



# MONTANA FARM BUREAU *News Brief*

*We Care for the Country*

September 2021

## TOP STORIES



Cascade County Farm Bureau members Todd Standley (left) and Frank LaLiberty, volunteer judges for the MT FFA Junior Ag Mechanics, Livestock Equipment Division, are pictured with winner Coulter Rein.

### ***MFB Foundation sponsors ag mechanics contest***

The Montana Farm Bureau Foundation proudly sponsored the inaugural Montana FFA Junior Ag Mechanics (JAM) contest at the Montana State Fair in Great Falls as part of its mini-grant program. Cascade County Farm Bureau members, Todd Standley and Frank LaLiberty were volunteer judges for the livestock equipment division. The judges awarded top honors to Coulter Rein, a senior at Sweet Grass County High School for his impressive metal fabricated gate for the entrance of the new school farm.

There were a variety of projects in the four divisions—Trailers, Livestock Equipment, Agricultural Machinery and Outdoor Recreation. Projects included fire pits, picnic tables, tilt trailers, smokers and headache racks, to name a few. The event allowed middle and high school students enrolled in Agricultural

Education courses the opportunity to highlight their hard work through their project showcases. Prizes were awarded for the top four participants in each of the four divisions.

Standley, a Cascade rancher, noted, “The students were very professional and put in many hours to complete their projects. You could tell they were proud of their work and excited to tell us about it. There were certainly high-quality pieces.”

Foundation Coordinator Scott Kulbeck said, “This contest works to develop important skills for youth, such as fabricating and welding. These skills aren’t as prevalent in education today as we would like them to be, so this contest provided a great way to reward those students who are learning those skills.”

For more information on the Foundation mini-grants visit [mfbf.org/foundation](https://mfbf.org/foundation).

### **YF&R hosts activities in coming months**

The Montana Farm Bureau YF&R Committee will be busy this fall with the October virtual Hoofin’ it for Hunger, YF&R Leadership Conference and holding the 2021 Discussion Meet.

Although the committee opted to not hold an in-person Hoofin’ it for Hunger, they are encouraging folks to register for the run; run on Oct. 9, then post a pic on the YF&R Facebook page. See page 2 for more information.

On October 15-17, the YF&R Leadership Conference will take place in Bozeman. For registration and speaker information, visit <https://www.facebook.com/MTYFRConference>.

Young farmers and ranchers will again have the opportunity to be able to drive away in a Polaris Ranger as winner of the MFBF Discussion Meet held during the MFBF Convention in Billings, November 8-11. Keep watching the YF&R Facebook page for details and check out the Discussion Meet questions at [mfbf.org](https://mfbf.org).

### **News Brief Plus**

Want more information regarding articles in this *News Brief*? Check out the *News Brief Plus* which can be found online. Full stories and press releases will be posted along with information gleaned from additional sources. The *September 2021 NB Plus* contains:

- Pesticide Disposal
- Calumet’s Montana Renewables
- Growth Through Ag Grants
- Hay Hotline
- More county news!

Visit [mfbf.org/News/News-Brief](https://mfbf.org/News/News-Brief).

## Renew your brand

The summer has flown by which means the end of the year will be here before you know it. Have you rerecorded your brand? Keep in mind you need to rerecord by midnight, December 31, 2021. Whether it's for a horse, cow or just a family nostalgia brand, 2021 marks the Decennial Montana Department of Livestock Brand Rerecord.

During this time, the Department of Livestock will be rerecording roughly 55,000 brands. Brands not rerecorded prior to midnight on December 31 will become inactive. *There will be no grace period for brands filed after that date.* The fee to rerecord a brand for the next ten years is \$175 per brand.

Brands can be renewed online, via mail, or drop off at the Helena office.

For more information visit <http://liv.mt.gov/Brands-Enforcement/Brands-Rerecord-2021> or call the department, (406) 444-1278.

## Montana Renewables

Several members of Montana Farm Bureau, including MFBF Executive Vice President John Youngberg and State Affairs Director Rachel Cone, along with Montana Governor Greg Gianforte, attended the ribbon cutting for the Calumet's Montana Renewables Facility in Great Falls.

