

2025 IMPACT REPORT



FB MONTANA FARM BUREAU

The Voice of Agriculture®

FARM BUREAU IS...

leading Montana toward a future with a prosperous agriculture economy and thriving rural communities.

FARM BUREAU IS...

a grassroots organization dedicated to preserving and improving the agriculture and natural resource industries through member involvement in education, political activities, programs and services.

FARM BUREAU IS...

the state and nation's largest and most influential farm organization. We are a grassroots organization meaning that our strength, influence and effectiveness are at the county level of our 29 county Farm Bureaus.

FARM BUREAU IS...

a non-partisan, independent, non-governmental, voluntary organization of farm and ranch families united for the purpose of analyzing their problems and formulating action to achieve educational improvement, economic opportunity and social advancement.

FARM BUREAU IS...

the trusted grassroots voice, shaping policy to safeguard Montana Agriculture, and cultivating a prosperous network that invigorates rural communities.

Letter from the President



Much of Montana saw welcome moisture during the growing season of 2025. Although recent federal policy has shaken the cattle market, for the most part our rancher members enjoyed great cattle prices to help rebound from previous drought and grasshopper-plagued years. In grain country, the year was not as encouraging... low commodity prices coupled with erratic rain patterns created another year of frustration. I've learned that in challenging years such as this, our efforts as farmers and ranchers united through Farm Bureau is more important than ever.

Thanks to our grassroots members and team of staff experts, Montana Farm Bureau Federation has advanced our issue priorities. In this 2025 Impact Report you will see some of the highlights that explain how Montana Farm Bureau has worked to shape our future and build a stronger tomorrow for Montana agriculture. You will see many events and programs that cultivated leadership, helped our members connect with the ag community and influence policy makers.

I am thankful for the many Farm Bureau leaders across Montana whose efforts attributed to the accomplishments in this Impact Report. If you're not already involved in Farm Bureau, consider joining us to work for agriculture and rural Montana to sustain our way of life and this great state that we love.

Respectfully,



Cynthia Johnson, MFBF President

2025 IMPACT REPORT

Growing Your Network

MFBF Annual Convention

The MFBF Annual Convention is just that - an annual highlight for over 400 of Montana's agricultural industry leaders. The 2024 Convention boasted national industry speakers like Vance Crowe on family farm legacies, Sierra Jepson with Butcher Solutions, Austin O'Brien on artificial intelligence in agriculture, Marsha Goetting on rural mental health and Dr. Frank Mitloehner on climate change. Attendees get to learn from these experts and each other while navigating their farm and ranch businesses. 131 delegates from 29 counties took to the floor for over eight hours of discussion and voting, ultimately covering 81 policy resolutions on everything from black bears, beef checkoff dollars, water, private property rights to livestock laws. Overall, the convention is an opportunity for neighbors and new friends to gather and celebrate another year of success and growth for Montana's largest ag organization, and to secure a prosperous future for the industry.



MFBF Summer Conference

Around 200 Montana Farm Bureau members and guests gathered June 9–11 at Fairmont Hot Springs Resort for the 2025 Summer Conference. The event brought together our farmer and rancher members and industry leaders to discuss key agricultural issues, shape grassroots policy, and network with peers. Keynote speaker, Karen Grosz, inspired attendees with her engaging “Quiet Leadership” presentation. R.J. Laher, Director of Government Affairs with the American Farm Bureau shared updates on the Farm Bill, trade and livestock issues. Farm Bureau members are annually appointed to our nine commodity advisory committees that represent areas within the industry that they are familiar with or have expertise in. This event marks the beginning of the MFBF Policy Development process; therefore, our Summer Conference attendees participated in committee meetings, educational breakout sessions, and social events, making it a productive week for Montana agriculture.

MFBF YF&R Leadership Conference

We kicked off 2025 in Missoula with the MFBF Young Farmer & Rancher Leadership Conference, held January 17–19. The event united young agricultural leaders from across Montana for a weekend of education, networking, and inspiration. Attendees toured Turner Farms and Oxbow Cattle Company to explore direct-to-consumer operations, as well as Lifeline Dairy and Buck & Dave's Eggs to learn about their business models and daily practices. Workshops featured sessions on succession planning, EPDs, timber management, and a live demonstration by Montana Ag K9s, whose detection dogs showcased their ability to sniff out diseases in potatoes. Saturday evening concluded with a lively dueling pianos performance that brought the crowd together in celebration. The conference strengthened Montana agriculture by inspiring the next generation of leaders to take on challenges, share their voices, and continue shaping a strong future for the industry.



Collegiate Young Farmers & Ranchers

The Montana Farm Bureau proudly supports three Collegiate Young Farmer & Rancher chapters located at Montana State University in Bozeman, the University of Montana Western in Dillon, and Miles Community College in Miles City. These clubs connect students who share an interest in agriculture, provide insight into the work of agricultural organizations, and offer hands-on experience with local, state, and national government through participation in legislative activities. Members also learn about Farm Bureau policies and programs while promoting careers in agriculture and related industries. In 2025, the collegiate chapters were active and engaged, competing in the Discussion Meet at convention, participating in the Calling on the Capitol event in Helena, attending the AFBF FUSION Conference in Denver, joining county Farm Bureau events and annual meetings, and hosting back-to-school socials and Trunk or Treats. Know someone attending one of these colleges? Encourage them to join their campus CYF&R Club!



