



MONTANA FARM BUREAU *News Brief*

We Care for the Country

December 2020

TOP STORIES



Karli Johnson, winner of the Montana Farm Bureau Discussion Meet, received a Polaris Ranger, courtesy of participating Polaris dealers.

Choteau rancher wins Discussion Meet, Polaris

Karli Johnson, a young rancher from Choteau, bested three other competitors to win the Montana Farm Bureau Young Farmer and Rancher Discussion Meet. She received the keys to a Ranger® 570 EFI as well as the chance to compete in the national competition which will be held during the virtual American Farm Bureau Convention in January. The three other contestants were Mark Boyd from Alder, John Walker from Nashua and Morgan Rose from Terry. The Final Four of the Discussion Meet was held during the Montana Farm Bureau board meeting in Bozeman November 12.

The topic revolved around trade issues and how to establish new and diverse trading partners.

Johnson said she enjoyed all aspects of the competition because of the interaction with the other contestants. "The Eleanor Roosevelt quote that 'Great

minds talk about ideas,' is one that the older I get, the more I like talking about ideas. It's such a joy to be able to do that with issues we're passionate about," said Johnson. "In the Discussion Meet, my fellow competitors were inspiring in discussing the challenges and solutions about agricultural trade and how Montana's farmers and ranchers can benefit."

The young rancher was exceptionally pleased with winning the Ranger. "We're at a point that because our family is outgrowing their transportation around the ranch, it's time to find something new. Winning this means we will be able to bring our three-year-old son as well as our soon-to-be daughter with us whether we're putting out mineral or checking fence. We really thank Polaris for their generous donation."

Read the full story at www.mfbf.org/news.

AFBF goes virtual

The 102nd American Farm Bureau Virtual Convention will be held January 10-13, 2021, and bring together farmers, ranchers and industry experts to discuss the top issues facing agriculture. (Scoop: A Keynote Speaker is *Dirty Jobs'* Mike Rowe.)

If you've ever wanted to go the AFBF Convention but weren't able to travel, now is your chance to attend, and it's free. Montana Farm Bureau members can simply go to fb.org/events, click on the convention link and register.

Look for up-to-date information on the Montana Farm Bureau Facebook page and on fb.org/events. Questions? Contact Alena Standley, alenas@mfbf.org, 406-799-9955.

Give Farm Bureau

Hunting for the perfect Christmas gift? Look no further than Montana Farm Bureau. Our beautiful book, *Legacies*, is ideal for anyone who loves agriculture and history. It follows Farm Bureau leaders and agricultural policies for the past 100 years, with outstanding photography. It's only \$40, plus \$5 shipping.

Another idea? We have jackets, hats, throws, insulated mugs and more with our Montana Farm Bureau logo. Or give the gift that keeps giving—a Farm Bureau membership. Order today at mfbf.org.

News Brief Plus

Want more information regarding articles in this *News Brief*? Check out the *News Brief Plus* which can be found at www.mfbf.org/news-brief. Full stories and press releases will be posted when applicable, along with other information gleaned from a variety of sources.

*Merry Christmas
and a Happy
New Year
from MFBF board
and staff*

MFBF elections

Montana Farm Bureau elected officers during its hybrid in-person/virtual voting delegate session November 10.

Hans McPherson, a diversified farmer from Stevensville, was re-elected as president of the Montana Farm Bureau Federation with Cyndi Johnson, a Conrad small grains farmer, re-elected as vice president.

Newly elected to the board were: Casey Mott, District 4, a cattle rancher from Custer; Don Steinbeisser, Jr., District 6, a diversified farmer from Sidney and Jim Willis, District 10, a cattle producer from Wilsall.

Re-elected to the board were Rhonda Boyd, District 2, a cattle rancher from Alder and Ed Bandel, District 8, a wheat farmer from Floweree.

Carla Lawrence from Boyd was re-elected as the organization's Women's Leadership Committee Chair and J.M. Peck from Melrose was elected as Young Farmer and Rancher Committee Chair.