Calumet's goals for the \$200 million project will convert portions of its facility for renewable diesel as well as build renewable hydrogen plant. They plan to process 140 million gallons a year of this feed stock which will initially come from out-of-state soybeans. Long-term Montana canola oil will be used. This facility will provide jobs as well as offering diverse energy production.

## Montana Book Buddies

Montana Ag in the Classroom has a great way to get ag books into schools: Montana Ag Book Buddies. It includes one book and one activity a month, for nine months. Find out more on [facebook.com/mtAITC](https://facebook.com/mtAITC).

## 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.*

Carbon-Stillwater County Farm Bureau – Leslie and Dawn Craft • Danny Dorvall • Jim Neu, Neu's Last Shot Ranch; Cascade County Farm Bureau – James and Darae Larson • Ernie Schmidt and Jennifer Cady; Chouteau County Farm Bureau – James and Calista Worrall, J & C Worrall Farms, Inc.; Custer-Fallon County Farm Bureau – Frederick and Lea Moore, Canyon Wind Holdings; Dawson-Wibaux County Farm Bureau – Tienna Canen; Front Range County Farm Bureau – Harold and Kenneth Hager, Hager Farms • Mark Jensen, Smoot Honey Company; Gallatin County Farm Bureau – Tim VanDam, Churchill Equip Co., Inc.; Lewis & Clark County Farm Bureau – Daniel Fiehrer, Fiehrer Properties Inc • Tara and Rick Price • Judith Vincent; McCone County Farm Bureau – Alf and Donna Idland, A D Idland & Livestock, Inc.; Northwest Counties Farm Bureau – Bruce Beckstead and Carissa McNamara • Cole MacPherson • Martha and Daniel McClure • Anna Stitt, Stitt Ranch; Park County Farm Bureau – Daryl and Theresa Smith; Ravalli County Farm Bureau – Erica Bell • Douglas Rose, Rose Family Orchards; Rosebud-Treasure County Farm Bureau – T. J. Cape; Southwest Counties Farm Bureau – David and Cindy Ashcraft, Ashcraft Ranch • Robert Beck, Jack Creek Ranch, LLC • Erin Freitas • Billie Kulaski • Richard and Linda Reichle, Willis Station LLC • Brent Smith; Sweet Grass County Farm Bureau – Page Dringman, Dringman Law Firm, PLLC • Catherine Kirchner, Uncommon Beef LLC • Thomas and Loraine McGuane • Sam Schwennessen, Timeline Construction; Valley County Farm Bureau – Robert Walden • Galen Zerbe; Wheatland-Golden Valley County Farm Bureau – Tonya and Craig Martin, AMD Incorporated.



## Hoofin' it goes virtual

This year, the YF&R Committee has decided to hold Hoofin' it for Hunger as a virtual race, asking those who have enjoyed the in-person race in the past to support the event and the Montana Food Bank Network, by registering for the virtual race. Virtual registration is only \$30 and you will still receive a cool race t-shirt. Participants will be asked to run October 9 wherever they may be, then post a photo on the Hoofin' it for Hunger Facebook page.

If someone prefers not to run but still wants to participate, they can register for \$30, sit on the couch and still get the cool t-shirt.

All proceeds benefit the Montana Food Bank Network, which serves as a distribution center for food banks and food pantries statewide. Over the past ten years, the committee has raised more than \$62,000 for the Montana Food Bank Network through the Hifh.

Donations can be made via: <https://runsignup.com/Race/MT/MilesCity/HoofinItForHunger>.

## Calendar

MFBF Board Meeting  
September 13-14—Bozeman

Hoofin' it for Hunger  
Virtual  
October 9

YF&R Leadership Conference  
October 15-17—Bozeman

MFBF Annual Convention  
November 8-11—Billings

## People

MFBF Executive Vice President **John Youngberg** visited about grizzly bears with Montana Public Radio.

MFBF State Affairs Director **Rachel Cone** interviewed with The Center Square—Montana regarding emergency haying and grazing in Wildlife Management Areas.

