



MONTANA FARM BUREAU *News Brief*

We Care for the Country

February 2021

TOP STORIES



Mike, a cow dog owned by Gallatin County Farm Bureau member Tim Feddes, was a runner-up for Farm Dog of the Year and was featured during the American Farm Bureau virtual convention.

Virtual AFBF Convention interesting for many

In mid-January a dedicated group of Farm Bureau members usually head to the Annual American Farm Bureau Convention to enjoy workshops, speakers, trade show and networking with other farmers and ranchers from across the country. Due to the pandemic, the convention slated for San Diego was held virtually. AFBF stepped up to the challenge. They organized a convention that allowed many members to “attend” at no cost. Dirty Jobs’ Mike Rowe, Navy Seal Rorke Denver and Land O’ Lakes CEO Beth Ford were General Session speakers, plus there were plenty of educational workshops.

Two Montana Farm Bureau members were featured at General Sessions: Matt Pierson with The Producer Partnership and Tim Feddes whose pooch, Mike, was a runner-up in the popular Farm Dog of the Year competition.

Pierson, a Park County Farm Bureau member, was featured explaining why he started The Producer Partnership at the beginning of the pandemic. As of the convention the Partnership had donated more than 53,000 pounds of meat to feed the hungry and teamed up with the Montana Food Bank Network.

Gallatin Farm Bureau member Tim Feddes had his dog, Mike, recognized during the General Session for being one four dogs named as runner-up for the Farm Dog of the Year competition, sponsored by Purina.

People who registered for convention while it was taking place can go back and watch recorded sessions for 90 days. Those who didn’t register cannot watch the convention videos other than selected sessions available on YouTube.

To access the convention, visit <https://www.fb.org/events/afbf-convention/>.

Legislative Time

By now, all MFBF voting members, i.e. active farmers and ranchers, should have received the first edition of MFBF’s *Legislative Highlights* newsletter, which is full of information on bills and interviews with leaders of the the Montana Legislature.

Remember to tune in every Friday at noon for Live with your Lobbyists on Facebook and Instagram.

A virtual Calling on the Capitol is planned for Ag Day, March 23 so stay tuned for more information.

If you have any questions or need information on bills, contact Nicole Rolf, MFBF senior director of governmental affairs, nicolerc@mfbf.org or Rachel Cone, director of state affairs, rachelc@mfbf.org.

Happy Birthday to us

MFBF celebrates its 102nd birthday February 13. Learn the history of MFBF from 1919 until today in the *Legacies* book, still available for \$40 plus \$5 shipping. Order today at mfbf.org or call 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 when applicable, along with information gleaned from other sources.

The *February 2021 NB Plus* contains:

- Boots on the Hill press releases.
- MDA’s Junior Ag Loan Program.
- Applications for GLCI project.
- Nat’l Groundwater Awareness Week.

Visit mfbf.org/News/News-Brief.

ACE Class

For the fourth year, Montana Farm Bureau's ACE (Advocate. Communicate. Educate.) program has been empowering Farm Bureau members to be confident, effective leaders in their county Farm Bureaus and local communities. Advocacy follows leadership and with practiced, ever-evolving leadership skills, participants will be prepared to actively advocate on key industry issues.

The 2021 participants are: Shay Richter-Fort Benton, Chouteau County; Rachel Frost-Livingston, Park County; Dana Jensen-Broadview, Wheatland/Golden Valley County; Keturah Moberg-Redstone, Richland County; Jodie Drange-Laurel, Yellowstone County; Scott Stoner-Helena, Lewis & Clark County; Candace Weeda Strobbe-Cascade, Cascade County; Tammy Copenhaver-Rudyard, Hill-Liberty-Blaine County; Sarah Boyer-Bridger, Carbon/Stillwater Counties; Alyson Robins-Moore, Fergus County.

Per capita fees due

The Board of Livestock annually sets the livestock per capita fee rates, which are per-head feeds charged on livestock. They are assessed on all poultry and honey bees, all swine three months of age or older, and all other livestock, including horses, nine months of age or older. The fees help fund the department's animal health programs, brands enforcement, theft investigation and recovery, and predator control.

Report your livestock in the county where the livestock are located on February 1. The Department of Revenue will then send out a bill, which is due May 31.

For per animal fees and other information visit <https://liv.mt.gov/Centralized-Services/Per-Capita-Fees>.

