

WINTER 2022

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ON THE COVER:
"Snowy Horse" is the winner of the 2021 Montana Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee Photo Contest

Photo by Charla Berg

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**Cyndi Johnson**

President, Montana Farm Bureau Federation

“Our Montana Farm Bureau staff is a fantastic crew that will help us defend our right to produce food and fiber to feed the world.”

Embracing change and engaging members

I can't begin to count the number of times I attended a workshop that posed the opening question: How do you deal with change? The one constant we deal with most frequently in agriculture is that things will change. Change is not always a good thing, nor is it bad.

As we begin our new Montana Farm Bureau Federation year, we look back at our past five years of excellent leadership under President Hans McPherson. We appreciate his friendship, unlimited support, vast wisdom on current agricultural issues, fierce advocacy for those involved in all types of agriculture, and the fact he has been willing to share his time and efforts so openly with every single member. “Thank you, Sir” seems so inadequate.

This change makes us focus on the future and consider what might be in store for our Farm Bureau organization and our farms and ranches. Should we add to the herd? Find more land to lease? Would it be wiser to downsize? Is our family ready for that generational transition conversation? How do we stay relevant in a fast-moving, ever-more technological and connected world with less than 2 percent of our nation's population engaged in production agriculture? Those are serious questions to consider. The answer lies in our ability to invite, explore and embrace new ideas and perspectives and to take advantage of opportunities when they present themselves.

Montana Farm Bureau Federation has resources available to help members grow, become proficient in public speaking and leadership, and engage the public in the story of agriculture. The high-quality variety of workshops offered at the Montana Farm Bureau Annual Convention and our Summer Conference result from Montana Farm Bureau staff's tenacious research and dedication as they seek to provide members with current options to tackle existing problems. Your membership has tremendous value, increasing exponentially when you get engaged.

Engagement includes inviting others to enjoy the opportunities Montana Farm Bureau offers. I want to challenge every member to find one new member in the year ahead. As we build our grassroots units in every county, we find new talent and areas of expertise, new ideas and interests,



and even new-to-agriculture folks who need our support. County Farm Bureaus are responsible for interpreting what membership looks like and who qualifies to be a member. Consider all those folks working at the implement dealerships, the feed stores, the fertilizer plants or the local elevators, or that small family-owned business that makes a value-added agricultural product with locally sourced ingredients. Strength in membership is the key to our grassroots approach to policy development, long-term engagement, and credibility. Find one new member.

The agricultural challenges we face are many; trade issues, redefining Waters of the U.S., marketing, the regulatory environment, rapid inflation, access to world markets, and the implications of ever-changing political decisions are only a few. However, let us reflect on what we should be thankful for. Our Montana Farm Bureau Federation is in a perfect place as the largest general agriculture organization in the state. We enjoy the freedom to farm and ranch in whatever style we choose – organic, conventional, holistic. Our Montana Farm Bureau staff is a fantastic crew that will help us defend our right to produce food and fiber to feed the world. I am so thankful I was raised in a Farm Bureau family and found my way back to agriculture. There is no better calling. I am truly humbled and grateful for the members' confidence in my ability to steer this ship into the future year.

May you all have a very healthy and prosperous New Year.



Giving thanks in a tough year

As the new year begins, we often reflect on the past year and wait expectantly on what the future will bring. Although 2021 presented many challenges, we have plenty for which to be thankful. I want to thank President Hans McPherson for his service to the Montana Farm Bureau for the past five years. President McPherson has been a dedicated leader who understood the professionalism of his position and the requisite time and commitment, yet never lost the fact that Farm Bureau is a membership organization representing Montana farmers and ranchers. He served as a leader, cheerleader and most of all, kept on farming and ranching. He has left a legacy of leadership for the Montana Farm Bureau and all of Montana agriculture.

The 2021 legislative session was a success for agriculturalists in Montana. In an atmosphere of uncertainty over how it would operate due to pandemic restrictions, the legislators were still able to pass bills that benefitted Montanans which included tax reform, property rights protection and many other issues. We want to thank the legislators, legislative services and the governor's office, as well as our Montana Farm Bureau governmental affairs team. This past session could have been much more challenging without their dedicated service.

As Montana agriculture faced the challenges of devastating drought, fires and grasshopper infestations, we are thankful for the ability to look to next year with its hopes and promises for abundant crops, fatter calves and better market prices. After a year of wildfires, we are thankful that

neighbors and friends from across the state pulled together to help those in need. We are grateful that no lives were lost in the devastating fire that recently consumed Denton. Credit goes to the firefighters and emergency personnel who saved as much as they did. My deepest thanks to everyone across Montana and the nation who provided hay and other items to those affected by the fires. In Montana, a neighbor is more than somebody who lives next door.

As we look to 2022, there are many exciting things for the Montana Farm Bureau. Cyndi Johnson, the recently elected president of

Montana Farm Bureau, is a leader who has paid her dues to the organization through many years of involvement at the county and state levels. We are looking forward to what this new leadership can bring to our organization. We have broken ground on the

new Farm Bureau Center, located on Huffine Lane west of Bozeman. We will start our next 100 years along with our Mountain West Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance partners in a facility that will serve our organization for years to come.

Most of all, I am thankful for the members and leadership of the Montana Farm Bureau. These people set the direction for both our lobbying efforts and other programs that Farm Bureau provides to continue keeping agriculture viable in Montana. On a personal note, I would like to thank the staff of Montana Farm Bureau for their tireless dedication to the organization and the industry.

I wish all of you a healthy, happy and prosperous new year.



John Youngberg
Executive Vice President, MFBF

“Most of all, I am thankful for the members and leadership of the Montana Farm Bureau. These people set the direction for both our lobbying efforts and other programs that Farm Bureau provides to continue keeping agriculture viable in Montana.”

Give thanks

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The Roaring 20(21)s

BY MARIAH SHAMMEL

I have never known the true sense of the word “community” until this year; but first things first. Hilger is a blink-and-you-missed-it sized wide spot in the road. If you have to turn around to tell your kids to be quiet or lean down to get the water bottle that rolled underneath your gas pedal, you’ll miss it. It’s nestled between the Judith, South Moccasin and North Moccasin Mountains and is home to a meat shop, bar, post office, fire hall and community center. Hilger doesn’t have a school of its own, so our school-aged kids find themselves on buses heading either south toward Lewistown or north

state, was already drying out at a rapid rate. It didn’t matter if you owned a thousand cows or just kept a pen of 4-H steers, everyone was frantically trying to find feed for their animals and praying like never before that moisture would find its way into our empty reservoirs and creek bottoms. We were all in the same boat (more like dune buggy) and no matter who you’d meet on the road, you’d wave, smile, notice how much water they had on the trailer and usually stop and chat. It was assumed that their day was probably going as crappy as yours and misery likes company. Even the 20 residents who live

within Hilger proper felt the pain—it was hard to miss the semi loads of cows speeding toward town and the well diggers driving from place to place like busy little ants.

It seemed like a real camaraderie was starting to form as we all commiserated about the future of our livelihoods. Then the fires hit. First it was the Taylor Fire which started near Winifred. Then it was the South Moccasin fire that started in the mountains to the south of us. Most recently it was the West Wind Fire that

to Winifred, mostly dependent on parents’ work locations or long-standing family allegiances.

We aren’t really claimed by either town, so we sit in LimboLand. Unlike other small towns where everyone knows everyone’s business, in Hilger half the town is running on a different schedule than the other half and unless your neighbors’ kids go to the same schools yours do, you don’t know when you’ll see them next or what goes on in their everyday lives. I’ve made some really good friends here but “community” wouldn’t be the first word to come to mind when describing this quirky little place. But that was before.