**Keturah Moberg** and **Dana Jensen**, both ACE program participants, were featured in the Montana FFA online newsletter.

MFBF members **Vogel Feeders**, **Swanky Roots**, **North 40 Ag** and **Kinsfather Farm** hosted an AgrAbility Tour in August.



## Drought survey

As farmers and ranchers across the West continue to battle severe drought conditions, a recent FarmBureau survey assessed the Western drought conditions and offered a window into hurdles farmers and ranchers face in coping with persisting water shortages. They have made tough choices including reducing herd sizes, transporting water through rugged terrain, or switching to more drought resistant crops.

Read more at [www.fb.org/land/drought-and-responsible-water-management](http://www.fb.org/land/drought-and-responsible-water-management).

## Budget truck rentals added

Montana Farm Bureau's member benefit savings are expanding, even to trucks! Moving can be stressful but renting the truck to move your belongings doesn't have to be.

Members can now save 20 percent off best available rental and mileage rates on Budget Truck Rental's entire fleet of cargo vans and light/medium-duty non-CDL trucks 365 days a year.

Go to [mfbf.org/benefits](http://mfbf.org/benefits) and check truck rental off your to-do list today. Be sure to review MFBF's other benefits, as well.

## Best farm books for kids

Are you looking for some amazing farm books for kids? Check out the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture's list of books for kids four years-old and up. These include many favorites like Full of Beans and Seed Soil Sun. The list can be found at [www.agfoundation.org/news/21-best-farm-books-for-kids-2021](http://www.agfoundation.org/news/21-best-farm-books-for-kids-2021).

Looking for even more great farm books for kids? Search by topic on the Foundation's publications list.

## Water rule concerns

The Montana Farm Bureau expressed disappointment with the District of Arizona court ruling to vacate the Navigable Waters Protection Rule.

"Three other courts have upheld the NWPR after carefully reviewing it; it's dismaying that this Arizona court saw fit to accept the plaintiff's assertions as true," noted MFBF President Hans McPherson. "This makes us very concerned that clean water and clear rules that affect farmers and ranchers every day are being overlooked."

McPherson, a diversified farmer from Stevensville, added that there are many parts to the court decision that need to be reviewed. Montana Farm Bureau has submitted comments to the Environmental Protection Agency, giving strong support to keeping the NWPR, and urging them to avoid returning to the onerous, unclear and concerning Waters of the U.S. Rule.

American Farm Bureau President Zippy Duvall added, "This ruling casts uncertainty over farmers and ranchers across the country and threatens the progress they've made to responsibly manage water and natural resources. We are reviewing the ruling to determine our next course of action. Farmers and ranchers deserve consistency and a rule that is fair and doesn't require a team of attorneys to interpret."

For more information on concerns regarding rescinding the NWPR visit [mfbf.org/news](http://mfbf.org/news) or [fb.org](http://fb.org).



## Time to speak out on stepped up basis

A Congress is moving forward with a \$3.5 trillion fiscal year 2022 budget resolution. The spending in the legislation resulting from the reconciliation language in the budget resolution will need to be offset by some combination of federal spending reductions, additional deficit spending and tax increases. The potential tax increases include an increased corporate tax rate, the elimination of stepped-up basis and imposition of capital gains at death.

"Farm Bureau is pushing back with all our might against these tax increases, as they will be devastating to farmers and ranchers," noted MFBF Senior Governmental Affairs Director Nicole Rolf. "It is critically important that our Senators and Representative hear from as many members as possible. We need your help."

Rolf says it's critical that farmers, ranchers and other small business owners respond to the Action Alert on the subject. "If you don't get an email (look in your email junk box) or a text message from American Farm Bureau, look on [www.mfbf.org](http://www.mfbf.org) or [fb.org](http://fb.org). Get those comments in, the sooner the better, because Congress is expected to act on the budget by the end of September," Rolf advised.

Questions or need help finding the Action Alert? Contact Rolf, [nicoler@mfbf.org](mailto:nicoler@mfbf.org) or 406-951-2429.

## MFBBF submits comments on beef processors

On August 30, the Montana Farm Bureau submitted comments on how the USDA will invest \$500 million into the meat processing capacity of our nation.

