



# MONTANA FARM BUREAU *News Brief*

*We Care for the Country*

June 2020

## TOP STORIES



*Leah Johnson, a sheep rancher from Highwood, talks to students about raising sheep and the joys of lambing during the MFBF Virtual Farm Fair held May 11-15.*

### ***Virtual Farm Fair features MFBF members***

During the month of May, Montana grade school students are generally attending farm fairs across the state, learning about various aspects of agriculture. This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, farm fairs which would be teeming with eager students were nixed, but that didn't stop students from learning, thanks to MFBF and its creative members. They coordinated a virtual farm fair to bring educational ag-related topics directly into homes using cell-phone filmed videos of farmers and ranchers telling their stories.

The Virtual Farm Fair featured 10 videos that were directed toward a fourth-grade learning level, but appropriate and fun for all ages—even for parents. These videos featured corresponding activities and lesson plans. From May 11-15, daily videos featured a variety of stories from beekeeping to cattle branding, growing

pulse crops and raising guard dogs to lambing and making your own ice cream.

Leah Johnson did a fantastic job describing lambing and sheep care. She explained why she wanted to participate in the virtual program.

"Sharing my sheep with others, particularly during lambing, is one of the highlights of my year," Johnson said. "Since sharing them in person at a farm fair was not possible this year, participating in the Virtual Farm Fair was a fun way to show my sheep to kids in their homes. Ag education is so important, and I was grateful to be asked to contribute."

There were reports of classrooms and parents signing on to teach kids about ag and honing new skills in math, science and reading.

The Virtual Farm Fair is still available for viewing on the MFBF Facebook page @montanafarmbureau.

### **"Legacies" history book ready for purchase**

The Montana Farm Bureau announces that their long-awaited book, *Legacies*, is now in print. Montana Farm Bureau members and non-members alike will love reading Farm Bureau history dating back to 1919 and learning about the personalities of the past 100 years. History buffs will enjoy this thoughtful, well-researched book that not only covers amazing tales about Montana agriculture, but features beautiful photos and stories from days gone by.

Books are \$40 plus \$5 shipping. Don't miss this chance to order the limited edition of *Legacies: The Values, Principles and Purpose of the Montana Farm Bureau Federation*.

To order copies for you *and* your friends, visit [mfbf.org](http://mfbf.org) or call 406-587-3153.

### **National News with Nicole on Facebook**

Click onto the Montana Farm Bureau on Facebook, @montanafarmbureau, every Thursday at 3 p.m. to catch the latest LIVE news from MFBF National Affairs Director Nicole Rolf. Rolf frequently visits with Montana's Congressional Delegation and their staff, as well as officials at federal offices and the public policy staff at American Farm Bureau. Viewers will receive the latest on national agricultural news as well as be able to ask questions of Rolf in a casual conversation. Plus, look for exciting guests!

Be sure to check MFBF's Instagram and Twitter accounts, too.



## Livestock Loss Prevention Grants

Apply now for livestock loss prevention grants. The Livestock Loss Board has \$80,000 available for wolf-only loss prevention projects. Limited money will be available for grizzly bear loss prevention projects. All projects must be for loss prevention for the following animals: cattle, sheep, horses, mules, goats, swine or llamas. Other animals such as chickens or bison are not eligible for our loss prevention grant funds. Also agricultural crop damage prevention is not covered.

There is a 50-50 match requirement for all grants that can be in the form of cash, in-kind work or a combination of both. None of the required match can include anything you already receive from federal sources. The grant period for wolf-only projects is from January 1 - December 31, 2020. The grizzly bear loss prevention funding is from state sources. The grant period for these grants is one year from when they are approved by the Livestock Loss Board.

Applications are available at [www.llb.mt.gov](http://www.llb.mt.gov) or by calling 406-444-5609. The deadline for applications is June 30, 2020. For more information, see the online *News Brief Plus* at [www.mfbf.org/newsbrief](http://www.mfbf.org/newsbrief).

## Welcome new members

Montana Farm Bureau gives a hearty welcome to new members who realize the importance of belonging to the state's largest ag organization.