Photo Contest deadline

The Montana Farm Bureau Federation Women's Leadership Committee Photo Contest will be held virtually this year. Photos will be voted on once they are posted to the MFBF Facebook page. The winners of each category will be announced on Facebook with all of the winning photos featured in the Spring MFBF Spokesman.

Get your entry in before December 15, then watch Facebook for voting details. For more contest information visit mfbf.org, MFBF's Facebook page or contact Mary Hill, BarJRGelbvieh@3rivers.net.

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 – James and Charlotte Horton, Dan and Janice Sayer; Cascade County – Timothy and Charla Bunker, Warren and Diane Kottke, Michael and Linda Moran, Justin and Kristin Okes; Chouteau County – John Bold, Turk and Megan Lords, Kenneth and Jennifer Ritland; Custer-Fallon County – Eugene and Diane Smith; Fergus County – Daniel and Michelle Hartman; Front Range County – Katelynn Emerson; Gallatin County – Andrew Dana, Jackson Lake and Grace Tyson, Timothy Sheehy, Levi Worts and Chanda Barber; Lewis & Clark – Kelli and Spencer Chaney, Terry and Valerie Dunlap, George Keys; Northwest Counties Farm Bureau – Jeffrey and Courtney Hathaway, Cody and Cheryl Jensen, Victoria MacLean, John and Melissa Sykes; Phillips County – John Sunford; Zach Campbell and Indiana Jones, Benjamin and Ariel Ralls; Southwest Counties – Terry Seidler, Justin and Janet Thornton; Yellowstone County – Lynda and Stephen Henning, Mikelann Mollman.



YF&R Chair J.M. Peck and MFBF President Hans McPherson with the food bank donation.

Food bank donation

The Montana Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee has donated \$6,000 to the Montana Food Bank Network (MFBN). This is the 11th year the group has presented a check to the MFBN, although usually the donation is from proceeds raised during the Hoofin' it for Hunger race held every October at the Fort Keogh Livestock and Range Research station in Miles City.

"Due to concerns about the pandemic, our committee made the tough decision to cancel the race this year. However, our entire committee felt strongly about continuing our efforts to help Montana Food Bank Network, so instead we solicited donations," said MFBF YF&R Chair J.M. Peck.

Several county Farm Bureaus donated generously and some sponsors continued their support. To date, YF&R has donated \$62,000 enough for 186,000 meals for people in need.

Calendar

AFBF Convention
January 10-13
Virtual

People

MFBF's Director of National Affairs Nicole Rolf has been named chair of Governor-elect Greg Gianforte's Ag and Livestock Transition Team. Other Farm Bureau members on the team include Jim Steinbeisser, Bob Quinn, John Helle, Lola Raska, Dean Folkvord, Lesley Robinson and Megan Shroyer.

MFBF President Hans McPherson, District 7 Director and ACE graduate Joy DePuydt, YF&R Chair J.M. Peck, along with staff members Nicole Rolf, Sue Ann Streufert and Chelcie Cargill were live on Northern Ag Network's Voices of Montana. MFBF Executive VP John Youngberg and Rolf were on Montana Talks discussing ag policy. In addition, Rolf interviewed with Northern Ag Network.

MFBF Director of State Affairs Rachel Cone participated in the Fireside Chat during the Montana Israel Virtual Trade Forum hosted by the Montana World Trade Center.

Northwest Counties Farm Bureau members Hugh and Barbara Sheehy of Bonner were featured in a Natural Resource Conservation video on land conservation in the Potomac Valley.

U.S. ag exports resilient

One bright spot in the news is that U.S. agricultural exports have generated more than \$270 billion for the U.S. economy since 2019, proving resilient during the global COVID-19 pandemic.

“Today, more than 20 percent of what U.S. farmers produce is exported,” American Farm Bureau Economist Veronica Nigh told *AgDaily*. “America continues to be in a strong position, especially as things normalize after COVID-19.”