"Agriculture is the number one economic driver in the state of Montana, with beef cattle making up the largest segment of our industry. Therefore, the way these funds are spent will have a major impact on our producers," said MFBF President Hans McPherson. "Our farmer and rancher members all have unique business plans with slightly different needs when it comes to meat processing capacity. That said, the corona virus pandemic highlighted some needs that can be addressed with these allotted funds which will be beneficial to all of them."

MFBF recommend the agency to prioritize funding to expand existing capacity and storage at very small, small and medium sized plants; and prioritize funds for processors who wish to upgrade facilities, train more employees, or upgrade inspection levels.

"Montana is fortunate to have an established meat processing certificate program at Miles Community College, and there are others in the works," McPherson wrote in the comments. "Funding to support training programs like this, as well as to help processors put employees through a training, will be beneficial for the long-term success of our industry."

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## COUNTY NEWS

### Fairs, picnics wrap up summer FB activities

**Valley County** sponsored the Nine-Years-Old and Under Showmanship class at the Northeast Montana Fair.



They had 16 showmen who showed pigs, sheep, calves

and dogs and were impressive little showmen. They each received a water bucket and a popsicle for participating in the show. Valley County provided water for all of the contestants in the livestock shows through the week.

**Richland County** hosted their



Annual Membership Appreciation Picnic at Veterans Park in Sidney. Russell and Paula Steinbeisser

handled the grilling, and other members pitched in for potluck sides and desserts.

**Yellowstone County** set up their Ag Adventure Farm during the Montana Fair. It featured agriculture arts & crafts for the kids, photo booths, grain sensory bins, Read with a Rancher sessions and more.

Kudos to the local leaders of the Yellowstone County Farm Bureau who stepped



up to bring this interactive, wildly creative exhibit to fair goers this year.

**Phillips County** won the May Membership Month challenge and had staff members of Montana Farm Bureau grill steaks and serve other goodies to county members.



*Left: Mountain West Agent Dustin Gillsie and wife, Tyanna at the Custer County Fair.*

### County Annual Meetings

HLB/Chouteau, Ft. Benton ....	Sept. 8
Lewis & Clark, Helena .....	Sept. 10
Rosebud-Treasure, Hysham .....	Sept. 14
Valley .....	Sept. 15
Judith Basin.....	Sept. 15
Fergus, CMR Chew Choo.....	Sept. 16
Gallatin, Logan .....	Sept. 16
Sweet Grass.....	Sept. 17
Custer/Fallon, Miles City .....	Sept. 19
Prairie, Terry .....	Sept. 19
Wheatland/GV .....	Sept. 19
Broadwater, Townsend.....	Sept. 19
Dawson/Wibaux, Glendive ..	Sept. 20
Big Horn, Hardin .....	Sept. 20
Powder River/Carter, Broadus .	Sept. 20
Carbon/Stillwater, Red Lodge.	Sept. 21
Richland .....	Sept. 21
Northwest, Charlo .....	Sept. 21
Yellowstone.....	Sept. 22
McCone, Circle .....	Sept. 22
Southwest, Melrose.....	Sept. 22
Park .....	Sept. 23
Cascade, Great Falls.....	Sept. 23
Front Range.....	Sept. 26
Phillips .....	Sept. 28
Meagher .....	Sept. 28
Valley .....	Sept. 29
Roosevelt.....	Sept. 29
Musselshell .....	Sept. 29

# **MFBF COUNTY ANNUAL MEETINGS**

*September 2021*

Sept 8 - Chouteau & Hill/Liberty/Blaine, The Clubhouse, Fort Benton, 3pm mtg, 5pm social/dinner  
Sept 10 - Lewis & Clark, The Christians Ranch, 4pm meeting, 6pm social/dinner

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Sept 14 - Rosebud/Treasure, Library Basement, Forsyth, 7pm meeting  
Sept 15 - Ravalli, Corvallis Grange, 5pm meeting/PD, 5:30pm social and dinner  
Judith Basin, Tall Boys, Hobson, 6pm  
Sept 16 - Fergus, Charlie Russell Chew Choo, boards at 3:30pm  
Gallatin, Land of Magic, Logan, 7am  
Sept 17 - Sweet Grass, Mason's Lodge, Big Timber, 5pm social, 6pm dinner/meeting