Big Horn – Bart Elliott; Carbon-Stillwater – Warren Stromme, Devon Mitchell; Dawson-Wibaux – Randall and Jessica Rahn; Fergus – David Udelhoven, Erik Arntzen; Gallatin – Leah and Todd Brouwer; Northwest – Andrew and Jamie Smith, James McDonald, Charles Hanson; Richland – Shannon Lunderby; Roosevelt – Marc and Aimee Black; Southwest – Steve and Sarah Goedert, Alyson Christians, Jason Roylance, Utah and Ava Falcon; Sweet Grass – Wallace and Rana Walker; Yellowstone – John Bedford.

## PALA program open for applications

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks has launched a new program for landowners who have inaccessible public lands within their grazing or farming allotments/leases on public lands. The Public Access Land Agreement Program (PALA) is a creative way for landowners to provide public access to public lands for hunting and/or fishing, in exchange for a payment and other negotiated improvements to facilitate public access to public lands.

Montana Farm Bureau members policy supported the creation of this program during the 2019 Montana Legislative session.

To be eligible for a Public Access Land Agreement private landowners must be willing to provide public access to either inaccessible public lands or improve access to under-accessible public lands, or both. Landowners who wish to enter agreements must also hold the lease for grazing/farming on the public land - if a lease exists.

Landowners who enroll parcels, roads or trails in the Public Access Land Agreement program are eligible for an annual payment of up to \$15,000 per agreement. Landowners and the department may also negotiate improvements needed to facilitate access.

The deadline for the first round of applications is June 19. For more information, visit <http://fwp.mt.gov/hunting/hunterAccess/pala> and see the *June News Brief Plus*, [mfbf.org/news/news-brief](http://mfbf.org/news/news-brief).



## Donate to the PAC

The Montana Farm Bureau Federation PAC is accepting voluntary contributions to help support getting more boots under the tables in Helena. Getting rural voices heard and properly represented is a top priority – we can only do it with your help!

The MFBF PAC is a nonpartisan, voluntarily funded committee of people who seek to promote the interest of Montana's agricultural industry in state government—we support candidates who support agriculture.

To assist us with this mission, we are asking Farm Bureau members to help in the upcoming 2020 election to voluntarily contribute to the Montana Farm Bureau PAC. All donations, regardless of size, truly make a difference.

If you wish to make a voluntary contribution please send your check to:

**Montana Farm Bureau PAC**  
502 S. 19th Ave, Suite 104  
Bozeman, MT 59718

## Calendar

**Long Range Planning Committee**  
August 27  
Bozeman

**Budget Committee**  
August 28  
Bozeman

**Yonng Ag Leadership Conference**  
October 16-18  
Great Falls

**MFBF Convention**  
November 9-12  
Billings

## People

Susan Lake was interviewed by the online publication *Business Insider* about how the potato industry was affected by COVID-19. MFBF National Affairs Director Nicole Rolf talked about the effect of COVID-19 on farmers and ranchers as well as volatility in the beef market.

MFBF President Cyndi Johnson was interviewed in the MT Free Press about the impact of the virus on their farming habitat.

## Enter the Ford Sweepstakes

Thinking about how much a Ford truck will help get your summer work done on your farm or ranch? Montana Farm Bureau members receive \$500 bonus cash on the purchase of selected Ford trucks as well as other selected Ford vehicles. In addition, don't forget to enter the Built Ford Proud Sweepstakes for a chance to win a 2-year lease on a new Ford vehicle! Visit [FordFarmBureauAdvantage.com](http://FordFarmBureauAdvantage.com) or text the word SWEEPS to 46786. Sweepstakes ends September 30, 2020.

## Is your well well?

Worried about the quality of your well water especially after a flood? The National Groundwater Association says if your well is impacted by flood waters, it needs to be tested by a certified professional to ensure that it's safe for you and your family to use.

The NGWA offers a monthly well owners tip sheet with information on keeping your drinking water safe. Visit [wellowner.org](http://wellowner.org) for more info and read their May 2020 newsletter online in the *June News Brief Plus*, [mfbf.org/news/news-brief](http://mfbf.org/news/news-brief).