County Networking Events

This year, Northwest Counties Farm Bureau created numerous networking events for their local communities. During May Membership Month, Northwest Counties put a fun-filled spin on their membership drive, inviting friends, family and neighbors to a spring BBQ, dance and Rancher Olympic Competition. A contest comprised of everyday ranch chores, participants competed for a free Farm Bureau membership. The creativity and success of the event even made its way to the application pool for American Farm Bureau's County Awards of Excellence.

Northwest Counties YF&R also started a monthly Coffee Hour, moving around to local coffee shops throughout their counties and purchasing coffees for other young farmers and ranchers who came to network and connect with like-minded individuals. Northwest YF&R has also been hosting practice discussion meets for District 1 members who are planning to participate in, or who are interested in learning more about the MFBF YF&R Discussion Meet. Not only does this give members an opportunity to practice their discussion skills, but it also has brought a group of young farmers and ranchers together to discuss issues in agriculture and connect with each other.



REAL Montana

Since its inception over 10 years ago, MFBF has been a Platinum Sponsor of the REAL Montana program. In addition to our annual program sponsorship, the Montana Farm Bureau Foundation offers current Farm Bureau members selected for each class, a scholarship to cover half the cost of tuition.

Resource Education and Agriculture Leadership (REAL) Montana is a comprehensive two-year leadership program offering in-depth education and training in the agriculture and natural resource industries. REAL Montana is building a network of informed and engaged leaders to advance the natural resource industries in Montana. MFBF is proud to count many REAL Montana alumni as top leaders within our organization.



Investing in Education &

Local Educational Events

Meet the Bulls

Every other year during our legislative session, Lewis & Clark County Farm Bureau host “Meet the Bulls” at a member’s working cattle ranch. Legislators from across the state are invited to step out of the Capitol and into ranch life for an evening of connection and education. Timed with the annual sale of registered Simmental bulls, the event showcases over 50 bulls including herd bulls weighing over 2,000 lbs. For many, it’s their first time on a working ranch. Guests enjoy a catered BBQ beef dinner, socializing, and discussions on priority issues. “Meet the Bulls” bridges the gap between policymakers and producers with the backdrop of a legacy cattle ranch.

Water Seminar

Park County Farm Bureau offered a couple of different educational seminars in 2025. To address a pressing issue within their community, Park County Farm Bureau board members hosted a Water Education Seminar in July with Hertha Lund from Lund Law. With water law being a complex and delicate issue, this seminar acted to educate water users about their water rights. The event drew in 80 plus and gave community members the opportunity to receive answers to important questions within the water world.

Stop the Bleed Workshop

Southwest Counties Farm Bureau is working to save lives by Stopping the Bleed. In October, Southwest Counties hosted a workshop on First Aid, particularly the Stop the Bleed course, with flight medic Chris Rosa. Attendees walked through life saving techniques like applying tourniquets and packing bleeding wounds. With many remote areas in Montana, and constant safety dangers on a farm and ranch, Southwest Counties saw a need for first aid training and hopes to continue addressing this need with a series of courses for their local community.



Scholarships

MFBF and the MFB Foundation offer scholarships for student members pursuing higher education and leadership development. In 2025, the MFBF Women’s Leadership Committee awarded \$3,000 to graduating seniors pursuing secondary education, and the MFB Foundation awarded \$4,500 for students in their first and second year of college education. MFB Foundation also awarded \$10,000 in scholarships to 10 collegiate students who attended the AFBF Young Farmer & Rancher Leadership Conference in Denver, CO. Both organizations put an emphasis on supporting young people in agriculture to pursue their goals.

AFBF FUSION Conference

MFBF made a strong impression at the AFBF FUSION Conference, held March 7–10 in Denver, CO, with nearly 50 attendees representing the YF&R, WLC, and P&E committees. The event gathered more than 1,100 members from across the country for a weekend focused on networking, education, and leadership development. Montana’s group enjoyed several tours, including the Colorado State University Cattle Research Center, the Denver Zoo, Bubble Planet, and Carboy Winery. Cady Brown, a University of Montana Western student, represented Montana in the Collegiate Discussion Meet. Inspiring keynote speakers and breakout sessions on leadership development, advocacy, and member value filled the conference, leaving attendees energized and equipped with fresh ideas to strengthen their farms and Farm Bureau.

Ag in Color Drawing Contest

MFBF’s Ag in Color Drawing Contest encourages students to explore the importance of agriculture through art. Kindergarten through sixth grade students across Montana submitted creative entries showcasing how agriculture shapes our lives. The categories are different for each grade level and are curriculum based to match topics covered in the classroom; Farm Animals, Crops, Grains, Cattle, Noxious Weeds, Safety and Ag Careers found in Montana provide the drawing inspiration. Teachers and parents can access free lesson plans to accompany the program in their classroom. For the 2024–2025 school year, we had an impressive 65 state-level entries to review and select from. Winners and their classroom teacher received \$100 cash prizes for their hard work.

