

FALL 2018

 MONTANA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

Spokesman

WE CARE FOR THE COUNTRY

**BREWERIES,
DISTILLERIES
REJUVENATING
SMALL TOWNS**

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**CAN GRIZZLY
BEARS BE GOOD
NEIGHBORS?**

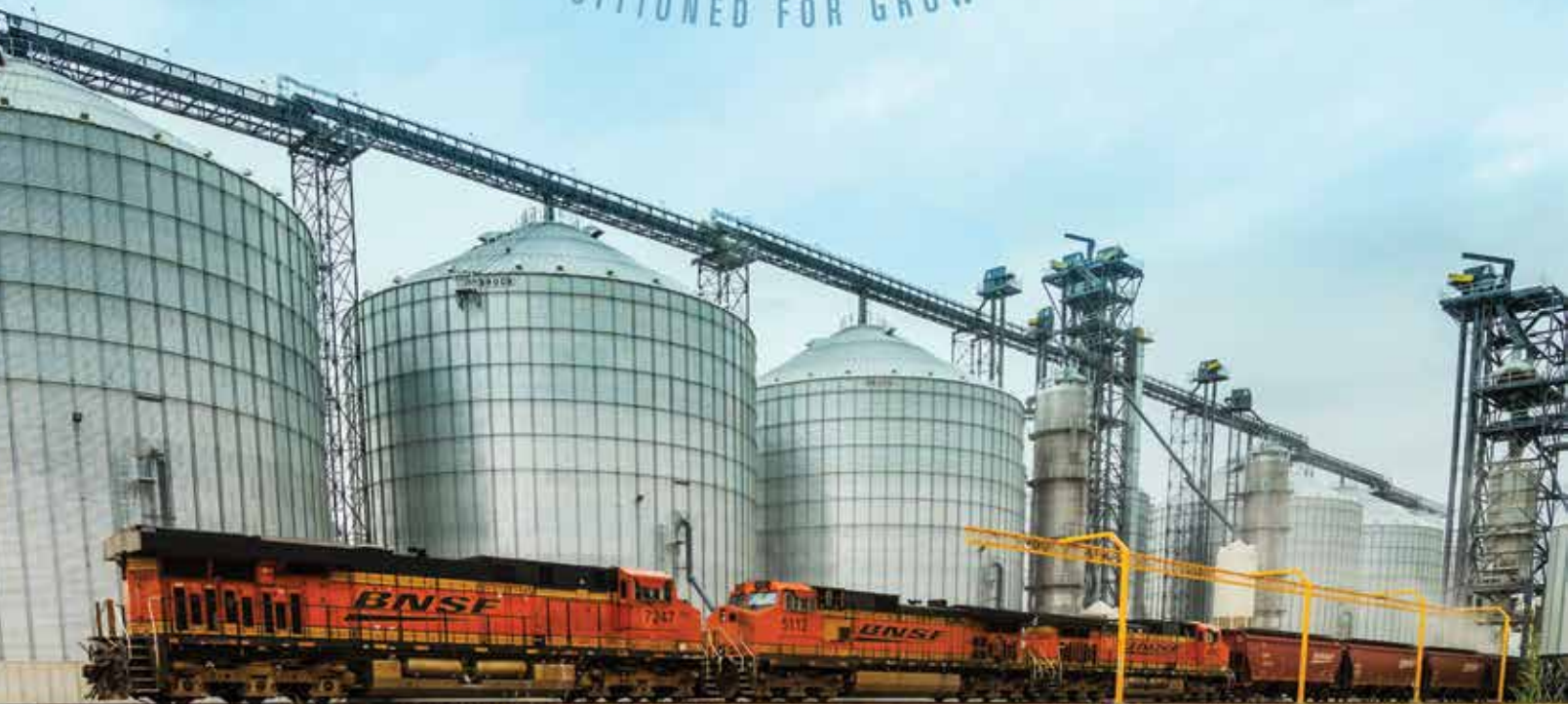
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A publication for the more than 21,000 member families of the Montana Farm Bureau Federation



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MONTANA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

WE CARE FOR THE COUNTRY



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**ON THE COVER:**

Tom and Chris Montgomery grow grain for
their Missoula Distillery.

Photo by Rebecca Colnar

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Where there's smoke, **there's ire**

Why join Farm Bureau? Some people think about all the discounts received with the membership benefits or the Mountain West Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance. Those are great reasons to become a member—or renew your membership—but the most

important reason to become a Farm Bureau member is the influence we have in Helena and especially now in our Nation's Capital. We have people in leadership positions in Washington, D.C. who understand agriculture and the rural way of life.

We have people at government agencies who have met with Montana Farm Bureau members. We have Farm Bureau members who had the opportunity to meet Vice President Mike Pence when he came to Billings. What did he say when they asked for a photo with him?

"Farm Bureau? I love Farm Bureau." We have state Farm Bureau leaders who have met with the president in the White House.

We have the American Farm Bureau Federation Congressional Relations staff who are well-known and respected at the agency level. American Farm Bureau President Zippy Duvall, a farmer himself from Georgia, is well-connected with Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Purdue, and Secretary of the Interior, Ryan Zinke, is from Montana. It's a fine time to be a Farm Bureau member.

Because Washington is listening, this summer during the Western States Farm Bureau Presidents' and Administrators' Conference in Alaska, 13 western state presidents representing 385,000 Farm

Bureau members met and drafted a letter to Secretaries Zinke and Perdue regarding forest and wildfire management.

In the letter, Western States Farm Bureau presidents and administrators told Secretary Zinke that they "hold a shared, strong belief that ineffective

land management practices and policies in the West over the past several decades have contributed to increased risk of catastrophic wildfires. An emphasis on fire suppression, reductions in commercial timber harvest and forest thinning, additional regulations related to permitting, and restrictions on livestock grazing have slowed the ability of the states' public and private forest land managers to make significant improvements in forested landscapes. Those concerned about the recurrence of catastrophic wildfires should also be concerned with current management practices and policies that hinder private and public responses to the wildfire crisis in the West."

The letter went on to say that sustainable forest management and protecting and preserving our environment are not mutually exclusive. The U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management must both work toward a series of significant reforms that accomplish these equally important goals. Targeted, active forest management practices will have a significant positive impact on the ability of Western states to combat catastrophic wildfire, protect lives and property, safeguard our water supplies, and prevent the destruction of farming and grazing lands."