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Sept 19 - Custer/Fallon, Wibaux Park, Miles City, 1pm meal, 2pm meeting/speaker  
Prairie, American Legion, Terry, 3:30pm PD, 4:30pm business, 6pm dinner  
Wheatland/Golden Valley, Two Dot Comm. Center, 4pm social, 5pm mtg/dinner  
Broadwater, The Lodge, Townsend, 1pm  
Sept 20 - Dawson-Wibaux, Yellowstone River Inn, Glendive, 6pm  
Powder River/Carter, VFW Hall, Broadus, 5pm social, 6pm dinner/meeting  
Big Horn, Bullis Center, Hardin, 6pm  
Sept 21 - Carbon-Stillwater, Red Lodge Pizza Co, 5:30pm social, 6pm dinner/meeting  
Richland, Sidney Elk's Lodge, 5:30pm social, 6pm dinner/meeting  
Northwest, Ninepipes, Charlo, 3:30pm meeting, 5:30pm social/dinner  
Sept 22 - Yellowstone, Billings Livestock Commission, 6pm  
McCone, Senior Center, Circle, 6pm dinner, 6:30pm meeting  
Southwest, Hitchin Post, Melrose, 5:30pm social, 6pm dinner/meeting  
Sept 23 - Park, Clyde Park Comm. Hall, 6:30pm social, 7pm dinner/mtg  
Cascade, Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center, Great Falls, 6pm dinner/mtg

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Sept 26 - Front Range, Branding Iron, Conrad, 5pm social, 6pm dinner/meeting  
Sept 28 - Phillips, Tin Cup, Marian Hill Golf Course, Malta, 6pm social, 6:30pm dinner/mtg  
Meagher, Musselshell Steak House, Martinsdale, 5:30pm  
Sept 29 - Roosevelt, Sherman Inn, Wolf Point, 12pm lunch/meeting  
Valley, Cottonwood Inn, Glasgow, 6pm social, 6:30pm dinner/meeting  
Musselshell



September 2, 2021

*Submitted via [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov)*

Damaris Christensen  
Oceans, Wetlands and Communities Division  
Office of Water (4504-T)  
Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW,  
Washington, DC 20460

Stacey Jensen  
Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for  
Civil Works  
Department of the Army  
108 Army Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20310-0104

**Re: Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OW-2021-0328**

**Definition of “Waters of the United States”; Request for Pre-Proposal Recommendations**

The Montana Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) request for feedback on the definition of “Waters of the United States,” commonly referred to as WOTUS.

Not surprisingly, the definition of WOTUS is extremely important to the members of the Montana Farm Bureau Federation. Our organization represents 20,000 member families from across the state of Montana. Our farmer and rancher members make their living on the land in all 56 counties, raising a variety of crops and livestock. Some have the benefit of irrigation, but others operate on completely dry land farms or ranches that rely on reservoirs to provide water to their livestock. The one thing these folks have in common is that they are all need water in order to raise the food and fiber that fuels this nation and much of the world. Over the years, farmers and ranchers have taken great strides in preserving and conserving one of our most important resources; water.

MFBF is disappointed by the EPA and the Corps’ announcement of intent to revise the definition of “waters of the U.S.” by first repealing the Navigable Waters Protection Rule (NWPR) and second, refining the pre-2015 definition of WOTUS. NWPR was a clear, defensible rule that appropriately balanced the objective, goals, and policies of the Clean Water Act. It provided our farmer and rancher members with the clean water and clear rules that we requested.

As a member of the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF), the Montana Farm Bureau Federation agrees with, and hereby incorporates, the substantive comments filed by AFBF and fully support their assertion that the Navigable Waters Protection Rule is capable of being a durable, defensible rule.

