

FALL 2017



MONTANA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION



Spokesman

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**FIRES, FIRES
EVERYWHERE:**

**STORIES FROM THE
2017 FIRE SEASON**

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**HIGH FIVE
LAMB BRATS**

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**MFBF CONVENTION
REGISTRATION**

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**AMAZING
MEMBERSHIP
BENEFITS**

PAGE 31

A publication for the more than 21,000 member families of the Montana Farm Bureau Federation



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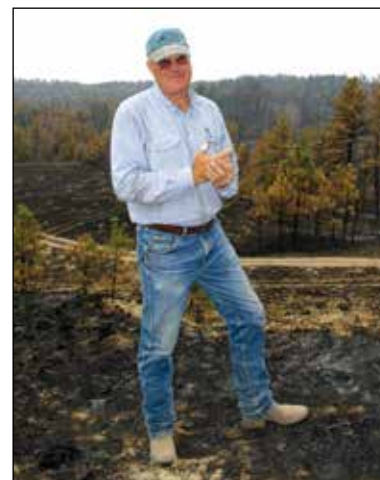
Spokesman

MONTANA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

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ON THE COVER:
Fritz Zook standing in his pasture after the Red Butte Fire.

Photo by Rebecca Colnar

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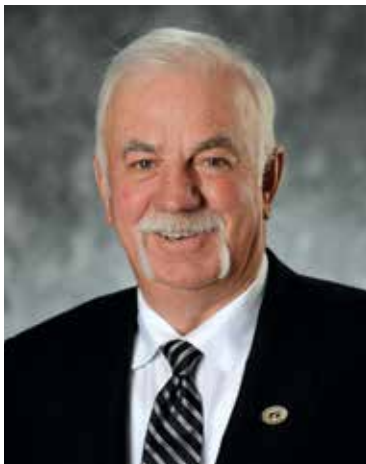


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Hans McPherson

President, Montana Farm Bureau Federation

“I encourage you all to invite your friends and neighbors to join the Montana Farm Bureau Federation family in protecting rural Montana and the livelihood of the farmers and ranchers who call it home.”

Fires and Farm Bureau membership

Hopefully, by the time you're reading this editorial our state will have received the rain it so terribly needs. There is not one corner of the state in good shape as I write this in early September. The southeast is droughted out and ablaze; the northeast is entirely droughted out and the west is on fire. Clean air is nonexistent, for both humans and animals. Even if irrigation is available to water crops, a thick cloud of smoke hides the sun and prevents growth of the only income some will have this year.

While we can't control the weather, we can control the way fires are attacked and suppressed. Whether the flames are rolling through wilderness, Forest Service land, or private land – the smoke all tastes the same. We could go on for hours debating who is at fault and why the failed plans of the Forest Service are not working. However, the bottom line is we have never had a greater opportunity to influence policies in Washington, D.C. Montana Farm Bureau has four strong friends heading agencies that affect the West: Secretary of the Interior, Ryan Zinke is a Montanan who understands our issues, the beauty that surrounds us and what's going on in the forests. U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Sonny Purdue recognizes that in order to market our crops, we need to have crops to harvest and we need to have markets to sell them to, including essential international markets. This includes our forests that need to be harvested and forest products marketed. Scott Pruitt, administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, realizes farmers and ranchers don't need to be harnessed with

undue burdens and regulations that hinder our ability to manage our land and produce food. Karen Budd-Falen, an attorney from Cheyenne, Wyoming, will have an important role in advocating that multiple-use is the best way to manage public lands in order to promote both wildlife habitat and sustainable agriculture.

Your Farm Bureau membership is worth more than ever, and it has never been more important to call on your friends and neighbors to join us as Farm Bureau continues to have the financial ability and the political clout to effectively make these changes. Now is the time to approach your neighbors with our positive message and our bright future with joining MFBF. We need new members and they need us. We are stronger and better off fighting this fight together. Individuals, specifically hardworking farmers and ranchers, do not have the time to contact the required political entities to lobby their cases; your Farm Bureau membership does that for you. I encourage you all to invite your friends and neighbors to join the Montana Farm Bureau Federation family in protecting rural Montana and the livelihood of the farmers and ranchers who call it home. Plan to attend the MFBF Annual Convention November 12-15 in Billings. A great way to have your voice heard starts with attending your county annual meeting and carrying policy all the way to the state level and on to the American Farm Bureau.

I hope everyone has had a good autumn and a great harvest. I look forward to seeing you all at the convention in November.



Government Regulations: 99,000 pages and counting

The other day when I got ready to mow the lawn, I got out the old gas can I had inherited from my dad. It was a battered old tin can with a rubber spout and a vent hole on the opposite side. It worked perfectly for many decades but I noticed that it was leaking around the seam on the bottom. A trip to the local hardware brought me a new EPA approved PFC (portable fluid container) also known as a gas can with a low vapor pour spout. I quickly learned that you need three hands to operate today's gas can. You spill more gas than you get in the tank. What happened to a can that works? In 2009 the EPA banned the gas can with a vent opposite the spout. You now get a sloshing, burping, gasoline erupting monster with a spout that breaks faster than a champagne glass at a wedding reception. It is like a giant dribble glass prank played on all Americans. Most of us don't buy gas cans on a regular basis so a lot of people today won't know any better, but it is another example of things that don't work as well as they used to because of government regulation.

Regulations today don't affect just gas cans. In fact, the Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI) estimates that regulations cost Americans \$1.9 trillion dollars annually with the biggest hitters being economic regulation at \$3.99 billion, environmental at \$3.94 billion and tax compliance rounding out the top three at \$3.16 billion. If U.S. regulatory costs were a country, it would be the world's seventh-largest economy, just behind India and ahead of Italy.

A bellwether of regulation is how many pages are added to the federal register during a particular year. The 2016 total showed 95,894 pages for the year, up 19.4 percent from the previous year. This was the highest level in history. If one were to

look at pages per decade, it would indicate that the 2010's nearly doubled the amount promulgated during the 1970's. These 95,000-plus pages are indicative of the total final rules passed by the administration. The total rules passed by all administrations up to 1993 was 4,369. In the ensuing 23 years that total has grown to nearly 99,000.

It is not just the rules that are passed by an administration that add to the total cost of regulation in the U.S. According to CEI, official rules do not include other bureaucratic activities that fall outside the purview of the Administrative Procedures Act (APA), which specifies the formal process that must be followed to issue regulations. CEI refers to these as "regulatory dark matter." Like the dark matter of the universe they are invisible to the population and hard to detect.

All this cannot be laid in the lap of the past administrations; in fact Congress merits some of the blame for allowing over delegation of its own authority for decades. This has seriously undermined checks and balances and the principle of separation of powers.

All of the above point out the importance of individuals commenting on rule making by federal and state agencies. Farm Bureau continues to keep members notified of these actions such as Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) (which, for the record was not yet made a law), Labor Rules, Electronic Log Books, etc. and we gladly provide basic talking points for folks to use for comments.

Back to the gas can. The hardware store sells a water can that has a durable spout with the vent on the opposite side that pours perfectly. Of course, I would never use that for gasoline.



John Youngberg
Executive Vice President, MFBF

“If U.S. regulatory costs were a country, it would be the world's seventh-largest economy, just behind India and ahead of Italy.”



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“Eat this and die.” Two Steps to Outsmart Media Marketing of Fear

BY CHARLIE ARNOT, CEO OF THE CENTER FOR FOOD INTEGRITY

Whether you're a Trump fan or not is irrelevant when it comes to the mainstream media's role in his election. There was much inaugural hand wringing and self-examination of the inadvertent role media played by covering every tweet and provocative campaign comment.

Yet, many of the same media outlets and others play a similarly complicit role in the marketing of food fear, causing hand-wringing on the part of consumers who may reject a food for no good reason for fear of potential health issues that range from joint pain to death.

By publishing anything claiming to have a whiff of scientific basis, assigning it a nefarious headline and relinquishing responsibility to verify its legitimacy, media counter their own noble pursuit by contributing to consumer confusion instead of being a beacon of clear, reliable information.

“Carcinogenic pesticide found in Ben & Jerry's ice cream” and “Chemical in mac and cheese tied to birth defects” are among the latest alarming headlines.

I understand that it's often no easier for media to sort through the sea of pseudoscience than for its audience. In fact, one could argue that in the highly competitive modern age of the 24/7 race to be first to post and the unrelenting pressure to quickly turn multiple stories in any given day, the public shouldn't expect Pulitzer prize-winning journalism.

Often, media outlets hungry for content

and short on staff simply post news releases verbatim – no scrutiny applied – from an author, company, advocacy group or public relations firm. One recent example is “These 7 foods are scientifically proven to put you in a bad mood” article, which was picked up by many media

outlets including AOL, MSN and Glamour.

With a simple 10-minute search for the science behind each claim (if scientific studies were even provided), I discovered the article didn't “prove” much of anything. As is the case here, so often science “suggests” a link or claims consuming a certain ingredient (in unrealistic, outrageous amounts in many cases) “may” cause various health conditions.

The mere presence of a chemical in a food doesn't make it harmful, but often stories lead us to believe otherwise.

Consider the “high levels” of phthalates recently reported in the cheese powder of various boxed macaroni and cheese

products. One of the companies whose products were tested said the amounts of phthalates reported in the study are “more than 1,000 times lower than levels that scientific authorities have identified as acceptable.”

But the “fear your food” headlines lure readers in because there's nothing quite as personal as the food we eat and feed our kids, and how it impacts our health. And more readers means more advertising dollars. That means more editors and reporters get to keep their jobs. I understand. I was a reporter too, scrambling every day to dig up stories on

deadline that were compelling and would make my boss happy.

So, where does this leave consumers? Swimming in a sea of conflicting studies, claims that don't deserve the label “science” and flat-out efforts to market food fears. Trust research from The Center for Food Integrity (CFI) <http://www.foodintegrity.org> shows that the public wants full transparency – the good, the bad and the ugly – so they can make informed decisions for themselves and their families.

But until they get it, here are two steps anyone can follow to outsmart the marketing of food fears.

