

Crystal committee studies varied bills on agriculture

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By BEN J. PLASTINO
Post-Register political editor

State Sen. Vearl Crystal, R-Rigby, chairman of the Senate Agricultural Affairs Committee, said Tuesday there are no major bills submitted as yet for consideration but there are a number of minor ones.

He said there are also bills that may be tossed to his committee from the House Agriculture Committee.

"We will give these bills plenty of attention as they are important to the sponsors and the people affected," said Crystal, a former Jefferson County assessor.

One of the bills under consideration provides for 4-H youths taking seeing dogs to public places as part of the seeing dogs training. It has been approved for printing and will be considered for passage to the floor, he said.

Another bill eliminates the voting privilege of the director of the Department of Agriculture as a member of the Hop, Mint and Honey commissions.

A third bill makes it mandatory to state



Sen. Vearl Crystal

exactly the contents of so-called wonder drug fertilizers.

Another bill received from the House would make the theft of livestock of not more than \$1,000 value a misdemeanor rather than a felony. This is to make it easier to convict, explained Crystal.

"We had a case in Lemhi County where it cost the county \$15,203 to prosecute such a case while the defendant spent only \$386 for a defense lawyer and \$300 for court fees," said Crystal.

The defendant spent only six months in the state correctional institution at Cottonwood after conviction.

Crystal said the bill keeps the theft of two or more heads of livestock as a felony.

Another bill provides for advertising fee increase by the Pea and Lentil Commission.

Several measures are what Crystal described as "housekeeping bills" to change laws for easier administration for self governing farm commissions.

Crystal is serving his fourth term and is also a member of the powerful Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee, and the Local Government and Taxation Committee.

The committee generally meets each Tuesday and Thursday afternoons while the Legislature is in session.

Members of the 10-person committee includes six Republicans and four Democrats.