The Navigable Waters Protection Rule (NWPR) very clearly protects lakes, rivers and streams, the very areas intended for regulation by the Clean Water Act. Most ditches and areas where water sits temporarily are excluded, which is appropriate. This point is especially important in states like Montana

because due to our unique and extreme climate, there are low spots in fields and pastures that only hold water for very short periods of time, especially during the spring when snow is melting, or in the summer after a hard downpour of rain from a thunderstorm. These spots on the land that are wet for only short periods of time should never be considered jurisdictional.

As the Agencies move forward with defining WOTUS, we ask you to recognize the burden overreaching regulations place on farmers and ranchers, to respect the statute and not write the term “navigable” out of Clean Water Act regulations. We also ask you to remember the importance of cooperative federalism and the fact that where federal regulation ends, state regulation begins. In Montana, we have two dedicated agencies working toward the protection of state waters and we believe that because they are close to the people and resources they regulate, they are well equipped to do so, and have a track record of taking their responsibility seriously.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'HMcM', written over a light blue rectangular background.

Hans McPherson  
President





August 30, 2021

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

On behalf of the 20,000 member families of the Montana Farm Bureau Federation, I would like to thank you for accepting comments on how the USDA will invest \$500 million into the meat processing capacity of our nation. Agriculture is the number one economic driver in the state of Montana, with beef cattle making up the largest segment of our industry. Therefore, the way these funds are spent will have a major impact on our producers. The Montana Farm Bureau Federation represents farmers and ranchers from every county in the state. These farmer and rancher members all have unique business plans with slightly different needs when it comes to meat processing capacity. That said, the coronavirus pandemic highlighted some needs that can be addressed with these allotted funds which will be beneficial to all of them. Our recommendations are as follows:

***Prioritize funding to expand existing capacity and storage at very small, small and medium sized plants.*** Montana is unique in that most of the calves born here are shipped out of state after weaning for eventual finishing and processing in states with a larger feed base and larger consumer populations. Even still, there are getting to be more calves raised to finish here in the state and the demand for locally processed meat is on the uptick. Montana is fortunate to have a good mix of USDA and state inspected processing plants, as well as small, custom exempt plants. These plants provide the essential service of turning our cattle into marketable meat products but unfortunately, they have been unable to keep up with increased demand. Many ranchers are looking at months or even longer waits for processing dates, which impedes their ability to market directly to consumers, or even to provide home raised meat to their own families. Prioritizing funding for expansion of these smaller plants, be they USDA or state inspected, will provide Montana farmers and ranchers with needed outlets for their products. Additionally, expanding storage, will help address the seasonality issue that is so impactful in our state. Most calves are born in the spring here due to our climate. This means that most beef cattle born and raised exclusively in Montana are ready to be processed at around the same time. Expanding cold storage will allow retailers and direct-to-consumer-marketers alike to satisfy more year-round demand.

***Prioritize funds for processors who wish to upgrade facilities, train more employees, or upgrade inspection levels.*** As cattle producers look to continue expanding direct to consumer marketing opportunities, interest in upgrading inspection status from custom exempt to state inspection, or from state inspected to USDA inspected will continue to increase. We hope that funds will be made available to help interested processors make needed upgrades. Furthermore, more ranchers are looking to expand their markets to consumers beyond our state borders as well. Just this year, our state began pursuing FSIS's Cooperative Interstate Shipping Program. MFBF believes that funds would be well spent to aide our Department of Livestock in obtaining this certification, and also on state inspected plants who wish to upgrade facilities and practices to become certified in the program. As these services are expanded, processors will need more skilled butchers and workers. Montana is fortunate to have an established meat processing certificate program at Miles Community College, and there are others in the works. Funding to support training programs like this, as well as to help processors put employees through a training, will be beneficial for the long-term success of our industry.

Thank you for your consideration,

Hans McPherson

President





**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

August 12, 2021

**CONTACT:**

[Chelsi Bay](#), Montana Department of Agriculture, (406) 444-3684

[Tina Bateman-Schlepp](#), Montana Department of Agriculture, (406) 444-0134

**Growth Through Agriculture Grant & Loan Program Funding Cycle is Now Open**

*GTA Pre-Application Submission Deadline is Monday, October 4, 2021*

**Helena, Mont.** – The Montana Department of Agriculture is announcing the opening of the 2021 funding cycle for the Growth Through Agriculture (GTA) Program. Montanans interested in innovating or expanding agricultural businesses are invited to apply for funds through the state grant and loan program.