1. Read beyond the headline. Many times, reporters start a story with the most shocking nuggets to draw you in, but end with statements from experts like, “the study raises important questions but doesn't prove causation,” or “it's probably not cause for concern.” In a time of increasingly shrinking attention spans, I'd venture to guess a good number of readers don't get to that last paragraph. Try starting there!
2. Don't accept an “eat this and die” story as gospel without viewing at least two other sources. Before you believe a claim, do a quick online search of the topic. The search results alone may paint a more balanced picture, but select at least two other credible sources and see what they say. BestFoodFacts.org covers many such topics with information direct from credentialed experts.

Consumers are smarter than those who market fear believe. These two steps empower you to outsmart the marketing of food fears without a PhD. Let's face it; the pseudoscience food stories aren't likely to go away, so our diligence in digging for the truth is the key to making healthy choices in the grocery aisle.



“Consumers are smarter than those who market fear believe.”

Charlie Arnot, CEO of The Center for Food Integrity

As originally published in the Huffington Post http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/eat-this-and-die-two-steps-to-outsmart-media-marketing_us_5993226ae4b0afd94eb3f532



Be confident.

When you're covered by life insurance, you're helping the most important people in your world live their lives confidently. So help them dream big, and enjoy your peace of mind.

No life insurance? Contact your agent to help you prepare for your future today!



www.fbfs.com

For Better and For Worse

BY MARIAH SHAMMEL

This fall, Favorite Farmer and I celebrate our 8th anniversary. I always think it's weird when people ask me how married life is because I never really know what to say. I want to tell them how much fun we have talking about our future plans, how patient my better half is when I decide to bake cinnamon rolls rather than pick up dirty dishes from breakfast, how gentle and reassuring he is with our kids, how I have to bite my tongue (except sometimes I can't bite hard enough) when cows, crops, and lots of other things take precedence over my "honey-do" projects, and everything else that makes our marriage a marriage. But then I realize all those details would result in an eyes-glazed-over, open-mouthed stare so I just respond with "It's good!" (said with enthusiasm, of course).

My response is kind of like the hyphen on a tombstone, the one that lands between the birth date and the day of a person's last day on earth. It signifies the span of a person's life but does nothing to describe the memories, events, and every hill and valley that made that life what it really was.

“It's our life and I can't dream of a better way to navigate this world than hand in hand with Lyle, my Favorite Farmer.”

As our anniversary date approached, I had to think about what year was printed on our wedding invitations to figure out how many years we've been married. Aside from that special date and the years our three kids were born in, I have no clue what happened when. Not because the length of our marriage isn't important to me (although there are definitely more important things) but because I tend to measure time gone by in memories instead of years.

I have no idea how long we were together or which year it was when we vacationed in Belize, but I can still taste the fish tacos

like we had them for supper last night and I start laughing when I think about our kayak/snorkeling adventure in the Ambergris Caye. Our first-born made his arrival in 2011, but more than the year on the calendar, I remember our final trek to deliver at the hospital in Billings, when Favorite Farmer detailed exactly what everyone would witness if the roadside flagger, whose sole job was to turn all vehicles around, didn't let us through the flooding roads of Flatwillow Creek after our primary path was under a three-foot river.

Even my friendships are measured in this way—it would take some quick math to figure out how long each member of my posse and I have been besties, but without skipping a beat I could tell you about the year I found the best friends you could ask for in the lunchroom of Skyview High, and during the next phase of my life in the cafeteria of Hapner Hall; the year we spontaneously flew to Mexico and almost lost a certain person of our group after having a little run in with the Federales, the year we made an impromptu trip to Missouri to conduct an "intervention" on a friend stuck in a relationship gone bad; the year I met my co-worker turned friend for life in the lab of Linfield Hall; and even the year my sister made all my dreams come true by moving her family home to Montana.

I would be lying if I said all the memories I look back on are heart-warming, fun and all together happy to think about. Whether it's Favorite Farmer, my best friend, or my siblings, if they've meant anything to me over the years, they've also shared tears, angry words, worries and regrets—but we still love each other. The worry of a sick child, the rash words spoken without thought, the fear of what's to come as our



Mariah and Lyle Shammel at their wedding 8 years ago.

drought-stricken pastures disintegrate into nothing and our crops wither on the stem.

2017 isn't over yet but like every other year, it's already full of memories and life-changing events. This will forever be the year our oldest started Kindergarten, Little Lady had to have eye surgery and Littlest Man started walking. It will be the year labeled "the driest on record," the year we had to fence places we've never fenced before to let cows eat grass they've never needed to eat before and so much more.

So if you ask me how married life is and I respond with a less than four-page commentary, know that there's more behind that generic response than you can ever imagine. It's mostly the best, sometimes the worst but I have a heart full of memories to remind me how amazing life is. The coolest thing of all? It's our life and I can't dream of a better way to navigate this world than hand in hand with Lyle, my Favorite Farmer.



Wildfires: Stay Safe, Stay Prepared

Every year, wildfires burn across the U.S., and more and more people are living where wildfires are a real risk. As fires burn across Montana, here are some tips on how to prevent wildfires and what to do if you're caught in the middle of one.

How To Prevent A Wildfire

- Contact 911, your local fire department, or the park service if you notice an unattended or out-of-control fire.
- Never leave a fire unattended. Completely extinguish the fire—by dousing it with water and stirring the ashes until cold—before sleeping or leaving the area.
- When camping, take care when using and fueling lanterns, stoves, and heaters. Make sure lighting and heating devices are cool before refueling. Avoid spilling flammable liquids and store fuel away from appliances.
- Do not discard cigarettes, matches,

and smoking materials from moving vehicles, or anywhere on park grounds. Be certain to completely extinguish cigarettes before disposing of them.

- Follow local ordinances when burning yard waste. Avoid backyard burning in windy conditions, and keep a shovel, water, and fire retardant nearby to keep fires in check. Remove all flammables from yard when burning.

Evacuation Tips

- If advised to evacuate, do so immediately.
- Know your evacuation route ahead of time and prepare an evacuation checklist and emergency supplies.
- Wear protective clothing and footwear to protect yourself from flying sparks and ashes.

Before You Leave, Prepare Your House

- Remove combustibles, including

firewood, yard waste, barbecue grills, and fuel cans from your yard.

- Close all windows, vents, and doors to prevent a draft.
- Shut off natural gas, propane, or fuel oil supplies.
- Fill any large vessels—pools, hot tubs, garbage cans, or tubs—with water to slow or discourage fire.
- Make sure there is an escape route/plan for animals and livestock who might have to be left behind.

If you live in a high wildfire risk area, don't wait until it is too late. Generally, agents do not have the authority to add or increase coverage in case of impending disaster, including forest fires. We recommend you meet with your agent annually and discuss what coverage options are available to you. Contact your local Farm Bureau agent today and protect what matters most!



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Meet **Agent Julie Bramlet**

BY REBECCA COLNAR

Appreciation of agriculture plays a large part in Julie Bramlet's life. Although she grew up in Spokane, her grandparents were cattle ranchers and owned an apple orchard. "I spent summers and as much time as possible with my grandparents. I remember irrigating in those boots that came up to your hips," Bramlet fondly reminisces.

She moved to Kalispell when she was 18 and spent 20 years enjoying that community. "Kalispell was great, although it's grown a lot. While I was living there, I started a medical transcription business with a friend. The business grew and at its peak, we had 30 transcriptionists around the country working for us," Bramlet says. "We used every technology we could."

Meanwhile, the Bramlet family has grown, with three kids heading to high school. "About five years ago, we looked around

and thought Dillon would be a little smaller and a good town for our kids to go to high school. A lot of times people say they don't like small towns because everybody knows your business, but when you have teenagers it's really good that everyone knows your business. Dillon is a good community."

With new regulations and recording methods changing the transcription business, Bramlet decided to sell out to her partner and become an insurance agent. "My husband saw an advertisement for an agent and thought I'd be great at that job. I talked to Wayne Lower, and he said with my business experience being a full-time agent would be the best step."

What does she like most about being an agent? "The most fun part is I can go to a Cubs barbecue or the Fire Department Pancake Breakfast and it doesn't feel like working because I'm outside," she states.

"What I really enjoy is that I am helping people to make sure a bad day doesn't turn into a hard life. We all experience those bad days. Insurance is all about getting through them."

Bramlet agrees there aren't better people than those in rural Montana. "I love going out to meet with my clients. I love hearing that somebody grew up in that certain house, or their grandparents owned the ranch. I also enjoy the financial service part by helping people plan for the future whether it's putting kids through college or planning for retirement."

Until she started working with Farm Bureau, she had never thought about the importance of moving working ranches from one generation to the next. "I have really enjoyed working with Wayne Lower and learning about the challenges our ranchers face in moving their ranches to



(Above) Julie Bramlet just after finishing the Missoula Half Marathon summer 2017. (Left) The Harley and Julie Bramlet in the Pioneer Mountains.



the next generation," Bramlet says. "It is often a difficult subject to talk about and each situation is so different, but it is very important to plan ahead and make sure that today's ranches will still be working ranches in the future. Our agricultural lifestyle is the greatest and I love the feeling that I can help move that to the next generation."

“The more I find out about it, the more I love it. Our ranchers work so hard and they need a voice.”

The energetic mother of three dedicates her time as a 4-H leader. "I am the membership person for the Beaver Boosters, the high school fundraising program. We're always willing to help out kids," she says. "There is a financial independence class in high school and I give a talk every semester about saving for retirement. I also do a presentation

on insurance for the students. Eighteen-year-olds don't know what a deductible is," Bramlet says. "Because I take any chance I have to educate kids."

The agent has nothing but praise for the Montana Farm Bureau Federation. "The more I find out about it, the more I love it. Our ranchers work so hard and they need a voice. It is so hard for a farmer that is so productive and busy working to sit in committee meetings and be politically active. The Federation does that for him," Bramlet says. "The agricultural lifestyle is vital to everything about us. The Federation promotes that by supporting the 4-H and FFA and they have the Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers

program. I ask everyone to get involved whether it's with the Women's Leadership Committee, YF&R or advisory committees. I tell them to attend their county annual meeting. It's so interesting when MFBF lobbyists speak at our meetings and tell us which senators they spoke with. They are very specific on issues. It's amazing that someone in Dillon can have an effect nationally. It's awesome."