## Learn about ag careers

As part of American Farm Bureau's *Free At Home Educational Activities About Agriculture*, one section looks at having an ag career conversation for grades 3 and up. The informational activities are divided into different categories for different grades.

Activities range from videos to hands-on lessons. Even with kids out of school, these lessons are invaluable to share ag career information. Visit [www.agfoundation.org/news/free-at-home-educational-activities-about-agriculture](http://www.agfoundation.org/news/free-at-home-educational-activities-about-agriculture).

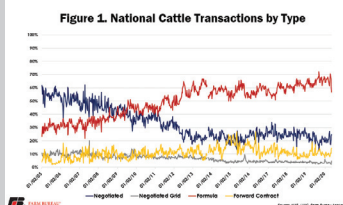
## CFAP program to help farmers, ranchers

The Montana Farm Bureau is reminding farmers and ranchers about the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program. As of May 26, the Farm Service Agency offices have been collecting applications. Payments will go directly to farmers who have suffered a 5 percent or greater price loss and who are facing significant marketing costs due to the coronavirus. Eligible commodities include cattle, hog, dairy, specialty crops and row crops.

"Montana Farm Bureau understands that the Coronavirus has caused considerable financial damage to farmers and ranchers. We are grateful that help is on the way for our struggling ag producers," noted MFBF Executive Vice President John Youngberg. "With this help, agriculture can continue to keep planting and growing our safe and nutritious food."

American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall, who was at the White House for the announcement of the program, noted, "We thank the White House, Congress and the USDA for their work on this. This aid can't arrive soon enough as many farmers file for bankruptcy, facing unprecedented losses. Although supply is strong, the shutdown of restaurants and school cafeterias caused the markets for meat, dairy and produce to shrink drastically."

For information call your local FSA office or visit [farmers.gov/cfap](http://farmers.gov/cfap).



## Examining cattle transactions

In recent months, there have been many conversations about how cattle are and should be marketed in the U.S. Some discussion has focused on the optimal level of cattle transactions through certain marketing channels in order to facilitate greater price discovery. In order to more fully understand these conversations and their implications, it is

helpful to take a step back and look at how cattle are currently marketed in this country as well as the implications of mandating how private companies make business decisions.

American Farm Bureau's economists have carefully studied this subject.

"There are a variety of market transactions through which cattle are marketed in the U.S. Thankfully, due to Livestock Mandatory Reporting, we have the data to be able to understand how these animals change hands and how these methods have evolved over time," note the economists in the latest Market Intel Report.

They go on to discuss in detail the four primary transaction types reported by USDA through LMR. AFBF Policy "supports rights of producers and packers to enter into formula pricing, grid pricing and other marketing arrangements and contract relationships."

Check out the full report at [fb.org/market-intel](http://fb.org/market-intel).

## NRCS needs to follow its own rules, says judge

A battle over a farmer's right to use and care for his own land is one step closer to being resolved. A determination by the director of USDA's National Appeals Division admonished the Natural Resources Conservation Service for failing to obey its own rules, favoring a farmer who battled NRCS for more than a decade. The decision is a welcome signal that concerns about NRCS conservation compliance are being heard.

In 2010, the NRCS determined that Illinois farmer Kurt Wilke and his family could not maintain and farm their land, claiming it contained wetlands, despite documentation to the contrary. An administrative judge ruled against the NRCS, but the agency repeatedly filed the same findings, forcing Wilke to fight the issue in court four times over more than a decade. Each time, an administrative judge ruled in Wilke's favor. In 2019, the American Farm Bureau Federation called on USDA to ensure fair treatment of farmers and ranchers by NRCS, highlighting Kurt Wilke's case and others. AFBF called for due process in enforcement of conservation and a transparent decision-making and appeals process.

American Farm Bureau President Zippy Duvall said, "This decision about a decade-old case sends a strong message to NRCS that the government must play by its own rules and treat farmers and ranchers fairly."

For the full story, visit [fb.org/newsroom](http://fb.org/newsroom).



