



# MONTANA FARM BUREAU *News Brief*

*We Care for the Country*

May 2021

## TOP STORIES



Cascade County member Candace Weeda Strobbe (left) talked about soil and cattle as recyclers during the MFBF Virtual Farm Fair—pictured with husband, Chet, and daughter, Royce. Sage DuBois Photography.

### ***Virtual Farm Fair covers gamut of ag activities***

The Montana Farm Bureau launched its 2021 Virtual Farm Fair on social media channels April 26-30. On each day of that week, farmer and rancher members of Montana Farm Bureau shared stories about what they do. This year, the Virtual Farm Fair featured detailed videos on calving, horses, ATV safety, hauling wheat to make pasta, meat processing and ranching/cows as recyclers.

Candace Weeda Strobbe invited viewers to her ranch to learn more about cattle. In the video, Weeda Strobbe talks about healthy soil and animal care.

“Soil is where the nutrient value is which feeds the plants that feed our cows and then feeds us,” she said. The Cascade rancher added, “Cows are recyclers and their super power is recycling grass. They convert the grass they eat to the food we eat like roasts, hamburgers

and steaks. They also leave behind poop as a fertilizer which helps grass grow.”

District 9 Director Scott Stoner and his wife, Louise, produced a video on horses explaining everything from how to safely tie a horse and walk behind a horse, to saddling the animal.

Scott noted, “There hadn’t been a horse video for the virtual farm fair so we wanted to share information about horse ownership. Often kids think having a horse is easy.”

Although the videos are directed toward a fourth-grade learning level, they are appropriate, fun and educational for all ages—even for parents. These farm-fresh videos offer corresponding activities and lesson plans.

View the 2021 as well as the 2020 Farm Fair videos, and get activities as well as lesson plans at [mfbf.org/Programs/MY-AG/Virtual-Farm-Fair](https://mfbf.org/Programs/MY-AG/Virtual-Farm-Fair).

### **Time for the MFBF Summer Conference**

The Montana Farm Bureau Summer Conference is slated for June 7-9 at the Heritage Inn in Great Falls. Two exciting keynote speakers are scheduled. Governor Greg Gianforte is slated as the Tuesday lunch speaker, with the morning keynote being Michelle Miller, better known as the Farm Babe, covering the importance of advocacy.

The Summer Conference is a time for commodity and advisory committees to meet and surface policy for the coming year. Workshops and presentations, along with the choice of the Foundation Golf Scramble or ag tours and the Best “Dam” Foundation Fundraiser are sure to make the 2021 Summer Conference an excellent time.

See the registration form on pages 5-6 of this *News Brief* for details. Register online or through the mail. If you haven’t bought a *Legacies* book yet, order one on the registration form. We’ll bring it to the conference.

Be sure to register no later than June 2. To get the Heritage Inn MFBF room rate, reservations must be made by May 23.

### **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 other sources.

The May 2021 *NB Plus* contains:

- Boots on the Hill press releases.
  - Press releases on capital gains, 30x30 concerns and more.
  - Broadband speed test app
  - State prevails in water rights case.
- Visit [mfbf.org/News/News-Brief](https://mfbf.org/News/News-Brief).

## Membership Month

May is Membership Month at Montana Farm Bureau. Membership Month is a time for showing member appreciation, promoting member benefits and recruiting new members. Farm Bureau offers something for everyone whether you're a student (Collegiate Farm Bureau), young farmer or rancher (the YF&R Committee) or a woman (Women's Leadership Committee). In addition, farmer and rancher members can serve on Farm Bureau's variety of advisory committees.

To celebrate Membership Month and show our member appreciation, there will be giveaways including two \$250 tuition vouchers, a DeWalt FlexVolt Jobsite Charger Radio, an MFBF-sponsored lunch and an MFBF apparel basket. The grand prize for the county who recruits the most new members is MFBF staff-catered cookout.

Keep watching MFBF's Facebook page for videos, live giveaways, recruiting tips, and other great information.

## Legislative Wrap-up

The Montana Farm Bureau finished strong in the 67th Legislative Session with 100 percent of the bills that negatively impact agriculture killed and more than 90 percent that benefit ag passing. Montana's number-one industry was represented through the Montana Farm Bureau, and agriculture succeeded with good legislation. The hybrid session allowed Farm Bureau members to participate in the session, whether they lived near or far from Helena.

