



MONTANA FARM BUREAU *News Brief*

We Care for the Country

September 2020

TOP STORIES



Yellowstone County Farm Bureau members served cake during the FFA 4-H Livestock Sale at the Montana Fair. Who are these masked folks? Pictured are Kathy Teter, Bonnie Kinsfather, Judy Becker, Gretchen Schubert, Ainsley McFarland, Lisa McFarland and Jim Schubert.

Yellowstone County stays active with sale

The summer of 2020 proved difficult with COVID-19 resulting in a myriad of cancellations and dramatically altered activities. Fortunately, the Montana Fair still held their 4-H Junior FFA Sale August 15 and Yellowstone County Farm Bureau continued to support the event.

“Originally, our county Farm Bureau opted to sponsor the buyers’ dinner rather than purchase an animal at the sale. We wanted to do something that would benefit all of the kids and show our appreciation for a job well done,” explained Yellowstone County member Kathy Teter.

When Agri-News took over the dinner sponsorship a few years ago, Yellowstone County helped by sponsoring and serving the desserts. With other changes, Albertson’s began donating the cakes, so the county decided to give a monetary donation to help with other expenses such as ultrasound fees or whatever else was

needed to help with the fair sale budget. However, they still wanted to be involved with serving dessert.

“Normally, we serve 900 meals, but this year because of different set up and location due to COVID-19, the numbers were down to 750. We were very thankful for those numbers and have our Yellowstone County Commissioners to thank for supporting and allowing the fair shows and sale to be held this year,” said Teter. “We enjoy serving the dessert because it makes the community aware of Farm Bureau’s involvement and support of youth agricultural activities and puts friendly faces to the Farm Bureau logo.”

“4-H is one of the premiere youth ag organizations,” added Teter. “The kids in 4-H are going to be the future of agriculture. Even if they move on to do other jobs, their connection to ag will stay because it’s such a positive experience.”

Convention update

With the advent of COVID-19, planning any meeting or conference has certainly been challenging. The 2020 Montana Farm Bureau Convention is no exception. At the time this newsletter is going to press, the current plan is to hold a curtailed convention with the caucus meetings and delegate session Tuesday and Wednesday, November 10-11 at the DoubleTree and Northern Hotels in Billings. COVID-19 prevention protocols will be practiced. Watch for more information in the *MFBF Fall Spokesman* and updates on MFBF’s Facebook page.

Legacies available

If you haven’t already purchased the amazing, beautiful MFBF history book, *Legacies*, now is your chance. Learn about MFBF leaders past and present. It makes a great gift, too.

Legacies is \$40 plus \$5 for shipping. Order at www.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 other general information.

The *September NB Plus* contains:

- Release on Ag in Color contest
- Release on meat processing acts
- Pesticide disposal days
- MDT bridge load posting
- Pesticide disposal
- Special deals from Polaris for farmers and ranchers!

Pest control info

The Montana Department of Agriculture's Vertebrate Pest Program provides the agricultural community and the general public with information on the management and control of many vertebrate species. These are animals, including ground squirrels, pocket gophers, voles, and prairie dogs that sometimes cause damage to agricultural crops, yards and gardens.

The pest control site, <https://agr.mt.gov/Topics/Vertebrate-Pests> includes information and bulletins regarding controlling these destructive critters. There are also videos available on YouTube.

Questions? Contact Stephen Vantassel, vertebrate pest specialist, Montana Department of Agriculture, 406-538-3004, svantassel@mt.gov.

ACE applications

Applications for the 2021 ACE program are now available. ACE is a year long leadership program for members of Montana Farm Bureau. The focus of the program is built around three primary objectives: developing leaders, engaging local communities and issue advocacy. The program is designed to empower Farm Bureau members to be confident, effective leaders in their county Farm Bureaus and local communities.

Rural Montana needs strong leadership. We need school board members, local government officials and energetic county Farm Bureau volunteers. We believe that advocacy follows leadership and with practiced, ever evolving leadership skills, participants will be prepared to actively advocate on key industry issues.