MONTANA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION  
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## COUNTY NEWS

### Counties work on recruitment, other activities

With many folks being cautious about being out and about in the month of May, many counties took to social media channels and ZOOM meetings.

**Richland County** and Sidney Chamber of Commerce hosted a Montana House District 35 Candidates Forum May 14.

**Judith Basin County** sponsored a special radio spot congratulating the 2020 graduates from their area schools.

**Carbon/ Stillwater County** sponsored an ad in the *Carbon County News* celebrating the class of 2020 and announcing their scholarship winners. Members planted living memorial trees May 31; one at **Theo Yanzick's** house in honor of her husband, **Bruce**, and one at **Sarah Boyer's** house in honor of her husband, **Lee**. In addition, Carbon/ Stillwater County held a ZOOM board meeting May 12 and awarded two \$500 scholarships.

**Southwest Counties** awarded two \$750 scholarships sponsored by their

Women's Leadership Committee to **Jessica Pauley** and **Jordan Smith**, both from Deer Lodge.

**Cascade County** awarded two \$1,000 scholarships: one to **Emily Funseth** from Charlie M. Russell High School and one to **Mackenzie Leray** from Central Catholic High School.

The *Great Falls Tribune* published an article about **Central Avenue Meats** located in Great Falls which is the first meat market of its kind cutting up beef grown in the area for local customers. The newspaper photo pictured **Cascade Farm Bureau** member **Cindy Bumgarner** buying meat.

**Sweet Grass County Farm Bureau President Bonita Cremer** has opened a restaurant in Melville with her family. **Cafe 191** will feature Sweet Grass Land & Cattle ranch-raised beef burgers and serve breakfast, lunch and espresso.

It's wonderful to see small businesses opening despite the challenges in these hard times. All the best for the success of Central Avenue Meats and Cafe 191.



### May-You-Belong Baskets

May was Membership Month and county Farm Bureaus were encouraged to participate in various activities to promote awareness and recruit members of Farm Bureau. Leaders shared their "Why I Belong" stories the first week, participated and shared the Virtual Farm Fair the second week, highlighted their favorite membership benefit the third week and treated their friends and neighbors to a "May-You-Belong" basket with Farm Bureau goodies the final week.

Montana Farm Bureau Facebook page May posts reached 33,336 people and had more than 10,000 comments.



# MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

## Public Access Land Agreements | open or improve public access to inaccessible public lands

### Overview

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks' Public Access Land Agreements program seeks to open or improve free public access to isolated parcels of state or federal land for hunting or fishing.

### Program at a Glance

The Public Access Land Agreement program is a creative way for landowners to provide public access to public lands for hunting and/or fishing, in exchange for a payment and other negotiated improvements to facilitate public access to public lands.

### Who is Eligible

To be eligible for a Public Access Land Agreement private landowners, must be willing to provide public access to either inaccessible public lands or improve access to under-accessible public lands, or both.

Inaccessible land means public land wholly surrounded by private land by which there is no other legal access via public road, trail, right of way or easement; public waters; adjacent federal, state, county, or municipal land that is open to public use; or adjacent private land for which that landowner has not granted permission to cross.

Under-accessible land means public land for which there is no other legal access point within two miles via public road, trail, right of way or easement; public waters; adjacent federal, state, county, or municipal land that is open to public use. Access via public waters may also be considered under accessible if there are safety concerns which limit access by boat (due to rapids, boulders, log jams) and/or by foot while remaining within the high water mark (due to swift currents, deep water along banks, slippery substrate)

Landowners who wish to enter agreements must also hold the lease for grazing/farming on the public land.

### Landowner Liability

Landowners enrolled in the Public Access Land Agreement program are provided liability protection under state law through 70-16-302, Montana Code Annotated (MCA) as long as no fees for access/trespass are charged. Landowners are also possibly eligible for reimbursement through FWP's Livestock Loss Reimbursement Program.

### Landowner Compensation and Benefits

Landowners who enroll parcels, roads or trails in the Public Access Land Agreement program are eligible for an annual payment of up to \$15,000 per agreement. Landowners and the department may also negotiate improvements needed to facilitate access.