Junior Ag Loans

Montana youth ages 21 and under may be eligible for up to \$8,500 in loan financing through the Montana Department of Agriculture's (MDA) Junior Agriculture Loan Program.

Applications are available on the department's website at agr.mt.gov.

Welcome new members

Montana Farm Bureau gives a hearty welcome to new members who realize the importance of belonging to the state's largest ag organization.

Carbon-Stillwater County Farm Bureau – Monte and Dawn Blain • Thomas and Debbi Fischer; Cascade County Farm Bureau – Reece and Lisa Gliko • Matt and Rosetta Otto; Chouteau County Farm Bureau – Tyler and Jenni Starman; Fergus County Farm Bureau – Wayne and Carol Todd; Gallatin County Farm Bureau – Troy and Joy Smith • Tim Venhuizen; Hill-Liberty-Blaine County Farm Bureau – Clayton Hofeldt; Judith Basin County Farm Bureau – Wade and Mary Kynett; McCone County Farm Bureau – Tori and Cody Dschaak; Northwest Counties Farm Bureau – Adam and Lauri Cowhig • Jim Cummings • Luke Cummings • Brice Heimark • Tyler and Jenny Johnson; Park County Farm Bureau – William Crooks; Ravalli County Farm Bureau – Randy and Elizabeth Hicks • Morgan Weidow; Richland County Farm Bureau – Gregory and Linda Kleinjan • Zane Pilgeram; Southwest Counties Farm Bureau – Double C Ranch • Gary Gustafson and Pam Birkeland • Hope Kincheloe and William Hampton • Newt Novich; Sweet Grass County Farm Bureau – Robert and Susan Harlick • Tucker Stenberg; Wheatland-Golden Valley County Farm Bureau – Darcy and Amanda Lammers.



Karli Johnson competes in the virtual Discussion Meet during the AFBF Virtual Convention.

Discussion Meet

Choteau rancher Karli Johnson provided knowledgeable insight and showed collaborative skills during the American Farm Bureau Virtual Young Farmers and Ranchers Discussion Meet. As winner of the Montana Farm Bureau Discussion Meet in November, the young rancher qualified to compete in the national event being held during the AFBF's Virtual Annual Convention January 10-13. Due to the pandemic, the convention, which would have been held in San Diego, CA, was completely online. However, that did not stop the Discussion Meet from being exciting and challenging. Johnson was not only in the first two rounds of the discussion meet, but advanced to the Sweet Sixteen round.

"The Discussion Meet gives you an amazing opportunity to bring back new ideas to your state. As a young person, one of the takeaways is we can't farm and ranch like everyone else, so getting new ideas is really valuable," Johnson noted.

Calendar

MFBF Board Meeting
March 8-9
Bozeman

MFBF Summer Conference
June 7-9
Great Falls

People

Kaite Sue Cooper, Willow Creek and Turk Stovall, Billings, have been appointed by the USDA to serve on the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board (CBB). Appointees will serve three-year terms beginning February 2021.

Tom DePuydt was interviewed by Western Ag Reporter regarding President Biden's cancellation of the Keystone XL Pipeline.

MFBF Nicole Rolf interviewed with Tri-State Livestock News regarding local meat processing in Montana.

Cyndi Johnson visited with MT Public Radio regarding COVID relief bill.

Rolf and Rachel Cone have done weekly interviews with KMON and Northern Ag Network.

Tim Feddes and Matt Pierson were featured on Montana Ag Network interviewed by Lane Nordlund.

Support Feeding America

The American Farm Bureau Federation is supporting Feeding America through sales of the #StillFarming to Feed America t-shirts. #StillFarming has reached more than a hundred million people across digital channels.

Half of the t-shirt profits will go to Feeding America which is the country's largest network of food banks. The other 50 percent will go to the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture.

Purchase a t-shirt online at fb.org/StillFarming.

Case IH Discounts

Case IH is a proud supporter of the Montana Farm Bureau. Thanks to a membership benefits partnership, Montana Farm Bureau members receive a discount of up to \$500 on every qualifying Case IH tractor and piece of equipment you purchase. This discount may be used with other promotions, rebates or offers.

Being a member of Montana Farm Bureau allows you to pocket up to \$500 in savings! Discover more about this discount at mfbf.org.

Book of the Year

The AFB Foundation for Agriculture Book of the Year is *Chuck's Ice Cream Wish (Tales Of The Dairy Godmother)*.