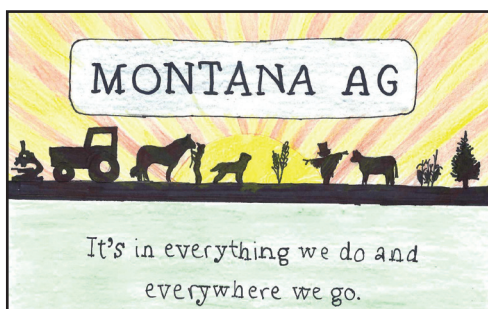
"We need to step up and become leaders. ACE is a great building block for you to start your leadership career in Farm Bureau," said Ed Bandel, Chouteau County Farm Bureau member and 2020 ACE participant.

Apply online at <https://mfbf.org/programs/Montana-Farm-Bureau-ACE-Program>. For more information contact Chelcie Cargill; chelciec@mfbf.org or 406-930-2299.

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 – William and Christi Kinney, Peter Parr; Cascade – Rodney and Debra Mellin, Jedidiah and Shelley Sauder; Custer-Fallon – Jim Hill and Stan Markuson; Dawson-Wibaux – Lee Melrose, Dale Welliever; Fergus – Maxwell Peck, Patrick Southworth; Judith Basin – Bruce and Susan Neumann; Lewis & Clark – Michael and Vonnice Hummert; Northwest – Nicholas and Randi Courville, Dave Hadden, Dean and Carli Hughbanks, Dan Lake and Tim Lake, Joel Miskimins, David Price, Michael and Kathy Shopa; Park – Robert Boyd, Caleb Elston; Roosevelt – Dustin Dighans; Southwest – Gage and Cassandra Baumeister, Tayber Goff, Dennis Reilly; Valley – James and Jill Henzie; Wheatland-Golden Valley – Lanie White



Ag in Color contest

Montana Farm Bureau announces its 'Ag in Color' Drawing Contest, part of their Montana Youth (MY) Agriculture Literacy program. This well-established drawing contest is now open for 2021. 'Ag in Color' drawing contest consists of seven entry categories and is designated for students in kindergarten through sixth grade.

Entry categories include areas specific to Montana Agriculture: Kindergarten – Farm Animals in Montana; Grade 1 – Grown in Montana; Grade 2 – Grains of Montana; Grade 3 – Cattle in Agriculture; Grade 4 – Noxious Weeds in Montana; Grade 5 – Safety on Montana's Farms and Ranches; Grade 6 – Ag-Related Careers in Montana.

One winner will be chosen from each category and judges will select one drawing from the winners to receive the "Farm Bureau Proud" designation. Montana Farm Bureau will host the winning artists at an award luncheon in Helena March 2021.

The 'Ag in Color' drawing contest is open to all students and educators across Montana. For more information, contact Montana Farm Bureau Regional Manager, Rikki Swant, rikkis@mfbf.org.

Calendar

MFBF Board Meeting
September 14-15
Lewistown

Young Ag Leadership Conference
CANCELLED

MFBF Convention
November 10-11
Billings

People

Nicole Rolf interviewed with Leif Bakken, Northern Ag Network on upcoming meat processing bills that would help smaller packing plants. Rolf and MFBF President Hans McPherson have been participating in the Cattle Working Group weekly Zoom meetings.

John Youngberg was interviewed by the Bozeman Chronicle regarding young farmers and ranchers/first time ranchers.

Joel LaLiberty has been appointed to serve on the Elk Management Plan Initial Guidance Citizens Group with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. He has a diverse background in his experience with elk management, from rural to agricultural involvement to recreational and tourism through his hunting knowledge. Joel competed in the MFBF Young Farmer and Rancher Discussion Meet and is a member of the MFBF Resource Management, Environment and Technology Committee.

He has a long history of agriculture from growing up in rural Montana and participating in FFA.