The letter noted, "healthy forests are critical to rural communities in the West whose economic and social fabric rely on

the revenues generated by the multiple uses of the National Forest System and BLM lands. These lands have a direct impact on agricultural activity, jobs and annual payroll in many counties throughout the West. Our timber and ranching industries depend on these lands for a merchantable supply of wood to keep our forest products economy viable, and to ensure the sustainability of our livestock producers. However, there has been a significant reduction in timber harvesting and livestock grazing in the past several decades, which has been a major contributing factor to the increased fire hazard we are now experiencing."

The group presented several suggestions including management plan flexibility, emergency NEPA alternatives, expanding categorical exclusion eligibilities, strengthening milling infrastructure, improving intergovernmental coordination, prioritizing grazing and ensuring biomass funding.

"In light of the recent catastrophic wildfires, it is abundantly clear that we need to implement thoughtful, sophisticated and scientifically-based strategies immediately to improve the health of our forests and to protect lives and property. Federal agencies working in conjunction with the states must work individually and collectively to allow responsible management of our natural resources," the letter added. "We refuse to accept the status quo as part of a so-called "new normal" that brings continued devastation to our Western communities. A humane response should reassert solutions that will diminish human suffering and renew our natural resources."

What other group would do so much representing so many? As we prepare to enter our 100th year Farm Bureau's political clout is impressive. Encourage your neighbors and friends to join because Farm Bureau has never been stronger and our voice has never been louder.

Looking forward to seeing you at our Montana Farm Bureau Annual Convention November 7-10 (note that it's Wednesday through Saturday) in Billings to kick-off our Centennial Celebration.



“ Farm Bureau has never been stronger and our voice has never been louder. ”

**Hans McPherson, President,
Montana Farm Bureau Federation**

Nuisance lawsuits harvest big bucks for trial lawyers

In agriculture we often spend the majority of our time working away from the public so consequently believe we are fairly insulated from what happens to our more urban neighbors. We help our farming and ranching neighbors with branding, fencing, even feeding cows in an emergency-- just being good neighbors.

However, it seems the attitude in North Carolina is not so neighborly. A North Carolina family has been facing a tough battle with out-of-state, big-trial lawyers who have swooped into their area and are pitting neighbor against neighbor. The charge: hog farming as a business is a nuisance to the very communities the industry supports. For these lawyers, lawsuit abuse is their bread and butter and if they are successful in North Carolina—a state with a strong Right-to-Farm laws—there's nothing stopping them from coming for the rest of us who raise livestock.

The Carter family has been in business for over three decades. Mr. Carter, a retired law enforcement officer is on the volunteer fire department, coaches Little League Baseball and has never had an environmental violation on his hog farm. He had hoped to pass the business along to his heirs. This sounds like a good neighbor to me.

In 2014, 26 lawsuits were filed on behalf of 541 plaintiffs who claimed hog farms in their area were creating a “nuisance” to neighbors’ quality of life with farm odor and truck noise. Of special note is these farms were in operation long before the majority of these neighbors moved into the area.

However, at the end of 2017, a North Carolina judge ruled the state’s Right-to-Farm law was no defense against these “nuisance” claims. The first set of trials have returned massive multi-million-dollar verdicts for the plaintiffs. Mr. Carter is under a court order to depopulate

his several thousand hog operation. Even after the hogs are gone, the bank is still going to want to be paid for the loan on the state-of-the-art buildings, manure handling equipment and tractors. His family may be forced off the land by their neighbors; the very neighbors he helped move into the area. This is tragic.

These farmers are being judged by jurors who live hundreds of miles from their farms and were denied the opportunity to visit the farms for themselves to see if a nuisance really exists. In addition, during the trials, the Carter family was served with a gag order to stop them from talking to the press, ag organizations or even their congressmen because the big-city lawyers feared they would taint the jury pool. How right those lawyers were—imagine if those jurors had the chance to meet with the Carters and learn about hog farming. The results would have been very different and the trial lawyers and neighbors out for easy money would have not walked away with an obscene amount of litigation cash.

Farms of all sizes and commodities should be seriously concerned that even by having good farming practices, following state regulations, being productive members of the community and even a strong Right-to-Farm law are no defense when trial lawyers set their sights on your farm or ranch to cash another big paycheck.

Consumers and farmers alike will pay a price if these lawsuits succeed and the trial lawyers take their playbook around the country. Raising the wholesome food our country depends on is not a nuisance. Farm Bureau has worked alongside other organizations to support the farmers in these suits because if we stand by and let North Carolina farms get run out of business, these frivolous lawsuits are coming for the rest of us in production agriculture.



John Youngberg
Executive Vice President, MFBF

“ In 2014, 26 lawsuits were filed on behalf of 541 plaintiffs who claimed hog farms in their area were creating a “nuisance” to neighbors’ quality of life with farm odor and truck noise. ”

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Cyndi Johnson, Conrad
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“ Human life and safety is important. Bear life and safety is important. Let's tell Congress to continue the hard work of updating the Endangered Species Act. Let's help our Grizzly Bears become better neighbors. ”

Grizzly Bears are not always good neighbors

I farm grain in Montana on the Rocky Mountain Front. Sixty miles to the west are the mountains with gorgeous rolling hills, but the rest of our landscape is flat--not exactly prime Grizzly Bear habitat. However, someone forgot to tell the bears.

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) lists the Grizzly Bear as Threatened in the Mountain Prairie region of the American West, except for right around Yellowstone Park. The federal government controls the management of this bear although the original intent of the ESA was to include state and local governments as well as farmers and ranchers in the decision making.

The first human-bear interaction in my county which caused significant concern was the weekend two years ago when a sow grizzly was teaching her two yearling cubs to hunt. To do that, the mother bear took her cubs to what she must have thought was her private hunting preserve. In fact, it was my best friend's sheep ranch. The bears killed and mutilated 75 ewes, rams, and lambs in two nights "hunting" and they didn't eat a single one. This was just one more incident that proves ag pays where bears stay.

Early in June this year, one local business had to close in order to "manage" a grizzly that wandered into town, putting both human and bear lives in danger.