Chuck's favorite food is ice cream. People say, "be careful what you wish for," but what harm could wishing for endless ice cream be? With the help of his Dairy Godmother, Chuck is taken—poof!—on a memorable and delicious adventure to a dairy farm. He finds out exactly where ice cream comes from.

Find out more at agfoundation.org.

AFBF expresses need for ag issue work

American Farm Bureau President Zippy Duvall commented on the inauguration of President Joe Biden, who was sworn-in as the 46th president of the United States and Vice President Kamala Harris. Duvall pointed out work that needs to be done.

"Addressing the needs of America's farmers, ranchers and rural communities is important, including strengthening the farm bill, expanding trade and finding a fair solution to the farm labor shortage. We must extend broadband coverage to ensure rural families, businesses, schools and health care facilities can compete in today's digital reality. We are also looking for partners in our efforts to achieve sustainability goals while ensuring climate policies remain market-based and voluntary. We have been meeting with President Biden's nominees to discuss priority issues and today we shift into high gear to achieve these goals.

"All of this can be done if we commit ourselves to working together for a better America. Agriculture is traditionally divided more by regional differences than by political parties. We urge our elected leaders to continue that tradition of bipartisanship in the agriculture committees and throughout our government. Our country faces some big challenges. Let's get to work on solutions."



AFBF sets policy for 2021

Farmer and rancher delegates to the American Farm Bureau Federation's 102nd Virtual Annual Convention adopted policies to guide the organization's work in 2021. Key topics ranged from farm diversity to farm labor and dairy policy to livestock marketing. For the first time in AFBF history, delegates met and voted virtually due to COVID-19.

"Our Farm Bureau delegates showed that no challenge, not even a pandemic, will keep them from working to improve the lives of America's farmers and ranchers," said AFBF President Zippy Duvall. "Their work not only sets policy for 2021, it will also serve as a guide for AFBF as we prepare to work with a new president and a new Congress to ensure we continue to lead the world in producing healthy and safe food, fiber and fuel."

Four Montana Farm Bureau policies made it to the national level with two policies being heard on the delegate floor and passing with slight revisions. One MFBF policy under Climate Change noted that when sources of greenhouse gasses are being evaluated, wildfires should be considered and compared as a source of greenhouse gas emissions as a means of supporting timber harvest and fuels reduction. The second policy, under Natural Resources, said Farm Bureau opposes the alteration of river flows by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the sole purpose of benefiting a wildlife species or recreational use.

"It's always rewarding to see our Montana Farm Bureau policies that start at the county Farm Bureau level being adopted in some form by delegates from state Farm Bureaus across the country," said MFBF Vice President Cyndi Johnson. "It truly shows what a grassroots organization Farm Bureau is."

AFBF examines NASS

A new report released by the American Farm Bureau Federation provides an in-depth examination into the USDA-National Agricultural Statistics Service's (NASS) survey collection and data reporting issues. It also provides recommendations to improve accuracy and farmer confidence in the survey results. The USDA-NASS Working Group, comprised of 10 farmer members, spent more than four months evaluating the process and methodologies USDA-NASS uses to put farmer survey data into monthly reports.

Large changes, especially the last two years due to adverse weather events, in estimates of planted area, crop yields and inventory levels have caused wild swings in markets and left farmers questioning the agency's ability to respond quickly to rapidly changing conditions on the ground. AFBF hopes the work done by this group will provide a framework for USDA to make timelier adjustments to these key reports and restore trust in the data farmers and ranchers have relied on.

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COUNTY NEWS

Counties plan their Programs of Work for 2021

Carbon/ Stillwater County held a board and program planning meeting January 19.

Cascade, Northwest, Chouteau and Lewis & Clark counties have all met to set a budget and Programs of Work for the year. Despite the pandemic, they have great programs planned for 2021.

Fergus County held a board and program planning meeting January 11. At that meeting, they discussed hosting the AgDay Ag Facts Contest. The Ag Day Ag Facts Contest is open to

K-12 students in Fergus and Petroleum Counties. Students must submit a fact that contains true information about something in agriculture, with the entry including the source of the information. Prizes will be awarded in grade groups K-4th, 5th-8th and 9th-12th with students able to submit up to three entries each. Fergus County Farm Bureau leaders saw this as a great way for kids to brush up on their ag facts while celebrating National Ag Day.