Special deal from Ford

New Q4 Promotion for the Ford Farm Bureau Program is now available on the [FordFarmBureauAdvantage.com](https://www.fordfarmbureauadvantage.com).

Farm Bureau Members receive \$1,000 Bonus Cash on purchase of most eligible Ford and Lincoln vehicles.

F-150 and Super Duty will remain at \$500 Bonus Cash. This is available for a LIMITED TIME, from now until January 4, 2021.

Please view the limited disclaimer at mfbf.org/benefits.

Farm State of Mind

American Farm Bureau Federation's Farm State of Mind provides resources for taking care of your mental health. If you, or someone you know, is struggling with anxiety, depression or another mental health challenge, you are not alone.

Check out the resources on the following link and follow #FarmStateofMind on social media to show your support. A healthy farm or ranch is nothing without a healthy you.

Visit <https://www.fb.org/programs/farm-state-of-mind/>.

Climate Alliance unveils climate policy

An alliance of groups representing farmers, forest owners, the food sector, state governments and environmental advocates today unveiled an unprecedented set of recommendations to guide the development of federal climate policy.

The Food and Agriculture Climate Alliance (FACA) was formed in February 2020 by four groups that now co-chair the alliance: American Farm Bureau Federation, Environmental Defense Fund, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, and National Farmers Union. The alliance has since expanded to include FMI – The Food Industry Association, National Alliance of Forest Owners, National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, and The Nature Conservancy.

“We are proud to have broken through historical barriers to form this unique alliance focused on climate policy,” said Zippy Duvall, FACA co-chair and president of the American Farm Bureau Federation. “We began discussions not knowing whether we would ultimately reach agreement. It was important to me to reject punitive climate policy ideas of the past in favor of policies that respect farmers and support positive change. Our final recommendations do just that.”

For more information on the Alliance visit www.fb.org/newsroom.



Gray wolf successfully recovered

When the Department of the Interior announced its removal of the gray wolf from the endangered species list, it signaled a successful recovery under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The gray wolf spent more than four decades on the endangered species list. The population is now thriving in the lower 48 states.

“This should be heralded as a success story of the Endangered Species Act,” noted Montana Farm Bureau Executive Vice President John Youngberg. “The gray wolf in Montana has already been delisted and state and tribal management is working well. When the numbers required by a scientific study are reached, it’s time to delist that species. In the case of the gray wolf, those states where they have already been delisted are managing the species well, limiting conflict with livestock and keeping a check on the reduction of wildlife numbers—yet still have the species thrive.”

State and tribal wildlife management agencies will now be responsible for the management and protection of the gray wolf.

“This is an Endangered Species Act success story,” said American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall. “The gray wolf joins more than 50 other animals, including the bald eagle, as an example of how careful management and partnerships between federal and state agencies can result in the successful recovery of a once-threatened species. The gray wolf population is now thriving so it is appropriate to turn management over to the states, which can oversee the species in a way that is most appropriate for each region.”

Congress works toward passing 2021 spending bills

Lawmakers in Washington, D.C. are working towards an agreement on the 2021 spending package. With less than two weeks before the current spending package expires, lawmakers are working on a package to fund the federal government for the remainder of fiscal year 2021.

R.J. Karney, American Farm Bureau Federation Congressional Relations Director, noted, “The federal government is currently operating under a continuing resolution which expires December 11. The House and Senate have agreed to top line spending amounts for all 12 appropriation bills. The next step is for the subcommittee chairs to finalize and agree on the specific allocations within their specific bill. Farm Bureau has a list of priorities for the agriculture spending bill, including an extension and additional funding for the Wildfire, Hurricane Indemnity Program, or WHIP+.

“If Congress is unable to come to a resolution, then we would likely see another continuing resolution which would extend early into the next Congress and the new administration,” Karney concluded.