Fish, Wildlife & Parks may provide hunter management assistance dependent upon need, property rules and program availability as well as may provide and post signs with associated maps and rules for each property, road or trail enrolled in the program.

### Agreement Details

Potential agreements will be reviewed by the Private Land/Public Wildlife Advisory Committee for a recommendation to the Department whether to fund the agreement.

The agreement will be between private landowners and Fish, Wildlife & Parks for a minimum of one year up to ten-years with payments made annually.

Landowner in collaboration with FWP determines when, where, and how the public may access public land in accordance with program guidelines including the possibility of limiting travel to foot traffic only.

### How to Apply

Landowners should contact their local Fish, Wildlife and Parks Hunting Access Coordinator or FWP biologist or warden to obtain an application.

Applications are available year-round and must be received at least 6-weeks prior to the next upcoming Private Land/Public Wildlife Advisory Committee meeting to ensure adequate time to review the project. Landowners must also submit with a \$5.00 dollar application fee.



PRIVATE LAND/  
PUBLIC WILDLIFE COUNCIL

For more information: Contact your local FWP office or contact the FWP Headquarters Office  
406-444-2612, [LndSportRelations@mt.gov](mailto:LndSportRelations@mt.gov)

# WELL OWNER TIP SHEET

A private well owner newsletter brought to you by NGWA and WellOwner.org



May 2020

*Another tip sheet, another opportunity for all well owners to understand and promote the importance of the water we drink—groundwater!*

## **THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: Private Wells and Flooding**

When extreme weather strikes and excessive rain falls, flooding is always a concern.

When you rely on a private well for your home's drinking water and other domestic uses, flooding becomes an even bigger issue.

If your well is impacted by flood waters, it needs to be tested by a certified professional to ensure that it's safe for you and your family to use.



### **After a flood, a contractor will most likely test for:**

Bacterial contamination, like E. coli and total coliform. The presence of total coliform bacteria is an indicator of possible contamination from human or animal wastes carried by flooding. Total coliform are a broad category of bacteria, most of which pose no threat to humans. Some come from fecal matter and others naturally occur in soils, vegetation, insects, etc. However, the presence of coliform bacteria in well water can be a harbinger of worsening water quality. In some cases, more specific tests for fecal contamination, such as E. coli, may be used.

### **Great, I'd like to get my well tested, but where do I start?**

Typically, most local health departments will perform water tests for bacteria and nitrates. If you'd like to test your water for other substances, the health department should also be able to provide a list of area state-certified drinking water testing labs to contact. Find a certified water testing laboratory in your area [here](#) or call the toll-free Private Well Owner Hotline at 855-420-9355.

### **This is important...**

Be sure to ask the lab that will be doing your water test for instructions on how to collect the water sample and for sampling bottles. Follow the instructions carefully to get accurate water test results.