Bears have been spotted as far as 300 miles from the Front in Central Montana -- tipping over bee hives and ripping doors off of full grain bins. I have full grain bins, and that concerns me. Grizzly bears have been within a few miles of me and my home. The standard response to these problem bears is usually relocation, if the bear survives the encounter. Unfortunately, that doesn't always result in a bear who stays put in his or her new home as they will wander hundreds of miles back to the scene of the crime.

Reform of the Endangered Species Act is finally being discussed by government officials in Washington. Proposals have been made to re-evaluate the original document and improve the rules that rob states and communities of the ability to address the local threats presented by the bears.

The ESA also contains unfunded mandates of which local and state communities shoulder the cost. It says actions designed to protect a species take precedence over infrastructure and development. For example, to repair a

road, costly special barriers must be erected to prevent bears and other wildlife from entering construction zones. This includes the cost of design and building of avenues for wildlife to cross or fences with dirt fill on both sides so critters don't have to jump or crawl under.

Some of the mandates also strike at the individual level. My goat raising neighbor is being required, at her own expense, to add tall electric fencing to prevent bears from eating her goats and their food. Again, ag Pays when the bears stay.

Even with all these rules, the ESA has only been 3 percent successful regarding recovery of listed species. Imagine if only 3 percent of your beef or milk was acceptable for market or only 3 percent of your students could pass your class. Amending this act is necessary.



Let's bring every stakeholder back to the table to take care of the problems with the ESA. Solutions should include incentives, rather than relying solely on unfunded expenses and penalties. These solutions could include pilot projects to reduce human-bear encounters, like the one in Valier, Mont., where a driver is paid to pick up livestock carcasses and removed them to the landfill, thus cutting down the prospects of unwanted bear visitations.

The ESA also needs to provide resources to encourage better livestock safety, animal feed storage and grain storage in remote areas if we are to continue having this increase and mobility in the bear population.

Human life and safety is important. Bear life and safety is important. Let's tell Congress to continue the hard work of updating the Endangered Species Act. Let's help our Grizzly Bears become better neighbors.





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Reality: It's Life

BY MARIAH SHAMMEL

My parents live in one of the busiest neighborhoods in Billings, so it's hard to believe it was once one of the most rural parts of the city. In the Heights, just a few blocks from Main Street, was Starnar Country Gardens, a 20-acre plot of land where all kinds of fruits and vegetables were grown and sold throughout the county. My maternal great grandparents started it in 1930 and it is what carried them through the Depression. Their family ran it for a couple decades before my great grandparents passed away and my grandparents took over, eventually rented it out as pasture and built a house on it in the 1950s. This is where my mom and aunt were raised. When my grandmother passed away (quite a few years after my grandfather had died), my parents and I (my older siblings were already in college) decided to make the move from Minnesota back to Billings and back into my grandma's house. I used those same fields for my horses, but after moving away for college and starting a family of my own, my parents once again leased the pasture out and by that time, all the farmland surrounding it had turned into subdivisions.

Using the old Gardens for pasture wasn't what my grandfather had in mind when they initially hoed over the last row of peas and closed the gate on Starnar Country Gardens. He dreamed of having some sort of community building on the property and was in discussions with the city to build a high school for the Heights on it. When access wasn't where it needed to be, they talked about building something to benefit the VA. As a veteran, he saw the need for a place to support people of past wars. With none of these ideas coming to fruition, he leased it out until another opportunity would hopefully come along.

Fast forward 35 years. While visiting my parents yesterday, I could barely turn into their driveway for all of the gravel trucks driving in and out of that pasture road. Although the grass/weed mixture had turned a crispy shade of brown when I was there a few weeks ago, now there isn't a blade of anything to be found. The

beginning steps of building an affordable senior living home are in full swing and it's quite a spectacle to behold. Before long the "back lot" as Favorite Farmer calls it will be a sweeping expanse of lawn, buildings, community gardens, walking paths, play areas for visiting children and everything else a senior living community could need.

It will be a huge benefit to the community when it's all finished, but in the meantime, I can't help but get sentimental about the whole thing. My parents house, the same cheery yellow one built by my grandfather seventy years ago, sits in the forefront, in all of its glory with flowers growing everywhere, vegetables popping out of vines planted wherever there was room left in the garden and a bright green lawn that is in drastic contrast to the yellow machinery and fields of dirt that now completely surround it. Eventually it will once again bear the name "Starnar Country Gardens," a great homage to the man who always wanted to see this little chunk of land become something more. (For now, it's quite an eyesore.)

The irony is that after all these generations of trying to find the best fit for these 20 acres that are now the middle of town, my parents are currently cavorting in the British Isles and are missing all the excitement. At first, I wasn't sure if it was a

good idea that they were gone when all of this breaking-ground chaos began. However, after seeing it yesterday, I think it's for the best. I emailed them a picture of the progress that has been made and noticed they responded to every other part of my email but not one comment was made in reference to the picture. I had to double-check my email to make sure I had included the image.

My parents have been waiting for this decades-long dream to come to fruition but no matter how ready they think they are, the first time they pull up into the driveway and see the old pasture that is no more, it's going to be tough. Just like meeting your baby after eagerly awaiting its arrival for nine months or having to say goodbye to a loved one who has been living on borrowed time, you think you're well equipped for these big moments, but when it's actually upon you, you aren't. No matter how prepared you are, when the finality of whatever life event is happening slaps you in the face, it's never enough. That's when we have to step back and take some deep breaths and appreciate what life was before this moment; then realize the breadth of what's currently happening and get excited for the next chapter of life because that's when the fun really begins.

Mariah says goodbye to the old Starnar Country Gardens.



Protecting your Home from **Strong Wind Damage**

Did you know that wind can start to damage tree limbs and branches at just 39 mph? And at 47 mph, wind starts to cause structural damage. In Montana, the windiest season (Nov.-Feb.) is fast approaching. Right now, it's especially important to take the proper steps to protect your home from the potential damage wind can cause. Below are some tips that will help you prepare your property for big gusts.

Evaluate potential threats

Check the perimeter of your home/property for things like broken fence, loose branches, and crumbling shingles. Making the necessary improvements or renovations to combat these potential risks will help ensure the safety of your home and loved ones. The cost of such preventative work could certainly save you money and provide peace of mind should a high wind storm occur.