From the get-go, this summer didn’t start out well—Fergus County, which is typically one of the wettest parts of the

other’s cows were, who had the quickest route to the fences that would need to be cut and where the cows needed to be moved should the fire change direction yet again. Kids were being passed around, trailers hooked up, water tanks hauled around, family heirlooms stacked by the door for quick removal. It was a chaotic whirlwind of activity but through it all, we knew our neighbors were doing the exact same thing and in some weird way, that was a tremendous comfort.

By the time the third fire hit during the first week in December, we knew exactly what needed to be done, in which order and by whom. Volunteer firefighters were coming out of the woodwork to jump on trucks, logistics coordinators were directing traffic in the fire hall, hot meals were cooked up and ready to serve upon shift changes and a steady supply of eye drops, cough drops, and Ibuprofen were being picked up by ladies on our text chain who worked in town. We were getting way too good at knowing what to do when those fire pagers went off.

Each of those fires independently were deemed the worst in Central Montana history, combined it was an absolute nightmare. Our place remained untouched, but I can’t say the same about our neighbors. Cattle, houses, treasured memories, and entire livelihoods have been completely lost. The community though, has been found. It might not be pretty but when we show up, We. Show. Up.

I don’t know what’s harder, finding a way to nonchalantly ask your kids to pack their most precious possessions or trying to maintain composure in front of them as your husband tells you that it’s your turn to get ready to cut fences, move cows, load the kids and get out. I pray none of us have to go through this again but if it does become a reality once more, we can rest assured there are loads of people who have our backs. Welcome to our community.

To support those affected by the Taylor, South Moccasin and West Wind Fires, donate now at ferguscountydisasterrelief.com.

Mariah Shammel ranches in Hilger with her husband, four active kids, and various cows, dogs, and other critters.





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Prevent winter accidents, injuries on farms and ranches

BY AUSTIN GRAZIER, *DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURAL SAFETY MONTANA AGRICULTURE SAFETY PROGRAM*

Montana is no stranger to harsh winters and freezing temperatures, and no matter the weather, chores on farms and ranches must get done. Taking extra safety precautions throughout the winter pays off, and it always helps to be prepared.

Dress for the worst. It is important to layer correctly. Wear at least three layers of clothing: a base layer against the skin, a middle insulating layer, and an outer wind and water-resistant layer. When you leave the house for the day, you may not know what you will be doing or what the weather will be like in a few hours. Layering gives you the ability to adjust to changing tasks and weather. Before leaving the house, do not forget warm gloves, a hat, and warm boots.

Although every farm and ranch across the state is unique, following these guidelines can help to ensure the safety of you, your family and your employees.

1. Try to work during the warmest hours of the day and take advantage of daylight. Begin your outdoor projects early and save

the office work for the evenings when dark.

2. Carry snacks and water if you have to be outside during extreme weather conditions for an extended period. Take frequent breaks and give yourself time to warm up if you can.

3. Use the buddy system whenever possible. If not, be sure to communicate with others about where you will be and what you will be doing. Consider carrying two-way radios so you can call for help if needed.

4. The most common but costly accidents for farms and ranches are

slips, trips and falls. Take time to mark ice and slippery areas, and spread sand or salt to avoid accidents.

5. Be ready for changing weather conditions and stay informed and plan projects and trips around the weather. Do not be forced to travel in hazardous conditions.

We will all see our fair share of stuck vehicles and equipment that needs to be towed throughout the winter. This is the time of year we see more injuries related to removing stuck equipment and vehicles. Remember, just because you can, does not

mean you should. If the situation is too difficult, is too dangerous, or is too big, get help. If it is a situation where you can help, follow these steps to ensure the safety of everyone and everything involved.

1. Choose the right towing and pulling equipment (i.e., rope, chain, strap, cable) and inspect its integrity. Ensure the towing capacity is within the limits of the job.

2. Know how deep the equipment is buried or stuck, the size of the stuck vehicle, and ensure the size of the towing vehicle is sufficient.

3. Ensure the exhaust of the stuck vehicle is clear and dig around the tires if necessary.

4. If possible, the towing vehicle should be on higher ground and have better traction.

5. Attempt to attach to two places and pull in a straight line to maximize pulling power.

6. Ensure bystanders are clear of the towing area and are far enough away to avoid injury should the towing equipment snap.

For more information on winter safety and towing safety, visit www.mtagrisafety.com/resources. Need more safety information for your farm or ranch? Contact Austin Grazier, Montana Agriculture Safety Program, 406-587-3153, austing@mtagrisafety.com.



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YOUNG FARMERS & RANCHERS

Meet new MFBF President **Cyndi Johnson**

BY REBECCA COLNAR, SPOKESMAN EDITOR

Cyndi Johnson, Montana Farm Bureau's new president, is no stranger to agriculture or Farm Bureau. The energetic, upbeat Johnson grew up on a cattle ranch in Broadus with a father who served as a county Farm Bureau president.

"He used to bring me to the county meetings," remembered Johnson. "When you're raised in a family like that, you understand what has value to your family. We had an Angus ranch on the Powder River. I grew up in Farm Bureau, and when I graduated from high school, I went to college and got involved in long-term care. My connection to agriculture stopped when my dad passed away when I was 22 years old. My mom sold the ranch, and my family lost our connection to agriculture."

She admits that living in north-central Montana has enabled her to re-engage with agriculture.

"On our ranch in Broadus, we raised forage and grain for our cattle. I thought we were farmers, but I realized what farming was all about when I came to Central Montana. When I met Ken, he was a wheat farmer and welcomed the opportunity to teach me whatever I wanted to learn. Honestly, I refuse to learn things I don't want to get stuck doing. I don't want to drive the 66 Cab-over Kenworth," Johnson says with a chuckle.

Johnson's Desert Claim Farm grows cereal grains, including winter wheat and spring wheat, and pulse crops as part of their rotation, and they are considering planting oil seeds.

"We don't have experience with oilseed crops, like canola, yet. It's a learning process, but it's enjoyable. If you are a person who likes to learn as much as you can, then farming is the place you should be. Every day is different."

Johnson has been active in organizations and organizational leadership all of her life. "It didn't matter whether it involved long-term care or politics. She served as a Pondera County commissioner from 2001-2011.

"I enjoyed that role because, in that capacity, you help many people. Local



Cyndi Johnson gives her president's address at the 2021 Delegates Session.

government is where the rubber meets the road," the Conrad farmer noted. "Because I love to help other people succeed, I think that's why I've always chosen organizational leadership. As a county commissioner, I

“It's essential to keep our younger generations interested in some aspects of agriculture. Ken and I have done what my father did; hauled our kids off to local, state and national Farm Bureau meetings.”

ultimately was president of the Montana Association of Counties and served on their national board of directors. I appreciated those roles because the people who are present make the rules. If you don't show up, then you're always bringing up the back

of the train."

Johnson hopes to follow past president Hans McPherson's footsteps prioritizing membership growth. "Growth must be a priority. We need members to be engaged because we have strength in numbers. The only way to succeed is if we all come to the table in agriculture. By including as many people as possible in an organization like Farm Bureau, we gain different points of view. That makes us a much stronger and a much more credible organization when we speak for agriculture."

The wheat farmer believes that because agriculture is so diverse both in Montana and across the country, there are challenges that regional producers don't realize. "There are many different points of view that we have to, at some point, justify, meaning we need to find common ground. The people who raise cattle in Louisiana don't raise cattle the way we do in Custer, Montana. The people who grow wheat in Iowa don't grow wheat the same way as we do in the Golden Triangle.