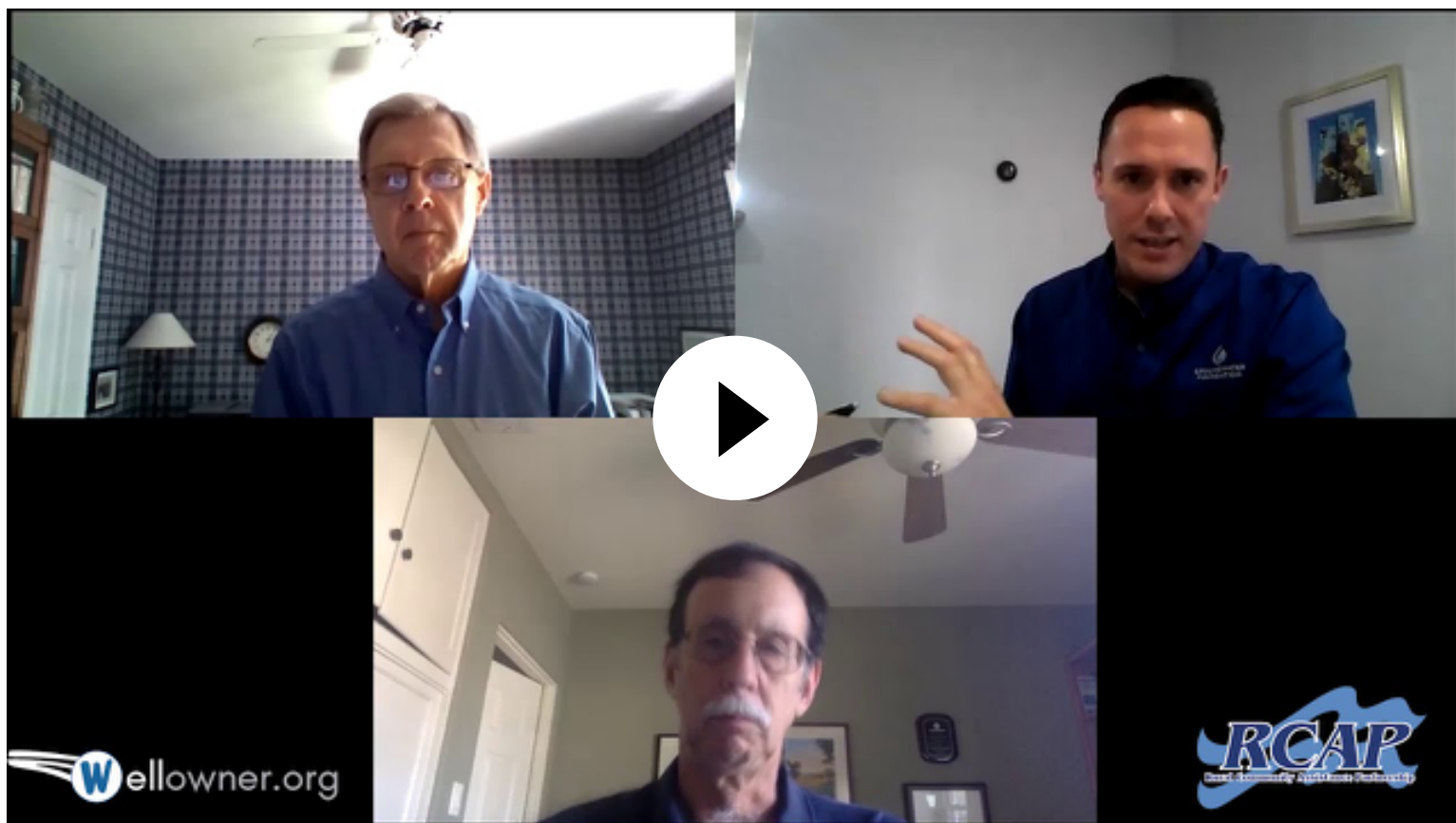


If you'd like a water well contractor to test your well, NGWA has a [Contractor Lookup tool](#) to help you find a list of professionals in your area.

### For more flooding resources...

Visit [wellowner.org/flooding-resources](http://wellowner.org/flooding-resources) for more tips and information for dealing with flooding and private wells.

Also, be sure to check out the [video](#) below to hear NGWA Director of Science and Technology William M. Alley, Ph.D., and NGWA Regulatory Affairs Manager Charles A. Job join Public Relations Manager Ben Frech to discuss water well safety during extreme weather and contamination of water wells.



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### Questions or concerns about your private well?

Refer to [Wellowner.org](http://Wellowner.org) for more information on testing, treating, and maintaining your water well. The [Contractor Look Up tool](#) will also assist you in finding an NGWA member or NGWA-certified water well contractor in your area.



## Livestock Loss Prevention Grants

Apply now for livestock loss prevention grants. The Livestock Loss Board has \$80,000 available for wolf only loss prevention projects. Limited money will be available for grizzly bear loss prevention projects. Applications are available on our website [www.llb.mt.gov](http://www.llb.mt.gov) or by calling our office. The deadline for applications is June 30, 2020. All projects must be for loss prevention for the following animals: cattle, sheep, horses, mules, goats, swine or llamas. Other animals such as chickens or bison are not eligible for our loss prevention grant funds. Also agricultural crop damage prevention is not covered by the Livestock Loss board.