“The Growth Through Agriculture program has helped hundreds of Montana businesses add value, scale up, and access new markets,” said Acting Director Christy Clark. “I am looking forward to seeing another round of innovative ideas and value-added proposals that will continue to elevate our agricultural economy here in Montana.”

The GTA program was established by the legislature to strengthen and diversify Montana’s agriculture industry by developing new agricultural products and processes. GTA grants and loans are awarded by the [Agriculture Development Council](#), consisting of seven members appointed by the Governor. GTA funding requires the investment of at least \$1 in matching funds for every \$1 in grant or loan assistance received.

Pre-applications for funding are due October 4<sup>th</sup>. Selected proposals from pre-applicants will be invited to submit a full application for funding in January. Information on submitting a pre-application, program guidelines, FAQs, and previously funded projects can be viewed online at [agr.mt.gov/GTA](http://agr.mt.gov/GTA). Applicants may apply for grants up to \$50,000 and loans up to \$100,000. Examples of eligible project activities include equipment purchases, construction costs, advertising and promotion, and consultant services. Those interested in applying can join a technical assistance call facilitated by the Department on August 24<sup>th</sup> from 12 – 1 p.m.

The Montana Department of Agriculture is serving Montana Agriculture and growing prosperity under the Big Sky. For more information on department programs and services, visit [agr.mt.gov](http://agr.mt.gov).

###



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Tuesday, August 31, 2021

**CONTACT:** [Chelsi Bay](#), MT Dept. of Agriculture, (406) 444-3684

**Additional Materials to Be Certified as Weed Free by MT Dept. of Agriculture**

**Helena, Mont.** – As established in [House Bill 93](#) signed during the 2021 legislative session, the Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) can now certify additional materials, such as gravel, as being free of noxious weeds.

Administrative rules for Noxious Weed Free Materials ([MAR Notice No. 4-21-273](#)) were recently adopted following a public hearing and comment period that received no comments, although industry groups have expressed support for certifying materials beyond forage.

“Laying the groundwork for more materials to be certified as weed-free allows the department to better serve Montana industries and protect our state from noxious weeds,” said MDA Acting Director Christy Clark. “With strong collaboration among county weed districts, MSU Extension, and our Noxious Weed Program staff, I am pleased to have such broad support for expanding the scope of state noxious weed services.”

Montana’s Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage Act was established by the 1995 Montana legislature to prevent noxious weed infestations, comply with forage import and export requirements, and educate citizens of the importance and incentive to market and handle noxious weed free forage. Until recently, the Noxious Weed Free Forage Program was limited to livestock forage, bedding, mulch, and other related materials like pellets and cubes. Now that the Certified Weed Free Materials program is established, the department can certify gravel as well as other construction and restoration products like straw mats and landscape mulch, at the request of businesses or organizations.

To learn more about the noxious weed free materials in Montana, visit [agr.mt.gov/Noxious-Weeds](http://agr.mt.gov/Noxious-Weeds), or contact Andrew Lam, Noxious Weed Free Materials Program Coordinator, at (406) 444-7819, or [Andrew.Lam@mt.gov](mailto:Andrew.Lam@mt.gov).

The Montana Department of Agriculture is serving Montana Agriculture and growing prosperity under the Big Sky. For more information, visit [agr.mt.gov](http://agr.mt.gov).

###



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Thursday, August 26, 2021

**CONTACT:** [Carli Davis](#), Montana Department of Agriculture, (406) 465-0531

**September Waste Pesticide Disposal Events Set for Havre, Great Falls, Lewistown & Bozeman**

*Pre-registration deadline is September 16<sup>th</sup>*

**Helena, Mont.** – The Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) is facilitating pesticide disposal events in its Central District (Havre, Great Falls, Lewistown, and Bozeman) during the week of September 20<sup>th</sup>.

