Research Leader and critical scientific and support staff.
4. Long-term fiscal viability is ensured through consolidation of administrative support and sharing of scientific laboratory space and instrumentation at the University of Idaho and Washington State University.

**Sage Grouse** — Population and habitat has been studied for 49 years at the USSES, leading to irreplaceable historical rangeland data. Sage grouse populations thrive on USSES lands where sheep graze, with annual USSES lek counts often exceeding regional counts. Efforts are underway to: enhance current monitoring programs for grizzly bear and sage grouse; combine USSES sage grouse records with the USSES Rangeland and Climate Databases; and research the effects of fire, climate, and grazing management on sage grouse lek populations. These efforts are needed to identify factors most associated with sage grouse presence and viability, which in turn will be used to craft science-based strategies for effective and responsible management of rangelands and wildlife.

For more information, please visit the ASI website at [www.sheepusa.org](http://www.sheepusa.org).  
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