Market Intel

Market Intel, produced by the Farm Bureau economic analysis team, provides market and policy insight and analysis for our farmer and rancher members nationwide, as well as policymakers on Capitol Hill. The reports cover everything from if new crop sales to China measure up to August cattle on feed and new crops being added to the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program. Stories are accompanied with excellent graphics. Check out <https://www.fb.org/market-intel>.

Save your hearing at Grainger

Does your crew need hearing protection on the job? Check out Grainger's huge selection of earplugs and earmuffs and save with our Farm Bureau discount.

See the benefits of shopping with Grainger as a Farm Bureau member at [Grainger.com/FarmBureau](https://www.Grainger.com/FarmBureau). Go to 'My Lists' to see the special prices on Key Suppliers. All orders come with free shipping (details and restrictions apply; see website for details).

It pays to be a Farm Bureau member.

iFarm. iVote.

AFBF has rolled out their "iFarm. iVote" toolkit which enables Farm Bureau members to register to vote, verify registration status, find your elected officials and find your 2020 candidates.

iFarm. iVote breaks down information at the county level so you can see everything from your local races to your precinct for state races as well as candidates for the national races. It also allows you to learn more about the candidates so you can cast an educated vote. Visit [fb.org](https://www.fb.org).

Cattle market webinar

Montana Farm Bureau members had the opportunity to learn about cattle prices and cattle marketing during an exclusive Zoom presentation August 27. AFBF's Economist Michael Nepveux and Policy Director Scott Bennett provided observations and challenges on livestock marketing.

"We never felt we were in a dire situation with beef shortage. There was plenty of supply, but the plants shutting down or operating at 70 percent capacity had less animals going through the system," noted Nepveux. "Plus, when COVID hit, there was a huge drop in people spending food dollars away from home, but there was a spike in home spending on beef. However, people weren't buying steaks, they were buying ground meat."

Nepveux explains that with the current recession, consumers will not be dining out or purchasing much high-end beef which could affect prices.

Bennett explained that when COVID hit there was wild volatility in the cattle market which resulted in lot of extreme reactions and attitudes on how to fix the "broken cattle market."

Both presenters encouraged ranchers to examine risk management tools.

"In general, ranchers don't use those, but it would be good for our livestock industry to look outside the box," Bennett said.

The hour-long webinar was recorded and is available in the Members-Only section of [mfbf.org](https://www.mfbf.org).



Meat processing bills to help smaller processors

The Montana Farm Bureau applauds Congressman Gianforte (R-MT) for co-sponsoring two important bills for livestock producers: The Requiring Assistance to Meat Processors for Upgrading Plants (RAMP-UP Act) and the

Direct Interstate Retail Exemption for Certain Transactions (DIRECT) Act. MFBF has been actively pursuing legislation and other actions that will improve cattle markets for producers in Montana and the rest of the country.

"One huge problem in Montana is a lack of livestock processing capacity," stated MFBF National Affairs Director Nicole Rolf. "There are a variety of complicating factors here, but these two bills will help fix some of the challenges."

The RAMP-UP Act, H.R. 7490, provides grants for small custom meat processors to become USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) inspected. This would allow more small meat processing plants to become federally inspected and the meat sold commercially.

The DIRECT Act, HR 7425, would allow state inspected meat to be sold across state lines via internet sales.

"We believe this legislation allows new flexibilities and marketing opportunities while protecting food safety, recall ability, and trade market access with regard to equivalency agreements," said Rolf. "While we recognize the importance of FSIS inspection in interstate commerce and international trade, this bill is narrowly crafted and only allows the meat to be sold through e-commerce, alleviating traceability concerns."

Conservation compliance rule falls short

A new NRCS conservation compliance rule falls short of farmers' needs, according to the American Farm Bureau Federation. The Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation Final Rule does not remedy unfair enforcement by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Don Parrish, AFBF Senior Regulatory Relations Director, calls the final rule problematic for farmers. "When you combine bringing terms into this regulation that aren't congressionally authorized—abandonment, changing the rainfall precipitation data used to determine when things are prior converted—as well as incorporating regulatory rules that they have been using to bind farmers from guidance and manuals that farmers have never had an opportunity to comment on, they add up to this being a really problematic regulation."