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COUNTY NEWS

Counties hold hybrid delegate session

In 2020, with COVID regulations continuously causing plans to change, the Montana Farm Bureau's Annual Convention, which had been slated from Nov 9 – 12 in downtown Billings, was drastically changed. Instead of conducting an in-person meeting with workshops, speakers and the delegate session, where policy is discussed and voted on, the state's largest agricultural organization opted to hold a hybrid virtual/in person delegate session only in its 10 Districts.

The small groups gathered in selected towns in each district, and under MFBF staff guidance, conducted a Zoom video meeting with the home office in Bozeman where the MFBF Vice President,

Cyndi Johnson, two MFBF staff and two FFA parliamentarians ran the session.

Using the hybrid method worked well, with the county Farm Bureaus still managing to meet, yet not violating COVID restrictions set by the state and counties at that time.

"Farmers and ranchers have kept growing food this entire time during the pandemic," noted MFBF President Hans McPherson. "Farm Bureau needed to keep their business of setting policy going, and this was the most sensible, safe way to do it. It worked great."



Above: Each district reviewed the policy book broadcast on a large screen and were able to interact with other districts. Pictured is District 6.

Below: The District 2 delegate session took place at a local church community hall in Sheridan.



Farm Bureau opposes blanket heritage areas

During the Montana Farm Bureau Voting Delegate session November 10, members of the Cascade and Chouteau County Farm Bureau brought forth policy concerning their disapproval of a National Heritage Area around Great Falls without the input from impacted landowners.

The policy was adopted by all of the voting delegates, stating: "We stand in opposition of National Heritage Areas, such as the proposed Big Sky Country National Heritage Area, without prior approval of private land owners."

Jess Bandel, president, Chouteau County Farm Bureau, noted, "Private property rights are essentially important to our members. National Heritage Areas are a slippery slope leading down the path to strip away our property rights. We are especially concerned that these blanket "takings" by Big Sky National Heritage Area, and other designations like it, would affect a farmers' or ranchers' ability to provide food for a growing population."



November 17, 2020

Young Farmers and Ranchers donate \$6000 to the Montana Food Bank Network

The Montana Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee has donated \$6,000 to the Montana Food Bank Network. This is the 11th year the group has presented a check to the MFBN, although usually the donation is from proceeds raised during the Hoofin' it for Hunger race held every October at the Fort Keogh Livestock and Range Research station in Miles City.

“Due to concerns about the pandemic, our committee made the tough decision to cancel the race this year. However, our entire committee felt strongly about continuing our efforts to help Montana Food Bank Network, so instead we solicited donations,” said MFBF YF&R Chair J.M. Peck.

Several county Farm Bureaus donated generously and some sponsors continued their support. In a year where more people than ever are experiencing hunger and the demands on food banks are elevated, it was especially critical to keep money coming to the MFBN which serves as a distribution center for food banks and food pantries statewide.

“The Montana Food Bank Network is grateful for the support and partnership with the Montana Farm Bureau Federation and the Young Farmers and Ranchers over the last 11 years,” said MFBN’s Chief Development Officer Bill Mathews. “The Hoofin’ it for Hunger event has created awareness for hunger relief throughout our state and has raised over \$62,000 including this year’s donation. That amount has provided more than 186,000 meals to those in need. A big statewide thank you to the Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee and Montana Farm Bureau from the Montana Food Bank Network.”

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Photo: Montana Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Chair J.M. Peck (left) and MFBF President Hans McPherson display the YF&R donation to the Montana Food Bank Network.



December 18, 2020

Farm Bureau shows perseverance, creativity despite challenging times

The year of 2020 proved difficult for many associations, yet Montana Farm Bureau and 30 county Farm Bureaus continued to excel at reaching out to their members, helping their communities, working on agricultural advocacy and setting Farm Bureau policy for the upcoming year.