Look for the *MFBF Legislative Highlights* in your mailbox for a full review of the successful session.

## Call before you dig

Preparation is the first step on any project. Before starting a new digging project on the farm, call or click 811 before you dig. Hitting a buried utility line while digging can disrupt service, be very expensive to repair, or cause serious injury or death.

Remember: small or big, call then dig.

## 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.*

Broadwater County Farm Bureau – Hugh Braaten • Robert and Kathy Brekke; Carbon-Stillwater County Farm Bureau – Eric and Leslie Indreland • Toni and Kathy Ilgen • Kyle and Sarah Kornick; Cascade County Farm Bureau – Jill and Mike Hagen • Brian and Amber Larson • Richard and Robin Williams; Chouteau County Farm Bureau – MaryLou and Rodney Tweet; Custer-Fallon County Farm Bureau – Lance and Katlyn Kono • Jeff Roberts; Dawson-Wibaux County Farm Bureau – T Squared Ag LLC; Fergus County Farm Bureau – Karl and Laura Finkbeiner • Whit and Kari Weingart; Gallatin County Farm Bureau – Clinton Burkhard; Lewis & Clark County Farm Bureau – Mayo Schmidt; McCone County Farm Bureau – Dean and Laraine Schillinger; Northwest Counties Farm Bureau – Jacob and Amanda Corcoran • Joe and Heidi Fritz • Joseph King and Michey Powell • Johnny Lopez • Matthew Robbins and Kristine Tyler • Larry Robertson • Brady and Amy Sevier • Sjaan Vincent • Jake and Patricia Wright; Powder River/Carter County Farm Bureau – Gayla and Roger Schofield; Ravalli County Farm Bureau – Brandon and Anna Straw • Jonathan and Megan Van Orden; Richland County Farm Bureau – Brady and Megan Bouchard • Luke and Lindsay Verschoot; Roosevelt County Farm Bureau – Darold Anderson; Southwest Counties Farm Bureau – Derek and Vivienne Anderson • Brad and Kelly Carnahan • Myles and Stacey Carpenter • Samuel Dyk • Garrett Harshbarger • Will Shirley • Austin and Dana Smith • Arnold Walter and Kathryn Arnold; Valley County Farm Bureau – Roy Neufeld; Wheatland-Golden Valley County Farm Bureau – Taylor and Andrea Brook; Yellowstone County Farm Bureau – Barbara Skelton



*MFBF Executive VP John Youngberg, Congressman Matt Rosendale and MFBF Lobbyist Rachel Cone.*

## Rosendale visits MFBF

U.S. Congressman Matt Rosendale visited the Montana Farm Bureau office May 4. In his visit with MFBF Executive Vice President John Youngberg, Senior Governmental Affairs Director Nicole Rolf and State Affairs Director Rachel Cone, Rosendale cited several issues affecting agriculture in Washington, D.C.

"We discussed the real problems for agriculture in eliminating stepped-up basis and lowering estate tax deductions," said Youngberg. "We talked about what might be contained in President Biden's 30 x 30 plan and problems with the Conservation Reserve Program."

The group discussed the possibility of a port in Shelby for loading containers, which would help maintain the integrity of Montana wheat.

## Calendar

**MFBF Summer Conference**  
June 7-9—Great Falls

**Long Range Planning Committee**  
August 30—Bozeman

**Budget Committee Meeting**  
August 31—Bozeman

**MFBF Annual Convention**  
November 8-11—Billings

## People

**MFBF District 6 Director Don Steinbeisser, Jr.** and Northwest Counties Farm Bureau member **Susan Lake** were interviewed about 2021 farming by Montana Public Radio.

**MFBF District 4 Director Casey Mott** was interviewed by the Western Ag Network on California's Prop 12 lawsuit.

**District 3 Director Kris Descheemaeker** interviewed with the Prairie Star and the Montana Ag Network about the Biden Administration's 30 x 30 report.

**MFBF Exec Dir John Youngberg** had an interview with Havre Daily News regarding the HAULS Act and the Mandatory Negotiated Cash Trade Bill.