Contact Kris Descheemaeker at krisd@midrivers.com for additional information.



Above: Members of the Cascade County Farm Bureau discussed their Program of Work for 2021.



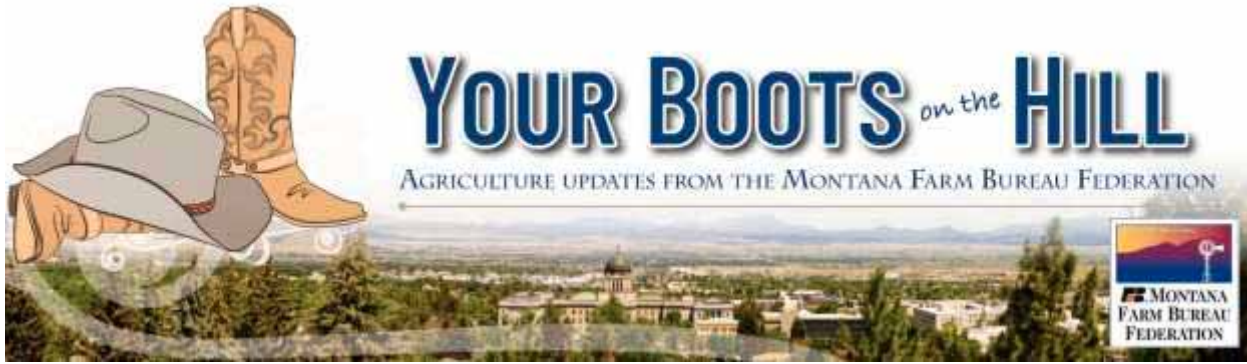
Above: Northwest Counties talk about their budget for the coming year.

MFBF receives excellence awards

Montana Farm Bureau captured four Awards of Excellence, announced during the American Farm Bureau Virtual Convention. These awards are presented to state Farm Bureaus that demonstrate outstanding achievement in four program areas based on membership category size.

These included Advocacy; Engagement and Outreach; Leadership and Business Development and Membership Value.

"It's rewarding to see our organization capture all of the excellence awards yet again," noted MFBF President Hans McPherson. "We would not have won these awards without our dedicated and hard-working volunteer leaders at the state and county Farm Bureau levels. They are what makes our Farm Bureau especially distinctive. I thank everyone who put so much effort into making our state Farm Bureau award-winning, especially during all of the changes caused by the pandemic."



January 28, 2021

YOUR BOOTS ON THE HILL:

Budget bills lumber on, trespass penalties tighten with proposed amendments

By Nicole Rolf and Rachel Cone, Montana Farm Bureau Federation

Between virtual technology and a new bill drafting system, the 2021 Montana Legislative Session is operating at a slower pace than we're familiar with. The Legislative body has chosen to opt out of its traditional Saturday floor sessions, saving those days for business days at the end of the session. Montana's legislature is allowed to meet for no more than 90 working days. 'Saving days' by not conducting a floor session on Saturday will lengthen this process, but it won't cost taxpayers additional operating money, as they're still only meeting for the allowed 90 business days.

This matters because it has pushed the transmittal deadline – the day all non-revenue bills must be moved to the second house – back several days. This means we have slightly more time to introduce bills and get them worked through the process before they must be transmitted to the other chamber. Right now, it looks like the transmittal deadline will be somewhere in the end of the first week of March.

House Bill 108: Revise trespass laws regarding permission for hunting, introduced by Rep. Denley Loge (R), HD 14. Montana Farm Bureau member policy supports.

This bill was first heard in the House Fish, Wildlife and Parks Committee and it was passed by the full House. This week the Senate Fish and Game Committee heard this bill and passed it in Executive Action shortly after. These amendments to current trespass statute regarding hunting

makes the legal language more explicit and may make penalties more severe for failure to obtain landowner permission when hunting, trapping or retrieving game on private land.

This is an important bill to show support to private landowners who take trespass seriously. Under this amended legislation, a hunter who fails to obtain landowner permission and trespasses on private land may be fined a minimum of \$135 (the current fine), or up to \$500. This allows the legal body handling the charge to assign a penalty depending on the severity of the charge. It also requires any person convicted of trespass to forfeit any current hunting, fishing or trapping license issued by the state for not less than 12 months or more than three years. It also includes language to further penalize subsequent trespass convictions. This legislation sends a clear message that trespass is a serious offence in Montana. It's important to note that this bill was brought forward by the Private Lands Public Wildlife (PLPW) advisory committee, with the intent of strengthening landowner/sportsmen relations. We appreciate this effort.