As president of this organization, I



New MFBF President Cyndi Johnson, who was in Washington, D.C. in December for the American Farm Bureau Resolutions Meeting, visited with all three of Montana's Congressional Delegation. (Left to right): Pictured is Johnson with Senator Jon Tester, Senator Steve Daines and Representative Matt Rosendale, along with her husband, Ken Johnson, and MFBF Senior Governmental Affairs Director Nicole Rolf.

represent an array of commodities, and I feel I need to educate other Farm Bureau presidents about our concerns regarding trade issues. I'm looking forward to engaging at that level. (At press time, President Johnson attended American Farm Bureau's board meeting in Washington, D.C., where she discussed the concerns of Montana's farmers and ranchers with 50 other state Farm Bureau presidents.)

As for being the first woman president of an organization founded 102 years

ago, Johnson sees that role as non-gender specific. "People think there is a glass ceiling in agriculture, but I know so many women who work alongside their husbands whether cattle ranching or farming. I have never considered myself any different than anyone else who stepped up, whether male or female."

In addition to being a farmer and active leader, Johnson stays a busy mom. The eldest daughter, Mariah, has degrees in business and accounting and works in Fort Benton; son Darin is a construction

contractor, and youngest daughter, Sheridan, graduated from Montana State University in December 2021 with a keen interest in staying involved in agriculture.

"It's essential to keep our younger generations interested in some aspects of agriculture," noted Johnson. "Ken and I have done what my father did; hauled our kids off to local, state and national Farm Bureau meetings. It paid off in showing them how leadership skills add so much value to life."



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Estate planning helps families, communities and MFB Foundation

The concept of estate and legacy planning results in conversations that many families avoid. It's important, however to start the conversation and embrace the emotions that surface in such discussions. During the Montana Farm Bureau Convention, Mountain West Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company Agents Jerad Grove, Sean Cirullo, and Warren Krone, along with attorney Addam Pincock, presented a workshop on starting the difficult conversation on estate and legacy planning.

"We want our members to realize that although talking about planning the future of your estate is understandably emotional, it can be incredibly powerful and bring peace once you take that first step," said Cirullo. "I was pleased following our workshop that one person shared she was currently dealing with an estate planning issue right now on a fourth-generation ranch. Just hearing us explain how to embrace those emotions and honor the generations that have come before you helped. It can be rewarding to get an estate plan done, but, the first step is to sit down and visit about it."

Both Cirullo and Grove, who have offices in Butte and Helena, have backgrounds that have led them to a desire to help other, as well as appreciating the difficulty in starting estate planning in farm and ranch families.

Grove was born in Lewistown and raised in rural Montana. His family had a fourth-generation dryland wheat farm near Denton. "It's the farm where my great grandparents homesteaded and my grandpa continued farming. He was a heck of a farmer and mechanic and my grandma was the family matriarch and an amazing cook who would bring meals out to the field during harvest. I helped on the farm often. When I was in fourth grade, my mom, who was a school clerk, met my stepdad and we moved to Butte. That was a culture shock, but I would go back to the farm area every summer and help with harvest."

Life then took Grove to Montana Tech, which led him to a career that moved him to California, Wyoming, and Texas, as well as getting married. But he always wanted to return to Montana. He worked for GE outside of Butte, but once his daughter was born, he made the decision to pursue a longtime dream of being a financial advisory and

insurance agent. MWFBI was the perfect fit.

"I started with Farm Bureau in 2015, and love every minute of my job," Grove notes. He shared that sadly due to a lack of estate planning, his family farm crumbled. "I have seen firsthand what happens without having the conversation and making solid estate plans."

Cirullo grew up in a logging community outside of Eugene, Oregon. He graduated from University of Oregon with a degree in human physiology. In college, he met a young woman from Helena, so would visit her family and fell in love with the state for its geography, the people and the sense of community.

"I was involved in the medical device and tech world for a number of years," said Cirullo. "At that time, we were living in California. When my wife and I had our first son, I had an epiphany that there was a better place to raise a family so we moved to Helena. In 2017 my father-in-law (Tom Schulke), who is also a Farm Bureau agent introduced me to Farm Bureau."

Both agents agree that although their stories are different, their uniqueness combined with their commonality is what united them. They are a true team along with their staff in the Butte and Helena offices.

Cirullo added, "I entered into the Farm Bureau world and started working with Jerad, and understood his passion for both insurance and the financial world. If you want to go fast, go by yourself, but if you want to go far, go as a team. I see us as a real team with our office staff, our clients, the Montana Farm Bureau Federation and the Montana Farm Bureau Foundation."

The Foundation, established in 1998, is designed to continue the grassroots efforts, fund those efforts, and provide opportunities for rural communities. When Grove and Cirullo learned about the Foundation and the fact it's only in its infancy, they realized they could not only help the Foundation's assets grow, but help members with their legacy planning. The duo presented their proposal to the MFBF Board about what they do and how they could help.

"We want to grow the Foundation and be their team," said Grove. "We are financial advisor and agents who understand estate planning and have a strong passion for getting in front of families before undesired events



(Left) Jerad Grove
(Above) Sean Cirullo

happen. We are armed with knowledge and have the ability to prevent what happened to our family farm from happening to others."

Cirullo added that they look through the lens of how to serve and protect our clients and community. "We want to protect what generations have built, and by working with the Foundation, this becomes a two-way street. We can make sure the Foundation has the resources it needs to keep giving back to rural communities, and that is done through protecting our clients' legacy. If we can grow the Foundation, everyone wins. We strengthen the industry, the community and the state, which is powerful."

The two explained that they are an extension of other Farm Bureau agents and can help those agents by bringing additional resources and horsepower.

"Whether a client wants to meet with us or another Mountain West agent, it's important to take that first step and sit down at the kitchen table with a cup of coffee and start the conversation," said Cirullo. "At some point in the conversation of developing an estate plan, it's essential to have an accountant, an attorney, and a financial adviser."

The two have teamed up with Addam Pincock of Viceich Law, a firm that specializes in estate planning with offices in Butte and Helena.

"Addam will meet with our clients for no charge to have that first conversation about estate planning," explained Jerad. "A lack of intentional planning can provide a heavy, and often unintended, hardship. Planning will help you control your emotions; instead of worry or concern, you'll have a sense of peace knowing your hard work, and the generations before you, will continue to leave a lasting legacy in our great state."



Montana Ag In the Classroom Update

BY LINDSAY OREM, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
MONTANA AG IN THE CLASSROOM FOUNDATION



The school year is buzzing, and MAITC has been hard at work. The 2021-2022 school year finds us with plenty of opportunities. We have been distributing book boxes to teachers throughout Montana, attending agricultural conventions and cultivating new relationships with partners in the industry. The ideas, support and encouragement have been incredible, and it's safe to say that Montana Ag In the Classroom is primed for growth.

All the months of planning and work are seeing a considerable dividend in Montana Classrooms this school year. Our Book Buddies program has grown to 70 classrooms statewide due to additional funding from private donations.

Books that K-2 classrooms received in their first book box included:

How Did That Get Into My Lunch Box by Chris Butterworth,

Sophie's Squash By Pat Zietlow Miller and Anne Wilsdorf

Fry Bread by Kevin Noble Maillard

Books that 3-5 classrooms received this fall included:

Where Did My Clothes Come From by Chris Butterworth

The Apple Orchard Riddle by Margaret McNamara

The Girl that Loved Wild Horses by Paul Gobel

Hands-on activities like decomposing pumpkins, strength testing different clothing fibers, building paper horses that walk, planting wheat seeds and comparing apples to onions kept Montana teachers and students curious and learning this fall. Teachers reported that kids enjoyed playing in flour and feeling the textural difference between a wheat seed and ground wheat. Many teachers engaged in this program have discovered that the MAITC activities provided have strengthened their instruction and increased their resources.