Farmers need clear rules and safeguards to ensure fair treatment of farmers in conservation compliance.

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

ISSN: 1555-788X

The Montana Farm Bureau Federation News Brief is published monthly except for January, April, July and October by the Montana Farm Bureau Federation at 502 S. 19th Ave., Suite 104, Bozeman, MT 59718. Subscription rates are \$4 per year, covered by annual dues to the Montana Farm Bureau Federation. Non-member subscriptions are \$25 per year. Mail at periodical postage rate in Bozeman, MT and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Montana Farm Bureau Federation News Brief, 502 S. 19th Ave., Suite 104, Bozeman, MT 59718. 406-587-3153.

PERIODICAL
POSTAGE
PAID
Kalispell, MT

News Brief Plus
More News. More Details.
mfbf.org/news/news-brief
Check it out.

COUNTY NEWS

Counties stay busy, prepare for annual meetings

Meagher County hosted a Labor Day Parade with the theme “Rural Resilience” in White Sulphur Springs.

Northwest Counties donated a heifer to the Western Montana Stockgrowers Association Heifer Scholarship Program. **Phillips County** and **Prairie County** held Zoom board meetings. **Rosebud-Treasure** and **Yellowstone Counties** both held policy development meetings. **Custer-Fallon, Northwest, Powder River-Carter, Sweet Grass, Meagher, Fergus, Gallatin and Park**

counties all held board meetings. **Powder River-Carter County** had a booth at county fairs in Broadus and Ekalaka.

Sweet Grass County held a Farmers’ Market educational event Sept. 4.

Yellowstone County awarded two scholarships to students who are attending Montana State University: Garrett Bromenshenk from Billings is a returning college student majoring in Animal Science – Livestock Management & Industry; Emily Agar, from Molt, is a new freshman starting on her ag degree.

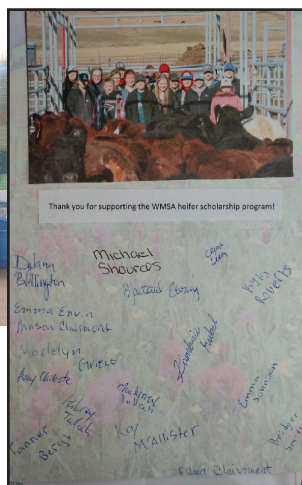
Be sure to check out the MFBF Facebook page to see the farm and ranch kids’ “Right This Very Minute” videos, spearheaded by the P&E Committee. The young folks from the **Deeschemaeker, Liles and Jones Farm Bureau** families share what their lives on a ranch entail.

County Annual Meetings

Carbon-Stillwater, Red Lodge	Sept. 8
Rosebud-Treasure, Hysham	Sept. 9
Yellowstone, Billings	Sept. 9
HLB/Chouteau, Chester	Sept. 9
Meagher, Martinsdale	Sept. 10
Wheatland-GV, Lavina	Sept. 13
Broadwater, Townsend	Sept. 13
Ravalli, Stevensville	Sept. 13
Big Horn, Hardin	Sept. 16
McCone, Circle	Sept. 16
Sweet Grass, Big Timber	Sept. 17
PR-Carter, Broadus	Sept. 17
Custer-Fallon, Miles City	Sept. 20
Southwest, Alder	Sept. 20
Lewis & Clark, Helena	Sept. 21
Dawson-Wibaux, Glendive	Sept. 21
Judith Basin, Geyser	Sept. 21
Phillips, Malta	Sept. 22
Mussellshell, Roundup	Sept. 22
Roosevelt, Wolf Point	Sept. 23
Gallatin, Logan	Sept. 23
Valley, Glasgow	Sept. 23
Fergus, Lewistown	Sept. 24
Richland, Sidney	Sept. 24
Park, Emmigrant	Sept. 26
Cascade, Great Falls	Sept. 27
Prairie, Terry	Sept. 27
Northwest, Charlo	Sept. 28
Front Range	Sept. 29



Above: Booth at the Powder River County Fair.