Even though she is busy with 4-H and other community events, she has time for her family. "We like to hunt and fish and be outdoors. My husband just bought a Harley, so we will be going on a few rides."



NOTICE

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Farm Bureau Center

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Rhonda Boyd: Having a strong voice

BY REBECCA COLNAR

The Boyd Angus Ranch sits in the Ruby Valley just outside of Alder, Montana. It's a beautiful spot for cattle and agriculture, a lifestyle and vocation that Rhonda Boyd is passionate about. She is no stranger to agriculture having grown up on a farm in Colorado. She majored in animal science at Colorado State University, and an internship brought her to Dillon to work for a feed company. After graduation, she started working for Parker Livestock Supply (Animal Health International) and then for Loomix.

"While working for Loomix, I met my future husband, Ellis. He was a customer and I wrote a story on him for a promotional piece," Rhonda explains. "We married in 1989 and moved to Wilsall, where Ellis was working. We had two kids, Mark in 1991 and Raquel in 1994. We sold that place and moved to Meteetse, Wyoming."

Rhonda admits throughout her entire lifetime, she has been involved in Farm Bureau. "In Colorado, my grandfather was president of Larimer County Farm Bureau, my brother was president of Morgan County Farm Bureau and my brother-in-law was president of Park County Farm Bureau. I was a Farm Bureau scholarship winner for Colorado State University, and both of our kids are Farm Bureau scholarship recipients. When we moved to Wyoming, we got involved with the Farm Bureau there. Farm Bureau has always been around me."

Although the couple enjoyed Meteetse,

their Black Angus cattle fell prey to High Altitude Disease. "Our summer pasture was on the edge of Yellowstone National Park. We either had to change our cattle breed or move. Our neighbor who raised Simmental bought that ranch from us and we moved to Boulder, Montana," explains Rhonda. "We ranched there for four years, and then we found our place in Alder where we could run more cattle and moved here in 2000."

The ranch included a lovely turn-of-the-century home, irrigated pasture, a good reliable water source with water rights, and a moderate climate. "Any time we moved, our main criteria were having water rights," noted Rhonda. "Because of that, we have a good feed base and our purebred and commercial Black Angus cattle do well."

Rhonda, a Southwest Counties Farm Bureau member, was elected to the Montana Farm Bureau Board of Directors during the Montana Farm Bureau Convention in November, 2016. There are several Farm Bureau positions that strike a chord with her. "Farm Bureau does an excellent job watching out for water and private property rights. Both of those rights are extremely important to your livelihood when you're a farmer or rancher, and we are very focused on that. I appreciate Farm Bureau's work with ag safety and their work with young farmers and ranchers. The Discussion Meet competition is great."

Rhonda was an American Farm Bureau Women's Communication Boot Camp delegate to Washington, D.C. in 2015. The Boot Camp is an intensive training opportunity for any female Farm Bureau member interested in building skills needed to communicate for Farm Bureau about agriculture. Currently, over 150 women have graduated from the program. As part of the Boot Camp, each woman must present a topic; Rhonda chose Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS), a rule of great concern to her. Because of her research into the subject, she has given presentations about WOTUS to local water boards and did an interview on the subject with the Northern Ag Network.

"The Women's Boot Camp gave me a start to learn the basics about communication," said Rhonda. "It helps build your confidence and skills. I'm currently participating in the MFBF ACE (Action, Communication, Education) program."

"I appreciate the fact that there is work being done to get WOTUS repealed and I appreciate what Montana Farm Bureau sends out with the Action Alerts," Rhonda says. "Farmers and ranchers have a strong voice. The more we can speak out and the more we can do, the more confident we become."

She explains another way to educate others about agriculture is bringing the My American Farm Game into schools. "I teach music at the Alder School and do a Farm Bureau Ag Day event there. My American Farm can be matched to the grade kids are in and everyone really enjoys playing it."

As an FFA Alumni, she has been visiting with the school FFA advisor about the ag safety program. "There are many opportunities to unite with other groups and make safety presentations engaging. We're hoping to get the FFA kids to run the farm safety program," Rhonda says.

In addition, Southwest Counties hosts a policy meeting luncheon which is great to watch policy come from the grass roots. What Rhonda is most impressed with? "You can be on the delegate floor at our MFBF Convention and remember when you and four other people at a county meeting drafted that policy."



Rhonda Boyd, District 2, Southwest Counties
(Silver Bow, Jefferson, Madison, Granite, Beaverhead)



Cindy Denning: Living the life of leadership

BY REBECCA COLNAR

Farm Bureau often gives “leadership development” as one of the many benefits of membership. Certainly, Cindy Denning demonstrates how one can advance in Farm Bureau just by getting involved. She and her husband, Riley, thought they’d look into Farm Bureau after neighbor Teresa Gannon urged them to check out the Young Farmers and Ranchers program and attend a Montana Farm Bureau Annual Convention.

“We got involved with YF&R for two years, and then we aged out,” explains Cindy. “I remember the first time I was trying to figure out how policy development worked. It was interesting. We got too busy to be very involved once our three sons became active in sports. We spent a lot of hours on the bleachers! However, in 2012 we ran into someone from Cascade County Farm Bureau who was looking for a board member. Riley was elected, and then I went on as county secretary.”

“I learned so much about leadership, advocacy and communication skills in REAL Montana. It opened my eyes about what to do to make a difference and how to learn.”

While secretary, Cindy became a district chair of the MFBF Women’s Leadership Committee and attended the AFBF Women’s Leadership Conference in 2013 in Las Vegas. Realizing the importance of getting involved, she applied for REAL (Resource Education Agriculture Leadership) Montana, Class One in 2013.

“I learned so much about leadership, advocacy and communication skills in

Cindy Denning at the Great Wall of China during the REAL Montana international trip.



REAL Montana,” Cindy says. “It opened my eyes about what to do to make a difference and how to learn. I was in the class with 19 different people, plus sponsors. When I started the class, I had no idea how to lobby or testify or do interviews with the media. Now I feel more confident doing that.”

In 2016, the Montana Farm Bureau District 8 Director position became open when Ed Bandel of Floweree termed out. District 8 includes Cascade, Chouteau and Hill/Liberty/Blaine County Farm Bureaus. “I thought about all the training I had to be a leader, and saw this position as a good fit. I really am enjoying the experience and being part of the decision-making process of the board.”

Being a leader in agriculture was not something Cindy had in mind when she was growing up in Black Eagle outside of Great Falls. “My dad was a detective for the Sheriff’s Department and my grandparents owned a floral shop. I would sometime help them, which gave me an appreciation of horticulture. I really liked the western way of life. I married Riley who had a ranch under Square Butte, south of Fort Shaw. Square Butte was often the backdrop for many of Charlie Russell’s paintings.”

Cindy admits she has had “thirty years of on-the-job training” in agriculture. The couple stays busy raising Black Angus

cattle and growing hay and wheat, while contracting with Miller/Coors for malt barley. “When we first got married, I was the hired man,” she chuckles. In addition to ranching, the Dennings own a small construction/excavating company. Cindy handles the books for the ranch and the construction company, and will always pitch in when needed, whether it’s driving a grain truck or flagging a road project.

What the busy lady likes most about Farm Bureau is the grassroots aspect. “The people who run it are the people who do it,” she says. “We have a huge job feeding the world. Farm Bureau is a leader in helping its members in doing that, so I feel we are heading in the right direction.”

Cascade County has a diverse group of farmers and ranchers, from conventional to organic. “I believe the membership focus of the Montana Farm Bureau board should be to include everybody in all areas of agriculture,” Cindy says.

The Dennings’ sons, ages 28, 26 and 25, want to stay involved in agriculture. Her eldest likes the construction side of the business, with her middle son working with the cows and her youngest handling other aspects, such as irrigation.

If she ever gets free time, Cindy enjoys traveling and quilting, although “it seems I do a lot more collecting fabric than sewing.”



Creative markets for local meats

BY REBECCA COLNAR

Interested in getting your agricultural product directly into the hands of consumers? Sometimes it's simple, sometimes it's more work than you'd think, as Sara Hollenbeck discovered when she was thinking of ways to market lamb from the Hollenbeck Ranch.

"I'm from California, and have experience with customers in restaurants always wanting to know where their food comes from. Menus always list who the rancher or farmer is for that item on the menu," says Hollenbeck who ranches with her husband, Henry, near Molt, MT. "I really believe the local foods trends are going to stay around. When I first married Henry, I was on the ranch and wanted a project, so concentrated on niche marketing. I attended Women Stepping Forward for Agriculture, and there was a chef giving a presentation on local foods. Somebody asked what he thinks is the



best way to get your agricultural product in a restaurant and he said, 'Just talk to me.' I went home, made a brochure and told my husband I was going to sell lamb."

Hollenbeck went back to that chef at the

restaurant, who agreed to take a lamb or two each week. "I'm not really into sales, but when it's your own product you're proud of, it's different. I asked myself how to get lamb into people's diets? Most

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PRODUCER TIPS:

If you think you want to sell your product direct to consumers, just try it. My start-up costs were next to nothing. Feel the market out, talk to restaurants, talk to friends if they're interested in buying a product. If your community has a good farmers' market, that helps. The greatest challenge is the lack of processors and lack of space. Having a good relationship with your processor is a big component.

people didn't want a whole carcass, so I had to develop a new idea."

High Five Meats was born. "I talked to my neighbors who had pigs. We had cattle and sheep. I developed packages that had some beef, pork and a small amount of lamb. I started going to farmers' markets in Billings. In addition, I thought about lamb products that were easy to cook and people could enjoy, so we started with lamb brats and sausages."

The enterprising young woman discovered that customers at farmers markets don't want to carry around a 30-pound bag of meat. "The big learning

curve for me is that people don't eat as much meat as we do on our ranch. Many of them don't own deep freezers. I was trying to figure out a good balance of the amount of meat someone will go through, whether it's a single person or small family. I developed the idea of the combination package which I change each week. I sell the lamb sausage separately."

