



# MONTANA FARM BUREAU *News Brief*

*We Care for the Country*

March 2021

## TOP STORIES



Wheatland/Golden Valley County Farm Bureau held a calving difficulties workshop with Katie Rein, DVM, Crazy Mountain Vet Service, and her life-size "pregnant Hereford cow." See back page for more details.

### ***Members attend virtual committee meetings***

Montana Farm Bureau members participated in the American Farm Bureau's Issues Advisory Committee meetings in late February. The IAC meetings, generally held at the association's headquarters in Washington, D.C., were held virtually this year due to pandemic restrictions. The meetings bring farmers and ranchers together from across the country to discuss issues of concern. MFBF has members on five committees: Animal Care, Environmental Regulations, Farm Policy, Federal Lands and Water.

Tonya Liles, a cattle rancher from Terry, was elected to serve as the chair of the Animal Care Committee.

"As my first year as chair, it had a few more challenges than it would have had for an in-person meeting, because on the virtual calls, everyone is either talking over each other or saying nothing," noted Liles. "Still, I felt we accomplished a lot."

Megan Hedges, who serves on the Farm Policy Committee, noted that their biggest conversation revolved around how farmers can be part of the solution. "Currently, farmers are often pointed out as being part of the problem. We need to show how our crop rotations, soil improvement and cover crops, to name a few practices, prove that agriculture is part of the solution, not the problem."

Tom DePuydt, a Saco diversified farmer, who serves on the Federal Lands Committee reported his committee discussed forest management and fires.

Mike Murphy, Water Committee, added that holding the meetings virtually, although successful in content, did not result in the same dialogue among members that an in-person meeting would have.

For the full story visit [www.mfbf.org/news](http://www.mfbf.org/news) or read the *News Brief Plus* online.

### **FUSION Reimagined**

Mark your calendars for the 2021 American Farm Bureau FUSION Reimagined Virtual Conference March 11-13. There will be great speakers, breakout sessions and evening events to bring together volunteer leaders from the Promotion & Education, Women's Leadership and Young Farmers & Ranchers programs. The conference will feature the Collegiate Discussion Meet, virtual tours from around the country, learning sessions and much more. All members are welcome to attend.

To register visit [www.fb.org/events/2021-fusion-conference](http://www.fb.org/events/2021-fusion-conference).

### **Calling on the Capitol**

Montana Farm Bureau welcomes all members to the 2021 Virtual Calling on the Capitol on National Ag Day, Tuesday, March 23. Sneak in a long lunch (11 a.m. - 2 p.m.) to meet with your elected officials, state leaders and more. Registration and a Farm Bureau membership is required.

Watch the MFBF Facebook page for the agenda and registration information.

Questions? Contact Sue Ann Streufert, [sueanns@mfbf.org](mailto:sueanns@mfbf.org), 406-587-3153.

### **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 *March 2021 NB Plus* contains:

- Boots on the Hill press releases.
- President Duvall full testimony.
- Much more!

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

# STATE NEWS

## Heritage area opposed

The proposed Big Sky Country National Heritage Area has met opposition from local farmers, ranchers, businesses, and local residents. The BSCNHA would put control of two million acres in the hands the National Park Service.

Montana Farm Bureau Federation stands with these local voices which include Chouteau and Cascade County Farm Bureau members. Establishing an NHA would add an unnecessary and duplicative layer of federal oversight through the National Park Service, on top of the local, state and federal regulations and programs already in place to promote the economy and preserve the history and heritage of Central Montana.

HB 554, introduced in the Montana Legislature, would add a level of accountability through elected state legislators to approve or deny the designation of a National Heritage Area.

Visit [mfbf.org](http://mfbf.org) to comment on the bill.

## Scholarship time

A reminder to students that the Montana Farm Bureau Foundation and the Montana Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee are offering several scholarships for students pursuing a higher education.

Scholarships available from the MFB Foundation include: \$1000 Collegiate YF&R, \$1500 Bernard Greufe Honor, and the \$1500 Future of Ag Honor Scholarship. The MFB Women's Leadership Committee is offering two \$1500 scholarships. April 1, 2021 is the deadline for the Foundation Scholarships to be submitted online. WLC scholarships need to be submitted to county FB presidents by April 1.

For information and applications visit [www.mfbf.org/foundation](http://www.mfbf.org/foundation).

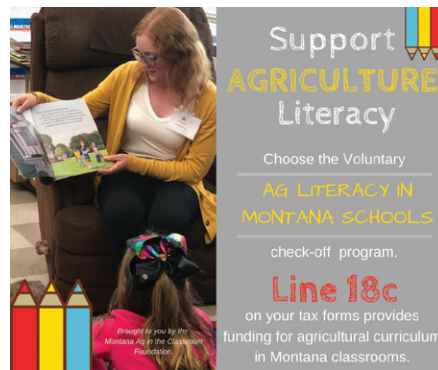
## Producer grants

Applications for the Montana Department of Agriculture USDA Value-Added Producer Grants are being accepted through March 22. For more information visit [www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/value-added-producer-grants](http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/value-added-producer-grants).

