

Musk ox herd to stay at Unalakleet

A solution has been proposed to the problem of what to do with a herd of muskoxen at Unalakleet. According to the Department of Fish and Game, the State intends to keep ownership of the animals for five years, but offers to leave them in the care of the Institute for Northern Agricultural Research under permit. If the Institute agrees, the herd will remain at Unalakleet.

While at Unalakleet, the animals would continue to be used for qiviut (muskox "wool") production and breeding. Alaska's qiviut industry would be able to depend on the herd for raw material.

The herd was declared surplus by the Alaska Board of Game in April, 1979. The Board then advertised for applications to

own the animals. Applications were evaluated by Department of Fish and Game biologists. In the meantime, the Alaska House of Representatives' Special Committee on Agriculture became interested in the herd and held meetings with Department officials and the Game Board.

The decision to retain the State's ownership of the herd was reached after consultation and review by the Game Board, the Special Committee and the Department. The animals have been offered to the Institute for Northern Agricultural Research under a five-year permit and cooperative agreement. The permit and agreement stipulate that the herd must remain at Unalakleet for the next five years.