Ground your appliances

When checking your property for potential threats, make sure your outdoor furniture

is secure or can be tied down in the event of high winds. Patio furniture, grills, sporting equipment and even garden sheds should be anchored whether it be with bolts, cables or chains. Move them indoors, if possible.

Remove dangerous trees

Make sure that the trees surrounding your home are far enough away not to cause damage should they fall or lose limbs. In general, trees should sit further away from the home than their height when fully grown. If you aren't sure whether your tree is safe, an arborist can evaluate the risk and remove limbs or the entire tree if necessary.

Cover your doors and windows

Consider installing steel or aluminum storm shutters if the winds in your area are particularly strong. These will protect your windows and doors from shattering when hit with flying objects or bursting open when hit with strong gusts of wind. You should also make sure that the

caulking on your windows and door jambs is in good condition.

Secure your roof

Roof shingles often sustain damage in strong wind, making homes more vulnerable to rain and water leakage. Metal roofing can be torn away completely, causing the wind to enter your home. Secure any metal panels on your roof with screws and bolts (a contractor can help you with this!)

Check your garage door

A home's garage door is a weak spot in the case of high winds and can cause significant structural damage if blown off. Make sure your garage door is in good condition by calling a contractor to inspect it and make necessary repairs. This will insure your garage door can withstand strong winds and keep everything (and everyone!) inside your home safe.

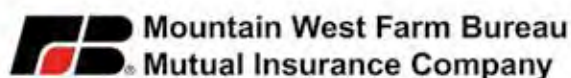
Sources:

The Weather Company; The Great Falls Tribune




**Life is full of surprises...
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Property-casualty insurance products offered through Mountain West Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company/Laramie, Wyoming.

Meet Agent Randy Moore

BY REBECCA COLNAR

Why does a school administrator decide to launch a new career as an insurance agent?

"I think it's because I like working with people, and similar to being in the education field, you get to work with individual people," says Randy Moore, whose office is located on the main street of Big Timber.

Moore explains that the insurance career was chosen after a several different life careers. He grew up in Malta in an entrepreneurial family who owned a print shop, ran a movie theater and provided janitorial services and cooking lunch for the local school. He joined the Army National Guard following high school graduation to help pay for his college education. At Montana State University, Bozeman, he received a teaching degree, while competing as a saddle bronc rider in college rodeo.

During summer vacation, he worked for Pegasus Gold, which melded into a full-time job as a miner after graduation. "After about a year and a half of being a miner, I realized it wasn't my career path of choice, so I decided to use my teaching degree and taught for five years in Reedpoint. My superintendent urged me to get a Master's Degree in school administration. Following that accomplishment, I became the principal of the Shields Valley junior high and high school."

Then his career took a turn. "A high school friend whom I had my insurance with told me about a position with Mountain West Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company in Big Timber," said Moore. "From my other jobs, I knew everyone in Reedpoint, I knew everyone in Shields Valley and several families from Big Timber from being a member at the local golf club for the past 10 years."

That was 2002 when Moore took over the office and brought his family with him. (Today he had his wife have two children in college and one in high school.)

"One aspect of this job I really enjoy is you can set your schedule. I can go to my kid's extracurricular activities, coaching basketball games with all of them from fourth to eighth grade, etc.," Moore explains.

Helping folks get the most from their insurance is important to Moore. "I urge anyone with insurance to meet annually with your agent and review your policy to understand what is covered and what isn't. The largest asset you probably own is your home which can easily be worth \$200,000 up. You want to have liability insurance that matches your assets. If you're worth \$1 million, you need to have that coverage."

He adds that many people don't know

“ I like the fact that Farm Bureau truly is a grassroots organization. It's great I get to be involved in farming and ranching by selling ag producers the insurance they need. ”

they can carry additional insurance on a variety of goods. "Home insurance doesn't cover everything, and nor is it all covered on some country squire policies. You might want to insure your hay and livestock."

The agent notes that life insurance is important, as well. "If one spouse or another dies, and you were counting on that other person's income to make end's meet, your whole lifestyle may have to change. You may have to get a second job or sell your house."

Community involvement is paramount. Moore has served on the Lions board



acting as Lions club president, was presiding president of the school booster club and president of his subdivision and has been president of the Chamber of Commerce. He also serves as chairman of the Legion Board and a member of its Honor Guard. He spends about \$3,000 each year supporting 4-H and in addition gives plenty of donations, sponsorships and a scholarship with the Sweet Grass County Farm Bureau.

"I sponsor the Reedpoint Sheep Drive because they took good care of me while I taught there," he says. Moore is an avid golfer, as well as a hunter and fisherman. He loves going home to Malta and hunting on his brother-in-law and sister's ranch.

Moore appreciates what the Montana Farm Bureau does, and says he will tell clients that Montana Farm Bureau is the largest ag lobbying group in the state for Montana's personal and property rights. "I like the fact that Farm Bureau truly is a grassroots organization. It's great I get to be involved in farming and ranching by selling ag producers the insurance they need."



NOTICE

Annual Policyholders' Meeting

Mountain West Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company

December 6, 2018 – 8 a.m.

Farm Bureau Center

931 Boulder Dr., Laramie, WY 82070



Leading for the Future

The YF&R Program helps young members hone their leadership and communications skills for the future of Montana's ag industry. The YF&R Discussion Meet, Excellence in Ag and Achievement Awards are all opportunities for young members to showcase their skills and win big. The winner of the 2018 Discussion Meet will be taking home a new Polaris Ranger 570! Go to mfbf.org to find out more.

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For more information on the YF&R Program and how to get involved, go to www.mfbf.org or contact Sue Ann Streufert at sueanns@mfbf.org, (406) 587-3153.



Opportunity rings at Bell Crossing Farm

Beginning hop farmers get by with
a little help from friends, grants

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LAURA NELSON

It started with a text.

"I'm going to quit my job and start a hops farm... are you in??"

The "typing indicator" bubble bounced.

There was radio silence for several hours.

Then, Steve Funston's response:

"WHAT?!"

His reaction was likely more shock than dissent, Desiree Funston says, laughing at the 2013 memory. After all, the couple had just moved to the Bitterroot Valley for her job just two years earlier. The Montana natives settled in Stevensville, bought a home, and fell in love with the area. But the ink was barely dry on their closing documents when she realized she wasn't as enamored with her new job as they were with their new home.

"But we really loved it here. So one day I just sat down and asked myself – what do I love to do? What do I love to do that can also make money?"