## 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.*

Cascade County - Brian and Elizabeth Beerman, Travis and Liz Edmundson; Chouteau County - Ronald and Patsy Long; Custer-Fallon County - Ottey Ekkelkamp; Fergus County - Rudy and Doris Hruska, Donald Obie, Clint and Sabrina Rhoton; Gallatin County - Eugene Graf, Mark and Adelaid Theisen; McCone County - Lathe Arnston and Shanya Gilead; Meagher County - Malcolm Rutledge; Northwest Counties - Jeffrey and Amber Fredenberg, Roni and Marc Haskins, KK and Emily Jense, Daniel Marchbanks, Ted and Jana North; Ravalli County - Howard and Elizabeth Hardeman, Katelyn Madden, Linda Marshall, Thomas Ruffalo; Roosevelt County - Kent and Kimberly Kleeman; Rosebud-Treasure County - James Guercio; Southwest Counties - John Hagenbarth, Dusty Thorton and Kyla West; Valley County - Casey and Jessica Riggins; Wheatland-Golden Valley County - Chad Howard; Yellowstone County - Alyssa Herman, Laura Peterson.



## Support ag ed on taxes

Help kids learn more about agriculture. On your 2020 Montana tax return, choose the voluntary check-off program to support ag literacy in Montana schools. These funds have the potential to provide materials and agricultural curriculum to teachers and schools across the state.

Whether you are using a tax preparer or completing the tax form yourself, check line 69c on the long tax form or 18c on the EZ form. Donating \$5, \$10 or another amount will benefit the agricultural knowledge of our youth.

Montana Farm Bureau Federation is a founding member of the Montana Ag in the Classroom Foundation. This tax season, help keep agricultural curriculum in the classroom for Montana students.

For more information on ag literacy efforts contact Rikki Swant, [rikkis@mfbf.org](mailto:rikkis@mfbf.org).

## Calendar

Calling on the Capitol  
March 23  
Helena/Virtual

MFBF Summer Conference  
June 7-9  
Great Falls

## People

**MFBF Vice President Cyndi Johnson**, a Conrad wheat farmer, was interviewed by KRTV during Ag Safety Awareness Week regarding farmer mental health and resources to help.

**Tom DePuydt** was interviewed by **Lane Nordlund**, Montana Ag Network, to discuss his meeting on the AFBF Federal Lands Committee meeting. **Randy Bogden**, KMON, interviewed **Megan Hedges** regarding the AFBF Farm Policy meeting she attended, virtually.

**MFBF Executive Vice President John Youngberg** was interviewed by Montana Public Radio regarding the affect on agriculture on the Phase One of the trade deal with China.

**Mark Diehl, J.M. Peck, Wes Jensen, Casey Mott, Jess Bandel, Gilmen Gasper and Cyndi Johnson**, to date, have all testified before committees in Helena.

# NATIONAL NEWS

## National Ag Day

The theme of National Ag Day, March 23, 2021, is “Food Brings Everyone to the Table.” It’s a day to recognize and celebrate the abundance provided by agriculture. Every year, producers, agricultural associations, corporations, universities, government agencies and countless others across America join together to recognize the contributions of agriculture.

For more information, blog posts, educational webinars and more, visit [agday.org](http://agday.org).

## Case IH discounts and more

Getting a new Case Maxxum Series tractor has never been easier when you utilize your Montana Farm Bureau discount. You can receive \$300-\$500 off your next dependable Case IH purchase. To download your discount certificate, visit [mfbf.org](http://mfbf.org). Combine the Montana Farm Bureau incentive with other discounts, promotions, rebates or available offers.

Case IH is only one of many Montana Farm Bureau member discounts. Check them out today at [mfbf.org](http://mfbf.org).

## At-Home Learning

Even though many kids are back in the classroom, some still are not. The American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture can lend a hand with their weekly series on learning through agricultural topics, whether it’s making edible dirt or discovering where sugar comes from.

Parents can sign up for a weekly lesson which includes games, science, reading, cards and more.

Check out all of the educational information at [agfoundation.org](http://agfoundation.org).

## What’s NEPA?

Why should ranchers be knowledgeable about the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)? MFBF member and attorney Peter Taylor, along with ACE Coordinator Chelcie Cargill, presented a webinar on the subject as part of the Dan Scott Ranch Management Program.

NEPA, which was enacted Jan. 1, 1970 and saw overhaul in July 2020, is an environmental law established by the President’s Council on Environmental Quality.

Taylor said there a lot of new regulations and stated public participation is paramount.

“You need to monitor what’s happening with NEPA, especially if you have federal agencies around your ranch. Most importantly, start commenting early in the process, because if you didn’t, you lose your chance to appeal later,” Taylor said.

“Follow the process and provide specific information and feedback,” he said, adding that NEPA is a slow process—expect to be in for the long haul.