## Mental Health Month

In recognition of May as Mental Health Month, American Farm Bureau has launched a comprehensive, easy-to-use online directory of resources for farmers, ranchers and their families who are experiencing stress and mental health challenges.

The directory, which is on the Farm State of Mind website at [farmstateofmind.org](http://farmstateofmind.org), features listings for crisis hotlines and support lines, counseling services, podcasts, videos and many other resources in every U.S. state and Puerto Rico.

## Compliant ladders and more

Are your ladders compliant? Learn more about OSHA and ANSI Standards and get usage tips on [www.grainger.com/knowhow](http://www.grainger.com/knowhow). For all your ladder needs or to find the perfect ladder, go to your Grainger Farm Bureau Account and start saving today. Remember, Montana Farm Bureau members get special member prices on selected categories and brands from Grainger, plus free standard parcel shipping on all standard Grainger products. Go to [www.grainger.com/farmbureau](http://www.grainger.com/farmbureau) for details.

## Kids ask about ag

What questions do children have about agriculture? Through the AFB Foundation's "Kids' Questions about Agriculture" project, kids can ask questions about food and farming and Farm Bureau will have a real farmer or rancher answer the question with a video reply. Answers will be posted online at [agfoundation.org](http://agfoundation.org) as well as on the Ag Foundation Facebook page.

Check out all of the ag-related educational resources at [agfoundation.org](http://agfoundation.org).

## Say no to elimination of step-up in basis

Capital gains taxes are based on the change in the value of an asset, such as farmland, livestock or timber, when that asset is sold. Currently, the top capital gains tax rate is 20%. To reduce the capital gains tax, farmers and ranchers use stepped-up basis, which provides a reset for the basis during intergenerational transfers. In effect, upon the transfer of assets following a death, the basis is reset to the market value at the date of death. Following the adjustment, taxes can be levied only on gains realized by the individual during his or her ownership, not on gains realized prior to the step up in basis.

Any change in capital gains tax policy that eliminates or scales back stepped-up basis could result in a massive tax burden on the agricultural sector. The magnitude of the burden depends on the change in the asset value, but it would likely significantly exceed the annual income generated by the assets. In fact, it could take years of returns to equal the amount of the tax.

AFBF's economics team delves deep into the realities of what will happen if the stepped-up basis is eliminated. Check out <https://www.fb.org/market-intel/elimination-of-stepped-up-basis-poses-hazards-to-family-farms>. A previous article reviewed the detrimental impact that reduction in estate tax exemption levels would have on family farms.



## Farm Bureau questions 30x30 report

Farm Bureau has consistently questioned the Biden Administration's 30x 30 report, now named the Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful report.

American Farm Bureau President Zippy Duvall said, "AFBF appreciates that the report acknowledges concerns we have raised and recognizes the oversized contributions of farmers and ranchers to conservation while feeding the world. That recognition must carry through implementation. The report is a philosophical document that emphasizes important principles such as incentive-based voluntary conservation, protecting personal and property rights and continued ranching on public lands, but it lacks specifics. I had several positive conversations with Secretary Vilsack about 30x30 and we will work with him and his colleagues to ensure the details live up to promises made to protect American agriculture."

The American Farm Bureau Federation had called on the administration to act responsibly in conservation efforts and had sent a letter to President Biden. Three key requests were outlined in the letter: that the administration provide clarity on the initiative; that the effort recognizes voluntary conservation efforts already underway; and that the administration seeks input from farmers and ranchers.

"America's agriculturalists have voluntarily enrolled more than 140 million acres of private land into federal and non-federal conservation programs. Any discussion about conservation must begin with the recognition that farmers and ranchers are leaders in this space and have been for decades."

## Ag Innovation Challenge

The American Farm Bureau Federation, in partnership with Farm Credit, has opened online applications for the 2022 Farm Bureau Ag Innovation Challenge. This national business competition showcases U.S. startup companies that are providing solutions to challenges faced by America's farmers, ranchers and rural communities. Farm Bureau will award \$165,000 in startup funds provided by sponsors Farm Credit, Bayer Crop Science, Farm Bureau Bank, Farm Bureau Financial Services, FMC Corporation and John Deere.