"Before Halloween, I read Sophie's Squash which led into an activity that I've done before. The students talked about where

we could keep a cut-up pumpkin fresh. They brainstormed places and suggested a cool place, a sunny place, a dark place, and outside. They wrote down their predictions in a journal and recorded how each pumpkin piece looked, smelled, and felt the first day and the days after. (I teach first grade, and not one student predicted a cold place would keep it the freshest.) We talked about what scientists do, making hypotheses/predictions, and realizing all predictions may not be correct, but that's fine because we learn from it."

~ **Tammy Robertus, First Grade Teacher**

To engage with teachers, provide resources and encourage awareness, we are pleased to be investing the time and energy into this project.

Winter K-2 Book Boxes include:

Rather Be Ropin' by Savanna Simmons

Levi's Lost Calf by Amanda Radke

Charlie Needs a Cloak by Tomie dePaola

3-5 Book Boxes include:

Big Cat Blunder by Savanna Simmons

Can Do Cow Kids by Amanda Radke

Weaving a Rainbow by George Ella Lyon

Hands-on activities continued with learning about livestock brands, setting goals and working on them and wool activities. We hope to continue to grow this program each year. If you would like more information on how to sponsor a classroom, contact Lindsay at montanaaitc@gmail.com.

(Top left) Students from Lauren Sprout's Kindergarten classroom in Great Falls enjoyed reading the book *Fry Bread*, then planting wheat seeds and exploring the difference between wheat seeds vs flour. (Top) Sheena Barber's first graders in Chinook loved watching their seeds they got from their pumpkins sprout after reading *Sophie's Squash*.

Supporting the mission

The Montana Farm Bureau Federation was the founder of MAITC Foundation, giving \$10,000 to support the program, with a continuing annual contribution. Montana Stockgrowers Foundation and Board have recently joined the MAITC Foundation, committing to the Steward level membership of \$10,000. Look for future announcements on additional memberships from ag foundations and organizations around the state. We are encouraged and appreciative of the support and shared vision engaging Montana's youth in ag literacy.

Montana Ag in the Classroom continues to look to gain new membership. If you would like to join the MAITC Foundation, contact Lindsay Orem at montanaaitc@gmail.com. Look for our membership flier and other great opportunities to engage on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube on social media.



Support ag literacy on your tax form

As you start thinking about the upcoming tax season, remember that you can contribute to Montana Ag in the Classroom on your tax returns. Look for line 18C on your tax form entitled: **Support Ag Literacy In Montana Schools**. This fund goes directly to MAITC and helps us with our general operating budget. Your support is appreciated.

The MAITC Foundation is committed to developing and providing Montana-specific, relevant, and accurate agriculture materials to educators, volunteers and organizations. Please consider membership and or financial gift to the Montana Ag in the Classroom Foundation. This is a proactive approach to keeping the Montana Agriculture curriculum relevant and available for all.



Safe Winter Driving

Winter storms often bring hazardous road conditions and increase the likelihood of car accidents. You can never be too prepared for driving in winter conditions, and here are some tips to help you prevent accidents and stay safe this winter.

Maintain Your Vehicle – It is essential to service your vehicle to ensure it will handle properly in icy conditions and prevent a breakdown. Use this checklist to keep your car or truck ready for winter weather:

- Check your battery – Cold weather is hard on car batteries, so making sure you have enough power to start your car is necessary. You can take your vehicle to an expert, or you can do it at home using a voltmeter.
- Check tire tread – As the roads get icy, having good tires will help prevent sliding or getting stuck in deep snow. You can use a coin to test your tire tread.
- Antifreeze – It's a good idea to check antifreeze/coolant levels in your vehicle

regularly. Doing so will help prevent engine damage.

• Tune-ups – It's also not a bad idea to have your vehicle inspected by an auto-shop regularly to make sure that everything is functioning correctly, especially if you are preparing for a road trip.

Practice Makes Perfect – You may consider yourself a skilled driver, but ice and snow drastically change even simple maneuvers. It's a great idea to practice turning, slowing down, and accelerating on ice and snow. Practicing will help you understand how your car handles in hazardous conditions and increase your comfort levels.

Plan Your Route – If you plan a long road trip, make sure you are prepared. Check the weather beforehand, and give yourself plenty of time (preferably daylight hours) to get there. Remember that it often takes considerably longer to drive in winter conditions. Let someone know when you are leaving, the route you plan to take, and an estimated arrival time. If you get

stuck or your car breaks down, someone will know.

Stopped or Stalled? – Make sure that you know what to do if your car breaks down or you get stuck.

- Stay in the car.
- Call for help.
- Don't overexert – You will want to conserve your energy and let your body focus on keeping you warm.
- Clear exhaust pipe – With your car running, you will want to prevent any carbon dioxide from coming back into the vehicle.
- If you are low on gas, try not to run your heat continuously. Use your emergency blanket to stay warm if needed.

By following these simple safety tips, you will be prepared for the long winter months ahead. Winter driving is always a challenge, but staying ahead of the curve will keep you and your family safe on the road.



Wishing You and Your Family Safe Travels this Holiday Season!

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102nd Annual **MONTANA FARM BUREAU CONVENTION** *&* **TRADE SHOW**

November 8-11 | DoubleTree & Northern Hotels | Billings

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102nd Annual MONTANA FARM BUREAU CONVENTION & TRADE SHOW

November 8-11 | DoubleTree & Northern Hotels | Billings

Montana Farm Bureau members from across the state flocked to the organization's 102nd Annual Convention held November 8-11, 2021 at the DoubleTree and Northern Hotels in downtown Billings. The event began Monday with the Women's Leadership Committee meetings and the ACE Program project presentations and graduation ceremony. The convention featured three outstanding keynote speakers who kept the audience riveted while addressing the future of agriculture, success on your farm, and understanding mental health issues. Workshops included estate planning, calving difficulties, grazing management after drought, cloud seeding, building your volunteer base and more. Members enjoyed networking and visiting the trade show during breaks. At Wednesday morning's awards banquet, many counties received recognition for their work. Following Wednesday evening's banquet, members enjoyed the after party with Bucky Beaver & the Ground Grippers at the Pub Station. Voting delegates spent hours discussing and voting on what will become MFBF 2022 Policy. For press releases and more information visit www.mfbf.org/news and check out our Montana Farm Bureau Federation Facebook page for plenty of photos.

Delegate Session



Representative Matt Rosendale (R-MT) addresses voting delegates during the Delegate Session.



McCone County member Lee Jensen brings up a point.



MFBF President Hans McPherson receives his retirement gift from Montana Farm Bureau for his five years of service.



The ACE program graduates had an awards luncheon Monday where they received their plaques. Pictured with MFBF President Hans McPherson.



American Farm Bureau's Katie Barbic and District 3 Director Kris Descheemaeker. Barbic talked about consumer attitudes towards the sustainability of raising beef.

Workshops



Katie Rein Loose, DVM, explained different calving difficulties using a plastic cow and rubber calf. Attendees had the opportunity to reach into the cow, determine the problem, correct it, and pull the calf.

Philanthropy

District 8 Director Ed Bandel, left, had the winning bid of \$5000 for the Henry 44 Caliber Commemorative Rifle, with proceeds benefitting the MFB Foundation. Pictured with MFB Foundation Coordinator Scott Kulbeck.



Tom Cunningham, director of field operations, Mountain West Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company, had the winning bid of \$600 for this beautiful quilt made by Debbie Bricker. Pictured are (left to right), WLC Coordinator Alena Standley, Convention Intern Andee Baker and Bricker.



The Women's Leadership Committee (WLC) chose to support the Montana Highway Patrol setting aside \$1000 for the project. During the WLC Luncheon, WLC Chair Carla Lawrence presented Sargent Trevor Chase, representing the Montana Highway Patrol, with a check in the amount of \$2325 which included donations from several county Farm Bureaus as well as several dozen boxes of nonperishable goods. The funding will be used for the Montana Highway Patrol statewide, (in all 8 Districts), to purchase needed items for the GO-Bags that each patrolman/woman carry in their trunks.



