



MONTANA FARM BUREAU *News Brief*

We Care for the Country

December 2017

TOP STORIES



MFBF President Hans McPherson with Distinguished Service Award Winner David McMillen.

Sidney rancher wins service award

David McMillen, a long-time member of Richland County Farm Bureau, received the Distinguished Service Award from the Montana Farm Bureau during the MFBF Awards Banquet November 14 in Billings.

According to Richland County Farm Bureau President Don Steinbeisser, Jr, McMillen is “one of the most respected ranchers and businessmen in the region. He has instilled in his children and grandchildren the importance of being excellent stewards of the land and supporting agriculture.”

McMillen, who has ranched all his life, has been a member of Montana Farm Bureau and has donated generously to the Montana Farm Bureau Foundation. He has been active in Montana 4-H, Montana FFA, the Montana Stockgrowers and the Mondak Area Stockgrowers. He has testified in

Helena and Washington, D.C. on key agricultural issues, especially involving water rights and property rights. He supports the Sidney community, serving as a county commissioner from 1983-1989 and is a great contributor to your agricultural organizations. He has also been a significant contributor to the Foundation for Community Care. He has served as a delegate to the Montana Farm Bureau Convention for many years alongside his high school Class of '53 friend, Don Steinbeisser, Sr. The 82-year-old is an Army veteran and proud patriot.

“David is very deserving of this award for his tireless efforts for agriculture and Farm Bureau at the state and county levels,” said MFBF President Hans McPherson who presented the award. “It’s truly an honor to recognize this advocate for agriculture and strong supporter of the community he lives in.”

MFBF at Special Session

Montana Farm Bureau was well represented in Helena during the Special Session called by Governor Steve Bullock in mid-November. Nicole Rolf, MFBF’s National Affairs Director and lobbyist, was present for the entire special session to answer questions and educate legislators on actions that could have harmed farmers and ranchers. This covered opposing additional taxes and fees that would have been placed on landowners.

Farm Bureau was concerned about was HB 4 which would have charged a fee on property parcels outside of a city’s limits to pay for fire preparedness and opposed SB 4 regarding charging the MT State Fund a 3 percent management fee on surplus funds over one billion dollars.

Overall the Special Session went well. The Legislature protected agriculture, and all Montana taxpayers for that matter, from increased fees and taxes.

Tax reform thoughts

The U.S. Senate’s passage of tax reform legislation was met with optimism by Farm Bureau. Farmers and ranchers have long called for a fair tax code that recognizes their hard work as well as the unique challenges faced in growing our nation’s food, fiber and fuel. The bill addresses key tax provisions farm and ranch businesses depend on, such as immediate expensing, business interest deduction and cash accounting.

Farm Bureau looks forward to the Senate and House reconciling the differences between their respective versions to achieve a final tax reform package that addresses the needs and concerns of farmers and ranchers.

Farm Bureau elections

Hans McPherson, a diversified rancher from Stevensville, was re-elected as president of the Montana Farm Bureau Federation during the organization's annual convention Nov. 12-15 in Billings. Cyndi Johnson, a Conrad small grains farmer, was re-elected as vice president.

Newly elected to the Montana Board of Directors was Craig Blevins, District 1, a cattle rancher from Ronan and Scott Stoner, District 9, a hay and equine producer from Clancy. Re-elected to the board were Jennifer Bergin, District 3, a cattle rancher from Melstone; Gary Heibertshausen, District 5, a sheep rancher from Alzada and Tom DePuydt, District 7, a cattle rancher from Saco.

Gretchen Schubert from Huntley was re-elected as the MFBF Women's Leadership Chair with Gil Gasper from Circle re-elected as the MFBF Young Farmer and Rancher Chair.

MFBF and ag education

The Montana Farm Bureau Federation has been selected to continue the mission of Ag in Montana Schools (AMS) program.

"Agriculture in Montana Schools was a very reputable program and we didn't want to see the efforts of that organization end. We plan to continue their mission and share the importance of Montana agriculture with students across the state," said Rikki Murrill, MFBF regional manager who will coordinate the Ag in the Classroom program on behalf of Farm Bureau.

With the transition to MFBF, the program titled 'Montana Farm Bureau's Agriculture in the Classroom,' will be primarily driven by the MFB Women's Leadership Committee with collaborative efforts of MFBF's other programs like the Young Farmers & Ranchers and the Promotion & Education Committee. Ag education is a comfortable fit with MFBF's Women's Leadership Committee and their focus on agricultural education. Currently, the WLC provides Accurate Ag Books and accompanying materials to county Farm Bureau to share with their local schools.

Welcome new Farm Bureau members

Farm Bureau welcomes these new members and appreciates them joining Farm Bureau, the voice of agriculture.