Cargill echoed Taylor’s advice that it’s important to engage early and often.

“Timely and specific comments and ideas are most effective, and the most likely to be responded to, and that applies to both written comments and those presented at a public meeting.”

The full webinar can be viewed on at <https://animalrange.montana.edu/danscott/danscott-seminars.html>.



## Duvall testifies on climate and ag

American Farm Bureau President Zippy Duvall testified in front of the Committee on Agriculture, Climate Change and the U.S. Agriculture and Forestry Sectors February 25 regarding farmers’ and ranchers’ role in promoting soil health, conserving water, enhancing wildlife, efficiently using nutrients, and caring for their animals.

“For decades they have embraced innovation thanks to investments in agricultural research and adopted climate-smart practices to improve productivity, enhance sustainability, and provide clean and renewable energy,” said Duvall.

The Georgia farmer explained that livestock and crop production are the heart of American agriculture, providing the food we enjoy every day. “The daily choices we make on our farm and ranches are driven by our commitment to sustainability,” Duvall said. “Farmers have embraced technologies that reduce emissions and increase efficiency, making U.S. agriculture a leader in sustainability. U.S. farmers and ranchers have long been at the forefront of climate-smart farming, utilizing scientific solutions, technology, and innovations to raise crops and care for livestock. These efforts are designed to protect soil and water, efficiently manage manure, produce clean and renewable energy, capture carbon, and improve sustainability. Over two generations, we’ve been able to increase productivity by 287 percent, while using the same resources.

Duvall encouraged the lawmakers to protect American agriculture and production practices from undue burden, and respect farmers’ and ranchers’ ability to innovate and solve problems.

For the full testimony visit [mfbf.org/news](http://mfbf.org/news).

## Farm Bureau supports cattle market transparency

The American Farm Bureau Federation is calling on lawmakers to require increased transparency in America’s cattle markets. AFBF supports the Cattle Market Transparency Act of 2021, sponsored by Sens. Deb Fischer (R-Neb.) and Ron Wyden (D-Ore.). The bill focuses on ensuring robust regionally negotiated cash trade and providing producers with more pricing information.

The Cattle Market Transparency Act aligns with the goals set forth by the AFBF Cattle Market Working Group in 2020, as well as new cattle marketing policy passed at Farm Bureau’s Virtual Annual Convention earlier this year. The Cattle Market Working Group, comprised of 10 state Farm Bureau presidents including MFBF President Hans McPherson, spent more than two months investigating factors that led to market disruptions following the Holcomb packing plant fire and the COVID-19 pandemic.

“This legislation will ensure farmers and ranchers have fair access to markets and are fully informed on pricing so they can continue to put food on the table in homes across the country,” said AFBF President Zippy Duvall.

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

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## COUNTY NEWS

### County Farm Bureau host seminars, safety programs

**Fergus County** is sponsoring an Ag Facts contest for K-12 grades in Fergus and Petroleum Counties. Prizes will be awarded in three grade categories and the winners will be invited to read their fact on the radio for an Ag Day, March 23. **Yellowstone** and **Phillips** Counties are also holding Ag Facts contests.

**Kris Descheemaeker**, Fergus County, sent a letter to the *Lewistown News-Arbus* regarding per capita fees.

**Yellowstone County** held a board meeting February 4 to discuss scholarships, budget and upcoming events.

**Phillips County** forwarded scholarship application links to all of the

schools in their county. They held a virtual coffee chat February 21 with Senator Mike Lang and MFBF Senior Director of Governmental Affairs Nicole Rolf.

*Phillips County News* published two articles to promote Ag Safety Awareness Week and Cultivating a Farm State of Mind about mental health. County members are planning to visit Saco School to read Ag Accurate books and present an ATV safety training, as well as provide a general farm safety training March 25.

**Northwest Counties** was a sponsor of an in-person legislative update March 4 in Ronan. Local legislators were available to answer questions

about what is happening in Helena this session. County President **Josh Senecal** moderated.

**Rosebud/Treasure** held two ag safety trainings March 4 during Ag Safety Awareness Program Week. The event featured Ag Safety Coordinator Austin Grazier, as well as a representative from Torgerson's Equipment and the Montana State Fund.

**Wheatland/Golden Valley** held a well-attended hands-on workshop on calving and calving difficulties with veterinarian and Sweet Grass County Farm Bureau member Katie Rein, DVM. The vet brought a life-size cow dummy with a calf "in utero" to demonstrate how to handle various calving difficulties.

**Sweet Grass County's** Young Farmer & Rancher Committee awarded three first year members of the Big Timber FFA Chapter with their official dress jackets. They were pleased to "Back the Blue" and support the next generation of agriculturalists. The jacket recipients were **Paige Whalin**, **Kody Reed** and **Mollie Mae Ruth**.



Above: Explaining surgical equipment during the Wheatland/Golden Valley County Farm Bureau calving workshop.



Above: The Yellowstone County Farm Bureau board met to discuss scholarships and programs.