Annual pesticide waste collection events have collected close to 720,000 pounds of pesticide waste from over 1,800 participants since the program's inception in 1994.

**2021 Pesticide Waste Collection Dates and Locations:**

Tuesday, September 21 <sup>st</sup>	Havre, MT
Wednesday, September 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Great Falls
Thursday, September 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Lewistown
Friday, September 24 <sup>th</sup>	Bozeman

The MDA program was designed to assist individuals with disposing of any pesticides that are unusable as originally intended, or cannot be used for any other purpose, in an environmentally responsible way. In effect, the pesticide and waste disposal program protects Montana's ecosystems and groundwater, as well as families, pets, livestock and drinking water from potentially hazardous materials.

Participants are encouraged to pre-register on the department's website at [agr.mt.gov/Pesticide-Waste-Disposal-Program](http://agr.mt.gov/Pesticide-Waste-Disposal-Program) by September 16, 2021. Registrations for pesticide waste collection events are accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis. There is no charge for the first 200 pounds of material; amounts over 200 pounds are assessed at \$1.00 per pound, and products are weighed on site. Additional fees may apply to pesticides with dioxins or dioxin precursors.

The Montana Department of Agriculture is serving Montana Agriculture and growing prosperity under the Big Sky. For more information on department programs and services, visit [agr.mt.gov](http://agr.mt.gov).

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

July 26, 2021

**CONTACT:**

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**Montana Hay Hotline Available for Producers Affected by Drought**

*Producers can list hay for sale or donation using Montana Hay Hotline*

**Helena, Mont.** – As severe drought conditions and wildfires persist across the state, the Montana Department of Agriculture is reminding agricultural producers of the availability of the Hay Hotline, an online tool that connects those interested in buying, selling, or donating hay or pasture.

The Hay Hotline allows producers to enter new listings with descriptions of the forage they have available to sell or donate. It also provides users with an option to search for available hay or pasture. The online tool is maintained by the Montana Department of Agriculture as a service to the agricultural industry with the expectation that all buyers and sellers will treat each other in an equitable and lawful manner.

The Hay Hotline is housed on the MDA website at [agr.mt.gov/Hay-Hotline](http://agr.mt.gov/Hay-Hotline). For more information on the Hay Hotline, contact the Agricultural Development & Marketing Bureau at (406) 444-2402 or [danielle.jones@mt.gov](mailto:danielle.jones@mt.gov).

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**MONTANA/RENEWABLES**

## MONTANA ENERGY TRANSITION

Calumet has announced it is converting a large portion of its Great Falls business into renewable feedstock processing. The project is underway and the company is building a coalition of stakeholders.

The renewable processing will be commissioned next year on soybean oil feedstock, with an end goal to integrate into local farm and ranch operations for renewable feedstocks.

### We Will:

- **Replace half of our crude run with renewable feedstock**
- **Build new "renewable hydrogen" plant**
- **Upgrade our specialty asphalt operations**
- **Partner with an investor**

This is an exceptional project that will allow us to lead the Montana energy transition. Our renewable supplies are needed in Canada and the West Coast, and our specialty asphalt plus conventional fuel supplies for Montana will remain available.

## QUICK FACTS

### Providing Solutions

- To have a positive impact on the challenges facing people and the planet.

### Energy Transition

- We are leading the energy transition in Montana transportation fuels while maintaining jobs. And we will continue to provide essential conventional products for Montana's infrastructure, farms, ranches, military, and motorists.

### Speed to Market

- We are uniquely positioned to convert our existing assets to renewable feedstock quickly and efficiently, with a timeline of less than one year.
- We are not the only company pursuing this kind of project, but the work needed to ready Great Falls is much less. The State of Montana is supportive which adds speed.

### Strategic Partner

- We have seen strong interest from a broad and diverse spectrum of potential partners who can help make this project successful for Calumet and for Montana.

### Full Employment

- The unique opportunity allows for an energy transition project that maintains full current employment and creates jobs both locally and at the corporate level.

### Montana Farm and Ranch

- High growth prospects for the Great Falls energy transition, combined with our vision to source feedstocks locally, will benefit Montana as we create new economic value chains.

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