- Gardening.
- Being outside.
- Beer.

Bingo! The Bell Crossing Hops Farm dream took root.

But of course, it wasn't that easy.

"I couldn't just quit my job; it's taken a little time to get here," she says. "But we're both into craft beer, and we love that Montana has this great craft beer scene. I don't know what connected that to, 'hops farmer,' but it did, and I knew it was right."

The Funstons aren't the only ones seeing opportunity in hops farming. Nationwide, hops production in Idaho, Oregon and Washington increased 20 percent between 2016 and 2017, according to the last USDA National Hops Report. The Hop Growers of America noted U.S. hop acreage has increased 79.5 percent since 2012; hops production increased by 77 percent. 2017

recorded a record high production of 104 million pounds between the states of Idaho, Oregon and Washington. Washington produced 75 percent of the nation's hops crop in 2017; with Idaho (13%) and Oregon (11%) nearly make up the balance of the nation's commercial production.

But the Hop Growers of America recently advised against further expansion in their 2017 report: "While global hop demand appears to be on the rise thanks to burgeoning international craft beer

“ So what if your idea is crazy?! If it's based in research and love and good wisdom and science – why not?! Why not try growing something really strange that no one else is doing? You might just corner the market and be really successful. ”

— Desiree Funston

cultures, many industry leaders cautioned against additional acreage being added in the U.S. for the 2018 crop. All key indicators suggest current aroma hop demand has largely been satisfied by the unprecedented expansion of U.S. acreage in recent years.”

However, the Funstons – and a number of other emerging hops farmers in the state – see an opportunity in localized, craft hops.

“There's definitely a demand here for Montana hops, and the local food movement is super focused on that,” Desiree says. “These Montana brewers want to be able to say, ‘my grain was grown in Conrad, my hops are from Stevensville, all our ingredients are grown in Montana, for Montana.’ That's really cool.”

The Montana Brewers Association notes a total of 73 breweries in the state, with 12 known breweries in planning as of February 2018. Mike Howard is the



Tall trellis poles are an essential infrastructure on a hops farm. Bell Crossing Farms' 19' wooden trellis poles have steel cable lines strung in a grid. In the spring, owners Desiree and Steve Funston attached coconut twine, called coir, to the cables. They wind the hops plant clockwise around the bottom of the coir to begin its climbing journey. At full maturity, the hops plants will climb the entire 19-foot rope.

master brewer and co-owner of Great Burn Brewing in Missoula. He bought and brewed with the first Bell Crossing crop in 2017, agreeing with the Funstons' hunch on the local demand.

“It's a tough market to compete in when you have the big boys in Washington to go up against,” Howard says. “But having a

local source is important; it's a no-brainer to me. We brew our product locally; we sell it locally. I use great Montana water, locally grown grains – so why wouldn't I want locally-sourced hops, too?”

With that kind of research and encouragement, the Funstons were gung-ho to get farming. Once the initial shock of that abrupt text wore off, Steve was, indeed, ‘in.’ They found a property to lease nearby, and thought they were headed in the right direction for their farming dream. But the deal fell through at the last minute.

“That was devastating,” she says. “But it was the first thing that slowed us down and made us do a little more research. It ended up being the right thing.”

It was their first lesson in this venture of becoming a first-time farmer: patience.

"This shouldn't have been such a surprise, but everything takes longer than we thought it would," she says.

Over the next four years, she and Steve continued to plot, plan, research and dream. Desiree moved on to a different day job, but the vision of their hops farm never faded. Then, opportunity rang in 2015. They found 11 acres for sale, just down the road from their originally intended "Bell Crossing" location.

It was far from perfect, but it was theirs. Hops take three to four years to reach their full production capacity, which means a large investment up front without much immediate return. They were up for the challenge, with a little help from their friends.

They spent the first year dealing with weed control and preparing the soil, with assistance and farming guidance from their new neighbor, Montana Farm Bureau President Hans McPherson. Together, they planted a rye grass, tilled it in, then a clover cover crop to out-compete the weeds.

"He's been such a good neighbor to have on our side," Desiree says. "I can't say enough about how kind and generous he's been to us every step of the way."

That brought lesson No. 2 in being a beginning farmer: use your resources.

They also spent time in northern Colorado, studying and networking with other smaller-scale hops farms to understand what the industry looked like at their scale.

"They understood what we wanted to do, as a small, local producer, and they were able to look us in the eye and say, 'buckle up. This is a lot of work.'"

Then, a mini-grant from the Missoula Community Food and Agriculture Coalition helped purchase trellis poles, weed cloth and rhizomes – "all absolutely necessary things to start a hops farm," she says. "It wasn't a big grant, but it was just enough of a boost to get us started and kick us into action."

They also found small business assistance and wisdom in the Headwaters RC&D program, which organized the Hops Summit in 2016 and 2017 through the Food Alliance of Rural Montana and the Montana Department of Agriculture.

"That's so valuable – to be able to get together and talk shop, to talk to people who get it and want to talk about the nitty gritty, the technical stuff – that's where we learned a lot," Desiree says.

There, they found their third lesson in farming from scratch: collaboration helps.

Hops are typically harvested in late August or early September. They'll cut the plants at the base, pulling the bine off the trellis. Then the bine goes into a harvesting machine that will pull the cones off, which are then dried and ran through a hammer mill to powder. The powder is put through a pelletizer, and the pellets are bagged, flushed with nitrogen gas and frozen to maintain peak chemical balance.

Without the pellet process, the fresh hops must be used within 7-10 days of harvest. A fresh hop brew is desirable in its season, but that's not sustainable for sales year-round.

“People sometime ask, ‘why would you want to be a farmer now?’ I say, ‘why not?!’ It’s so rewarding to know we’ve worked hard for something, and it’s paying off. When we finally saw our own beer on tap and got to taste it – well, it couldn’t have been better.”

Hops Forward

The ideal growing latitudes for hops is between 35 – 55° north or south of the equator, with long, sunny days during the growing season and well-drained, nutrient-dense soils. Stevensville hits the mark, flush with the latitudes of hops-growing giants like Germany, Bavaria and the Yakama Valley.

The crops require consistent water; drip irrigation systems work best.

Varying levels of alpha and beta acids impart different flavors and characteristics in the hundreds of varieties of hops that exist.