House Bill 187: Provide for local option sales tax, *introduced by Rep. Dave Fern (D), HD 5.*
Montana Farm Bureau member policy opposes.

The concept of a "local option sales tax" has been brought to the legislative body in many forms, many times over the years. A local option sales tax would allow municipalities or city/county governments to implement a sales tax in their jurisdiction with the approval of a local electorate vote. This iteration of the idea would allow for up to 2 percent sales tax on retail goods, and it specifically notes that revenues could be used for property tax relief or for local infrastructure upgrades in the jurisdiction in which it is assessed.

While our farming and ranching members strongly support efforts to relieve property taxes, they are equally adamantly opposed to local option sales taxes. Here's why: the funds raised by this tax are not evenly distributed throughout the state and essentially result in the redistribution of rural dollars to urban areas. Those of us who live in rural Montana know there are many supplies we have to go to larger towns to purchase. When a local option sales tax is in effect, we end up paying the tax in the city and leaving our money there. It exacerbates the transfer of rural dollars to more urban areas, essentially asking rural people to help relieve the property tax in urban areas or fund the infrastructure needs of that municipality. Rural people don't benefit from this system.

House Bill 14: Long-Range Building Bonding Program, *sponsored by Rep. Mike Hopkins (R), HD 92;* and **House Bill 2: General Appropriations Act**, *sponsored by Rep. Llew Jones (R), HD 18.*
We've shared updates on these two appropriations bills before, but it's important to note that these funding bills require long focus and diligence. We're frequently monitoring their progress and show up regularly to voice our support for funding for specific parts of these bills.

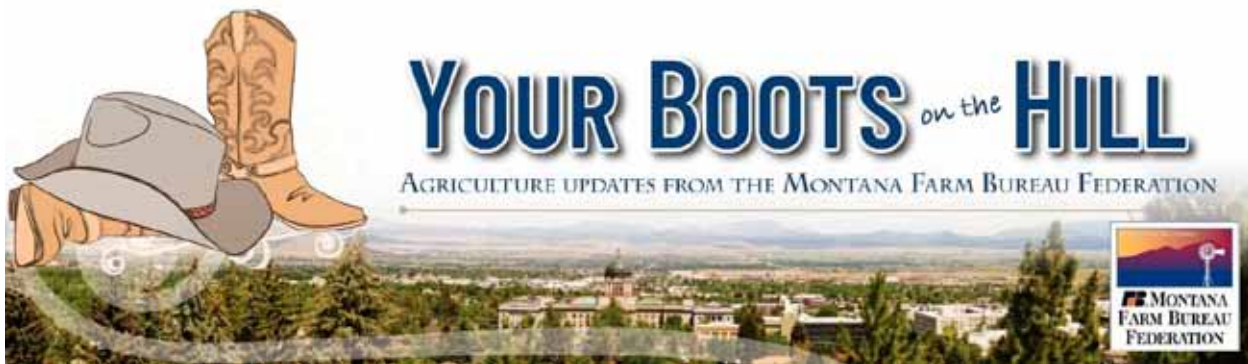
In addition to providing bonding allocation for the proposed and much-needed new Veterinary Diagnostics Lab, HB 14 provides for long-term bonding to support a new Wool Lab and improvements at some of Montana's Agriculture Experiment Stations, too. The Wool Lab is currently one of only two wool research and service laboratories in the country. It provides

critical research and analytical services to a large region of sheep producers. Montana Agriculture Experiment Stations provide vital research for our state's No. 1 industry, and innovations that support our livelihoods. Additionally, MFBF has gone on the record supporting the Department of Livestock and Department of Agriculture budgets, which are part of HB 2.

For more legislative updates and details on these issues, follow our Live with Your Lobbyist broadcast each Friday at noon on our [Montana Farm Bureau Facebook Page](#).

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.

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.



January 21, 2021

YOUR BOOTS ON THE HILL:

Rules and regulations: water rights and hemp laws get regulatory updates

By Rachel Cone and Nicole Rolf, Montana Farm Bureau Federation

With more than 3,000 bill draft requests filed, just a few over 300 have been introduced in the 2021 Montana Legislature so far. This means much of our time now is spent analyzing, researching, and talking to sponsors and agencies here in Helena to better understand the intent and ramifications of potential bills before they're heard in committee. We work proactively to suggest improvements, ask for changes, and help ensure that when and if a bill is introduced, it will be positive for Montana's agriculture industry.