Advocacy and education play a large role in Farm Bureau. The pandemic caused the cancellation of activities such as farm fairs, but that didn't stop students from learning. Farm Bureau's creative staff and members coordinated a virtual farm fair to bring educational ag-related topics directly into homes using cell-phone filmed videos of farmers and ranchers telling their stories. The Virtual Farm Fair featured 10 videos that were directed toward a fourth-grade learning level, but appropriate and fun for all ages—even for parents. Many members participated in the social media campaign #stillfarming #stillranching. Others sent in videos for the "Right This Very Minute" campaign, sharing information about daily work on their farms and ranches.

As the pandemic took hold and many businesses felt the pinch of not being able to open, the Montana Farm Bureau Foundation continued to help small businesses in rural areas with their \$100,000 Community Centennial Initiative Grant. The funding helped with starting an EMT service, a brewery, a woolen mill, an irrigation service, and more. They also awarded 10 mini-grants of \$1,000 each. Mini-grants were awarded for educational purposes including a fall festival with ag stations and a summer ag education program.

County Farm Bureaus donated more than \$20,000 worth of scholarships to local students enrolling in college and generously donated \$7000 to the Montana Food Bank Network when Hoofin' it for Hunger, a Young Farmer and Rancher race to raise money for the MFBN, was cancelled. Counties continued their support of local 4-H and FFA programs by sponsoring awards and belt buckles as well and serving at the buyers' dinners for the local market sale. In fact, 10 county Farm Bureaus awarded prizes for a variety of classes at their county fairs.

In addition, county Farm Bureaus stepped up with a variety of activities aimed to promote membership as well as educate others about agriculture in their areas. They helped sponsor a 4-H project parade for nursing homes, held presentations for Ag Week and Ag Safety Awareness Week, posted a video of harvest from a drone and read accurate ag books. Some counties handed out May Day baskets to new members during May Membership Month. Other counties have been working on local programs to connect ranchers with direct marketing materials, local processors and consumers. One county was a sponsor for an inaugural fall festival, as well as helping urge a community college to start a collegiate YF&R chapter.



December 22, 2020

New Omnibus, COVID Relief Package helps agriculture

The 2021 Omnibus and COVID Relief Package will help farmers and ranchers hurt by the continuing economic harm caused by the ongoing pandemic, says Montana Farm Bureau. Of the \$900 billion in the stimulus package, the bill provides \$13 billion directly benefits agriculture, including \$11.2 billion provided to the Office of the Agriculture Secretary to supports ag producers, processors and contract grower impacted by the coronavirus.

Many farmers and ranchers who were previously left out of aid will now qualify for assistance, including growers who were forced to euthanize livestock during the initial wave of the pandemic. More help will be made available to specialty and non-specialty crop growers, and the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) will be expanded, which will allow small farmers to continue operating and paying their employees.

Farm Bureau worked for several months to ensure the needs of America's farmers and ranchers were brought forward to lawmakers as they considered the latest stimulus package.

"This package will certainly help American families get through some tough winter months, especially those who have found themselves in dire circumstances through no fault of their own because of shut downs and work stoppages," said Montana Farm Bureau President Hans McPherson. "If it can stimulate processing facilities for agriculture products and restart demand, it will be good for all farmers as everyone agrees we want markets, not checks. However, we realize we may need a check in the short term so we can continue to provide the safest most abundant and economical food supply in the history of the world."

Highlights of the coronavirus stimulus bill include:

- Establishes a grant program for small meat and poultry processors to upgrade operations in order move to federal inspection or a state inspection program that allows for the sale of products across state lines.
- Extension of Livestock Mandatory Reporting
- Extension of Electronic Logging Device exemption for livestock haul
- Establishes a grant program to allow state departments of agriculture to supplement ongoing farm stress initiatives.
- \$20 per planted acre for non-specialty crops.