Bell Crossing Farms currently raises CTZs and Cascade varieties. These are what the Funstons call "workhorse" hops.

"These are multi-taskers; the everyman's hops," Desiree says. They're looking at diversifying into more varieties in the future; but these are good starters.

"Every hop is unique in its own variety and in what it can instill in the flavor," brew master at Great Burn Brewery Mike Howard says. Similar to a wine grape's terroir, the environment, soil and variety of the hops impact its flavor profile.

Timing matters, too. The later you add the hops to the brewing process, the more you'll extract the floral qualities. If you add it sooner, bitter flavors step forward.

"Hops can impart flavors all the way from stone fruit to grapefruit to citrus to garlic – those flavors all come from the hops, and every palette is a little different in what it picks up," Howard says.

The Great Burn is a "hops-forward" brewery, meaning they let hops shine in the majority of their beers. While malt steal the show in brewing porters or stouts; yeasts make the Belgian ale or lager distinct; hops are the centerpiece of IPAs and pale ales, which are the mainstays of a "hops-forward" brewery. There, about half the beers they brew and sell on tap have double or more the amount of hops a domestic beer would.

"As soon as they can do that, I'd love to buy more," Howard says.

This year, as they look forward to a larger crop, they'll collaborate with Bozeman-base Crooked Yard Hops to use their processing equipment. But they've also cleared a space on the farm for a building to house a harvester, hammer mill, pellet mill, bagging machine and walk-in freezer. Once that's established, they hope to "pay it forward" by partnering with other beginning hops farmers for their processing, too.

"We're living our dream, and we didn't do this in a vacuum," Desiree says. "We had so many people helping us along the way. This industry has been incredibly open and helpful, so it's important for us to give back and help people who come after us, too."





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Amanda LaYonca, owner
of Ruby Valley Brew

Ruby Valley brewery adds energy to small town

Community embraces brewery with customers enjoying the beer and camaraderie.

BY REBECCA COLNAR

Amanda LaYacona loves Sheridan and loves beer. So when the former Ohioan followed her husband to the Treasure State (it was his dream to live in Montana) the couple landed in southwest Montana.

"At first we thought we'd live in Dillon, but nothing was doing it for us," noted LaYacona. "We thought we'd look further afield. One property was in Sheridan and although we'd never been there we came down Main Street and I noticed a beautiful brick building and said, 'That place looks like a brewery should be in there.'"

To the couple's surprise, once they found their home in Sheridan, the brick building came up for sale and they bought it. "We weren't sure what we were going to do with it. People kept saying Sheridan needed a brewery and we decided to do that. Then the storefront a few doors down became available, and we decided to purchase that, as it made more sense to start small and open our brewery there."

Even before the malted beverage was on tap, the LaYacona's spent hours

working on the space to make it clean, inviting and efficient. "That wall on the right is original," she points out. "I spent hours and hours sanding it."

The energetic young woman says their fermentation tanks are small ("we can almost hug our tanks!") so the brewery produces just enough beer to serve customers and fill growlers. "Our intention is to keep the tanks small in this location. I see this as a pilot system and a place

where we can play with experimental beers. Our menu is constantly changing. This is a good place to see what people want in a beer and what sells before we start brewing on a much larger scale."

Current beers, in keeping with local lore, include 3-7-77 Kölsch, Mad. Cou. "Heifer" Weizen, Maverick Mary IPA and Road Agent Rye, to name a few.

When they brewery began, LaYacona was not a brew master. "Brewing beer is

4/24/15		~ ON TAP ~		2014 2015 2016	
3-7-77 Kölsch	IBU 24	ABV 4.8	Passamari Pale Ale	IBU 34	ABV 4.5
Blue Hawk Kölsch	IBU 24	ABV 4.8	Maverick Mary IPA	IBU 61	ABV 6.8
Black Ruby Cherry Porter	IBU 24	ABV 4.2	Anniversary Ale	IBU 120	ABV 10
Mad Cow 'Heifer' Weizen	IBU 10.4	ABV 4.2	Kilty Pleasure Scotch Ale	IBU 29	ABV 4.7
Road Agent Rye	IBU 18	ABV 5.5	Smugglers Keep Amber Ale	IBU 27	ABV 4.8
			Fresh Hop Pale Ale	IBU 7	ABV 4.9

The brew board.



something I learned along the way. I'm self-taught. I hired Zach Shaw—a skilled brewer from California—as my consultant before he came on full-time. Before he started here, he was a phone call away and helped me step-by-step. The majority of time was spent with me just lumbering through it."

At the point where LaYacona and Shaw felt their beer was ready for the public, they opened their doors to the

public—June 2017."

She's extremely pleased that the community has embraced her business. Wednesday trivia nights find the Ruby Valley Brewery packed with eager customers enjoying the beer and camaraderie. "It really has become the social center of the community. The customers who come are now a big family."

LaYacona explains that the small

breweries (that are popping up in Montana like good mushrooms after a heavy rain) tend to provide a social environment. "People look forward to trivia night all week," she says. "I think a small business like a brewery keeps people in the small town and that means the money stays in our town instead of going elsewhere. That's what local businesses are all about."

Wanting Sheridan to be a successful small town is the driving force behind the Ruby Valley Brewery. "I want to see our town thrive. In the big scheme, when you give people a reason to come to your town, it just doesn't help you but helps the neighboring businesses," the entrepreneur says. "Zach explains a brewery becomes a destination for people. In addition, we employ local people. I have several part-timers. Most of my servers work other full-time jobs—they just like to do a shift at our brewery for the social interaction and meeting people. It's fun."

For more information visit
www.rubyvalleybrew.com



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Photos of miners at the Huson Bar, now the Montgomery Distillery in Missoula.



PHOTO COURTESY LYNN DONALDSON

Montgomery Farm keeps spirits local

Lewistown couple raises grain for family distillery business

STORY AND PHOTOS BY REBECCA COLNAR

Chris and Tom Montgomery chuckle about being co-owners of a distillery. “That’s the last thing we thought we’d want to do,” the retired couple say in unison.

The Montgomery Distillery in Missoula boasts a unique feature; all of the grain used in spirits comes from grain grown in Montana and even more specifically, grain grown in Lewistown by the Montgomery family. A stop at the Montgomery Farm finds a modest facility, along with a beautifully restored barn and a couple of modern grain storage bins. Tom and Chris Montgomery now farm the ground where Chris was raised on her parents’ dairy.