Irv Alderson – Rosebud-Treasure County Farm Bureau • Clint Broere – Southwest Counties Farm Bureau • Richard Eaton – Yellowstone County Farm Bureau • Curtis Fladager – Roosevelt County Farm Bureau • Kelsie Harbert – Gallatin County Farm Bureau • Dana Kerner – Fergus County Farm Bureau • Catherine Lindbeck – Ravalli County Farm Bureau • Danyce McClure Stulc – Fergus County Farm Bureau • Carroll Oasis – Cascade County Farm Bureau • Tyler Rooney – Sweet Grass County Farm Bureau • Kelly Rutledge – Chouteau County Farm Bureau • Shaud and Melanie Schwarzbach – Chouteau County Farm Bureau.

Being a member allows you to realize unique opportunities to advocate for agriculture. One way to advocate is to share your story with the media. Often members step forward and agree to be interviewed by agricultural as well as mainstream news outlets. At the MFBF Convention last month, Bonita Cremer, Dave McClure, Cyndi Johnson and Hans McPherson were interviewed by the Northern Ag Network and KTVQ and/or by Jim Sargent (Sarge) with Staradio and KULR8-TV.



Sophi Davis, winner of the YF&R Discussion Meet.

A new Polaris

Sophi Davis bested three other competitors to win the Montana Farm Bureau Young Farmer and Rancher Discussion Meet. She got the keys to a Ranger® 570 EFI and an all-expense paid trip to represent Montana in the national competition in Nashville in January. Other competitors included Joel LaLiberty, Lee Jensen, and Kim Gibbs. The winner was announced at the Awards Banquet Nov. 14 during the MFBF Annual Convention in Billings.

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 enthusiastic winner, who works on a commercial cow-calf ranch with her husband near Springdale, said, "I am so excited have won the contest and the Polaris. The first thing I'll do is use it to bring my horses in!"

Good luck in Nashville, Sophi.

MFBF Calendar

January 5-10

**AFBF Annual Convention
Nashville**

June 12-14

**MFBF Summer Conference
Fairmont Hot Springs**

People

Lillian and Tom Ostendorf and their family hosted U.S. Senator Steve Daines and his son Michael at their ranch in Powderville. They gave the Daineses a tour, looked at cattle, grass, solar wells, wildlife and a one-room schoolhouse. Michael even bagged a nice mule deer buck. Lillian is former MFBF WLC Chair and now serves on the AFBF WLC Board.

Fergus County Farm Bureau member Matt Knox was interviewed on a public radio program (KUAR-Little Rock/aired on Montana Public Radio) regarding the Department of the Interior's survey of national monuments. The survey will determine if monument designation in some areas restricts economic development, such as cattle grazing in the Missouri River Breaks.

Treasure chest of info

Want to know statistics about NAFTA? Need some background on the Endangered Species Act? Anxious to see how your senator voted on Farm Bureau's Strategic Action Issues? Go to the American Farm Bureau's website, www.fb.org. The website is chock-full of information on everything from registering for a conference to detailed information about a wide range of issues affecting farmers and ranchers. You can also shop at the Farm Bureau General store. Check it out!

Grainger for Winter

Whether you are winterizing your car, tractor or home, a Montana Farm Bureau membership can make it easy and save you some money. How? With a Grainger discount. Farm Bureau members can get exclusive discounts, PLUS free standard ground shipping on Grainger catalog items. Jumper cables or a new car battery may not fit in a Christmas stocking, but they'll fit in your car while saving you a bundle.

Check out www.grainger.com and make people on your Christmas list happy.

Reno-bound YF&R

Are you a college student or young farmer/rancher who wants to network and learn? American Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers Leadership Conference themed "Agriculture: Biggest Little Industry in the World" takes place February 16-19, 2018 at the Peppermill Casino in Reno, NV.

For more information watch the MFBF Facebook page and contact Sue Ann Streufert, 406-587-3153, sueanns@mfbf.org. Early registration deadline is Jan. 2.

Congressmen share thoughts on D.C.

Montana Senator Steve Daines and sole Representative Greg Gianforte had a candid talk with Farm Bureau members during the Century Club Breakfast Monday, Nov. 13 during the MFBF Convention in Billings.

Senator Daines talked trade, noting that it's essential to grow markets around the world, saying renegotiating trade agreements can be tricky.

"American farmers and ranchers need to get fair deals, but be careful to do no harm when renegotiating those deals," Daines said.

He told the group that one of the most important votes a senator makes is for a U.S. Supreme Court Justice because that is a lifetime appointment.

Rep. Gianforte noted that with new agency leaders in place agriculture has a reason to be optimistic. "Now when we make an appeal to those agencies, commonsense prevails."