MFBF in the Classroom

MFBF volunteers know that agriculture education starts in the classroom and some of our most valuable time is spent with youth and teaching them about where their food comes from. Thanks to the generosity of the MFB Foundation, free agriculture literacy materials are provided for volunteers to take to Montana classrooms, youth groups, daycares, and libraries. They use exciting and colorful books about agriculture and accredited teacher guides with fun activities to impress the importance of Montana agriculture on young minds. In 2024, over \$5,000 worth of books, guides, ag fact booklets, and agriculture magazines were provided to elementary and middle school students.

Leadership Development

AFBF Annual Convention & Trade Show

Thirty-seven MFBF members started the year off by attending the American Farm Bureau Federation Annual Convention January 24-29 in San Antonio, Texas along with 6,000 other Farm Bureau members from across the country. The convention is always an exciting time for members to connect with others in the agriculture industry and to recognize the vastness of the organization. Members participate in valuable meetings, attend energizing sessions with incredible keynote speakers and have the opportunity to tour farms, ranches, and historical sites that put a spotlight on Texas commodities like cotton, taxidermy, vineyards, working ranches and livestock feed manufacturing. MFBF delegates sit on the national delegate floor and discuss law-changing policies that truly have an impact on the farmers and ranchers they represent back at home.



Young Farmer & Rancher Competitive Events

Montana Farm Bureau YF&R members can showcase their skills and leadership through competitive events, including the Discussion Meet, Achievement Award, and Excellence in Agriculture programs. The Discussion Meet simulates a committee meeting, challenging participants to engage in thoughtful discussions on agricultural topics while demonstrating cooperation, communication, and problem-solving skills. The Montana winner receives a Polaris Ranger and an expense-paid trip to compete at the American Farm Bureau Annual Convention. In 2025, Nick Courville, chair of the YF&R Committee, earned this honor. The Achievement Award recognizes contestants for growth and financial progress in their farming operations, leadership within Farm Bureau, and involvement in their communities. Judges look for excellence in management, enterprise growth, and self-initiative. Similarly, the Excellence in Agriculture program celebrates YF&R members who contribute to agriculture and Farm Bureau while exhibiting leadership in civic, service, and community activities. These competitive programs provide Montana's next generation of agricultural leaders with opportunities to learn, be recognized, and inspire others in the industry.



A.C.E. (Advocate. Communicate. Educate.)

MFBF's ACE Leadership Program is designed to empower Farm Bureau members to be confident, effective leaders in their county Farm Bureau and local communities. Each year, MFBF selects 10 Farm Bureau members to take part in this premier leadership program. Class members receive in-depth leadership development training along with practical application strategies. ACE participants learn to identify the needs of their own communities and the role they, and Farm Bureau, have in serving those needs. Without a vibrant, healthy grassroots foundation we cannot profoundly affect change on the policy issues impacting agriculture. During this year-long program, participants attend six in-person seminars focused on enhancing advocacy skills and leadership development. Applications are available online at mfbf.org and are due December 8, 2025.



Supporting 4-H & FFA

Montana Farm Bureau Federation is committed to investing in agricultural education and leadership development—key foundations for the future of farming, ranching, and the ag industry. Through both financial contributions and volunteer efforts, MFBF members and staff support 4-H and FFA programs that help young people gain hands on experience, industry knowledge, and commitment to the agriculture industry.

In 2025, MFBF invested over \$12,000 in FFA members and events, \$6,000 in state-level 4-H activities, \$1,600 in the Youth Speech Contest, and \$6,000 in scholarships for student teachers in agricultural education. By sponsoring scholarships, providing resources, and hosting youth events, MFBF helps ensure that Montana's next generation of agricultural leaders is equipped to grow, lead, and strengthen their communities—securing a bright future for Montana agriculture.

Amplifying Grassroots Voices

Washington, D.C. Fly-In

The 2025 MFBF Washington, D.C. Fly-In brought six MFBF members and staff to D.C. to tell their stories and share a united message about the needs of Montana farmers and ranchers. In just three short but action-packed days, the group met with our Senators and Representatives, agency officials at both USDA-Forest Service and the Department of the Interior, the White House Office of Public Liaison, and even an agriculture ambassador from the Embassy of the United Kingdom. During these meetings, the group was able to thank Congress for passage of key tax provisions and Farm Bill programming that have long been a priority of our organization in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, describe the needs for other Farm Bill programming, labor reform, regulatory relief, new trade opportunities, and a strong battle against the New World Screw Worm.

The D.C. Fly-In gives our members an opportunity to make a difference at the highest levels of government, by putting them in front of key elected and appointed leaders. These efforts really do pay off in both the short and long term. After our visit, we saw positive changes the farm labor disaggregation rules, we were encouraged by the direction of Interior on their rulemaking regarding a new grazing rule and the rescission of the widely opposed Conservation Lands Rule finalized during the Biden Administration. We were positively received by our delegation and by staff at the White House, creating and cementing important relationships which will benefit all farmers and ranchers in the future.