There is a 50-50 match requirement for all grants. This can be in the form of cash, in-kind work or a combination of both. None of the required match can include anything you are already receiving from federal sources. The grant period for wolf only projects is from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020. Our grizzly bear loss prevention funding is from state sources. The grant period for these grants are one year from when they are approved by the board.

The board will not know how much money is available for grizzly loss prevention grants until mid-July. Board members will be holding a board meeting either in July or early August to award these grants. Use separate grant forms for wolf and grizzly related projects. They will be reviewed separately as each type of grant has a different funding source.

Up to ten percent of the total applied for may include administrative costs. Keep in mind that if an excessive value is listed for these costs, the board may reject your administrative costs for matching values. Please be reasonable if listing these values. The same thing would apply to values for in-kind values for labor, materials, and/or equipment time on projects. Be specific in all aspects in your description of the grant. For example, the number of estimated hours and wages for range riders, type and number of livestock covered or fencing materials. If applying for a grant to purchase a guard dog and/or dog food, include the receipts if already purchased in 2020. Any part of a project occurring before January 1, 2020 is not eligible for grant funding.

All projects must be for loss prevention due to wolves, grizzly bears or mountain lions. Loss prevention grants are not available for other predators such as coyotes, fox, eagles, etc...

Lastly, please share this email with anyone who may want to apply for a livestock loss prevention grant.

If you have any questions, please feel free to George Edwards at 406-444-5609.



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

May 26, 2020

**CONTACT:**

Dr. Anna Forseth, Program Veterinarian, (406) 444-2939, [anna.forseth@mt.gov](mailto:anna.forseth@mt.gov)

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski, Assistant State Veterinarian, (406) 444-5214, [tszymanski@mt.gov](mailto:tszymanski@mt.gov)

## **The Department of Livestock Advises Montanans About Swine Imports**

**Helena, Mont.** – The impacts to meat packing plants due to COVID-19 has resulted in the sale and movement of animals through non-traditional channels. The Department of Livestock (DOL) is asking Montanans to be aware of the requirements to move swine into the state and to sell pork products.

Packing plant closures throughout the country have resulted in a backup of swine going to feeding and slaughter. Many farmers, especially in Midwest states, are seeking new outlets for their animals. This has resulted in an influx of pigs coming to Montana for harvest and for sale to individual buyers for feeding.

DOL lists the following requirements:

- Live animals (swine and other livestock species) transported to Montana for immediate slaughter require a health certificate and an import permit number. To obtain an import permit, please call the Import Office at (406) 444-2976.
- Swine being transported to Montana for feeding require a health certificate, an import permit number, and need to be individually identified with an ear tag, tattoo, or ear notch.
- Meat products from swine harvested in Montana can only be sold if they were processed in a state or federally inspected plant.
- Only federally inspected meat products can be sold to customers out of state.
- Meat products processed by Custom Exempt businesses are labeled “Not for Sale” and may not be sold or donated; they may only be consumed by the owner of the animal, family members, employees, and non-paying guests.

“We are happy to see Montanans supporting swine producers in other states who have lost their market access. However, we have a responsibility to protect the health of our Montana swine



herd and our import requirements assure only healthy animals come to Montana,” said Dr. Tahnee Szymanski, Assistant State Veterinarian with the DOL.

All swine owners are encouraged to practice biosecurity and work with a veterinarian and county extension agent on questions concerning health and management of newly purchased pigs. The DOL would also like to remind Montanans that domestic pigs can revert to a feral state quickly if not housed and managed appropriately. A lot of work has been completed to prevent the introduction of feral swine into the state and now is the time to be especially diligent due to our growing swine population.

The mission of the Montana Department of Livestock is to control and eradicate animal diseases, prevent the transmission of animal diseases to humans, and to protect the livestock industry from theft and predatory animals. For more information on the Montana Department of Livestock, visit [www.liv.mt.gov](http://www.liv.mt.gov).

###