Launched in 2015 as the first national competition focused exclusively on rural entrepreneurs, the Challenge continues to identify the next ag entrepreneurs to watch and supports innovation essential to Farm Bureau member businesses and communities. For this eighth year of the competition, Farm Bureau is seeking entrepreneurs who are addressing either traditional or new/emerging challenges.

Detailed eligibility guidelines, the competition timeline, videos and profiles of past winners are available at [fb.org/challenge](http://fb.org/challenge). Applications must be received by midnight Eastern Daylight Time on Aug. 20.

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

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## COUNTY NEWS

### County Farm Bureau's busy with farm fairs, ATV safety trainings

**Fergus County** held their annual Ag Safety Day for Lewistown and surrounding schools. The Ag Safety Day is put on by the Fergus County 4-H Ambassador team and utilizes grant money from the Montana Farm Bureau Foundation. Stations included this year were cattle, horse, grain entrapment, ATV, tractor and PTO, fire truck, ambulance/EMT and electrical. **Sweet Grass County** held a membership event May 12 at the fairgrounds in Big Timber. The event featured a safety presentation, legislative session review and a corn hole tournament.

**Northwest Counties** presented a scholarship to Skyler Shima who plans to attend vet school and become a large animal vet. Thirty students K-2 from Mission Valley Christian Academy enjoyed

Ranch Day at the Senecal Ranch. During Conservation Day, hosted by the conservation district, Northwest Counties presented ATV Safety and provided bottled water.

**Meagher County's** Farm Fair takes place May 25 and will feature honeybees, soils, farm animals, ATV safety, gardening and making cheeseburgers and ice cream.

**Lewis & Clark County** took the MFBF Virtual Farm Fair to classrooms, April 26-30, with a county leader each day answering kids' questions on Zoom. They served a thank you dinner to the Volunteer Fire Department Council Meeting on May 3.

**Ravalli County** did an ATV safety presentation at Stevensville Ag Day May 7.

**Wheatland-Golden Valley County** is holding a farm fair for their school May 29. **Carbon/Stillwater County** is holding a board meeting May 18 in Edgar. They have been hosting mini-



*Cascade County YF&R Chair Todd Standley with Sarah Kline, director of food service, Ulm School, and rancher Jeanne McKamey. Jeanne and Merrill McKamey supplied 350 pounds of ground beef for a full year of lunches at Ulm School. The beef was raised on their ranch and processed at School House Meats in Missoula. They donated half of the beef and the Cascade County YF&R Committee purchased half of the beef for the school.*

ACE trainings to learn about ag advocacy. **Judith Basin County** held a Rural Safety Afternoon May 18. **Yellowstone County** will hold a board meeting May 19.

**Southwest Counties** held a meeting to plan Membership Month activities.

District 4 (**Big Horn, Carbon/Stillwater, Sweet Grass and Yellowstone**) is holding a free low-stress cattle handling workshop the morning of Saturday, July 10 with stockman-ship clinician Curt Pate.



*Above: Aly Robbins demonstrating with Lego people how a grain entrapment can happen while students put their hands in a tub of grain to see how it feels.*

*Above: A wagon ride through the pasture at the Senecal Ranch at NW Counties Ranch Day.*

*Right: Darcia Patten, Powder River/Carter County donated an MFBF Legacies book to the Henry Mallet Memorial Library in Broadus.*





# 2021 MFBF SUMMER CONFERENCE

JUNE 7-9 \* HERITAGE INN \* GREAT FALLS



## Schedule of Events

### Monday, June 7

8:00 AM	Foundation Board of Directors Meeting
9 AM-5 PM	YF&R Comm. Speakers, Tour & Meeting
9:30 AM-3 PM	MFBF Board of Directors Meeting
12:00 noon	Registration Opens
3:30 PM	Women's Leadership Comm. Meeting
3:30 PM	Policy Development Comm. Meeting