Voter Voice

Voter Voice is our members direct connection to advocate for agriculture. With the 69th Legislative Session, MFBF called members to action on many important issues affecting agriculture. This allowed our boots on the ground farmers and ranchers to share their perspective with their local legislators at the click of a button. Members were asked to share their comment on multiple issues throughout the session including; HB 886: Provide for water division court judges, HB 119: Establish the Montana Cattle Committee, HB 522: Provide pesticide warning labels, SB 178 and SB 358. Along with Action Alerts, Voter Voice provided our members with weekly session updates, the Legislative E-Source that tracked the progress of bills MFBF has taken a position on. Nationally, members were called into action to provide comments on the USFW Proposed Rule on Grizzly Bears. Overall, MFBF saw 116 members take action to advocate for agriculture and 45 new advocates join our Voter Voice program. All voting MFBF members are able to access

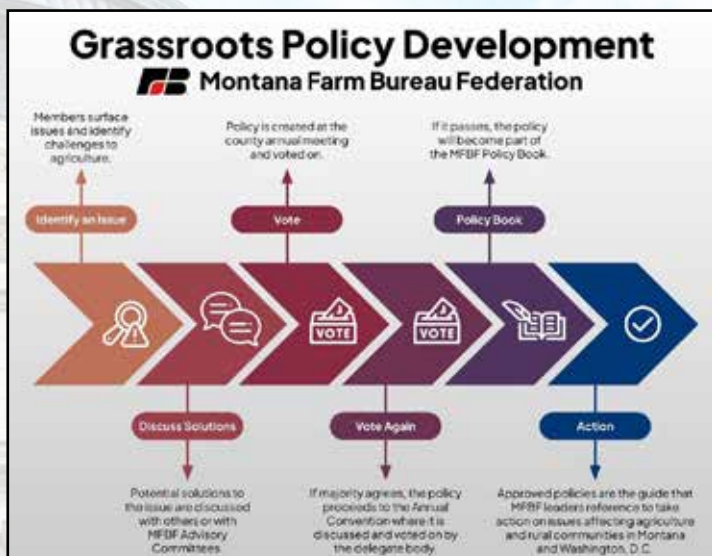
Voter Voice through our website by using their membership login information.



The Spokesman Magazine

The Montana Farm Bureau Spokesman is the organization's award-winning flagship publication reaching 19,000 Farm Bureau member families. The publication serves our membership in two ways; sharing information including thoughtful editorials, critical policy updates and crucial safety advice and providing advice to new residents of our state; and highlighting our members and county Farm Bureaus. Our editorial staff showcases involved members including new faces on our board, posts from committee chairs, book reviews from member authors, photo galleries from our events featuring a collage of faces and extensive county news. Our loyal advertisers support the publication and offer an array of goods and services. With a readership of 60,000, the publication reaches our members and beyond, reflecting our organization and everyone who belongs to it.





Grassroots Policy Development Process

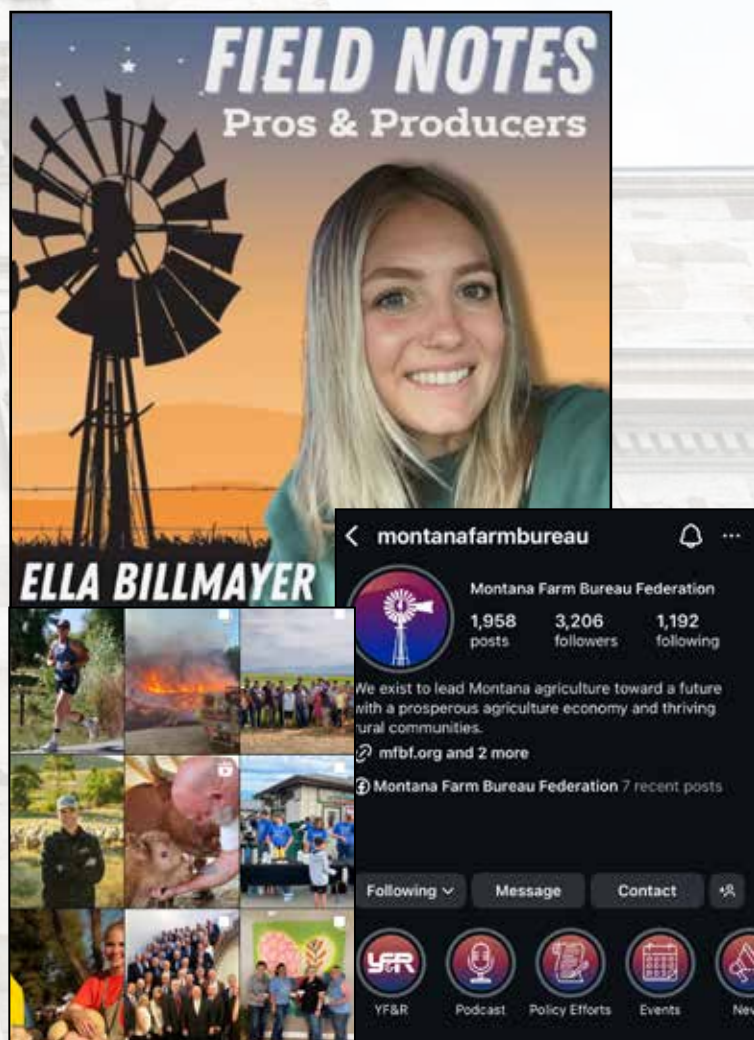
The MFBF process for creating policy is purely grassroots, starting with a member, or members, who identify an issue that they see, or foresee, affecting Montana agriculture. Solutions are then discussed with other Farm Bureau members at a County Farm Bureau meeting or during Summer Issue Advisory Committee meetings. From there, a formal policy is created and presented at a County Farm Bureau's Annual Meeting. The policy is voted on by our ag producer voting members, and if the majority agrees, the policy recommendation is sent on to the State Office. The policy recommendation is reviewed by the Policy Development Committee for clarity and grammar and is then brought before the voting delegate body at Annual Convention. If the policy is passed by a majority vote of the delegate body, it is added into the MFBF policy book and can be used by our lobbyists to support Montana agriculture in the legislature. An example of this policy process is HB 356, which adds black bears to the livestock loss board, sponsored by Rep. Eric Tilleman. This bill started as a policy recommendation at Cascade Farm Bureau's 2024 annual meeting. From there, a draft bill was written, made its way through the legislative process and was signed into law on May 12, 2025.