In the first few farmers' markets, she sold 50 packs of brats and 10 combination packs. "The combo packs are high-dollar items," Hollenbeck says. "However, people have told their friends about our products and we now have increased sales. I found

a commercial freezer storage in Billings that allows me to keep stock all year. I do Facebook marketing, some direct mail pieces and advertise in local magazines."

She admits lamb sausage is expensive to have made because the processors charge the rancher what they would charge a hunter. "We're trying to make it work and put certain lambs towards sausage or brats."

Finding a processor takes time, and High Five Meats uses three: Project Meats in Huntley, C&K Meats in Forsyth and Stillwater Packing in Columbus.

The farmers market is not only a time to sell product but is a time to educate consumers. "People will stop at our booth and ask how the meat is finished. Is it grain fed or grass fed? I've found people actually don't have a preference, but they feel this is a way to connect. We explain that we don't have grass fed beef, and talk about how we finish our beef. People want to engage with you. It's up to us as farmers and ranchers to educate them."



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Montana on Fire: The Awful Summer of 2017

BY REBECCA COLNAR

Editors Note:

Writing a story about fires this summer in Montana proved challenging. Most of the state either had burned, was burning or might burn. North to south, east to west, look on the Montana fire map and blazes were abundant. It was difficult to decide who to interview. Ostensibly, one could drive around the state for a month or two, talking to Farm Bureau members affected by the fires of 2017. Instead of doing a "Producer Profiles" in this issue, I opted to get first-hand stories of producers affected by the fires. If I didn't visit about "your fire" for this issue it certainly wasn't from any disregard. Some of the urgency of the earlier fires were shadowed by the larger and newer fires—not that anyone's loss has been forgotten.

One regular theme from my visits with ranchers was regarding the extreme conditions. The fires this summer were the result of a wet fall followed by no moisture as spring heated up into summer. This was followed by an extremely hot summer with high winds and storms. Conditions were ripe for fires. I heard the fires were erratic; successful fire-fighting techniques often didn't work. There was some grumbling about federal bureaucracy and there was extreme anxiety in some cases where communication systems didn't work, thus

adding more problems to a tense situation.

However, the most common comment was awe and thankfulness for neighbors and friends who came with everything they could muster: bulldozers, spray rigs, tractors with discs, trailers, shovels, know-how and, yes, sandwiches, handwipes and water. This appreciation was followed by additional gratitude for the kindness of strangers, everything from donated hay to fencing supplies to other ranchers opening their pastures and corrals to outside livestock. I heard of a woman from Kansas who had lost much in the Kansas fires but sent a large check. She had received help from Montana ranchers during those trying times and understood how help of any kind is needed. Kids from 4-H clubs donated the proceeds from their sale animals to ranchers hurt by the fires. FFA chapters sent hay. Many small towns had fund drives; the Melstone Café (population 107) drummed up \$6,000 to help those affect by the Lodgepole Complex Fire. The list goes on and on of individuals, organizations and businesses who selflessly donated equipment, feed, supplies, money and time.

I visited with MFBF District 3 Director Jennifer Bergin of Melstone who own Foster Farms Feedlot with her family. "The idea of opening the feedlot to ranchers

who had lost grazing started because we knew people in the area and they needed a spot. We're right by the Musselshell River, and we flooded terribly in 2011. People helped us then," Bergin said. "Neighbors help neighbors. With this fire, we felt we could offer the availability of a place for people to put cattle, and we have an easy place to drive in and drop off cattle and hay. We have a scale, so it makes weighing hay very easy."

To date, 19 tractor trailer loads of hay (some are doubles) and a truckload of fencing supplies have come in. "We had one man donate grass hay bales when he heard we had horses in the feedlot. Some producers from Texas and Kansas donated their leftover supplies of what they received during their fires to these Montana ranchers. They understand what it's like," she added.

Farm Bureau members have headed into the burned areas to help, others have donated cash or feed. Many have trucked cattle at no cost. Several retailers, like Agri-Best Feeds and Western Ranch Supply, to name a few, provided steep discounts on feed and supplies for those affected by the drought and fire.

"The ag community is incredible," Bergin said. "They truly believe in paying it forward."

Bill Harris, Winnett
Lodgepole Complex – 270,723 acres

The Lodgepole Complex fire burned more than 270,000 acres or about 400 square miles. It left 40 – 50 ranches burned out in its path.

"2017 was the driest summer on record for Garfield County and the lower Musselshell River. During the night prior to August 19, we experienced a very hot dry lightning storm. The lightning started several fires in Petroleum and Garfield Counties. The Musselshell River divides the two counties. The Harris ranch lies in both counties, nearly equally divided on each side of the river. Twenty miles North of highway 200, on the Old Stage Road.

"Two of the fires started by the dry lightning were on our ranch. One in Petroleum County, and one in Garfield County. Since both were on summer range we had livestock in danger in front of both fires. My son Destry, with the help of neighbors, moved the cattle ahead of the Petroleum County fire and brought them to the corral. We fed them in the corral for a week before returning them to pasture. The fire was eventually contained.

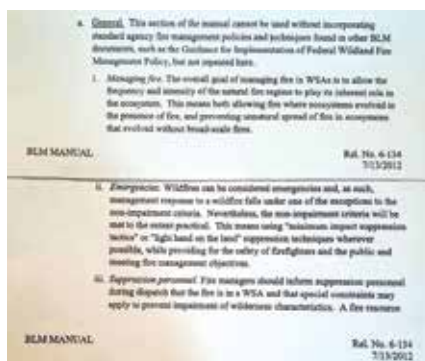
"The fire in Garfield Country was a completely different story. It started in Sandage Coulee. Sandage Coulee is well inside the boundaries of a Wilderness Study Area, also referred to as WSAs. Wilderness Study Areas were established more than 50 years ago. They have no vehicle access, very light grazing, no water established for livestock and very strict rules that apply to fire management. They have had no timber management, resulting in a much-exaggerated supply of fuel waiting for a fire.

"No attempt to put out the fire was made until it burned near the WSA boundary. By the time it burned to the boundary the fire was a least a mile wide. There were a few retardant drops from the air but even though it knocked the fire down slightly, there were not enough firefighters on the ground to put it out. With a fairly strong northwest wind, the fire expanded and grew into an inferno that spread ten miles wide, jumped the highway, then burned nearly to Ingomar. This all took place in a three-day span.

"Meanwhile the fire crept slowly to



Bill Harris



the north, burning up the north side of Sandage Coulee. We were busy fighting fire where we could, and gathering cattle. We found all of the yearling heifers (about 100) and more than half of the cows and calves (about 80 pair). We saw next to no firefighters on the north side for three days. When a vehicle came through that were either BLM or State, we stopped them and urged them to do something about the fire burning north out of Sandage Coulee. It seemed like we were being ignored. I knew if it burned over the ridge into the head of Smith Coulee they wouldn't be able to stop it if the wind switched to the south or southeast. Like clockwork on the third day, the firefighters arrived as the fire burned across Smith Coulee. The wind switched to the south. The BLM fire crew tried to make a stand on the North boundary of the Wilderness Study Area. The fire blew by them very fast. It grew into an inferno rapidly. It was unstoppable. It burned for two more days. It burned clear to Fort Peck Lake, consuming several more ranches.

"Even though about 30 pair of cattle were in the path of the fire, we only know of one calf lost. The horses didn't fare so well. We lost three spring colts in the fire and had to put a fourth one down because its front legs were burned beyond repair.



The Harris horses in the feedlot.



We are still missing one mare and colt and two cows and calves, but they may still show up.

"I know that fire conditions were very high. I'm certainly not pointing blame in anyone's direction, but I am pointing out circumstances around a Wilderness Study Area that complicates range fire management. I am including from the WSA management manual, BLM, and the rules that have to be followed for managing fires and handling wildfire emergencies. You will see why a firefighter team leader waits until a fire burns out of a WSA before they attempt to put out the fire. This creates a very serious danger for the people living anywhere near a WSA. The Lodgepole Complex Fire is a very good example. Similar circumstances are replicated in many of the other fires in the state. Wilderness Study Areas serve no good purpose and only put lives and property at risk."

Travis Brown, LO Cattle Company, Sand Springs, MT
Lodgepole Complex Fire - 270,723 acres

Anyone who has a fire remembers it well. "We had gone to a neighbor's ranch for two days to help them fight the fire. Once it rolled out of the timber, it headed towards our ranch. The fire started 10 miles north of our place in the morning and by the time it was evening, it was south of us. There were very hot temperatures, no humidity and a lot of wind. We have four permanent residences on the property and the fire got about 30 feet away from one and about a half mile from the others. That was way too close."

"Once it became apparent we weren't able to stop the fire, we started moving cattle. Then when it became apparent horses were in danger, we started moving them. When you're fighting a fire, you're always trying to think ahead and plan how to stop it. This fire was different. We've never had a fire really jump the county road. After it did that, then we had to figure out what is next, how will we stop it at the creek; next, how will we stop it at the highway? It crossed the highway, so then we had to plan how to protect

the buildings. While you're fighting it, you try very hard to know where everyone is to make sure none of the neighbors are in danger and everyone is safe. What I remember most was asking where everyone was and our next plan of action."

"We lost between a third and a half of grazing on the ranch. We're going to have to make dramatic changes in our management. We have talked to the National Resource Conservation Service about how our grazing had been hurt, and we talked to animal health specialists about what to look for in our cows if they have any problems. We talked to other ranchers to ask what we should do next—where should we take our cows, what should we feed them? We lost our normal calving pasture along with some winter and summer grazing."

"That first week after the fire, we just tried to find the cows and get them accounted for. We had to euthanize two

bulls. We had already purchased most of our hay already for the winter. I really feel for ranchers who lost haystacks. We weaned earlier than usual to reduce forage use and the calves are in a feedlot. That will be increased expense this year, but at least that means better feed for the calves. We're hoping the mid-September moisture will get some grass to grow back and get some cover on the scorched earth so it doesn't blow around this winter. Right now, the cows are out of the burned area, but we're short on pasture and feed. We are still trying to decide whether to sell cows or lease additional pasture."