YF&R Chair J.M. Peck visits with Northern Ag Network's Voices of Montana Host Tom Schulze. ACE graduates Tammy Copenhaver and Scott Stoner also were on the program along with MFBF Senior Governmental Affairs Director Nicole Rolf.



(Above) Aaron Flint, Montana Talks, visits with Mike Pearson, who addressed the MFBF Convention on commodity prices in 2022.

(Left) Lane Nordlund, Western Ag Network, visits with ACE graduate Aly Robins.

Socials/Trade Show



Doreen Gillespie and Montana Senator Butch Gillespie at the Ice Cream Social.



Kendra Joyce, founder of Cutting Fences, visits with Carbon/Stillwater County Vice President Andy Simpson. Cutting Fences is committed to cultivating connection, support, advocacy, and compassion for all individuals in agriculture who have sustained injuries, accidents, or have disabilities.



Media

Unique agriculture adds diversity to Montana

BY REBECCA COLNAR, *SPOKESMAN EDITOR*

Montana, a state known for its supreme beef cattle and amber waves of grain, is also home to unique agriculture. The next several issues of the *Spokesman* will feature articles on crops and livestock that might be considered “non-traditional.” In this issue, *Spokesman* Editor Rebecca Colnar visits with Drange Apiaries that raise bees, along with meat goats, and two wine grape growers who hope to promote grape growing and quality wine making in Montana.

Bee “ranching” in Montana

In 1980, Andy Drange spotted a bee tree on his family’s ranch in Big Timber which piqued his interest in the insects. He met with a local beekeeper, acquired a few hives, and was hooked. That endeavor led him to attend Ohio State University, where he studied Commercial beekeeping. While there, he met his future wife, Jodie, who was studying agricultural research. He persuaded her to head to Montana in 1988, where he worked as a state beekeeping inspector while maintaining a few of his own hives. A few years later, Andy decided to become more involved with beekeeping, working for a commercial beekeeper in Columbus.

Meanwhile, Jodie and Andy began growing bees at their home in Laurel. In 2010, when the opportunity came to purchase a bee business three miles down the road surfaced, they jumped at the chance. Today, Drange Apiary owns 5400 hives which totals between 60,000 to 80,000 bees per hive in the summer. The couple has two kids: a daughter who is a teacher in Custer and a son who works for them and will eventually take over the business.

In the summer, two crews work with the bees, checking them daily to ensure the bees are healthy and that there are enough supers. What’s a super? A hive

consists of boxes. The bottom two boxes are called brood boxes, where the baby bees are located. All boxes above those two are called supers for honey collection in the hive. When the bees are in Montana, which is May through November, their hives are in more than 180 locations, from Laurel to Hysham to Broadview and Big Timber. Landowners get paid in honey for having bees on their place.

“Bees will fly three miles to find pollen and nectar, so as a commercial beekeeper, you need to be three miles away from another commercial bee yard owned by others; however, hobbyists can put their hives anywhere. We do worry because some hobbyists don’t treat the bees to keep them mite and disease-free,” Jodie explained. Currently, we’re using essential oils to protect them from the deadly



Andy Drange, Noah Graber and Spencer Drange put frames full of honey in the extractor.

varroa mites. You need to have good employees who can look in a hive and tell if there is a problem and know if you need to add more supers.

“If there aren’t enough supers, the honey plugs up, causing the bees to swarm. Half of the hive will leave, which you understandably don’t want,” said Jodie. “If we have a good crop, we have to hire an extracting crew to extract the honey in the extracting plant. Usually, we extract five



days a week. However, with the drought the past two years, we haven't even hired an extracting crew and only extracted ten times this year and eight times last year.

Bees excel in creating several value-added products:

1) Honey - Honey is the most well-known product created by bees. Most honey from Montana's middle and the eastern part is clover and alfalfa. Drange Apiaries has a cabinet in the driveway where people can purchase honey using the honor system. Since the Drange family has been in the honey business for 30 years, they have a following and sell to a few restaurants and stores locally. They



PHOTO BY DRANGE APIARY, INC.



PHOTO BY DRANGE APIARY, INC.



PHOTO BY DRANGE APIARY, INC.

(Top) Workers checking bees hives in the stock pile yard. (Above) The Drange bees in their hives will spend some time in a temperature-controlled shed in Idaho before heading to pollinate almonds in California.

make honey butter and put together gift baskets for auctions.

2) Wax - People who do beadwork, wax skis, bows, arrows or make candles. Wax is made from glands on their belly.

3) Propolis - Bees glue their hives together with a substance called propolis, a mix of sap and honey. It's scraped off the boxes, cleaned, dried and sold to the health-product market.

4) Although Drange Apiaries doesn't sell **pollen**, it can be collected from the hive

and sold for a protein boost in smoothies and other products. It's full of amino acids.

5) Royal Jelly is made from the gland behind the ear of the bee and used to feed the queen. It's hard to collect and is primarily comes from Asian countries.

Although the Dranges sell only honey and wax, they make bees part of their business model by trucking them to California to pollinate almond trees in the winter. Honeybees primarily pollinate almonds.

"We move bees when they are in their hives," Jodie said. "It's a matter of timing.

In December, our bees are in their hives, hibernating in Idaho until around January 20, when they are shipped to California. They will return in April or May. A couple of loads go to Washington during this time to pollinate apples and cherries.

"There wouldn't be agriculture without bees," said Jodie. "You can make a living with bees, but you need to be willing to learn

Honey is one of several value-added products derived from bees. Drange Apiaries, Inc. offer several sizes of their clover/alfalfa honey.

about them, travel and put in the time to keep them healthy. You also need to market the value-added products. Beekeeping is a year-round business with many expenses, including employees. However, bees are so fascinating, and they are worth it. They do so much for agriculture."

Jodie, who serves as secretary for Yellowstone County Farm Bureau, praises the Montana Farm Bureau for its work on agricultural advocacy. "Farm Bureau is a great grassroots organization which allows me to share my love of agriculture through advocacy, education and policy. The members and staff are there to support you in every way."

Jodie graduated from the 2021 MFBF ACE (Advocate. Communicate. Educate.) class where her final project was fun, informational agricultural "quizzes" for classrooms. Son Spencer Drange is involved in Farm Bureau, serving as the Young Farmer and Rancher Chair for Yellowstone County.

Check out Drange Apiary, Inc. on Facebook for more information.



Meat Goats

Raising meat goats for 4-H projects has been a side business for the Drange family since 2010. When their children first became involved in 4-H, they bought some dairy goats. When the Montana Fair began having meat goat shows, the Dranges decided to raise the animals for 4-H kids.

"At first, we had a hard time finding meat goats, so we bought a buck and so we decided to start breeding our own Boer goats," said Jodie. "If you're going to show goats, the Boers work best. Other meat goat breeds include Spanish, Kiko, and Savannah. I really enjoy the goats, and they have great personalities."



PHOTO BY REBECCA COLNAR

Jodie Drange with three day-old Boer kid.

The Dranges have 40 meat goats, four llamas (which serve as guard animals for the goats), an alpaca, two turkeys, and six ducks.

The does start kidding (having babies) in December so the kids can be the right size for 4-H students to use at fairs. "We want to offer a quality goat at an affordable price. We get about \$ 250 per goat and usually sell 15-20 to 4-H kids depending on the year. They have a sale in the spring for people looking for replacement does, as well. They are hardy animals, do well in the winter, and eat weeds. They're fun to have around."

Although the Dranges use their meat

goats for 4-H animals and breeding stock, the demand for goat meat in the U.S is increasing, primarily in Hispanic and Middle Eastern populations.