MSU Bobcat Corporate Sponsorship

As our land grant university, Montana State University has deep-rooted connections in rural Montana communities. These connections are shared by Montana Farm Bureau. As a sponsor for MSU Bobcat Football we extend our reach to thousands of Bobcat fans and MSU alumni who follow the Cats every Saturday during the football season. Outreach to our mutually aligned core audience magnifies our impact for rural Montana and builds brand awareness for MFBF.

Social Media & NEW Field Notes Podcast

MFBF has entered new frontiers online over the last year. This summer, we joined TikTok and started the Montana Farm Bureau Field Notes podcast on Spotify, Amazon, and YouTube! We also started a Facebook group exclusive to our Young Farmer & Rancher members. Across platforms, we've welcomed 1,265 new followers to the Farm Bureau family and garnered over 2 million views on our posts. Top performing content ranges from winter calving encouragement, to member action figure graphics, to our collegiate members meeting with Governor Gianforte and Education Secretary, Linda McMahon. Our highest ranking podcast episode was regarding mental health in agriculture with Ella Billmeyer of Havre telling her family's story. Our communications are a direct reflection of the excellence of our membership and this year, we've covered involvement from the county level to our national conferences and presence in Washington, D.C., our success at Montana's 69th Legislative Session, our programs like ACE, Hoofin' It For Hunger, various committees and much more. Our community continues to expand, and we're excited to keep delivering value, making connections, and building a space where we can connect and share together.



Follow us!



Invigorating Rural Communities

Foundation Mini-Grants

The Montana Farm Bureau Foundation's mission emphasizes support to rural economic development and youth in agriculture. The MFB Foundation awarded nine, \$1,000 "mini-grants" in the last fiscal year. This funding went toward projects like a first-grade classroom hydroponics system where they grew and harvested vegetables in Cascade. Over 30 toolkits were purchased for the Scobey School's ag shop so students could work on small engines. Lewis & Clark County Farm Bureau received a grant to host their Ag Day where over 150 4th grade students learned about farming and ranching at a working ranch. Other grant monies were awarded to events focused on local industry education opportunities and a project at Montana State University where students are studying ag economics on a global scale and get to travel for hands-on career readiness in agriculture and professional development opportunities.



Montana Ag Safety Program

The Montana Ag Safety Program's mission is to provide resources, trainings and support to farmers and ranchers to increase workplace safety in Montana's agriculture industry. The program currently serves approximately 200 farms and ranches with Montana State Fund worker's compensation policies who are members of MFBF, MSGA, MGGA, MCA, MWGA, and MPPC. Task-specific resources and training materials are available for instant download covering 40+ topics and are available in both English and Spanish. Trainings remain a popular program offering. Trainings have been conducted across the state covering topics that range from emergency preparation and response, first aid and general farm safety. The MASP is proud to work with active Farm Bureaus to host county wide events for MFBF members like the Ag Safety Day hosted by Rosebud-Treasure County Farm Bureau each spring. Trainings have also been conducted in partnership with NRCS, Winnett ACES, Dan Scott Ranch Management Program and BART Farm, and Montana Young Ag Couples Conference. Engaging with members directly on the farm and ranch is a unique element of the MASP. Each year visits are made to approximately ¼ of the members enrolled in the Montana Ag Safety Program. This year, MFBF and the MASP hosted the AFBF Health and Safety Conference to work with our colleagues from across the U.S. on ways to promote health and safety for America's farmers and ranchers.



Local Ag Days and Farm Fairs

During the months of April and May, many county Farm Bureaus take the opportunity to educate the youth in their area on the importance of agriculture, ATV Safety and common farming and ranching practices. In 2025, 14 county Farm Bureaus participated in, or hosted, a Farm Fair for local schools. Many counties like Broadwater, Gallatin, Judith Basin and Front Range educate kids on ATV safety and the proper ways to recreate or work on an ATV. Others like Roosevelt, Fergus and Sweet Grass explain safety around tractors and grain bins at stations during their Ag Days. Cascade County Farm Bureau puts on a branding station for over 800 kids at their local Farm Fair and Powder River/Carter County Farm Bureau visits small schools within their counties to share the ABCs of Farm Safety with over 200 kids. Many other county Farm Bureaus are the main hosts of their local Farm Fairs. Ravalli, Northwest, Lewis and Clark and Yellowstone all work hard to bring Farm Fairs to life for local schools. Thanks to the help of our county Farm Bureaus, thousands of kids from a variety of backgrounds learn the importance of agriculture from the experts in our economy.