We continue to get to know our state's new administration. This week, we met with a number of Governor Greg Gianforte's key staff members, including policy advisors Glenn Oppel and Michael Freeman and attorney Rachel Meredith. We appreciate that Gianforte's team reached out to us for this meeting, seeking input from Montana's agriculture organizations on the issues that matter most to our state's No. 1 industry.

Our conversation covered an array of important topics that impact our state's farmers and ranchers, including exempt wells, wild bison, meat processing capacity and the state's new veterinary diagnostic lab. These executive staff members were helpful and informative. They made it clear that this administration will support private property rights, the growth of value-added agriculture in our state, and the proposal put forward by the Department of Livestock to build a new Veterinary Diagnostic Lab. This is good news for farmers, ranchers, and the population at large.

The Montana Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory provides disease diagnostic support to veterinarians, livestock producers, companion animal owners, and the Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, as well as many other state and federal agencies. The laboratory supports the

Department of Livestock's Animal Health Division and Milk & Egg Bureau, includes the State Central Milk Laboratory and helps protect public health by testing for zoonotic diseases.

It's clear we need a new lab to provide the services that livestock producers and the public in general needs to ensure a safe, wholesome food supply and healthy human and animal populations. The Department of Livestock has worked hard to develop a funding proposal that is equal parts privately funded by rancher and farmer per capita fees and publicly funded with General Funds appropriations.

Funding for the new Diagnostic Lab is included in House Bill 14, which is currently working its way through the Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on Long-Range Planning. HB 14 also includes funding for a new wool lab and our state's agriculture experiment stations, which Montana Farm Bureau members also support. We'll share more updates throughout the session as this appropriations bill makes its way to the final budget.

While there is a bevy of bills on our radar, we have testified on 14 that Montana Farm Bureau members have specific policy directives on. Here are two of the many we testified on this week:

Senate Bill 55: Revise the Process for Water Right Ownership Updates, sponsored by Sen. Jill Cohenkour (D), SD 42, hearing in Senate Natural Resources Committee.

The Water Policy Interim Committee was busy in the time leading up to this legislative session, and this bill is the result of that work. First, some background: This is a joint, bi-partisan committee that studies water quality and quantity issues between sessions and provides suggested legislation to the committees. It's often referred to by its acronym, WPIC, which sounds a lot like "Whippic" when pronounced to those not as familiar with legislative lingo.

Senate Bill 55 amends the process for water right ownership updates and creates a certification process to resolve ownership disputes. If passed, this legislation would more precisely require the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation to update its records of water right ownership within 30 days of receiving notification regarding a change in water right holdings. It is the personal responsibility of a property buyer and seller to file the proper paperwork concerning a transfer of water rights, and this legislation requires the DNRC to keep those records up to date and accurate, which is an obvious necessity.

House Bill 142: Generally Revise Hemp Laws, sponsored by Rep. Joshua Kassmier (R), HD 27, hearing in House Agriculture Committee.

Montana is one of the nation's largest hemp producing states. Hemp growers in Montana currently operate under the guidance of a pilot program launched in the state in 2014. Hemp is a highly regulated product in a quickly evolving market. It's a crop that many farmers in Montana have been excited to add to their cropping rotations.

This bill generally revises current Montana hemp laws to comply with federal hemp laws, and it allows the Montana Department of Agriculture the rule making authority it needs to adhere to ever-evolving federal laws or regulations. This bill allows our Department of Agriculture to keep our state's hemp program current so that our farmers can be assured they are complying with a consistent set of state and federal guidelines, ensuring the long-term success of the program.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**National Ground Water Association Announces
National Groundwater Awareness Week Will Be March 7-13**

Week of activities seeks to increase advocacy for the protection of groundwater

(WESTERVILLE, OH — Jan. 26, 2021) [The National Ground Water Association](#) (NGWA) and The Groundwater Foundation (GF) have announced that National Groundwater Awareness Week (GWAW) will take place March 7-13.

An annual observance established in 1999 to highlight the responsible development, management, and use of groundwater, the event is also a platform to encourage yearly water well testing and well maintenance, and the promotion of policies impacting groundwater quality and supply.