"I am proud of the place we live in, to have neighbors who helped us when we needed it. I'm proud to have talked to inspiring people who have dealt with fires on ranches and talked us through it. It makes you humble and thankful people are as giving and caring as they are."



Abby Hall, Havre
East Fork Fire - 21,896 acres

Letter to her family

The girls and I had gone home to Winifred to visit family and attend a wedding of friends. Mike stayed home to get some work done at the ranch. On our way back to Havre on Sunday afternoon August 27, several text messages came across my phone regarding a fire in the Bears Paw Mountains and help was needed. I called Mike to see if he had received those messages. We ended our call and he called Bear Paw Volunteer Fire Department Dispatch to get more information. Mike called me back and said he was headed to the fire.

Sunday night through Tuesday night: There was no doubt the fire was growing but not by an alarming amount. Resources included local farmers, ranchers, and their friends as well as the Bear Paw Volunteer



Fire Department (BPVFD) and Chippewa-Cree Tribe were working at getting some lines built around the fire and getting the fire contained. On Tuesday Mike and I headed to the fire. Mike fought fire then recovered a broken down BPVFD truck. I was helping with dispatch on the south side of the fire and keeping track of resources as communications were very difficult. Mike nor I got home until 11:30 p.m. Tuesday night. Daycare graciously kept our two girls that night, which shows just how much everyone in a community comes together



and helps out in a time of need.

Wednesday - Friday: Wednesday morning I headed to work, stopping by daycare to check on the girls, and Mike headed to the ranch. By 9 a.m. things were changing and I was called to help with communications and accountability of personnel and resources. Shortly after I was called, I put in a call to Mike for him to help with fighting fire. Mike loaded up our UTV and headed to the Bears Paw Mountains. On my way to the fire, I stopped by a local church where a couple wonderful gals were gathering all sorts of

donated food, water, and other necessities to send to the individuals helping with the fire. (Note: One of these wonderful gals was Casey Peterson Solomon who later had to move their cattle out of harm's way.)

The next hours/days after that are indescribable, one "big giant" (in the words of our oldest daughter) adrenaline rush. I spent too many hours without seeing or hearing from Mike or sleeping in my own bed. That whole time Mike was fighting fire hard and fast without sleep or food. It was not just Mike and I, but everyone. There were about 36-48 hours of fire chaos where everyone was giving their all to fight the fire beast in any way they knew possible. It was in this timeframe where the fire made two large runs; one to the north and another to the east, consuming thousands of acres in each run and ignoring dozer lines. I was at a location on the southern access point to the fire at BPVFD Truck #13 trying to provide some radio communications and accountability of resources. Mike was somewhere on the north end leading dozers to locations for putting in containment lines and fighting fire.

My sister, parents and the girls' daycare were taking care of our children

so we knew they were in great hands. Occasionally I spoke with my boss to let her know I was okay and not coming to work. Mike fought fire and landed home occasionally to shower and nap before heading back out. What some people don't understand about fire is that it does not rest, so you need to keep working as long as the fire is working – day and night.

I was told about a fire break line which was four dozer lines wide, with flames 100 feet tall the fire blew across the line like it was nothing. People were smart and evacuated themselves from harm's way...a line of 25 plus vehicles came out of the fire at the point where I was located.

I was told of another story where a ATV/UTV broke down with two people in it. A nearby dozer operator dozed a safe zone, parked inside with incapacitated ATV/UTV and rode out the firestorm, saving all three people.

Nearly 20,000 acres burned with the majority being on private land, but also including Beaver Creek Park, BLM, State and Chippewa-Cree Tribal Land. Several of our friends and neighbors lost their entire summer/fall grass. A few cabins were lost in Beaver Creek Park but thanks to the

tremendous efforts of the fire fighters, no permanent residences burned. People came together to move cattle and livestock out of harm's way. Others kept the hard-working fire fighters hydrated and fed. In numerous places the fire came right down to ranches, but hard work and prayer kept the flames from reaching the homes.

By the end of Labor Day Mike and I were done at the fire and needed to get back to "regular" work. We were on call for the BPVFD and lots of other people stepped up to take some of the around-the-clock shifts of fire patrol and fighting. The following Friday one large flare-up occurred consuming another 300-400 acres but fast community response kept it to a minimum. The next weekend possessed much cooler weather and a little rain proving Mother Nature can fight fire in a much larger way than all of the manpower we had accumulated on the East Fork Fire. The rain and cooler weather did not dampen the spirits of the Havre Festival Days Parade watchers and participants. BPVFD and many other East Fork Fire helpers had their trucks in the parade with Thank You Havre and Hi-Line Community signs and it was well received by all.

Casey Solomon, Havre East Fork Fire, 21,896 acres

Getting the call that a wildfire is heading towards your cattle is a scary one. The East Fork fire had been burning for two days in the Bears Paw Mountain when Casey Solomon and her husband, Chancin, received word the fire had the potential to reach their summer pasture and family's cattle.

"There were ranchers on the front line of that fire, and they knew the location of everyone's cows. I had two good friends, one dispatching and one fighting the fire, and they had said they'd call me if the fire got erratic. When we got the call that our cows, along with another rancher's, needed to be moved, we started calling friends and neighbors to come ride. Within an hour there were over a dozen riders on their way to help. We headed out on horseback with two scouts on ATVs to gather the two bunches of cows. Dispatch had our phone numbers so they could call us if



the fire broke out of the fire line, but the cell service was poor back in the pasture where we were. We could see smoke and that it was big and close. One of the planes fighting fire ended up signaling us by flying down close over us. We saw the fire crews working as we finally got the last of the

cows together and through the gate. We later found out that the fire actually blew through two fire lines in the pasture south of us while we were moving the cattle. We were able to get to the home place of the owner of our pasture lease, where we had a better view and could load our cows if necessary. I'm not sure how many hours elapsed while we were getting the cows moved, but we started moving them late afternoon and by that evening the pasture where they had been was all burned. My husband and others stayed with the cows that night, ready to open gates or cut fences if need be."

"As we rode that day, my family started calling neighbors and friends for trailers to help us move the cattle home. I got home that night at 11 pm, after moving the cows down and my dad called to say he had 11 trailers and two semis lined up to help us move cows out the next morning."

"We can't say enough for the people who came to help. It was incredible. It's unbelievable how everybody banded together to fight the fire and assist each other. This is an amazing community."

Fritz Zook, Zook Ranch, Volborg
Red Butte, 700 acres | Sartin Draw – 99,735

// Mother Nature often doesn't do things gently," notes rancher Fritz Zook, looking at a large burned area on his ranch. The Zook ranch lies out 12 miles northwest of Volberg. "Fire is like water. Under control it's an amazing tool. Out of control, it's very dangerous."

"We were preg-testing cows at the ranch, and my brother came running in and said 'Fritz, you're on fire!'. I looked at my clothes and said, 'Me?' I couldn't see that I was on fire," Fritz remembers.

Then he yelled, "Your place is on fire. There's a fire to the north!"

Everyone dropped what they were doing and headed out. The area has already been through 30-plus fires including the huge Sartin Draw fire two miles west of Zook's; the community was on high alert which resulted in the fast response when Zook's pasture went up in flames. The area is timbered and hilly with open meadows. Neighbors showed up with bulldozers and spraying rigs and a tractor with a disc.

Zook and his neighbors thought they'd stop it at the bottom of the creek when it went north, but the fire had other ideas and took off, resulting in the DNRC, BLM, Forest Service and the Miles City Volunteer Firefighters personnel adding to the crew, including air support.

"The fire acted strangely," Zook recalls. There was one time at ground level it started spinning like a top and hissing like a snake, a couple dozen feet long! At one point, when they hit the fire with water from helicopter, it came boiling out of the trees."

The October 2016 rain led to a lot of growth; the 2017 summer turned very hot, which resulted in a heavy fuel load that dried out. "We started into this fire season already in a bad drought, in fact it's the third driest year since keeping records on it," Zook noted. "We are very fortunate the prompt action of so many got this fire stopped. The Sartin Draw fire on the west end of my property burned 109,000 acres in three days; south of us was the 1,100-acre Basin Creek Fire. Twenty miles east was the Maxwell Butte and the Snake Fires. I believe we had 30 fires in this neighborhood. Many ranchers lost their fall and winter pastures, which



Fritz Zook expresses amazement that the fire mineral feeder was unscathed.

means they'll have to make some tough management decisions, such as whether to feed hay early, put the animals in feedlots or sell some cattle."

Zook points to an area that was minimally affected by the fire. "My neighbor has been doing controlled burning and logging. It's interesting to see how the fire slowed there. I've found where cattle had been grazing, it was easy to stop the fire with just a sprayer."

"We were very blessed with the incredible turnout of agencies, family, friends and neighbors. We have the greatest neighborhood in the world. It's very humbling. Two days after the fire here, we had people from as far away as Washington and Nebraska sending us fencing supplies. We sent that on to neighbors who had catastrophic losses of winter pasture and fence. We've received donated hay. There was so much generosity during the fires, too. People sent toiletries, toothpaste, sandwiches, bottled water and Gatorade

to the all of us fighting the fire. When you're on a 99,000-acre fire, you might get home every three days. I have to say the occasional friendly text or kind word really provided emotional support, more than I ever thought."

Looking at the burned land, Fritz sees the positive. "This land will heal more quickly than you'd expect if we just get a little rain. Fire is all part of the nature's cycle. As humans, we've been suppressing fire for more than 120 years. Fire is nature's way to recycle the minerals in soil. Proper grazing will help stimulate the regrowth. We are seeing some green in the black after those rains in mid-September."

Zook offers advice during fire season:

- Be prepared. You think you are, but you're probably not.
- Have equipment ready to go. Minutes means acres.
- Put fire guards around buildings and storage tanks; anything of value to you.
- Give fire maps to agency personnel so they know where they are.
- Mark gates. Your close neighbors might know the name of a ridge, but having the gates numbered will help when directing people.
- If you're not directly involved with fighting the fire, please stay away as onlookers can become a hazard.