Helping Those in Need

Drought, fire, family emergencies and the effects of inflation can have a devastating impact on Montana family farms and ranches. Montana Farm Bureau Foundation Board of Directors established a Disaster Relief Fund to provide critical financial support to Montana agriculture producers facing difficult times. You can donate to the fund at <http://mfbf.org/Foundation/Donate-Today> or scan this QR code. If you or someone you know could benefit from the Disaster Relief Fund, you can apply at the same site.



Putting Food on the Table

Montana Farm Bureau members annually answer the call to action to support our neighbors during their most difficult times. We work closely with the two Montana Ronald McDonald House Charities in Billings and Missoula by providing food, meat for their freezers, children's activities and guest supplies. This year, Yellowstone County initiated the Beef Up Your Freezer campaign encouraging county Farm Bureaus to donate money or beef to supply the two homes with healthy beef from Montana ranches. Members across the state also focus monetary donations to their local food banks to ensure families have access to healthy food.



Hoofin' it for Hunger

The MFBF Young Farmer & Rancher Committee hosted the annual Hoofin' it for Hunger Run. The 5K and 10K run was held September 20 in Dillon with all proceeds from the race donated to the Montana Food Bank Network. This event is part of a larger national effort of the YF&R Committee. Whether the contribution is a bushel, a dollar, or an hour, Farm Bureau is working to finish an important job – making sure every American can enjoy the bounty produced on our farms and ranches. The Montana Farm Bureau YF&R Committee is proud to have raised over \$100,000 for the Montana Food Bank Network.



MT High School Association Sponsorship

MFBF is proud to support the Montana High School Association (MHS) as an Official Corporate Sponsor. Montana high schools are often the center of a thriving community, and extra-curricular activities are vital to the fabric of those communities. Many Montana high school students, especially in rural areas, come from farming and ranching families. By supporting MHS, MFBF directly invests in the local communities that form our core membership. This helps build stronger connections and shows a commitment to the youth in rural Montana.

Legal Advocacy Supporting Rural Communities

State of Montana v BLM and American Prairie Reserve Update

In 2022, MFBF and Phillips County Farm Bureau intervened in three appeals challenging the Bureau of Land Management's final decision on requested changes to the grazing permits that allow the American Prairie Reserve to graze bison on several grazing allotments in Phillips County.

MFBF argued that BLM's decisions regarding APR grazing wild bison is not in compliance with the Taylor Grazing Act or its implementing regulations and there were fundamental problems with the BLM's socioeconomic impacts of the grazing permit changes. BLM's socioeconomic analysis is materially flawed because the APR's bison herd is not managed as a commercial bison herd thus there is real and impactful harm to the local community.

Update

BLM has filed a motion to voluntarily remand the Final Decision to permit BLM to reconsider and reevaluate the existing permits and associated management for all allotments subject to the consolidated appeals.

MFBF responded in that we would only consent to the BLM's motion for voluntary remand on the condition the motion make clear that the underlying APR permits are vacated. In the event the BLM intends to request remand without vacatur, MFBF opposes the request.

Although BLM's decision to remand their Final Decision seems like a win, we are concerned that remanding the decision without vacating the permits would only prolong the issue without providing MFBF and other plaintiffs the remedy that we were seeking. That remedy would be to vacate APR's grazing permits that we argue were unduly changed to accommodate the APR.

Safeguarding the Agriculture Economy

One Big Beautiful Bill Act

Passage of the Farm Bureau-supported One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) was a big economic win for America's farmers, Montana certainly included. The bill improved and extended most of the Farm Bill, with an additional investment into existing farm programs equivalent to over \$65 billion over the next ten years. These improvements include the continuation of safety net programs such as ARC and PLC through 2031, increased reference prices, and updates to base acres. Risk management is also improved in the crop insurance title as and the bill makes several significant updates to strengthen and modernize the program through 2031. Additionally, it makes permanent many of the important provisions from the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act that were set to expire this year. Those provisions include an expanded estate tax exemption, expensing and depreciation provisions, and Section 199A which lowers the share of farming profits spent on taxes and is a big win for small businesses nationwide that compete alongside corporations with lower tax rates. This is a double whammy positive for agriculture because it put more "farm back in the Farm Bill" and kept our taxes at lower levels, helping improve profitability.

Regulatory Reform

Montana Farm Bureau's continued push for positive regulatory reform is starting to pay off. Thanks to our persistent advocacy, the Department of the Interior has started the process of fully rescinding the Conservation Lands Rule, which we opposed during the Biden presidency, and has taken up the task of rewriting the Grazing Rule with an eye toward making the rule work better for lessees. The USDA-Forest Service has also commenced a grazing rule rewrite of their own and announced at the end of the year that it would fully rescind the Roadless Rule, which Farm Bureau opposed since its inception because it harms access to allotments for grazing and hampers forest management. Likewise, the EPA has turned its attention to finalizing a WOTUS rule that satisfies Farm Bureau's request for clean water and clear rules.