“Our son, Ryan, was working overseas and wanted to find a way to move back to Montana,” explains Tom. “He was always thinking about different projects he could do to make it possible to live here. One day he said, ‘I think I will start a distillery’ since there were very few in Montana.”

Ryan worked another job until he could get the distillery started. After purchasing the farm in 2014, Chris and Tom began tilling

fields and planting rye and wheat. Tom was District Director of the USDA Farm Service Agency for 31 years, and Chris taught fourth grade in Lewistown for many years. Both note that they had to have outside jobs to afford running their farm and a distillery wasn’t on the list of retirement projects. However, when it appeared life was taking a turn to own a distillery, the two jumped in and started farming their 121 acres for crops suitable for distillation.

“Now we’re the silent partners in the distillery, although sometimes we’re not

too silent,” says Chris.

Rye is used to make rye whiskey and wheat is used for our vodka, gin and aquavit, a distilled beverage with added dill and caraway. The distillery purchases its malted barley from Great Falls and uses it to make a single malt whiskey.

Tom buys the winter wheat seed from Moccasin and rye seed from Shelby, noting that most of the rye seed is from Canada because few farmers in the U.S. grow rye for seed. One other different farming practice is striving to produce low-protein



Some of the spirits found at the Montgomery Distillery.



Left: Chris Montgomery poses in the first floor of their old dairy barn. Right: Tom Montgomery checks out one of the huge grain bins outside of the shop.

winter wheat which differs from most wheat growers who want higher protein wheat for the milling industry.

"I don't fertilize the wheat crop in the fall, which contributes to it being low-protein wheat," says Tom. "We usually harvest our rye and winter wheat at the end of August but because of our cool wet weather last spring, it will be later this year. Unfortunately, we're going to have a 45 to 50 percent loss this year to the rye because of hail damage. Three years ago, the crop got a fungus, and we lost our entire crop. That's farming."

The farm has two huge grain bins, one for rye and one for wheat that provide a way for the grain to be stored as well as put in large bulk totes and shipped to the distillery.

In addition to being co-owners of the successful distillery in downtown Missoula, the couple restored the dairy barn on the property as a venue to host weddings, reunions, and other events.

"We were tearing out the old milk parlor and horse barn, and looked at this barn. It didn't look very good, but I didn't want to take it down," Chris said. Tom gave her a price limit to fix it, which actually was surpassed, but the couple is pleased with the results.

"We've had great luck with the weddings. When you have a small farm like we do, it's important to have fresh ideas to bring in additional income," Tom said.

The Montgomerys have been Fergus County Farm Bureau members for more than 30 years. Chris' mother worked in the Farm Bureau office in Lewistown. "We are very supportive of Farm Bureau and its policies, especially those regarding property rights."

The Distillery

Although Missoula's not a small town by Montana standards with more than 72,000 residents, the downtown has a historic, small-town feel. Chris and Tom helped Ryan and his wife, Jenny, to refurbish an old building on West Front Street with its former lives as a John Deere dealership, a

clothing store, flower shop and, yes, a bar.

The distillery offers a nod to its owners' agricultural roots. There are milk cans—harkening back in the time when the family owned the dairy—filled with wheat. There is even family history regarding spirits: Chris' great uncle owned a saloon in a local ghost town in Fergus County. A photo of the saloon showed miners gathered around a bar, so then Ryan had a master woodworker create an identical bar for the tasting room.

"I feel opening this distillery gave downtown and Front Street a real shot in the arm because there wasn't as much here at the time in 2010. This has helped bring more walk-in traffic to the downtown area. That area has progressively become renovated, and at night it's really hopping," said Tom.

The charming building has a tasting room along with the distillery. Liquor must be sold through the state liquor store system which then sells it to the customers and bars.

"Nothing comes out of our distillery that we haven't made at the distillery," Toms explains. "We started distilling grain to produce our Quicksilver Vodka and Whyte Laydie Gin because they don't have to be aged so you can get a cash flow going. Whiskey, like our Montgomery Single Malt or Sudden Wisdom Rye needs to be aged a few years.

Knowledge about producing spirits requires education, so Ryan and Jenny spent time in Scotland studying with skilled whiskey makers. The distilling equipment, a combination pot-column artisan still was made by Christian CARL, Germany's oldest distillery fabricator and shipped from Germany—complete with Germans to install it. The still can be used to make whiskey and with the addition of a 21-plate column, world-class vodka and gin.

A popular beverage for the holidays is their Kirschwasser. Tom and Ryan buy 6000 pounds of Flathead Cherries and make this delicious, festive cherry brandy. "It's not a big money maker, but it's fun and uses one of the treasures of

Montana," says Tom.

In addition, the Montgomerys use a commercial kitchen in Ronan to create specialty products including Devil's Broom Hot Sauce and Sunday Morning Bloody Mary Mix sold in stores and the tasting room.

The distillery not only offers creative cocktails, but contributes to the community. They have 20-part-time employees in the tasting room and have hired two full-time distillers. In addition to being the center of the community where friends gather, book readings are held and there is often music. The Distillery also offers their spirits for a



The beautiful still was imported from Germany.

limited number of fundraising and special events each season. Their giving mission emphasizes children's health and well-being, fighting hunger in our community, and environmental stewardship.

Ryan recently received plenty of international publicity for the distillery by building a restored motorcycle he called Sudden Wisdom that runs on vodka heads-part of the vodka discarded in the distilling process. It hit 113 mph racing at Wendover, Utah's Bonneville Salt Flats Motorcycle Speed Trials August 26 and held the world record for a little while.

"It's exciting to see how far we've come since opening the distillery in 2012," says Chris. "Although it's been a lot of work and plenty of challenges, our greatest pride is the kids' work and creativity that's gone into starting this business and also that the grains used in the spirits come from the soil right here in Lewistown turning them into truly great products."

For more information visit www.montgomerydistillery.com



The Gallahan's raised \$30,000 from the community to help with building renovations.