### Tuesday, June 8

7:30 AM	Registration Opens
8:00 AM	Opening General Session - Keynote Speaker: Michelle Miller - "Farm Babe"
9:15 AM	Coffee Break <i>Sponsored by Miles Community College</i>
9:45 AM	Promotion & Education Comm. Meeting Sheep & Goat Committee Meeting Farm & Trade Committee Meeting Membership Committee Meeting <b>Consumer Engagement Workshop</b> - Michelle Miller - "Farm Babe"
11:40 noon	Lunch <i>Sponsored by Northwest Farm Credit</i> - Keynote Speaker: Governor Greg Gianforte
1:15 PM	Livestock Committee Meeting Public & Private Lands Comm. Meeting RMET Committee Meeting <b>Legally Speaking Workshop</b> - William Trachman, Mountain States Legal Foundation - Hertha Lund, Lund Law

### Tuesday, June 8 *cont.*

3:15 PM	Coffee Break
3:45 PM	Water Committee Meeting Equine Committee Meeting Taxation Committee Meeting <b>Collaborative Conversations Workshop</b> - Kelly Beevers, Topos & Anthros - Chris King, Winnett ACES
6:00 PM	MFB Foundation Fundraising Dinner

### **Best "Dam" Fundraiser Ever!**

We're all lucky ducks for being able to enjoy a fun evening at the Ryan Dam Clubhouse for the "Best Dam Fundraiser Ever"! There will be live music by The Teccas, a social hour, delicious barbeque dinner catered by Cattlemen's Cut and fun events raising money for the MFB Foundation. No permit needed to duck hunt during this trip to the river. For a small amount, you can adopt a rubber ducky in our Pluck-A-Duck fundraiser where the winner will take home airfare and hotel for 2 anywhere in the continental U.S. *Casual attire.*

### Wednesday, June 9

7:00 AM	MFBF Board of Directors Meeting
8:30 AM	Farm to Plate Tour bus departs Includes tour stops to McCafferty Beef, Central Ave. Meats, Roadhouse Diner and Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center <b>Golfers tee off at Anaconda Hills Golf Course</b> <i>Includes eighteen holes of golf, a cart, lunch, refreshments and great prizes.</i>
8:30 AM	

# MONTANA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

## Summer Conference

June 7-9 \* Heritage Inn \* Great Falls

**DUE  
JUNE 2**

PLEASE PRINT NAME(S) AS YOU WANT THEM TO APPEAR ON NAME BADGE(S):

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ COMMITTEE(S)\*: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ COMMITTEE(S)\*: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Committee appointments are for one year only. Appointment letters for 2021 have already been sent out. If you do not remember receiving one or aren't sure which committee(s) you are on, please contact the state office.*

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY/STATE/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

	REGISTRATION		# ATTENDING		TOTAL
<b>TUESDAY:</b>					
Lunch	\$20	x	_____	=	\$_____
Foundation Fundraiser	\$45	x	_____	=	\$_____
<i>Price includes dinner, live music and a small donation to the MFB Foundation.</i>					
<b>WEDNESDAY:</b>					
Golf Scramble Day (includes lunch)	\$65	x	_____	=	\$_____
<i>For the best value see the sponsor package below.</i>					
Tour Day (includes lunch)	\$50	x	_____	=	\$_____
MFBF History Book <i>Legacies</i> Pick up your signed copy on-site!	\$40	x	_____	=	\$_____
<b>TOTAL</b>					\$_____

### PAYMENT

\_\_\_\_\_ Check Enclosed (payable to MFBF)

\_\_\_\_\_ To Register and Pay By

VISA or MASTERCARD go online  
to [www.mfbf.org](http://www.mfbf.org).

### LODGING INFORMATION

Attendees are responsible for making their own room reservations. Call the Heritage Inn at (406) 761-1900 and request the "Montana Farm Bureau" room block for the special \$99 conference rate. **The room block will be released MAY 23**, book now so you don't miss out on the conference rate and availability.