Are you interested in raising meat goats? Visit goatmt.org.

Montana Grown wine shows exciting potential

Montana has never been considered a wine state. Still, Larry Robertson and Brian McGuire believe cold-climate grapes grown on suitable sites in the Treasure State will be producing award-worthy wines in the future.

It's all about location, said Robertson, who has been making wine for more than 50 years and recently retired from Montana Natural Resource Conservation Service. He worked with orchards and vineyards.

"Wine grapes will grow anywhere in Montana, but they just won't produce quality wine unless planted on prime sites that have enough growing site advantages," said Robertson, president of the Winery Association Montana and a Northwest Counties Farm Bureau member.

"So many vineyards are pushing the envelope trying to grow and ripen wine grapes on their piece of Montana, usually without much success," Robertson added. "There is plenty of information available for determining the productive viability of planting vines on anything other than prime sites is seldom commercially viable. Montana does have the potential to expand vineyards and develop a unique Montana Grown wine industry. By learning from the successes and failures of other states, we can avoid mistakes."

Robertson started growing his own grapes in the early 2000s when working with the NRCS on grape variety trials. "I had the opportunity in 2014 to replant a vineyard and research the grapes. I've been into wine my whole life, and to me, it's one of those mystical things you can provide people."

Brian McGuire's interest in wine started with his wife, Roxann. "She had a childhood background ranching in Augusta, and her family owned a packing plant. When we met later in life, I left my background in foodservice catering, and we began studying wine extensively in Argentina, France, Italy and Spain," the Corvallis winery owner explained.

"Roxann wanted to develop her own estate wine, and we found the ideal location in Corvallis. Between 2011-2014 we attended Washington State University. Roxann received a degree in viticulture/enology, and I studied accounting for running the wine business."

The couple started their Willow Mountain Winery in 2016 and did subsequent planting until spring 2021, when they finished planting their 20-acre vineyard.

To cash flow, however, the couple needed wine to sell. "We had to start by buying grapes. In 2017, we were able to crush our first grapes, some from Montana, some from Washington state," McGuire added. "We released our first wines in 2018. After planting, it takes three years to get a light crop but four to five years for full production."

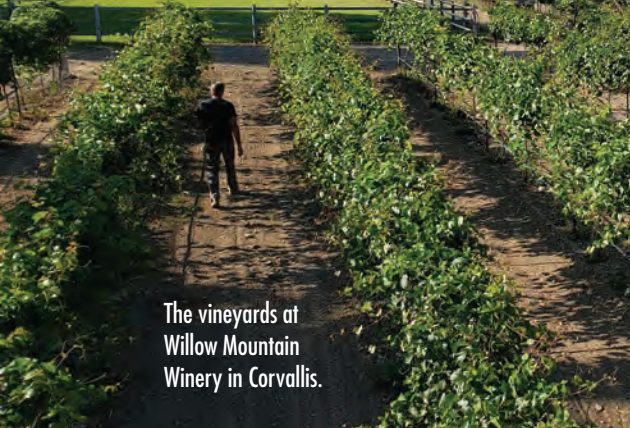
McGuire, a Ravalli County Farm Bureau member, added, "If you have a vineyard, that is you are just going to grow wine grapes to sell, you need 20 acres to become an economically viable vineyard. If you have a winery selling your wine to the public, that becomes customer-based revenue. You now have that value-added



Larry Robertson, Flathead Lake Vineyard and Winery.

markup, so you need roughly five to seven acres to become economically viable if you make and sell your wine."

The grower explained that wine grown in Montana is unique because the grapes need to be a varietal able to survive the winter. "Because of that, you are going to



The vineyards at Willow Mountain Winery in Corvallis.



A cluster of cold-hardy Verona grapes.



Roxann McGuire demonstrates how grapes are transported prior to crushing.

grow a much lighter, expressive wine, not a big robust wine with heavy tannins. It will be parallel to wine produced in northern Europe with lighter acidity. It pairs well with the food that is grown here like wild game, beef—foods that are not heavily seasoned.”

Robertson added that the grape varieties, like Marquette, are relatively new, so the wines are new and attracting interest. “Some of the benefits in Montana is that we don’t have to spray like they do in New York and Michigan where it’s humid. We get more UV light in our arid climate and are farther north, more like Ontario. The grapes have to protect themselves more from the light, so they put a lot of goodies in their skins. Of course, we have plenty of disadvantages like our short growing season. Grapes need to be planted in a prime location. Sure, they will grow anywhere, but they won’t ripen to obtain quality chemistry. We need to be planting our grapes on good sites.”

McGuire explained that specialty crops like grapes and their value-added product of wine could be very beneficial to small

communities. “Let’s face it; the Bitterroot no longer has 1200-acre pieces of land. But, when specialty crops like grapes and resulting wineries are established, the community can develop. The retail side of wine develops tourism. Twenty acres of grapes put a lot of money into the economy, and you could supply 35-40 wineries with 200 acres of grapes. Legislators, state government, restaurants, hotels, ag and commerce are opening their eyes wide. Why not support this and see what we can develop?”

Both Robertson and McGuire thank Montana Farm Bureau members for

supporting grape farmers. “We’ve been on the soapbox for a few years that wine has to be represented as agriculture. We have to relate wine to agriculture, and that brings wine home to the vineyard,” McGuire said. “Our Willow Mountain Winery wine will be grown and produced in the Bitterroot. Once that takes place, the sales staff in stores and restaurants will understand that the product is grown in Montana, and that interest will encourage consumers to taste the wine.”

During the Montana Farm Bureau Convention, Robertson spoke during the Resolutions Session, urging the voting delegates to support their resolution of fostering a positive agricultural business environment for the establishment of vineyards and other fruit to supply a Montana grown, value-added wine industry.

“Statewide support and understanding are needed for Montana Grown viticulture to expand,” Larry noted. “Grapes do not have diverse end uses other than in wine. Vineyards and wineries are vastly different businesses bound together in a value-added chain. Supporting locally grown and produced wine will keep a greater amount of the profits and ancillary economic development in Montana. Vineyards and locally grown wine industries from the Dakotas to New York, Canada and northern Europe have proven cold-hardy grapes help stabilize rural communities. Successful wine economies worldwide support their local agriculture from ‘Root to Glass.’ If Montana encourages a vibrant and expanding Montana Grown wine industry, we can be successful. We are just at the beginning with 50 acres in the state; we need 200.”



➤ Can I grow wine on this hill?

Larry Robertson recently retired from USDA/NRCS after 36 years, working with grapes and other fruit in western Montana since 2003. He owns Flathead Lake Vineyard & Winery, is president of Winery Association of Montana, and a founding member of the Montana Grape and Wine Association. Robertson believes in Montana-grown wine grapes and offers a free vineyard site assessment to any Montana Farm Bureau member. “Grapes can diversify your farm or ranch and possibly help bring the family back to the farm, building a viable, sustainable agricultural business,” noted Robertson.

If you are interested in finding out what vineyard potential you may have, contact Larry Robertson at 406-253-9641 or larryrob22@gmail.com. For Robertson’s article on-site assessments and growing grapes in Montana, look for the December News Brief Plus at mfbf.org/news/News-Brief.

Young Farmer and Rancher News

2022 Farm Bureau YF&R Leadership Conference

The 2022 Farm Bureau YF&R Leadership Conference will bring together an estimated 1,200 young agricultural leaders from across the country to Louisville, Kentucky, February 25-28, to learn, share and grow together to build a stronger Farm Bureau.

"I encourage all of our YF&R members to consider attending this event in Louisville this year," noted MFBF YF&R Chair J.M. Peck. "It provides an excellent opportunity to network, attend compelling workshops and participate in regionally unique tours. I know it is always tough to get away from the farm or ranch but opportunities like this are always well worth it. If you are concerned about the cost, reach out to your county Farm Bureau for help."