Right: Thank you note to Northwest Counties for the heifer.



August 18, 2020

Farm Bureau supports meat packing acts to help state agriculture

The Montana Farm Bureau applauds Congressman Gianforte (R-MT) for his co-sponsoring of two important bills for livestock producers: The Requiring Assistance to Meat Processors for Upgrading Plants (RAMP-UP Act) and the Direct Interstate Retail Exemption for Certain Transactions (DIRECT) Act. MFBF has been actively pursuing legislation and other actions that will improve cattle markets for producers in Montana and the rest of the country.

“One huge problem in Montana is a lack of livestock processing capacity,” stated MFBF National Affairs Director Nicole Rolf. “Plants across the state are significantly backed up so when a rancher gets ready to bring in a beef for processing, it may be months, or even next year, before they can get an appointment. Hogs and lambs are affected as well. This was a problem before the pandemic and it has been exacerbated by all the issues that have arisen since the coronavirus hit. Consumers got worried when they noticed store shelves getting a little bare so they started looking to buy in bulk or to buy local, which is great, but now we need to be able to deliver. There are a variety of complicating factors here, but these two bills will help fix some of the challenges.”

The RAMP-UP Act, H.R. 7490, provides grants for small custom meat processors to become USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) inspected. This would allow more small meat processing plants to become federally inspected and the meat sold commercially.

“Montana has a mix of USDA-inspected, state inspected and custom exempt processing plants. The custom exempt plants or state-inspected plants are great for personal-use processing, such as when a rancher takes in a beef or a hunter has a deer cut for their own consumption,” noted Rolf. “However, state and federal law places some restrictions on the sale of meat killed at these plants. If the RAMP-UP Act bill were to pass, more of the state-inspected and custom plants may be able to take advantage of grant money to upgrade to FSIS inspections, allowing them to sell meat across state lines. This would give Montana ranchers more outlets for their cattle.”

The DIRECT Act, HR 7425, would allow state inspected meat to be sold across state lines via internet sales.

“We believe this legislation allows new flexibilities and marketing opportunities while protecting food safety, recall ability, and trade market access with regard to equivalency agreements,” said Rolf. “While we recognize the importance of FSIS inspection in interstate commerce and international trade, this bill is narrowly crafted and only allows the meat to be sold through e-commerce, alleviating traceability concerns.”



September 2, 2020

MFBF announces 2021 ‘Ag in Color’ Drawing Contest

Montana Farm Bureau announces its ‘Ag in Color’ Drawing Contest, part of their Montana Youth (MY) Agriculture Literacy program. This well-established drawing contest is now open for 2021. ‘Ag in Color’ drawing contest consists of seven entry categories and is designated for students in kindergarten through sixth grade.

Entry categories include areas specific to Montana Agriculture:

- Kindergarten – Farm Animals in Montana
- Grade 1 – Grown in Montana
- Grade 2 – Grains of Montana
- Grade 3 – Cattle in Agriculture
- Grade 4 – Noxious Weeds in Montana
- Grade 5 – Safety on Montana’s Farms and Ranches
- Grade 6 – Ag-Related Careers in Montana

One winner will be chosen from each category and judges will select one drawing from the winners to receive the “Farm Bureau Proud” designation. Montana Farm Bureau will host the winning artists and their families at an award luncheon in Helena March 2021. Winners and their families will tour the capitol city and meet with state dignitaries prior to the luncheon.

The ‘Ag in Color’ drawing contest is open to all students and educators across Montana. Entries must be submitted to the County Superintendent who in turn will submit county winners to Montana Farm Bureau for consideration.