**Please register online OR return this registration form by June 2 to:**

MFBF, 502 S. 19th Ave., Suite 104, Bozeman, MT 59718 \* Phone (406) 587-3153 \* Email [info@mfbf.org](mailto:info@mfbf.org)

## MFB FOUNDATION GOLF SCRAMBLE & CALCUTTA

18 HOLE SCRAMBLE \* 4 PERSON TEAMS

HOLE AND TEAM PRIZES \* MULLIGANS & POPSICLE STICKS AVAILABLE

**SPONSORSHIP PACKAGE: \$450 (Save \$60!)**

HOLE SPONSORSHIP (VALUED AT \$250) PLUS 4 PERSON TEAM ENTRY (NORMALLY \$260)

SPONSOR: \_\_\_\_\_ TEAM

TEAM CAPTAIN: \_\_\_\_\_ 2: \_\_\_\_\_ 3: \_\_\_\_\_ 4: \_\_\_\_\_

*All team members must be registered. Contact Scott Kulbeck at 587-3153 with questions.*

A CALCUTTA WILL TAKE PLACE AT THE FOUNDATION DINNER AFTER THE TEAMS ARE FORMED.  
40% TO 1ST • 25% TO 2ND • 10% TO 3RD • 25% TO MFB FOUNDATION





**May 13, 2021**

## **Montana Farm Bureau conference features Governor Gianforte, committees**

Montana Farm Bureau continues its dedication to membership and advocacy with its theme, “Growing Stronger Together.” The MFBF Summer Conference will be held June 7-9 at the Heritage Inn in Great Falls. This is a time when advisory committees meet to discuss current agricultural issues and concerns and surface ideas for policy development.

Keynote speakers include Governor Greg Gianforte who will cover the successes of Montana’s 67<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, and Michelle Miller, better known as the Farm Babe, who will share her latest interaction with Burger King and the importance of diligent advocacy.

The MFBF Summer Conference begins Monday morning with MFBF Board and Foundation Board meetings along with the Young Farmers & Ranchers, Women’s Leadership Committee and Policy Development Meetings. Tuesday’s schedule includes the issues advisory committee meetings as well as several workshops: Consumer Engagement with the Farm Babe; Legally Speaking with Mountain States Legal Foundation and Hertha Lund, Lund Law; and Collaborative Conversations Workshop with Kelly Beaver, Topos & Anthros and Chris King, Winnett ACES.

Tuesday evening the MFB Foundation will hold the “Best Dam Fundraiser” event at the Ryan Dam Clubhouse which will include the entertaining “pluck a duck” fundraiser and a band.

The ag tour Wednesday has a “Farm to Plate” theme with stops at McCafferty Beef, Central Avenue Meats and a catered lunch from the Roadhouse Diner serving McCafferty Beef, wrapping up at the educational Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center.

For more information and to register, visit [www.mfbf.org](http://www.mfbf.org). The registration deadline is June 2, with the room block deadline at the Heritage Inn May 23. Questions? Call the MFBF office, 406-587-3153.





May 5, 2021

YOUR BOOTS ON THE HILL:

## 2021 Montana Legislative Summary

*By Nicole Rolf and Rachel Cone, Montana Farm Bureau Federation*

Legislators and lobbyists have packed up and headed out of Helena, but the work of the 67<sup>th</sup> Montana Legislature is not yet complete. Governor Greg Gianforte has up to ten business days to sign, veto or ignore the bills that have reached his desk to determine the full fate of the session.

Still, it's safe to say the 2021 Montana Legislative Session was favorable for Montana's farmers and ranchers. Of the 69 bills we tracked closely which were tied directly to member-generated policy, around 50 have reached their final destinations in our favor so far. Here's a rundown of the biggest victories for Montana agriculture, according to our Farm Bureau members' policy.

**NOW LAW – Senate Bill 65, Revise civil liability laws**, introduced by Sen. Steve Fitzpatrick (R), SD10. Farm Bureau member policy supports.

This law limits liability to the owners of a premise if a person is infected with COVID-19 on said premise, as long as that owner was not negligent. This bill is primarily intended to protect business owners, which includes farms and ranches. As one of the first bills signed into law in 2021, it set an important tone for session. This new law may not be specific to agricultural needs, but it did establish a theme and desire to get Montana's small businesses and rural economies back open and running, and that means a lot to the farmers and ranchers who depend on thriving rural communities for their businesses to succeed.

**NOW LAW – House Bill 303, Revise business equipment tax laws: Business Investment Grows (BIG) Jobs Act**, sponsored by Rep. Joshua Kassmier (R), HD 27. Montana Farm Bureau member policy supports.