For more information, visit <https://www.fb.org/events/2022-young-farmers-ranchers-conference>.

To register and to make hotel reservations, contact Sue Ann Streufert, 406-587-3153 or sueanns@mfbf.org.



Young farmers and ranchers donate \$5500 to the Montana Food Bank Network

The Montana Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee presented a check for \$5500 to the Montana Food Bank Network (MFBN) during the 102nd MFBF Annual Convention in November in Billings.

The donation came from proceeds raised during the virtual YF&R Hoofin' It for Hunger race October 9 and from donations by county Farm Bureaus from across the state. Although this marked the 11th year for the race, in 2020 and 2021, it was held virtually. This year, participants were encouraged to run in the category of their choice (5K, 10K, half-marathon), then post a photo of their efforts on the MFBF Facebook page. Other "virtual runners" opted not to run but got the t-shirt and helped the Montana Food Bank Network.

YF&R Committee Chair J.M. Peck said, "Farmers and ranchers work hard every day to feed the world, and the YF&R Committee is honored to be able to contribute to the MFBN, a group that works tirelessly to make sure that no one in Montana goes to bed hungry. The YF&R Committee would like to thank all the Hoofin' it for Hunger participants, donors and sponsors that make this contribution possible to help feed Montanans in need."



Young Farmer and Rancher Committee Chair J.M. Peck presented a check for funds raised from the virtual Hoofin' it for Hunger to the Montana Food Bank Network. This is the 11th year the YF&R Committee has supported the MFBN.

The Hoofin' it for Hunger event has created awareness for hunger relief in Montana over time, and it has raised nearly \$70,000 cumulative. That amount has provided over 350,000 meals to those in need.

Melrose Rancher wins Discussion Meet, Polaris

J.M. Peck, a young cattle rancher from Melrose won the Montana Farm Bureau Young Farmer and Rancher Discussion Meet. He received the keys to a Polaris Ranger® 500 and will be eligible to compete in the national competition which will be held during the American Farm Bureau Convention in Atlanta in January. The Discussion Meet, which is open to Farm Bureau members age 18-35, is meant to simulate a committee meeting with ideas discussed and solutions developed.

Peck, who serves as MFBF YF&R Chair, said, "It's an honor to win the Young Farmers and Ranchers Discussion Meet. The competition was fierce and it's great to see so many young people engaging on the big issues impacting agriculture."

December found Peck's Polaris busy doing an array of ranch chores. "I have been hauling salt, fixing fence and checking cows. I've

also taken it to my local Polaris dealer to get a windshield installed. What better way to say thank you than give our local dealer business.



J.M. Peck, winner of the MFBF Discussion Meet and the Polaris Ranger.

"I would love to give a big thank you to the participating Montana Polaris dealers, Montana Farm Bureau and all of the competitors for making the Discussion Meet possible," said Peck. "I look forward to representing Montana at the national competition."

Thanks to these Polaris dealers for supporting the MFBF Young Farmers and Ranchers: Gallatin Recreation, Bozeman; Helena Cycle Center, Helena; Yellowstone Polaris, Billings; Beaverhead Motorsports, Dillon; Riverside Marine & Cycle, Miles City; Montana Power Products, Ronan; Jesco Marine & Power Products, Kalispell;

Redline Sports, Inc, Butte; Lewistown Honda & Polaris, Lewistown; Sports City Cyclery, Great Falls, Russell Motorsports, Missoula, Kurt's Polaris, Seeley Lake and Pure Bliss, Conrad.

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COUNTY NEWS

Southwest Counties held their annual Christmas party December 1 at the golf course in Dillon. It was well-attended by county and UM-Western Collegiate Farm Bureau members. Pictured are District 2 Director Rhonda Boyd with Jules and Bonnie Marchesseault.



Prior to **Fergus County** hosting their Christmas Open House at the Mountain West Farm Bureau Insurance office December 13 in Lewistown, the board held a training session led by their regional manager, Rikki Swant.

Rare December fire rallies ranchers to help



Lewis & Clark County President Karl Christians hails from Denton, so when he learned about the devastating fires in December in his hometown, he rallied the troops for help. A group in Denton suggested that a new, young rancher named Cole Jelinek had lost not only all his hay in the fire, but his barn, fences and corrals, and could use help. The Lewis & Clark and Fergus County Board of Directors each donated \$500 for money towards fuel for trucking donated hay. Karl and Raelynn Christians, Joe and Julie Dooling, Dave Brown, Aly and Jayme Robins, Jim and Marilyn Dusenberry and other members of the ag community including Andrew Gould, John Novotny, and Casey Fitzsimmons all donated money for fuel or hay.

"My goal was to keep our fellow ranchers in business and knowing Cole lost everything, we realized he would be affected the hardest," said Christians. "It was wonderful to see others step up to provide the much-needed assistance to help a rancher really in need."



Brady and Abbie Richardson manned the **Meagher County** hospitality table during the Christmas Stroll in downtown White Sulphur Springs December 3. **Yellowstone County's** Young Farmer & Rancher Committee met December 7 at MWFB Agent Cory Albin's office, followed by a county board meeting.



Dawson-Wibaux County held their annual Christmas party December 11 at the Yellowstone River Inn.

Carbon/Stillwater County held a Zoom Board Meeting December 14.

Richland County held their Christmas Party December 16 at 1035 Brewing in Sidney.

Wheatland/Golden Valley judged their Ag in Color entries at Gally's Brewing in Harlowton December 19.



Sweet Grass County donated four FFA jackets to deserving Sweet Grass FFA students. Pictured are Sweet Grass County President Jacob Stenberg, Paige Wertheimer, JoLynn Stene, Ashlyn LaRue and Angela Green, Sweet Grass High School.

Cascade County met to plan their Program of Work and had a Christmas Dinner December 20. The county board visited all seven Mountain West Farm Bureau Agents in the county to personally thank them with their county office support checks and a Christmas bonus.

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Foundation News

Foundation Memorials

Montana Farm Bureau Foundation receives a number of memorial donations to recognize departed members. What an appropriate way to remember someone to whom Farm Bureau has been an important part of their lives. This charitable remembrance perpetuates their belief in the future of agriculture. Next time you ponder how to express your appreciation for a friend or acquaintance who has passed away, consider a memorial that promotes agriculture and will have a meaningful impact.

Carbon-Stillwater County Farm Bureau...

In memory of Lee Boyer

Casey Mott and Rebecca Colnar...*In memory of Ed Mott*

Fergus County Farm Bureau...*In memory of Sie Schindler*

Sarah Boyer, Carbon-Stillwater County Farm Bureau member, presents MFBF Executive Vice President John Youngberg with a donation of the bronze, "Whitey Rains Famous Chair Ride" by Bill Rains. The donation was made in memory of her husband, Lee Boyer.

Jim and Charla Berg and Family...

In memory of Evan Johnston

Lew Zimmer...*In memory of Sarah Zimmer*

Ryan and Jan Banks...*In memory of Pat Nile*

Sarah Boyer...*In memory of Lee Boyer*

Tom and Sherri Cunningham...*In memory of Sarah Zimmer*

For more MFB Foundation information visit <https://mfbf.org/foundation/> or contact Scott Kulbeck, 406-587-3153, scottk@mfbf.org.