Lillian Ostendorf A bird's eye view on firewatch

City folks don't necessarily realize what's going on during summer thunderstorms in Montana's rural landscape. Ranchers are driving around with spray rigs in the back of their flatbeds, old pumper trucks are casing the area, people are watching lightening strikes and radar on their computers. Others find high vantage points to watch. Meanwhile, ranchers with road graders and tractors with blades or discs wait for the call to create fire lines that may prevent the blaze from spreading.

"In the bad drought and fire year of 1996, our ranch was completely burned out," explains Lillian Ostendorf from Powderville. "Mom and Dad's place was five miles away so we didn't think that would burn, and it

did. That all happened in one night. It was a lot like this year with early rain that made great summer grass, but then summer turned hot and dry and you had a big fuel load that would easily go up in flames."

When a lightning storm is imminent, Lillian drives up to sit on their hill. "It's a pretty steep climb so I'm up there fairly high and I have a good view. I can see my neighbors on their hill 10 miles away. Early detection is the key to stopping the spread of fire."

She explains when she started fire watch 10 years ago, there was no cell service. "We used to sit there with our bag phone trying to read phone numbers for neighbors in the dark. Now it's much easier as we have everyone's number in our cell phones—which actually work here. We watch the lightning map and when we see a strike, we look for the glow and if we see one, start calling the neighbors. This is what we all do to keep ahead of the fire."

John Bailey

Coal seams: A different kind of fire

In 2011, the rains came down in eastern Montana which not only grew amazing ground cover but also caused landslides. Those landslides exposed layers of coal contained underground. Then a huge fire swept across southeastern Montana burning more than 300,000 acres in 2012, setting coal seams on fire. The range fires are out, but the coal is still burning.

"Many of them are down in the ground and as they burn, the ground sloughs away," explains John Bailey, of the Bailey Ranch near Lame Deer. The Bailey Ranch lost most of its grazing in 2012. "What's most worrisome about coal seam fires is they can come up anytime. I've fought them in the snow. I think I was on 25 fires this summer – I've lost count—but at least 20 of those were coal seam fires. Some of those seams can be a foot thick, others might be 10 feet thick, and they burn."

Water won't extinguish them; in fact, it can cause them to flash steam and cause an explosion. In addition, they can be treacherous to firefighters since often the burn will cause an unseen hole.

"They burn and then make the ground very unstable. I dropped a fire truck into one of the holes!" Bailey remembers.

The rancher admits although the coal seams are everywhere in that part of Montana, their ranch especially seems to be plagued by them. "The only way you could eliminate them is to dig the whole way around the burning area and refill them with clean dirt. But because the terrain is very steep, it's extremely challenging. It would be an enormous project to dig them out and clean them up."

Rosebud County tried to conduct a thermal mapping project two winters

ago, which failed. "They couldn't get any images, and concluded the coal seams fires were out. But we've had dozens burning since that. The 2017 summer is the worst summer we've had with them since 2012. I've calculated that we've lost a month of ranch work just fighting these fires."

The Baileys have been trying to find known seams and put guards around them which is currently their most effective method to keep them under control and prevent injuries to humans or animals.

"In most of the areas, the landowners don't own the coal—generally it's the Bureau of Land Management or the railroad, and they don't appear to be interested in working on them," Bailey says. "The worst thing is these fires come up whenever. You have to be constantly watching."



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Shirley Skinner

Facebook post of Shirley Skinner, July 22, 2017

As I was out capturing this amazing sun tonight, I had some thoughts on the life of a rancher. The sun was sinking, the smoke was lying heavy across the sky, and the devastation left by the fires lay heavy on the hearts of the ranchers, the true stewards of this land they love. For most of them, they were born with ranching and the love of the land in their blood; land that has passed from generation to generation. Some people see the rancher as a land grabbing, hard-hearted bunch. Those people have never seen, as I have, a grown man quickly wipe away a tear as they watch the land they love burn; they have never seen those grown men gently cradle a newborn calf that he just dug out of a snowbank in his arms and bring it to his house to warm up; they have never witnessed him refusing to ship an old ranch horse to the sale because they were partners and

best friends for many years— you retire them to the good life. You may have seen but not understood those odd spots in the middle of a hay field and wonder what that rancher was thinking to have missed that particular patch of hay, never knowing it was because of a nest of baby pheasants or a newborn fawn. Maybe you have never seen him when it comes time to sell his calves, walking along the fence talking to them because they recognized him and came running over to him in the sale yard and he has a sad look in his eye.

You are probably unaware that not only does he work from sunup to sundown on his ranch, he also gets called away to work long, thankless, dirty, hot hours putting out not only his fires but also lending a hand to neighbors on their fires. Sometimes they run on two hours of sleep in a 48- hour period. Sometimes less. You have probably not witnessed him on horseback, pausing to take off his hat and look toward the sky, giving thanks to God that this is the life he has chosen to live. Say a prayer for them tonight.



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BNSF RAILWAY

Lina Moore, Angela
Crow Rock Fire – 8,500 acres

Early blazes that “start” the fire season almost always take people unawares. On July 7, a fire started 25 miles north of Miles City near Angela. It had been a hot, dry summer with only 3.33 inches of rain so when the fire took off, it burned hot and fast—1,000 acres in an hour. Even the droughted out grass couldn’t stop the speed of the blaze.

“It first started north of here, but then was heading very quickly for our barn and our house,” remembers Lina Moore who, with her husband, Dan, own the Willow Creek Cattle Company. As the fire approached, they began moving cows, evacuating their home, and hauling out their horses.

Two bombers came out of Billings, and the Montana Department of Natural Resources (DNRC) fire crews were on the scene, along with the Custer County Fire Department, neighbors and friends. While the fire crews left after 24 hours on the scene, neighbors spent the night putting out hotspots. In the end, 8500 acres of rangeland burned. Two nights later, it



started again, with Lina and Dan and once again many neighbors rushing to stop its spread.

Neighbors lost many sheep (some were put down because of smoke inhalation) and the Moore’s saw a coyote with only three legs; one had been burned off in the fire.

Lina regrets the toll fire takes on wildlife. “There are a lot of fowl displaced and the antelope lost forage as well as their breeding area.”

She lists how their ranch was hurt by the fire. “Our hay ground all burned, and

the person who leases grass from us now can’t be here. We had to wean our calves early, and our yearling heifers went to the feedlot. This means they won’t be home learning to be cows when it comes time to calve. We can’t use our Block Management (for hunters) either. Because we’re close to a well-maintained gravel road, we were handicapped accessible for people wanting to hunt. We’ve lost that opportunity as well.”

Not only did their ranch lose a well and two stock tanks, it lost pieces of history with the destruction of four homesteads and old wagons.

Lina provided tips for those not involved in the fire. “Don’t spectate and don’t flick cigarette butts out the window. Don’t pull over on the side of the road into the grass with a gas engine,” she admonishes.

Even with the loss comes hope and appreciation for neighbors and those who showed up to fight the fire including the Custer County Road Crew and Fire Department. The power company quickly replaced power poles.

“We’re so thankful to be in a community where neighbors from as far as 40 miles away showed up. We will just pick up the pieces and put it back together.”



98th Montana Farm Bureau Annual Convention & Trade Show



November 12-15, 2017
Northern and DoubleTree Hotels
Billings, MT

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

Schedule of Events

Sunday, November 12

11-12:30pm	Promotion & Education Committee Mtg
1-3pm	Women's Leadership Committee Mtg
1:30-3pm	Commodity Advisory Committee Mtgs
3pm	MFBF Board of Directors Meeting
3:30-5pm	Commodity Advisory Committee Mtgs
4-7pm	Registration Open <i>Northern Hotel</i>
4:30-5:30pm	Ag Safety Training
7:00pm	Vespers Service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Message by Tim Moullet • Entertainment by Orvin Solberg

Monday, November 13

6:45am	Century Club Members Only Breakfast <i>Keynote: U.S. Secretary of the Interior, Ryan Zinke (invited)</i>
7:30-6pm	Registration & Trade Show Open <i>DoubleTree Hotel</i>
8:00am	Opening General Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of Colors • National Anthem • President's Address • Keynote: Dr. Garry Lacefield, Professor Emeritus, University of Kentucky
9:10-10:30am	Workshops <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Purchasing Preparedness for Beginning Farmers - <i>Colter DeVries, Bo Kombol & Kelsey Rhinehart, NWFCS and Bruce Johnson, FSA</i> • Women's Health on the Farm - <i>Carolyn Sheridan, Agrisafe</i> • Review of Plan to Complete Water Adjudication and Exempt from Filing Rights - <i>Julie Brown and Maddie Weisz, Montana Water Court</i> • Making the Pitch: Recruiting with Passion - <i>Melanie Swartz, Big Sky EDA & Tyler Wiltgen, Billings Clinic Found.</i>
9:10-11am	YF&R Committee Meeting
10:30-11am	Coffee Break
11:00am	Audit Report
11:15am	Open Resolutions Session

12-1:15pm Lunch hosted by YF&R Committee
Keynote: Gary Brester, MSU

1:15-2:30pm YF&R Discussion Meet - Round 1

1:15-2:30pm Workshops

- Telling Your Ag Story Panel - *Jennifer Bergin, Rhonda Boyd and Scott Blain*
- Agriculture and Mental Health - *Brenda Roche, Billings Clinic*
- Leadership in Ag - *Lindsay Calvert, American Farm Bureau*

2:30pm Ice Cream Social

3-5pm District Caucuses

5:30pm YF&R Discussion Meet - Final Round

6pm MFBF Social

7pm YF&R Social & Dinner

Tuesday, November 14

6:45am Presidents & Secretaries Breakfast

8am General Session

- Insurance Report
- Exec Vice President's Address
- Roll Call of Delegates
- Credentials Committee Report
- Nominating Committee Report and Introductions

10:30am Resolutions Session

11:45am-1pm Lunch hosted by Women's Committee
Keynote: TBA

1-5pm Resolutions Session continues

5:30pm MSU Alumni/College of Ag Social

6:00pm MFBF Social

7:00pm Awards Banquet

9:00pm Entertainment: Jolene Brown

Wednesday, November 15

8:00am Resolutions Session

The Board of Directors will meet immediately following the resolutions session.