Farming and ranching are equipment-heavy businesses. Balers, combines, loaders, and more – the tools we need to efficiently raise the crop and livestock – are expensive, which is why this law's new exemption increase on business equipment is a well-welcomed relief for farmers and ranchers. Class eight property includes agricultural implements and equipment,



among other industry necessities. This bill made the first \$300,000 of class eight property exempt from taxation, an impressive increase from the previous \$100,000 exemption.

While this is good for farmers and ranchers, it's also good for our rural economy. Those tax savings may encourage a farmer to add another piece of equipment to the lineup or allow a rancher to reinvest in upgraded fencing, all boosts to our local economies.

**NOW LAW – House Bill 302, Require county approval to relocate bison**, sponsored by Rep. Joshua Kassmier (R), HD 27, and **House Bill 318: Clarify definition of bison**, sponsored by Rep. Kenneth Holmlund (R), HD38.

Montana Farm Bureau member policy supported both of these bills, and we were excited to finally get to see them to fruition. The concept of requiring county approval to relocate wild bison has circled around the Legislature for several sessions, and it's past time we had these assurances for livestock health, disease management and local autonomy in place. Now, local elected officials – county commissioners – have a chance to weigh in on the importation of wild bison to their local jurisdiction, which our members support.

House Bill 318 further clarifies wild bison defined as those animals that have never been reduced to captivity, have never been subject to per capita fees and have never been owned by a person. These are important clarifications that clear up any ambiguity between wild bison and bison as livestock.

These new laws, and many more, are important victories for rural Montana. Often, killing harmful bills is just as important as passing good bills. Here's a rundown of some of the more important bills our member policy successfully rejected this session.

**KILLED – House Bill 311 and 312, both titled Generally revise bison laws**, sponsored by Rep. Marvin Weatherwax (D), HD 15.

These bills proposed that a state health certificate, permit or documentation not be required for bison leaving a national park destined for a Native American tribal reservation, and that a certification from the state vet not be required if the animal is transferred to a tribal entity to quarantine.

Montana Farm Bureau member policy opposed both of these bills on the premise of disease management. Brucellosis and other zoonotic diseases are a high risk for wildlife, domestic livestock and the public. The Montana Department of Livestock mitigates the spread of this disease, and the state has worked hard to implement systems and practices to control and prevent its spread.

The Department of Livestock has an established quarantine facility near Yellowstone National Park where Park bison are held and tested to ensure they are brucellosis free before they can be transferred to new locations. This quarantine and testing facility is located within the state's brucellosis Designated Surveillance Area, which is another step to ensure potential cases are not spread or established in new parts of the state. Once the bison passes state testing and quarantine, they are prepared to be transferred to a tribal entity. This is a tried-and-tested policy, and we're glad to see it upheld.

**KILLED – House Bill 324: Generally revise certain labeling laws**, sponsored by Rep. Frank Smith (D), HD 31 and **Senate Bill 210: Revise laws related to country of origin labeling**, sponsored by Sen. Tom Jacobson (D), SD 11.

These nearly-identical bills were introduced in both chambers and came with the same fundamental flaws. These ‘placarding bills’ attempted to require grocery retailers to put a sign or ‘placard’ in the proximity of beef and pork products to indicate the origin of the product. These bills offer retailers two options to label beef and pork product: “Born, raised, and processed in the USA” or “Imported/Origin Unlabeled.” Montana ranchers are proud of the meat we raised, and we would love to see it labeled for consumers. We want transparency and a chance to distinguish our American products.

The problem was, these attempts at state laws keep trying to dictate federal regulations with no system or infrastructure in place to help the retail meet those requirements. Montana Farm Bureau members support Country of Origin Labeling that is compliant with WTO requirements, but these bills do not achieve that aim.

Instead, we were proud to **support the passage of House Bill 660, Funding for Made in Montana program**, sponsored by Rep. Josh Kassmier (R), HD 27. Our farming and ranching members believe this existing, voluntary marketing program satisfies the demand for consumer transparency. Through the Made in Montana program, Montana farmers and ranchers have the opportunity to tell their customers where their food comes from and proudly offer consumers a choice to support Montana’s family farmers and ranchers.