November 12, 2020

Choteau rancher wins Young Farmer and Rancher Discussion Meet, receives Polaris Ranger

Karli Johnson, a young rancher from Choteau, bested three other competitors to win the Montana Farm Bureau Young Farmer and Rancher Discussion Meet. She received the keys to a Ranger® 570 EFI and will be eligible to compete in the national competition which will be held during the virtual American Farm Bureau Convention in January. The three other contestants were Mark Boyd from Alder, John Walker from Nashua and Morgan Rose from Terry. The Final Four of the Discussion Meet was held during the Montana Farm Bureau board meeting in Bozeman November 12,

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 question for the final round: International trade is important to agriculture. We must continue working to build strong relations with existing customers while seeking out new trade partners to strengthen market stability. How can we enhance existing, and establish new and diverse foreign trading partners?

Johnson said she enjoyed all aspects of the competition because of the interaction with the other contestants. "The Eleanor Roosevelt quote that 'Great minds talk about ideas,' is one that the older I get, the more I talking about ideas. It's such a joy to be able to do that with issues we're passionate about.," said Johnson. "In the Discussion Meet, my fellow competitors were inspiring in discussing the challenges and solutions about agricultural trade and how Montana's farmers and ranchers can benefit."

The young rancher was exceptionally pleased with winning the Ranger. "We're at a point that because our family is outgrowing their transportation around the ranch, it's time to find something new. It's really wonderful because having the Ranger will allow us to include our kids in agriculture. Winning this means we will be able to bring our three-year-old son as well as our soon-to-be daughter with us whether we're putting out mineral or checking fence. As beginning ranchers, we wouldn't have been able to include a Ranger in our budget, so we really thank Polaris for their generous donation."

Although Johnson is a sixth-generation rancher, she and her husband weren't able to return to the generational ranch, but have forged ahead on their own by leasing ground from Karli's parents, uncle and a family friend. They are currently developing both a registered and commercial Angus herd.

Johnson said that being a part of Farm Bureau and participating in the discussion meet has allowed her to network with other people involved in agriculture.

Thanks to these participating Polaris dealers for supporting our Young Farmers and Ranchers: Gallatin Recreation, Bozeman; Helena Cycle, Helena; Yellowstone Polaris, Billings; Beaverhead Motors, Dillon;

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Wyndham Hotels Discount - Members receive up to 20% off the "Best Available Rate" at participating locations. For terms and conditions or to book online go to wyndhamhotels.com/farm-bureau or call (877) 670-7088 and give your discount ID #8000002613 at time of booking.

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Case IH Tractor & Equipment Savings - Farm Bureau members save \$300-\$500 per unit on select Case IH equipment. Visit your dealer and make your best deal. Then present your discount certificate to subtract another \$300 - \$500 from the bottom line. Your certificate, along with valid ID, must be presented to the Case IH dealer in advance of delivery. Print your certificate at mfbf.org/member-benefits.

Avis Car Rental - Farm Bureau members receive up to 30% off Avis base rates with Avis Worldwide Discount (AWD) number A298826. Enjoy offers like dollars off, a complimentary upgrade, or a free weekend day. Visit avis.com/mtfb or call (800) 331-1212 to make a reservation.

Budget Car Rental - Members save up to 30% off Budget base rates. Plus, get other great offers like a free upgrade or a free weekend day. Visit budget.com/mtfb or call (800) 527-0700 to make a reservation. Use Budget Customer Discount (BCD) number Y775726.

Coast to Coast Vision Plan™ - Save 20% to 60% on prescription eyeglasses, including frames, lenses and specialty items. Save 10% to 30% on eye exams at participating retail locations nationwide. For the nearest participating retail location, call (800) 800-EYES. Mention you are a Montana Farm Bureau member and use group code #103.

John Deere - Farm Bureau members receive an upgraded John Deere Rewards membership (Platinum 1) – which unlocks extra discounts on equipment, parts, and merchandise. Go to JohnDeere.com/Farm-Bureau to register, and explore all that Rewards has to offer. Check out the savings on the following equipment categories: Commercial Mowing - \$200 to \$1,700 off, Residential Mowing - \$50 to \$150 off, Utility Vehicles - \$100 to \$250 off, Tractors - \$150 to \$250 off, Compact Construction - \$550 to \$1,400 off.

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