MFBF PAC

Montana Farm Bureau Federation's Political Action Committee (PAC) is a non-partisan, voluntarily funded group that seeks to promote the interest of Montana agriculture in state government. Our grassroots PAC board helped educate legislators by supporting Lewis and Clark county's event, Meet the Bulls, in February. The MFBF PAC is also helping MFBF staff connect with legislators during the interim by funding educational events for legislators. The first of these events was held in October and focused on water-related issues. It provided elected officials—many of whom had limited experience with water policy—a valuable opportunity to speak directly with water users and tour an irrigation ditch, gaining firsthand insight into the importance of water in agriculture.

The MFBF PAC is committed to supporting candidates who understand and prioritize Montana agriculture, and to educating policy makers on how to effectively protect and promote the industry. With the generous donations from our membership, our PAC is able to ensure that there will always be boots under the desks in Helena.



Make America Healthy Again

When the Trump Administration published their first version of the Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) initiative, it included some concerning provisions surrounding the use of pesticides and other modern farming practices. Farm Bureau members from across the country reached out to their Congressmen and Senators, and Farm Bureau leaders discussed concerns with officials at the highest levels of government, President Trump included. The result was a much more favorable final version that celebrates the good work of American farmers and ranchers and the healthy food we produce. This positive outcome was made possible by farmers and ranchers positively and proactively sharing their perspectives.





International Trade

MFBF President, Cyndi Johnson, took part in Governor Gianforte's trade mission to South Korea and Japan during October 2025 to strengthen established international relationships and represent Farm Bureau's support for Montana's cattle producers, grain growers, and pulse growers. South Korea is Montana's second-largest trading partner with exports totaling \$335 million and Japan consistently imports Montana hard wheat, which amounted to \$38 million last year. The group met with representatives from the Korea International Trade Association (KITA) and focused on beef imports to South Korea while meeting with the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USBFE). Johnson concluded that the trade mission was successful, noting her primary inclusion was to maintain existing relationships, while other delegates worked to grow new markets.

Legal Advocacy Safeguarding Ag Economy

Exempt Well Legal Challenge

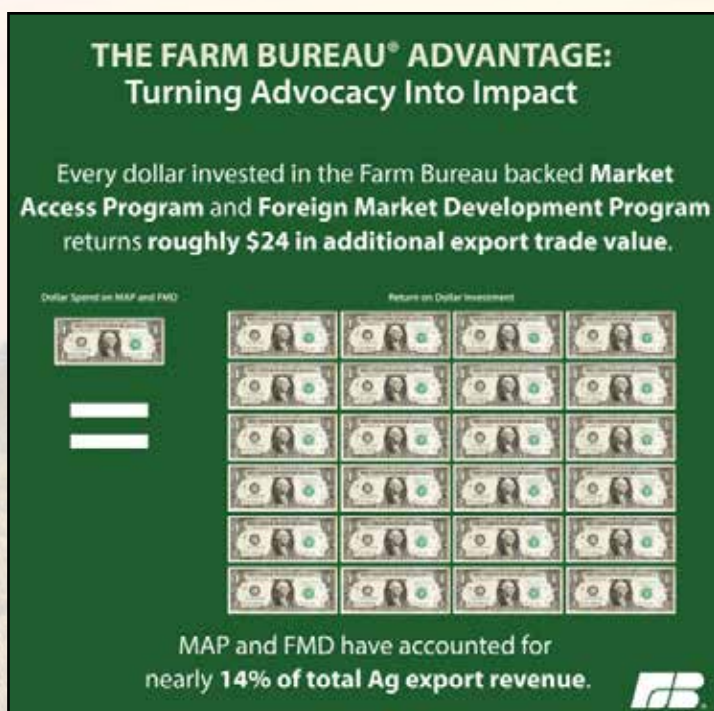
Montana Farm Bureau Federation has just recently joined cities and towns, individual landowners, conservation groups, and agricultural irrigators to protect Montana's water rights in challenge to exempt well loophole. The legal challenge will be held in Montana state court against the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) and the State of Montana over its continued implementation of the state's "exempt well" law, which allows unregulated groundwater development outside the state's permitting system.

The lawsuit seeks to protect Montana's senior water right holders and restore fairness and accountability to the state's water administration system. Montana law guarantees that senior appropriators—those with older, established rights—are first in line to use available water. However, the "exempt well loophole" has allowed developers to drill thousands of new groundwater wells without a permit, even in basins that are legally closed to new appropriations. The unchecked proliferation of these wells has reduced stream flows, impaired senior water rights, incentivized urban sprawl and undermined the State's constitutional obligation to manage and protect Montana's waters for the benefit of its people.

In 2016, the Montana Supreme Court ordered the DNRC to close a regulatory loophole that had allowed developers to drill thousands of wells outside the state's permitting process. Despite that ruling, the number of unregulated wells has skyrocketed over the past decade as the State has failed to adopt meaningful policies to rein in abuse of the exemption—leading directly to today's legal challenge.

The lawsuit, filed in Lewis and Clark County, challenges § 85-2-306(3)(a)(iii), MCA (the "Exempt Well Law"), on several constitutional grounds. Plaintiffs allege that the law:

- Violates Article IX, Section 3, which protects existing water rights and requires the State to ensure that senior appropriators are not impaired by new water uses.
- Violates Montanans' rights to equal protection and due process under Article II, Sections 4 and 17, by granting exempt well users preferential access without a process to protect other water right holders effectively granting privilege to exempt well development over law-abiding senior rights holders and those that look to go through the permitting process for new uses.
- Violates the public's right to know and participate in government decisions under Article II, Sections 8 and 9, by allowing thousands of wells to be approved without public notice, transparency, or review.