This year, NGWA and its partners will be focusing their advocacy on highlighting the need for heightened awareness of local, regional, and national policies that protect and increase access to groundwater.

Over the course of GWAW, NGWA will be running an aggressive social media campaign linking the public to educational resources and opportunities to advocate for groundwater in their area. NGWA will also be offering free materials such as state-by-state groundwater fact sheets, groundwater FAQ's, and tools to get students involved in groundwater education.

GWAW also serves as an annual reminder for water well owners to test, tend, and treat their private water systems. NGWA encourages annual inspections of private water systems by certified water well contractors to ensure systems are operating correctly and producing safe and healthy water.

WellOwner.org, which is operated by NGWA with assistance from the Rural Community Assistance Partnership, offers private well owners tip sheets on water well maintenance and a "Find A Contractor" page which allows the public to find certified local water well contractors in their area.

“GWAW focuses on showing the public how to take action to protect groundwater nationally, regionally, and in their own backyard,” said NGWA CEO Terry S. Morse, CAE, CIC. “The more educated people become on the role groundwater plays in our environment and our day-to-day lives, the more they understand the need to speak up for its protection.”

The National Ground Water Association is a not-for-profit professional society and trade association for the global groundwater industry. Our members around the world include leading public and private sector groundwater scientists, engineers, water well system professionals, manufacturers, and suppliers of groundwater-related products and services. The Association’s vision is to be the leading groundwater association advocating for responsible development, management, and use of water.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

January 21, 2021

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**Department of Livestock Conducts Activities in Preparation for
a Foreign Animal Disease Introduction**

Helena, Mont.— The Montana Department of Livestock (DOL) continues to prepare for a foreign animal disease (FAD) introduction into the state. The Animal Health Bureau (AHB) and the Montana Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (MVDL) were recently awarded funding by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to increase practical livestock biosecurity measures and address needs related to receiving, testing, and reporting diagnostic test results, respectively.

The AHB was awarded over \$29,000 to conduct outreach to Montana cattle producers about biosecurity measures that will be required for permitting movements of agricultural products during an outbreak. In the coming months, the AHB will hold 10 biosecurity tabletop courses around the state, focusing on biosecurity recommendations from the Secure Beef Supply program. The tabletop exercises will serve as a 3D interactive model to help illustrate biosecurity principles and why they are fundamental to decrease the risk of disease introduction. The tabletop activities will be supplemented by on-farm biosecurity assessments for interested participants.

"On-farm biosecurity is a critical management tool for producers to protect livestock from foreign or domestic diseases," said Dr. Anna Forseth, veterinarian with the Department of Livestock.

Additionally, the MVDL has been awarded \$94,500 to progress efficiencies of data entry, and analysis of diagnostic test results.

"Readily available data will be critically important to veterinarians and producers during the event of a foreign animal disease outbreak," said laboratory Director, Gregory Juda, PhD. "Veterinary diagnostic laboratories play a key role in disease surveillance and livestock business continuity, and these activities will be best served by a laboratory information system that can provide State Animal Health Officials with accurate and timely information."

The MVDL partnered with veterinary diagnostic laboratories at South Dakota State University and the University of Illinois as part of a multi-laboratory joint grant submission.

Biosecurity and diagnostic efficiency will be key factors in the success of a FAD response. The DOL is excited about the opportunity to advance its preparedness for a FAD and will look to producers in the coming months to take advantage of these opportunities.

The mission of the Montana Department of Livestock is to control and eradicate animal diseases, prevent the transmission of animal diseases to humans, and to protect the livestock industry from theft and predatory animals. For more information on the Montana Department of Livestock, visit www.liv.mt.gov.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Tuesday, January 19, 2021

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Junior Ag Loans Available Through Montana Department of Agriculture

Loans up to \$8,500 available to young Montana farmers and ranchers

Helena, Mont. – Montana youth ages 21 and under may be eligible for up to \$8,500 in loan financing through the Montana Department of Agriculture’s (MDA) Junior Agriculture Loan Program.

“With the average age of farmers and ranchers being nearly 60 years old, supporting the next generation is vital to Montana’s livelihood,” said MDA Director Mike Foster. “The Junior Ag Loan Program plays an important role in connecting young people who are passionate about pursuing projects in agriculture with the financing they need to get started.”