We’ll announce our full legislative report card and legislative awards soon. If you have questions or want a summary of results on all the bills we tracked throughout the session, voting Montana Farm Bureau members receive a full Legislative Update with more details. Not a member? Join today at [www.mfbf.org](http://www.mfbf.org).

*Nicole Rolf is the Senior Director of Governmental Affairs and a rancher from Miles City, Montana. Nicole works closely with our Congressional delegation on national issues affecting Montana agriculture. Additionally, this is her seventh Montana Legislative Session, lobbying in Helena on behalf of MFBF members. She also works as the Eastern Montana Regional Manager. Nicole can be contacted at [nicoler@mfbf.org](mailto:nicoler@mfbf.org).*

*Rachel Cone is the Director of State Affairs for Montana Farm Bureau Federation. This is Rachel’s first session lobbying on behalf of Montana Farm Bureau. Rachel is involved throughout the interim session to track how bills will come to the session. She also coordinates the MFBF Water Committee, the Resource Management, Environment and Technology Committee and the Livestock Committee in addition to being the Treasurer for the Farm Bureau PAC. Rachel can be contacted at [rachelc@mfbf.org](mailto:rachelc@mfbf.org).*



HEY, MONTANA RANCHER!

# Are you selling BEEF direct to consumers?

Montana Beef Council is here to help you...



CONTACT MBC FOR RECIPE BROCHURES, BEEF FACT SHEETS, NUTRITION INFO, CUT CHARTS, BEEF IMAGERY, DIGITAL GRAPHICS & MORE TO INCLUDE WITH YOUR BEEF!

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**Media Contact:**

Anne Veigle, (202) 418-0506  
anne.veigle@fcc.gov

**For Immediate Release****FCC ENCOURAGES PUBLIC TO USE ITS SPEED TEST APP TO  
MEASURE THEIR BROADBAND SPEEDS**

WASHINGTON, April 12, 2021—As part of the Commission’s [Broadband Data Collection](#) effort to collect comprehensive data on broadband availability across the United States, the FCC is encouraging the public to download the FCC’s Speed Test app, which is currently used to collect speed test data as part of the FCC’s Measuring Broadband America program. The app provides a way for consumers to test the performance of their mobile and in-home broadband networks. In addition to showing network performance test results to the user, the app provides the test results to the FCC while protecting the privacy and confidentiality of program volunteers.

“To close the gap between digital haves and have nots, we are working to build a comprehensive, user-friendly dataset on broadband availability. Expanding the base of consumers who use the FCC Speed Test app will enable us to provide improved coverage information to the public and add to the measurement tools we’re developing to show where broadband is truly available throughout the United States,” **said Acting Chairwoman Rosenworcel.**

The network coverage and performance information gathered from the Speed Test data will help to inform the FCC’s efforts to collect more accurate and granular broadband deployment data. The app will also be used in the future for consumers to challenge provider-submitted maps when the Broadband Data Collection systems become available. More information about the app is available on the [FCC website](#). The FCC Speed Test App is available in the Google Play Store for Android devices, and in the Apple App Store for iOS devices.

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*This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).*





**April 14, 2021**

## **Ag groups, State prevail in water rights case**

The Montana Farm Bureau is applauding a success story with the First Judicial District Court – Lewis & Clark County, dismissing the Advocates for School Trust Lands case. The State of Montana was a defendant in the water rights case, along with the Montana Farm Bureau, Montana Stockgrowers Association, Montana Water Resources Association and the Association of Gallatin Agricultural Irrigators.

“It’s a great success that these agricultural organizations worked together to take a stand on a case that would have expanded the school trust lands law,” said MFBF Executive Vice President John Youngberg. The law, HB 296 which passed two years ago in the 2019 Montana Legislative Session, required the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation to follow a legal process prior to inserting the State’s name on privately owned water rights.

That law had been challenged by the Advocates for School Trust Lands after it was passed two year ago, and today the court dismissed the challenge.

“Farmers, ranchers and their corresponding organizations got together and prevailed in this case,” said Youngberg. “We thank everyone, including Lund Law who represented agriculture in the case, to allow HB 286 to protect water rights owners across the state.”

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