The Voice of Agriculture®

Legislative Session Success

MFBB made a powerful impact during the 2025 Legislative Session, taking positions on 80 bills. MFBB stood strong to protect essential tools like pesticides and vaccines, preserve Montana's state lands from development, and secure funding for vital programs including middle school ag education. MFBB also championed private property rights by advocating for the protection of senior water rights and pushing for stronger trespass penalties. It was a busy session, and Farm Bureau is proud to fight for Montana agriculture every step of the way by providing a voice for our member's grassroots policy.



Calling on the Capitol

None of this work would be possible without the robust efforts of our members through our grassroots policy development process and their continued engagement throughout the legislative session. Nearly 60 dedicated individuals joined us in Helena this February to put MFBB policy into action during Montana Farm Bureau's Calling on the Capitol event. MFBB members, along with a group of young veterinarians, came together for two impactful days of learning, networking, and advocacy. From legislative briefings and department updates to a meeting with Secretary of State, Christy Jacobsen, Governor Gianforte and a reception with lawmakers, attendees experienced the legislative process firsthand. The event was not only informative, it was energizing and deeply meaningful, reminding everyone of the power of showing up, speaking out, and working together to shape the future of agriculture in Montana.

The efforts did not stop at Calling on the Capitol. Members also testified and reached out to their local legislators throughout the session to help ensure lawmakers knew where Montana agriculture stood on key issues. Thank you to all our members that participated.

Livestock Loss

On the state level, our policy development process was exemplified by a county Farm Bureau who raised the issue of adding black bears predation as a covered loss under the Livestock Loss Reduction Program. Leaders from Cascade County Farm Bureau championed the effort by helping secure a sponsor for the legislation and supporting the bill through the legislative process. Farm Bureau was able to achieve passage of this legislation through strategic drafting, supportive testimony, and member input giving the issue true meaning and real life impacts in front of the Legislature.

Wildlife

MFBB supported bills that protect private property rights. These included increasing criminal trespass penalties to include revoking hunting and fishing privileges for up to two years and expanding definitions to include shed hunting as part of hunting and fishing. Additionally, MFBB supported legislation requiring FWP to notify county officials when releasing large predators. This will ensure that large predators are not released without the knowledge of county commissioners and sheriffs. All the bills successfully made it through the process and are now law.

Protecting Critical Inputs

MFBB worked to protect critical agricultural inputs, opposing bills that would have disrupted access to equipment repairs and essential vaccines. Two bills on vaccines had broad enough language to effectively ban modified live and clostridia vaccines in the state. This could have had a devastating impact on the livestock industry in Montana causing ranchers to have potentially critically high death losses from diseases that are easily prevented with vaccines that are safe and effective. Fortunately, these were both defeated.

Water

MFBF fought hard to prevent the expansion of exempt wells, successfully defeating two bills and closely monitored a third that could have been amended. In the end, no new legislation on exempt wells passed and Montana agricultural water users are protected from an expansion of this loophole that incentivizes urban sprawl and has no checks of balances for senior water right holders. On the post-adjudication front, there was no resolution on continuing the Water Court after final adjudication. The sunset on the Water Court was successfully removed though, ensuring its continuation and allowing water users to petition to go to water court with any actions they see fit.

Property Taxes

Residential property tax relief was a major focus for lawmakers during this session. MFBF worked to protect agriculture from a tax shift. While not entirely successful, we secured important provisions: In the final bill, which raised property taxes on second homes by up to 68%, MFBF secured an amendment exempting secondary residences on agricultural property from being taxed as second homes. MFBF also defeated two bills that would have directly shifted the tax burden to agriculture. MFBF was also able to support legislation that exempted agriculture from open space levies which passed and is now law.



Funding Secured

MFBF supported increased funding for ag education, veterinary training, and the noxious weed trust fund. Unfortunately, due to budget constraints, funding for veterinary training and the noxious weed trust fund were both vetoed. However, middle school agricultural education will see increased funding and will help to increase access to students to learn a lifelong love of agriculture.



Wolves

Wolves can have a significant economic impact on livestock operations. A Market Intel from the American Farm Bureau Federation outlines the long-term economic consequences of wolf predation, including the direct loss of animals, stress-related impacts on livestock health, and the costs associated with mitigation efforts. It estimates that wolves in Montana cost ranchers nearly \$23 million in direct losses, increased stress on cattle, and additional management expenses incurred when prevention measures are taken (American Farm Bureau Federation, 2025). It is important to note that these costs occur even when there is not direct predation, just the threat of predation can cause increased costs as ranchers take precautionary measure to co-exist or cattle deal with stress related to the presents of wolves. MFBF relayed this important information to the Fish and Wildlife Commission asking them to take into consideration how an expanding wolf population affects ranchers while they make important quota and season setting concerns. This is just one example of how AFBF and MFBF work together to advocate for agriculture.





MT MONTANA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

Join

mfbf.org/join

Sponsor

rikkis@mfbf.org

Contact

100 Red Mountain Drive, Suite 101

Bozeman, MT 59718

(406) 587-3153 | info@mfbf.org