Teachers can visit mfbf.org/Programs/MY-AG for educational resources and lesson plans to match each category. For more information, contact Montana Farm Bureau Regional Manager, Rikki Swant, rikkis@mfbf.org.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Monday, August 24, 2020

CONTACT:

Carli Davis, MT Dept. of Agriculture, (406) 465-0531

Waste Pesticide Disposal Events Set for September

MT Dept. of Agriculture asks participants to pre-register by September 10, 2020

Helena, Mont. - The Montana Department of Agriculture's annual Pesticide Disposal Events will be held in several locations across Montana during September. The collection events will be held September 15 in Kalispell; September 16 in Polson; September 17 in Hamilton; and September 18 in Butte. The annual events have collected more than 668,000 pounds of waste pesticides since it began in 1994.

The program was designed to help individuals dispose of any pesticides that are unusable as originally intended and cannot be used for any other purpose. This allows participants to dispose of waste pesticides in an environmentally responsible way and helps protect Montana's ecosystems and groundwater, as well as families, pets, livestock and drinking water.

The department asks that participants pre-register [online](#) by September 10, 2020, before the collection events, so products can be managed safely and efficiently. Those interested in having their waste pesticides recycled should visit the website at: <https://agr.mt.gov/Pesticide-Waste-Disposal>.

There is no charge for the first 200 pounds of material. Amounts over 200 pounds are assessed at \$1.00 per pound. A higher fee may apply to pesticides with dioxins or dioxin precursors.

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.

###

The Montana Department of Transportation Bridge Load Posting Program

Recent mandates from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), require the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) to place new load posting signs on bridges around the state. Based on recent safety-based bridge engineering evaluations, new vehicle types, and the updated requirements from FHWA, the new load postings will indicate the maximum amount of weight that can legally cross a bridge for different vehicle types.

MDT needs your help to prevent overload and damage, maintain the integrity of the bridge, and safeguard bridge longevity.

What's new?

Truck manufacturers are building specialized hauling vehicles (SHVs) capable of legally carrying heavier loads than typical vehicles have in the past. These vehicles may increase stress on bridges, so current weight restrictions may not be sufficient to ensure safe operations.

FHWA has mandated that all States must include these new, short, heavy vehicles when evaluating the safe limits of bridge capacity. Accordingly, MDT is in the process of updating load ratings for 4,500 public bridges across the state, including approximately 2,500 owned by MDT. For this reason and for the safety of the traveling public, motorists will start to notice some bridges with new bridge load posting,

Load Posting Signs

Load posting, or "Weight Limit" signs indicate the maximum gross vehicle weight (GVW), including equipment or loads being towed by the vehicle, that can safely cross the bridge. Weight limit signs cannot show every possible vehicle on the road, so three standard silhouettes are used to

represent the most common truck configurations. The number of axles shown on each silhouette is only an example and is not to be interpreted as the only possibility for that vehicle type; actual axle numbers will vary. Descriptions are provided to help interpret vehicle types that are represented by each silhouette. See the brochure at the bridge load posting program webpage below.

For Additional Information

MDT is also in the process of creating interactive maps for the public's use. When the interactive maps are finalized and posted on the program's webpage, the public will be able to look up individual bridges and their corresponding posting. As the Bridge Load Posting Program moves forward other information will also be posted on our webpage. For the most up-to-date information and additional resources, visit MDT's Bridge Load Posting Program webpage at

<https://www.mdt.mt.gov/business/contracting/bridge/loadrating/load-posting-program.shtml>. Or contact us at our email MDTbridgeloadingposting@mt.gov.



Bridge over the Beaverhead River west of Sheridan





Bridge Load Posting Program

• POSTING PROGRAM •
Safeguarding Montana's vital connections



Bridge load posting means restricting vehicle weight on Montana's bridges

Bridge weight restrictions are required when the engineering analysis of a bridge, known as a load rating, indicates that it cannot carry standard, legal loads. Bridge load posting signs show the weight restrictions, indicating maximum weights for different vehicle types.