He talked about the strong need to have regulatory reform with the Endangered Species Act, as well as the Equal Access to Justice Act, which "has been hijacked by extremists" who use the law to get the government to pay them.

He said he will support HR 953 which will reduce regulatory burdens.

Century Club dues support Montana Farm Bureau's legal and legislative efforts.



Truckers worry about new hours of service.

Trucking restrictions questioned

Drivers hauling agricultural commodities, especially livestock, have been concerned about the mandates established by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) that would have required Electronic Logging Devices (ELDs) on commercial trucks by December 19. The news yesterday that FMCSA would grant agricultural industries a 90-day waiver for a mandate was met with optimism by the Montana Farm Bureau and other agricultural organizations.

The greatest concern was not only about equipping trucks with ELDs, but that the mandate will limit truck drivers to only 11 hours per day on the road after 10 hours of rest.

Montana Farm Bureau National Affairs Director Nicole Rolf, said it was good to hear the FMCSA was taking time to consider the exemption requests that have been filed on behalf of agriculture. "We are thankful to hear that the FMCSA has issued this 90 day waiver to look into the issue further. We have also learned that the agency plans to release guidelines on the current hours-of-service exemption that they have by statute for the transportation of agricultural commodities, which we hope will be helpful."

Rolf says the FMCSA needs to realize drivers hauling cattle, hogs or sheep to market can't simply pull over on the side of the road to rest for 10 hours while the livestock remains on the truck. For the full story visit www.mfbf.org/news.

Sage Grouse Land Management Plan

The Montana Farm Bureau submitted comments in late November to the Department of the Interior regarding the Bureau of Land Management's Greater Sage Grouse Land Management Plan. The state's largest agricultural organization encouraged the DOI to make several improvements to the plan in order to make it more workable for multiple-use lands.

The comments pointed out several problems with the current plan, including minimum stubble height requirement; the curtailing of the placement of structures such as fences, windmills, corrals and water development; mandatory removal of livestock ponds in perennial channels; and forced removal or modification of fences within 1.2 miles of Greater Sage Grouse leks.

In addition, Farm Bureau said there can't be one plan for private land and one for public. "The State of Montana worked very hard to establish a management plan that would satisfy requirements and protect the species; therefore, those plans should be used for public lands, as well," MFBF noted.

For the full story, visit www.mfbf.org/news.

MONTANA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION
502 S. 19th Ave., Suite 104
Bozeman, MT 59718

ISSN: 1555-788X

The Montana Farm Bureau Federation News Brief is published monthly except for January, April, July and October by the Montana Farm Bureau Federation at 502 S. 19th Ave., Suite 104, Bozeman, MT 59718. Subscription rates are \$4 per year, covered by annual dues to the Montana Farm Bureau Federation. Non-member subscriptions are \$25 per year. Mail at periodical postage rate in Bozeman, MT and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Montana Farm Bureau Federation News Brief, 502 S. 19th Ave., Suite 104, Bozeman, MT 59718. 406-587-3153.

PERIODICAL
POSTAGE
PAID
Kalispell, MT

COUNTY NEWS

County Farm Bureaus receive President's Awards at convention

During the Montana Farm Bureau Annual Convention Awards Banquet November 14 at the DoubleTree Hotel in Billings, county Farm Bureaus received Silver and Golden Windmill Awards for their programs. The best-of-the-best received President's Awards for Group 1 (121 voting members or less) and Group 2 (122 voting members or more). A county Farm Bureau had to make quota to be considered for the President's Awards. Look for more convention photos and coverage in the 2017 MFBF Winter Spokesman.



Above: MFBF Vice President Cyndi Johnson (right) presents the President's Award for Membership Development and Public Policy (Group 2) to Bonita Cremer and Ken and Kathy Hanson, Sweet Grass County Farm Bureau.

Right: MFBF Vice President Cyndi Johnson (right) presents the President's Award for Leadership Development (Group 1) to Gil Gasper, McCone County Farm Bureau.



Below: MFBF President Hans McPherson (left) presents the President's Award for Public Relations (Group 2) to Rhonda Boyd, Southwest Counties Farm Bureau.



Above: MFBF President Hans McPherson (left) presents the President's Award for Ag Promotion & Education (Group 2) to Craig Blevins, Northwest Counties Farm Bureau.



Above: MFBF Vice President Cyndi Johnson (right) presents the President's Award for Membership Development (Group 1) to Gina Stevens, Big Horn County Farm Bureau.



Above: MFBF President Hans McPherson (left) presents the President's Award for Public Policy, Ag Promotion & Education and Public Relations (Group 1) to Tom DePuydt, Phillips County Farm Bureau.



Left: MFBF Vice President Cyndi Johnson (right) presents the President's Award for Leadership Development (Group 2) to Don Steinbeisser, Jr., Richland County Farm Bureau.