98th MFBF Annual Convention

REGISTRATION FORM

November 12-15 * Northern & DoubleTree Hotels * Billings

DUE NOVEMBER 3

PLEASE PRINT NAME(S) AS YOU WANT THEM TO APPEAR ON NAME BADGE(S):

NAME: _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____ COUNTY: _____

E-MAIL: _____ PHONE: _____

☐ Voting Delegate

☐ Alternate

☐ Member

☐ Guest

REGISTRATION AND MEALS

Registration Fee (required to attend all events) \$40 x _____ = \$ _____

Monday Lunch (Dr. Gary Brester, MSU) \$20 x _____ = \$ _____

Tuesday Lunch (TBA) \$20 x _____ = \$ _____

Tuesday Dinner & Awards Banquet (Jolene Brown) \$40 x _____ = \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

PAYMENT

_____ Check Enclosed (payable to MFBF)

_____ You can register online with
a credit card at www.mfbf.org.

LODGING INFORMATION

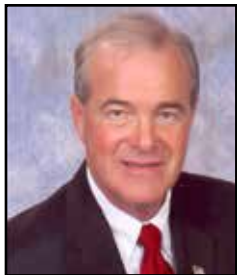
Attendees are responsible for making their own room reservations. Call the Northern Hotel at (406) 867-6767 or for overflow, contact the DoubleTree Hotel at (406) 238-4302 and request the MFBF room block for special conference rates. Be sure to book your room by **October 23!**

Please return registration form by November 3 to:

Montana Farm Bureau Federation, 502 S. 19th Ave, Ste 104, Bozeman, MT 59718 or fax (406) 587-0319
Call the MFBF office at (406) 587-3153 or e-mail info@mfbf.org with questions.

Convention Highlights!

Gratitude and Patriotism



Dr. Garry Lacefield, Professor Emeritus, University of Kentucky will focus on seven major areas that he along with many Americans take for granted. Food, Farmers, Family, Friends, Faith, Freedom and Country. Join us on Monday morning to hear his inspiring message and be

reminded of all the things we have to be thankful for. Garry is a native of McHenry, Kentucky and grew up on a crop-livestock farm.

Comparing U.S. and EU Crop Yields: The Effects of the EU Ban on GM Technologies

Dr. Gary Brester is Professor Emeritus in the Dept. of Agricultural Economics and Economics at MSU. He was raised on an irrigated sugar beet and malting barley farm near Laurel. Over 90% of U.S. corn, cotton, and soybeans are planted with genetically-modified (GM) seed varieties. Recently, several authors have claimed that yield trends have not differed between the U.S. and the EU even though the latter has banned GM technologies. Dr. Brester will discuss the results of his research that show evidence to the contrary. Don't miss Monday lunch and the always entertaining Dr. Brester!



Polaris Ranger Up For Grabs

Polaris and the Young Farmer & Rancher Committee are upping the ante again this year! The winner of the 2017 MFBF Discussion Meet will take home a brand new Polaris Ranger 570 plus an expense paid trip to Nashville, TN to compete in the national YF&R Discussion Meet. All voting members ages 18-35 are eligible to compete for this amazing prize package.

Encourage members from your area to attend the convention on Monday, November 13 for a great day of events for YF&R-aged members. For more information contact, Sue Ann at sueanns@mbf.org.



"It's a Jungle Out There"

Jolene Brown will entertain the crowd with humor and insight. They're lurking in the jungle... regulations, consumer demands, competitive markets and more! It's time we blaze a new trail because the pace, the people, the process and the products for agriculture have all changed. Have we? During this fun-filled presentation, we'll learn the value of what we do is in the eye of the purchaser, not the producer. With lots of humor, real life stories, and a celebration of your hard work through Farm Bureau, we'll laugh and discover the joys of blazing trails in agriculture's "jungle!"



Take in the Trade Show

Don't miss this unique opportunity to get one-on-one face time with the over 25 ag-related businesses and government agencies on hand to talk to Montana Farm Bureau members. The trade show opens on Monday morning and will run through Tuesday afternoon. Take time out of each coffee break and social hour to learn more about the businesses that came to support our convention. Don't forget to check out the equipment parked outside as well!

See you there!

County Annual Meetings spell Farm Bureau in September

The county annual meeting is the time for county Farm Bureaus' boards of directors and members to come together to talk about the past year, make plans for the upcoming year, elect board members and surface policy to be brought to the delegate floor at the Montana Farm Bureau Convention. All counties are required to hold an annual meeting. Look for more county photos in the November News Brief.



Big Horn County Farm Bureau board in Hardin: John Stevens, Big Horn County Secretary Gina Stevens, Holly Higgins and Big Horn County President Casey Mott.



The **Broadwater County meeting** in Townsend.



MFBF District 8 Director Cindy Denning with MWFBI agents, Brett Keaster, Warren & Michelle Krone and Kevin Gillespie during the **Cascade County meeting**.



MFBF Executive Vice President John Youngberg talks on exempt wells at the **Chouteau County Annual Meeting**.



Custer-Fallon County Farm Bureau's meeting in Miles City featured Jace Beardsley, a Miles City native who has been living and working with the beef industry in Russia for several years.



The **Dawson-Wibaux County** had a lunch meeting in Glendive. They welcomed a new YF&R member to their board and discussed the possibility of starting a collegiate chapter on Dawson Community College.



Members at the **Fergus County Farm Bureau** meeting in Lewistown discussed their calendar of work and bylaws changes.



Senator Llew Jones, SD-9, gives a legislative report at the **Front Range Counties Annual Meeting** in Shelby.

At the **Lewis & Clark meeting**, Krista Lee Evans, Blake Creek Management, explained filing on exempt water wells.



Jim Woods, MFBF's Scott Kulbeck, Secretary Chris Kolstad, and District 8 YF&R Committee member Shay Richter at the **Hill/Liberty/Blaine meeting** in Chester.



Members at **Judith Basin's meeting** in Hobson.



The **Prairie County meeting** in Terry.



The **McCone County meeting** was held in Circle. Pictured leading the meeting is McCone County President Gil Gasper and Secretary Cheryl Jensen.



Meagher County Jay Kolar with Fish, Wildlife and Parks spoke about the impact of elk on ranchers in the area and solutions for land owners including shoulder season hunting.



Park County secured three new voting members during their meeting in Clyde Park.



Powder River/Carter County held their meeting in Broadus.



Ravalli County President Lacey Sutherlin and MWFB agent, staffer DeAnn Cranmore and Shelly Brown served homemade liquid nitrogen ice cream.



The **Rosebud-Treasure meeting** in Forsyth.



Wheatland-Golden Valley board, Vic Lewis, Craig Jensen, Ben Lehfeltd and Brad Lode, at their meeting in Harlowton.

Cascade and Front Range County Farm Bureaus presented their legislators with Farm Bureau Golden Windmill awards during their annual meetings. The Golden Windmill Award is presented to legislators who scored in the highest percentages on the MFBF Report Card, served on important committees and were active advocates for Montana agriculture.



State Senator Jeff Welborn, SD 36, receives his Golden Windmill award from Rhonda Boyd, MFBF District Director, during the **Southwest Counties Annual Meeting**.

MFBF Director Rhonda Boyd, District 2, presents Representative Ray Shaw, HD 71, with his Golden Windmill Award at **Southwest Counties Annual Meeting**.



During the **Front Range Counties Annual Meeting**, Ross Fitzgerald, HD 17, receives a Golden Windmill Friend of Farm Bureau Award from MFBF Vice President Cyndi Johnson.

MFBF Vice President Cyndi Johnson presents a Golden Windmill Award to state Representative Rob Cook, HD-18 during the **Front Range Counties Annual Meeting**.



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Women's Leadership Committee

"Faces of Farm Bureau" PHOTO CONTEST



The Photo Contest will be held during the MFBF Annual Convention November 12-15 in downtown Billings.

Photos will be judged by online vote on the MFBF Facebook page prior to the MFBF Convention. They will still be on display/voted on at convention, as well. **The winners** (first, second, and third prize) **will be announced at the**

Awards Banquet, Tuesday, November 14. Cash prizes to top three contestants.

The top three winning photographs become the property of MFBF to be used for display and publicity purposes.

The contest theme for 2017 is "Faces of Farm Bureau." The committee encourages members to enter photos that capture what the theme means to them.

The entry deadline is October 30, 2017.

Submit photos to: Mary Hill, 1496 Goose Creek Rd., Raynesford, MT 59469 or email (preferred) to BarJRGelbvieh@3rivers.net.

The rules of the contest:

- The entrant must be a current MFBF member.
- Open to amateur photographers only.
- Photos must be taken by entrant.
- B&W or color photos, 3x5 or 5x7 or panoramic 4x12.
- Digital photos preferred.
- Name, address and membership number must be on back.
- No more than three photos per entrant.
- No matting or framing.

Membership Benefits Save Money



Farm Bureau Insurance - Contact MWFBMIC for rates on a wide range of insurance plans. See your local listings for a Farm Bureau agent near you or go to www.mwfb.com.

Choice Hotel Discount - Receive a 20% discount at participating Comfort Inn®, Comfort Suites®, Quality Inn®, Sleep Inn®, Clarion®, MainStay Suites®, Suburban Extended Stay®, Rodeway Inn® and Econo Lodge® hotels. Call (877) 424-6423 and use MFBF benefits number 00209680.

Life Line Screening - Members can save money on painless, non-invasive, advanced ultrasound technology for stroke and other disease prevention through Life Line Screening. The screenings are performed by a highly qualified and skilled technologist and reviewed by a board-certified physician. You'll receive a confidential written report within 21 days and are encouraged to share the results with your doctor. Call (877) 380-1746.

Grainger - Farm Bureau members get deep discounts on all equipment and supplies and enjoy free standard ground shipping when they order catalog items online, over the phone or at their Grainger branch.* Call (877) 202-2594, check out www.grainger.com or stop by your local Grainger store and use your MFBF account number 0854097532.

Wyndham Hotel Group Discount - Members receive up to 20% off the "Best Available Rate" at participating locations. For terms and conditions or to book online go to www.mfbf.org or call (877) 670-7088 and give your discount ID #8000002613 at time of booking.