Weight restrictions are required and important for Montana's bridges

Not all bridges were designed to carry today's standard legal loads, and some bridges have deteriorated over time. Bridge weight restriction signs are posted to keep motorists and their vehicles safe. They are also posted to prevent certain loads from crossing and overstressing the bridge, which could lead to both visible and hidden damage, and eventual closure or failure of the bridge. **A posted bridge is safe to use**, but the weight of certain vehicles must be limited accordingly.

Specialized Hauling Vehicles (SHVs)

SHVs are single-unit vehicles with multiple, closely spaced axles. Examples of SHVs include construction vehicles, dump trucks, solid waste trucks and other hauling trucks.

Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided on request. Persons who need an alternative format should contact the Office of Civil Rights, Department of Transportation, 2701 Prospect Avenue, PO Box 201001, Helena, MT 59620. Telephone 406-444-5416 or Montana Relay Service at 711.

This document printed at state expense. Information on the cost of publication may be obtained by contacting the Department of Administration.

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) needs your help to prevent overload and damage, maintain the integrity of the bridge, and safeguard bridge longevity.

Evolution of the trucking industry means changes to weight restrictions

In the last decade, manufacturers have developed specialized hauling vehicles (SHVs) that are capable of legally carrying heavy, concentrated loads. These vehicles have been found to overstress bridges more than standard vehicle types of the past. To account for their increasing presence and ensure safe operation, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) designated SHVs as standard, legal loads that all States are required to use in bridge analysis and posting.



VISION ZERO
zero deaths · zero serious injuries

**MONTANA DEPARTMENT
OF TRANSPORTATION**



For Additional Information: MDTbridgeloadingposting@mt.gov
<https://www.mdt.mt.gov/business/contracting/bridge/loadrating/load-posting-program.shtml>

MSU's virtual Celebrate Agriculture weekend scheduled for Nov. 13-14

From MSU News Service

Contact: Susan Fraser, sfraser@montana.edu, 406-994-3681

BOZEMAN — [Celebrate Agriculture](#), an annual weekend-long event held each year by Montana State University's [College of Agriculture](#), has been scheduled to take place virtually Friday, Nov. 13, and Saturday, Nov. 14.

The weekend, which celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2019, will include many of the same elements as an in-person event, as well as some new virtual programming. Scholarship winners and donors will be honored, as will past recipients of the college's [Outstanding Agricultural Leader](#) award, which has recognized more than 80 people since its inception in 1995.

Celebrate Agriculture weekend is an opportunity to recognize those people who invest in the future of agriculture and hundreds of agriculture students through those scholarships, said MSU Vice President for Agriculture Sreekala Bajwa. The College of Agriculture awarded more than \$550,000 in scholarships during the 2019-2020 academic year through more than 130 individual awards.

"The scholarship donors that we honor each year at Celebrate Agriculture truly change the lives of so many of our students," said Bajwa, who also serves as dean of the College of Agriculture and director of the [Montana Agriculture Experiment Station](#). "Our tireless supporters and generous benefactors make a direct impact on our students and the work we do in the college. It is their willingness to give and recognition of the importance of agriculture that makes so much of what we do possible."

Virtual content for Celebrate Agriculture will be available Nov. 13 on the College of Agriculture website, <http://agriculture.montana.edu/celebrateag>. The weekend will also include the annual [Science as Art Contest](#) for MSU agriculture students, who are tasked with translating their perceptions of science and agriculture into art projects using a variety of media. Celebrate Agriculture will also feature virtual speakers, research presentations, opportunities to engage with students and faculty within the college, and departmental celebrations.

The [Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics](#) will host a virtual version of its usual Agricultural Economic Outlook Conference during the celebration. The web-based conference will be free and open to the public, and will take place on Nov. 13 from 9 to 11:30 a.m. Information on presenters and the conference agenda can be found at <https://ampc.montana.edu/fallconference/>.

"Many things look different this school year, and one of those is Celebrate Ag weekend. But we also know that making this event virtual is about more than just ourselves. It's about keeping every member of our community safe and healthy," said Bajwa. "We are so looking forward to coming back to Celebrate Agriculture in person next year, bigger and better than ever."