MONTANA FARM BUREAU FOUNDATION
Investing in the Future of Montana Agriculture



MFB Foundation Mini-Grants 2021 Rudyard Harvest Boogie

The desire to re-energize their downtown surfaced when Tammy Copenhaver, a 2021 ACE program participant, collaborated with the Rudyard Community Commercial Club to hold the Rudyard Harvest Boogie. On September 18, community residents came together for an afternoon and evening of camaraderie and connection. The Harvest Boogie drew from multiple generations of families throughout the day with the event schedule. In the afternoon, families and children of all ages attended activities at the park with face painting, crafts, painting pumpkins and overall fun. Late afternoon at the café catered to the more mature genre gathering to catch up

A crowd gathers by the Bank Bar during the 2021 Rudyard Harvest Boogie. It was the first time since 2003 the neon glowed in the dark.



with neighbors and support the local museum with pie and beverages. Later in the evening, residents of all ages gathered along the main street corridor to enjoy chili, Dale's Dogs (corn dogs), the neon lights of the theatre, and Bank Bar while listening to live music. The Bank Bar has been closed since 2003; the owners opened up the front of the bar and served refreshments inside. It was the highlight of the evening to see the neon glowing again.

Copenhaver conducted a survey of attendees, sponsored by the MFB Foundation, with a \$1000 mini-grant as part of her ACE project. The survey responses indicated why residents want to live in the area and why many return with their families.

"It came down to the community (people/environment) as the most significant reason," Copenhaver noted. "The assessment notes, the people, and the current businesses in town are vital to residents' everyday lives, and businesses are essential."

In addition, the survey showed that residents believe a restaurant, coffee shop and senior center would breathe new life into the downtown.



Mini-Grant Money Available

The MFB Foundation has \$10,000 to give for 10 mini-grants in this current fiscal year, ending September 30, 2022. If you or your organization has a project that educates about agriculture or contributes to rural community development, visit our grant portal today.

<https://mfbf.org/Foundation/Foundation-Grants>.

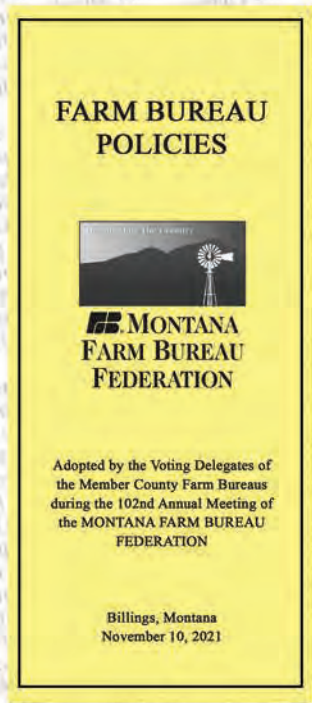
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MFBF Policy Book Online!



To read up on all the latest Montana Farm Bureau policies, go to [www.mfbf.org/Policy & Advocacy](http://www.mfbf.org/Policy&Advocacy) and look for the Policy Book button.

You must be a member and be logged in to view the policy book. You may also call the state office at 406-587-3153 to request a copy of the 2022 Policy Book.

MFBF election results

Cyndi Johnson, a wheat farmer from Conrad, has been elected as president of the Montana Farm Bureau Federation during the organization's 102nd Annual Convention Nov. 8-11 in Billings. Johnson will serve as the organization's first female president since its inception in 1919. **Gary Heibertshausen**, an Alzada sheep rancher, was elected vice president. Heibertshausen served from 2015-2021 as MFBF District 5 Director.

Darcia Patten, a cattle rancher from Broadus, was elected as MFBF District 5 Director. Re-elected to the MFBF Board of Directors were **Craig Blevins**, District 1, a purebred Angus breeder from Ronan; **Kris Descheemaeker**, District 3, a cattle rancher from Lewistown; **Joy DePuydt**, District 7, a small grains farmer and cattle rancher from Saco, and **Scott Stoner**, District 9, who raises horses in Montana City.

Carla Lawrence from Boyd was re-elected as the MFBF Women's Leadership Chair with **J.M Peck** from Melrose re-elected as the MFBF Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee Chair.



Women's Leadership Committee

District 2 – Marti Shields, Dillon; Rhonda Boyd, Alder
District 4 – Gretchen Schubert, Huntley; Teddi Vogel, Ballantine
District 6 – Michelle Gibbs, Circle; Paula Steinbeisser, Sidney
District 8 – Marjorie Pribyl, Cascade; Katie Schuler, Fort Benton
District 10 – Carole Plymale, Townsend; Heidi Brewer, Bozeman

Young Farmer & Rancher Committee

District 1 – Vacancy – Nick Courville, Charlo
District 2 – Mark Boyd, Alder; Michael Walsh, Twin Bridges
District 4 – Zach Weimortz, Fromberg; Jacob Stenberg, McLeod
District 6 – Lee Jensen, Circle; Marianne Gartner, Sidney
District 8 – Shay Richter, Fort Benton; Todd Standley, Cascade
District 10 – Kat Taylor, Bozeman; Brady Richardson, White Sulphur Springs



NOTE! PAY 2021 DUES

This is the last Montana Farm Bureau Spokesman you will receive if your 2021 dues are not paid. Don't know for sure? Call 406.587.3153 or log in to your MFBF account at <https://mfbf.org/user/login> to check your membership status. If you haven't previously logged onto your account, click on "Don't have a login? Create one." Link below the "Log In" button. From there, you can easily renew your dues if not current.

MFB Campaign Seminar slated for February

Planning to run for the office? Want your campaign manager to glean more campaign-trail skills? Montana Farm Bureau's two-day, interactive, comprehensive seminar takes place February 10-11, 2022 at the Delta Colonial Inn in Helena. It covers everything from selecting your campaign theme and setting up your campaign structure along with how to manage money and how to win.

The American Farm Bureau Federation developed the training with input from political consultants and staff from both major political parties. It's designed for candidates running for public office, their spouses, their managers, and is even beneficial to individuals who might be throwing their hat in the ring. American Farm Bureau provides a qualified facilitator for the seminar.

Senator Walt Sales, R-SD-35, noted, "Farm Bureau's campaign

school has been valuable providing the understanding needed as you consider a political office. You will not only learn the "nuts and bolts" of a campaign but how to turn that into a successful campaign. The non-partisan approach allows for great dialogue, instruction, and confidence to plan your steps that best fit your needs. My wife and I attended twice allowing us to continue gaining from the complete overview and updating campaign plans and schedules."

The seminar is open to all candidates running or considering running for any political office. Montana Farm Bureau members receive a discounted rate of \$150; other participants pay \$200. Candidates are welcome to bring along a spouse or campaign manager for an additional fee.

The registration and hotel deadlines are January 15, 2022. Call the Delta Colonial Hotel, 406-443-2100, and request the MFBF room block rate of \$129/night for hotel reservations. To register for the campaign seminar and more information, visit www.mfbf.org or contact Rachel Cone at 406-587-3153 or rachelc@mfbf.org.

Women's Leadership Committee

PHOTO Contest



2021 Photo Contest Winners:

1ST: CHARLA BERG, SOUTHWEST COUNTIES FB

2ND: JODIE DRANGE, YELLOWSTONE COUNTY FB

3RD: ANDY SIMPSON, CARBON/STILLWATER COUNTY FB

Congratulations to the winners of our 2021 Montana Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee Photo Contest!

Stay tuned to **Facebook** and the **Summer Spokesman** for details on the 2022 WLC Photo Contest.



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Lewistown Honda & Polaris - Lewistown
Montana Power Products - Ronan
Pure Bliss - Conrad
Redline Sports, Inc - Butte
Riverside Marine and Cycle - Miles City
Russell Motorsports - Missoula
Sports City Cyclery - Great Falls
Yellowstone Polaris - Billings

Congratulations to J.M. PECK of Melrose for
earning top honors in the 2021
MFBF YF&R Discussion Meet. J.M. is the proud
owner of a new Polaris Ranger 500!



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Photo Credit: Christina Brooks



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