Radisson Colonial Hotel Helena - Enjoy the great rate of \$92.00/night for a standard room. Call (406) 443-2100, ask for "in-house reservations" and request the MFBF membership discount. *Valid only in Helena.*

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Case IH Tractor & Equipment Incentive Program - Farm Bureau members save \$500 per unit on the purchase or lease of Case IH Maxxum® tractors; Farmall® C series utility, U series utility and 100A series tractors; self-propelled windrowers and large square balers. A \$300 per unit incentive is available for Case IH Farmall® C series compact and Farmall A series utility tractors, Case IH Scout® utility vehicles and other hay tools, including round balers, small square balers, disc mower conditioners and sicklebar mower conditioners. Visit your dealer and make your best deal. Then present your discount certificate to subtract another \$300 - \$500 from the bottom line. Your certificate, along with valid ID, must be presented to the Case IH dealer in advance of delivery to receive the discount. Go to www.mfbf.org/member-benefits to print your verification certificate.

Avis Car Rental - Enjoy 5-25% savings on daily, weekend and weekly Avis car rentals, special benefits and the comfort and reliability that come with renting from Avis. Log on to www.avis.com or call (800) 331-1212 and use your Avis Worldwide Discount number: A298826.

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Identity Theft 911 - MFBF members receive access to highly experienced fraud specialists who will guide you through the complicated resolution process for FREE. Call (877) 742-9991 for more details or go to www.mfbf-idtheft.org.

Reward Signs - Farm Bureau's neighborhood watch program will help protect your property by paying \$500 to \$2500 for information leading to an arrest.* Request your reward sign today by calling (406) 587-3153. *Certain limitations & exclusions apply.

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Thrifty Car Rental - Whether your travel is for business or pleasure, you'll receive discounted prices on car rentals. Call (800) THRIFTY and use your MFBF ID code 0010212772.

ClearValue Hearing Healthcare Benefit - MFBF members will save up to 25% off all Starkey Hearing Instruments (discount off suggested retail). Schedule your FREE Hearing Assessment by calling: 1-888-497-7447. For more information please visit our website: <http://www.clearvaluehearing.com/farm-bureau.aspx>

Caterpillar Inc. Benefits - Montana Farm Bureau members can save up to \$2,500 on your next Cat purchase. Additionally, Farm Bureau members will now receive a \$250 credit on work tool attachments purchased with a new Cat machine. Discounts cannot be applied to past purchases. Members must provide a valid Member Verification Certificate to the Cat dealer at the time of purchase or lease quote to receive the discount. Certificates may be obtained at www.mfbf.org/member-benefits.

Young Farmers and Ranchers



POLARIS®

Win a Polaris and a trip to Nashville

Want to improve your knowledge about agricultural issues and have the chance to win a Polaris Ranger? Plan to participate in the 2017 Montana Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Discussion Meet Monday, Nov. 13 in Billings. The winner of the event in Billings gets the keys to a Ranger® 570 EFI, and gets an all-expense paid trip to the compete at the national competition in Nashville in January.

The Discussion Meet, which is open to Farm Bureau members age 18-35, is

meant to simulate a committee meeting with ideas discussed and solutions developed. The first round of the Discussion Meet will be held Monday afternoon at 1:30 p.m. with the Final Round at 5:30 p.m. The winner is announced during the MFBF Awards Banquet Tuesday evening, Nov. 14.

One of the following question will be selected for each round:

1. Farmers are a shrinking percentage of the population. How can Farm Bureau help first-generation farmers and ranchers get started in agriculture?
2. With a growing demand for U.S. farm products abroad, how can agriculture overcome public skepticism of foreign trade to negotiate new trade

agreements and open new world markets?

3. Formation of family farm corporations is common practice. How can Farm Bureau work to ensure that the public's positive perception of the family farm is not lost?
4. How can farmers and ranchers maintain their buying power with the continued trend of input supplier and provider consolidations?
5. How can Farm Bureau help members with increasing legal and regulatory obstacles so they can focus on farming and ranching?

"We're so grateful for our partnership with many of Montana's best Polaris dealers," said MFBF YF&R Chair Gil Gasper. "They have supported our Young Farmers & Ranchers program for the past three years by sponsoring a brand new Polaris Ranger as a prize for our Young Farmers and Rancher's Discussion Meet. I urge any young person with an interest in learning more about agriculture, who would love to win this Ranger and represent Montana in Nashville, to participate in this year's Discussion Meet."

Although there is no fee to compete, an application must be filled out prior to participation in the event. Visit www.mfbf.org/programs/young-farmers-and-ranchers for the application and more information. Questions? Contact Sue Ann Streufert, 406-587-3153, sueanns@mfbf.org.

The YF&R Polaris is brought to you by these participating dealers.

- Adventure Cycle-Dillon
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- Kurt's Polaris-Missoula
- Kurt's Polaris, Inc.-Seeley Lake
- Redline Sports, Inc.-Butte
- Gallatin Recreation-Bozeman
- Helena Cycle Center-Helena
- Hi-Line Polaris-Havre
- Lewistown Honda & Polaris-Lewistown
- Riverside Marine and Cycle-Miles City
- Sports City Cyclery-Great Falls
- Yellowstone Polaris-Billings

Be sure to stop by their dealership and say thanks!

Montana Farm Bureau Discussion Meet winner Gil Gasper competes at the American Farm Bureau Discussion Meet in Phoenix.



Young Ag Leadership Conference offers a variety of speakers, workshops

The 2017 Young Ag Leadership Conference (YALC) is slated for Oct. 13-15 at the Radisson Colonial Hotel in Helena. YALC brings together people ages 18-40 with an interest in leadership, personal development, education and networking.

This year's event kicks off Friday afternoon with an area ag tour followed by keynote speaker Brandi Buzzard's talk "How to Combat Fear-Based Marketing."

Saturday is packed full of informative sessions starting with the breakfast topic "Three Secrets for Increasing Profit" by Dave Pratt of Ranching for Profit. Workshops Saturday morning include information on the advancement of beef genomics, year-round intensive grazing, digital marketing, improving cash flow in a drought and more. Afternoon sessions include new information on no-till, leading the conversation on GMOs and financial strategies followed by dinner and entertainment.

Sunday's closing breakfast features Kim Bremmer of Common Ground with "Celebrate American Agriculture; It's Time to Speak Up!" Common Ground is a group of farmers having conversations via social media about the food they grow and how they produce it.

Registration fee is \$50. To register, [visit www.mfbf.org](http://www.mfbf.org). Questions? Call Rikki Murrill, Montana Farm Bureau at 406-587-3153, rikkim@mfbf.org.



The American Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Leadership Conference is always a huge hit with Montana Farm Bureau YF&R members. Mark your calendar for this exciting conference, "Agriculture: Biggest Little Industry in the World" February 16-19 at the Peppermill Casino in Reno, NV. The conference brings together YF&R members to learn, share, and grow together to build a stronger Farm Bureau. Watch for more information on the Montana Farm Bureau Facebook page and in your email. For more information contact Sue Ann Streufert, 406-587-3153, sueanns@mfbf.org.

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Rebecca C. Calhoun, Editor Date: 9/25/2017

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Food and Farm Facts

REVIEW BY REBECCA COLNAR

"Did you know that?"

- Ninety-nine percent of all U.S. farms are owned by individuals, family partnerships or family corporations.
- Women make up 30 percent of today's farmers.
- About 25 percent of all U.S. agricultural products by value are exported annually.
- Farmers and ranchers receive only 16 cents out of every dollar spent on food at home and away from home.

Possibly even more importantly: Do your city friends, non-farming neighbors and your kids' teachers know that? The good news is the America Farm Bureau Foundation has their new Food and Farm Facts book, map and pocket guide available.

AFBF President and AFB Foundation Chair Zippy Duvall praises the book. "Food and Farm Facts provides the opportunity to learn about the many ways modern farmers produce food to meet the needs of today's consumers. I hope it also puts into perspective how blessed we are to be Americans," Duvall noted.

I agree this is an excellent resource that helps answer the questions "Where

does our food come from and who grows it?" The 32-page, full-color book features updated facts and easy-to-read infographics that can be used in a variety of ways to help increase agricultural literacy. The book is a valuable resource in the classroom, at fairs and events, for student leadership organizations and on social media.



It's organized in sections: Consumers, Modern Farmers, Trade & Economics, Environment and Production.

This is a great resource to share that is colorful and reader friendly. The pocket guides are inexpensive and handy to pass out at meetings or at trade show booths. Don't miss

ordering some today. At the very least, buy the Food and Farm Facts book for yourself.



ORDERING INFORMATION

Copies of Food and Farm Facts may be purchased for \$4.25 each (up to 49 copies). Price breaks are available for multi-copy purchases starting at 50: 50-99 copies, \$3.50 each; 100 or more copies, \$2.50 each. Each copy of the book includes a color "America the Bountiful" map poster depicting top agricultural products produced in every state. A pocket guide version of Food and Farm Facts is also available (100 copies for \$10) and features several popular infographics from the book. Place your order by visiting the Foundation's website: agfoundation.org. Question? Contact Julia Recko, AFB Foundation, at 202-406-3737, juliad@fb.org.






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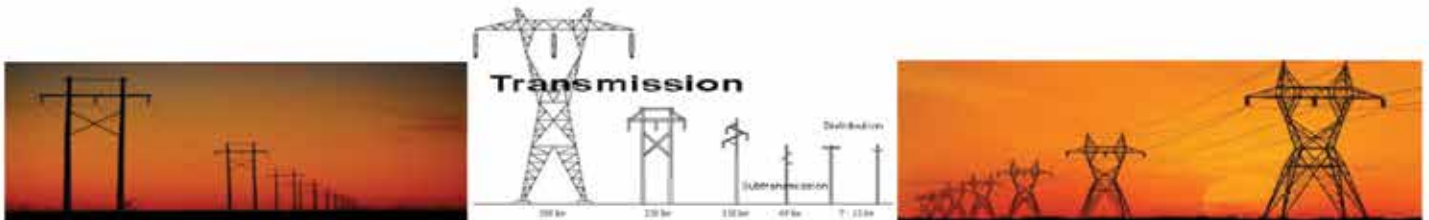
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