More than 60 young farmers and ranchers currently participate in the Montana Junior Agriculture Loan Program which was developed to assist rural youth in developing or expanding agribusiness projects. Program benefits often far exceed the actual loan for program participants. Many young men and women that were unable to secure conventional financing due to age or inadequate collateral have utilized the program as a means for establishing financing experience and advancing their project’s monetary value.

Projects can involve crop and livestock production, custom farming, marketing and distribution, processing, and other financially feasible activities. Up to 90 percent of projects can be financed through the program with repayment taking place for up to five years. Junior Agriculture Loan Program applications are available on the department’s website at agr.mt.gov/I-Want-To/Apply-For/Grants-Loans/Junior-Agriculture-Loans.

The Montana Department of Agriculture’s mission is to protect producers and consumers, and to enhance and develop agriculture and allied industries. For more information on the Montana Department of Agriculture, visit agr.mt.gov.

###

Application for Montana GLCI Demonstration Projects

Ranking criteria for applications includes the significance for benefiting private grazing lands in Montana. Projects must be initiated in 2021 and funding will be allocated on an annual basis, which is dependent upon the yearly budget allocation. Submission of application does not guarantee project funding will be available. The current focus is on emerging issues in grazingland management as well as topics that may assist the Natural Resources Conservation Service with delivering [Montana Focused Conservation](#)

Applicants

Applications will be accepted from groups of individuals, non-governmental organizations, state or local units of government

Project

The projects must include some aspect of private grazing lands improvement and/or management. Projects must be initiated and sponsored through local, groups of individuals and/or groups. The Montana GLCI steering committee places special emphasis on cooperative efforts working with partners which may include (USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), MSU Extension, Conservation Districts, etc.) Individual projects will be considered only if the project provides broad scale, community wide education and benefits the greater good.

Matching Funds

All applicants must show a one-to-one match for project cost. Applicant's match may be from in-kind contributions and should be noted on the budget form under in-kind or other funding sources.

Application Materials

The following information must be provided, on additional pages, as requested below; incomplete applications will **not** be considered:

- Contact Information for Project Coordinator: Name, address and phone number
- Project Name and Sponsor: Include contact information.
- Area and Scope of Project: Describe the location and relative size and scope of the project area and provide a map of the area.
- Description of Project: Describe the history of and the need for the project. Be specific, using qualitative and quantitative measures.
- Number of Individuals Impacted: Identify all partners involved in the proposal and their roles and responsibilities.
- [Montana GLCI Application Detailed Budget](#) (PDF; 95KB): Under each category, please provide details; that is travel (who is traveling, cost of travel, form of travel); communications (posters, brochures, flyers, radio and so forth.)
- Purchase of Equipment: Not funded by this grant but should be noted for the purposes of matching funds, if applicable.
- Method of Implementation: Describe clearly the methodology of the project and the tools or processes that will be used to implement the project.
- Expected Outcome: Identify the expected results of the project and the benefits to be derived from the proposed project activities.
- Method of Evaluation: Describe the methodologies or procedures to be followed to evaluate the project, to determine technical feasibility and quantify the results for the final report.
- Method of Dissemination of Information: Projects must be relevant to the local area, but applicable to a larger area, once data is collected and available. Projects must be designed to provide methods of evaluation and sharing of information, such as tours, written materials and so forth.

Letters of Support

Please provide **only** two (2) letters of support that is from an organization that is involved in the demonstration project or providing matching funds or in-kind funding to the demonstration project.

Application Review and Hearings

The Montana GLCI steering committee will meet in early 2021 (date and location to be determined) to review applications for Montana GLCI demonstration projects. A representative may be requested to be available via phone during this meeting. This will allow the steering committee to ask questions and have a better understanding of the demonstration project submitted for consideration.

Award Notification

Applicants whose projects have been awarded funding will be notified in writing within one month of the application review. Applicants who have not been awarded funding will also be notified in writing within the same time frame.

Demonstration Project Agreement

Applicants will provide a written summary report to the coordinator on an annual basis and upon completion of the demonstration project using the criteria set forth in this application: 1) introduction; 2) objectives; 3) study area; 4) methods; 5) results; and 6) contact information.

Application Deadline

March 1, 2021

Application Address

Please send applications to:

[Ben Hauptman](#)

ben.hauptman@montana.edu

GLCI Co-Coordinator

406-544-5090

Submission of application does not guarantee project dollars will be available. Funding of projects is dependent upon yearly budget allocations.