PHOTO COURTESY REBECCA COLNAR



Hometown pride brings brewery to Harlowton

Family sets up brewery in fading downtown

BY REBECCA COLNAR

Gally's Brewing Co. on the main street of Harlowton is an example of a local family taking hometown pride to a completely new level. Drew Galahan and his sister's husband, Matt Speed, started brewing beer in their basement as a hobby. They thought it was exciting to experiment and see what tasty brews they could develop. It never entered their heads that their hobby had potential to become a lucrative business and a way to revitalize their town's main street. They had grown up there and had affection for the fading downtown.

"We were at the Fourth of July Parade in Harlowton in 2016 when Drew said to us, 'We should make something happen in Harlowton,'" says Drew's younger sister, Kendra Galahan. "We were both working in finance in Billings and didn't totally love it. Drew and Matt began scheming long before I was a part of the plan and landed on the idea of a brewery."

By 2017, there were plenty of examples of that type of business doing well, especially in small towns. Some people told them they were crazy. A brewery? In Harlowton?

"It was a risk because you never know how a community will respond in such a small town," says Kendra. "We were told people here liked Budweiser and Coors and may not support a craft brewery."

What happened next was total community support. During a fundraiser to renovate the old 1913 building at the south of Main Street, the young entrepreneurs raised \$30,000 from the generous residents of Harlowton. They implemented the "Mug

Club" to raise other funds for additional brewery establishment.

Kendra notes that it's helpful she and her siblings were raised in the community. "People have known us since we were babies and they have been very receptive and generous from the beginning of our concept."

In the process of renovating the building, the group, including Drew's fiancée Melanie, who is a brewer and co-owner, was joined in the work by their parents, brother Patrick, and sister, Shanda.

"The atmosphere is so different than a bar—it's very community-oriented. People can bring their kids," Kendra explains. "By law we need to stop serving at 8 p.m., so we avoid the late-night crowd that can get overly rowdy."

“ The atmosphere is so different than a bar—it's very community-oriented. People can bring their kids, ”

All of the owners quickly saw the need in the community for engagement and music in the taproom was born just after they opened. "We opened on December 15, 2017 and had a band that weekend. In January, we started having performers every other weekend," explains Kendra. "The musicians are mostly from Montana or the region. If I hear a good band somewhere, I encourage them to come on up!"

They are always game to do community outreach; a fundraiser for their local library that lost its grant money; the Wheatland/Golden Valley Farm Bureau County Annual Meeting; they even created a special beer for the Pride of the Judith fundraiser to save a historic grain elevator. The Pride of the Judith beer was crafted entirely out of Montana ingredients.

Gally Brewing Co. offers 10 beers on tap which they frequently rotate. "It's fun to see what hits home for people," Kendra says. "We had several seasonal beers this summer and right now there is a pumpkin porter in the fermenter."

Drew, Matt, and Melanie had some adjustments to make moving from fermenting beer in five-gallon buckets to a pilot system (1.5 bbl) to their current bigger system (22 bbl total). "They learned



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Above: Matt Speed with Kendra Galahan and Drew Galahan with fiancée Melanie kidding around at the brewery. Left: Beer offerings include Peach, Please Blonde Ale, Hopikaze 2.0 Session IPA, and Pride of the Judith Light Amber Ale. Center: Gally's was a nickname that's been passed on from grandfather to father and now, Drew.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE GALAHAN FAMILY.

to adjust the recipes accordingly, as a lot of beer would be wasted on a bad batch on the full-size setup," Kendra explained. "But to some degree it's always trial and error until it they get it just how they want it. They are always wanting to improve."

Gally's gives Harlowton credit for loving IPAs – a beer known for its hops. "We actually had quite a few people around town growing hops, so we decided to make our own Harlowton IPA with the hops they harvested for us. It's in the fermenter right now; we are anxious to try it! Despite the claims of only having light beer lovers in rural Montana, our 8-Second Double IPA is a full, hoppy, beer and people love it.

Drew is great about telling our customers what he's brewing, explaining differences and ingredients, and even lets them taste it right off the fermenter. We have a good connection with those from whom we source local ingredients."

The family all steps in whether it's working the tap room, helping out in the brewery or simply pitching in with whatever needs done. Kendra graduated from MSU-Billings in 2015 and is working on her master's in public relations, training that is useful as she handles the marketing for Gally's. "We're all learning as a team as we go!"

"Drew and I personally love where we grew up. Our dad was a junior high

teacher and coach and mom worked at the courthouse. Some people don't love these small towns. They can't wait to get out of there. We loved it and enjoyed coming back home while we were away to school," says Kendra. "It was sad to see the town losing businesses throughout high school and after graduation when we'd come back to visit. If you opened a brewery in big city, it might add to the neighborhood and be cool for a while, but when you open it in a small town, the effect is more palpable. It's all about the people we know and care about, doing something we have a passion for, and possibly making a positive difference. That's why we wanted to open a brewery and invest our time and resources in our home town."

For more information visit
www.gallysbrewing.com



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The YF&R program helps young members shape their future and American agriculture through leadership development and personal growth opportunities. Three competitions enable members to showcase their leadership experience, communication skills and successful business plans as they compete against the best of the best from each state Farm Bureau.

As part of the YF&R competitions, the top four competitors in the Achievement Award, Discussion Meet and Excellence in Ag areas will receive:



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THIRD PLACE: Case IH 40" Combination Roll Cabinet & Top Chest and \$500 Case IH parts card, courtesy of Case IH plus \$2,000 of Stanley Black & Decker merchandise (PROTO, DeWalt, Stanley, Lenox & Irwin), courtesy of Stanley Black & Decker.

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PLACE**

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NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

Schedule of Events

Wednesday, November 7

11-12:30pm	Promotion & Education Committee Mtg
1-3pm	Women's Leadership Committee Mtg
1:30-3pm	Commodity Advisory Committee Mtgs
3pm	MFBF Board of Directors Meeting
3:30-5pm	Commodity Advisory Committee Mtgs
3-7pm	Registration Open Northern Hotel
4:00pm	Vespers Service
7:00pm	Centennial Year Kickoff Reception in the Trade Show

1:15-2:30pm	Workshops <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocating in a Marketplace of Distrust - Donna Moenning, Center for Food Integrity MT Economy & Tax Base Changes - Llew Jones & Rob Cook Conservation Easements - Kristen Juras, UM Law Professor
2:30pm	Ice Cream Social
3-5pm	District Caucuses
5:30pm	YF&R Discussion Meet - Final Round
6pm	MFBF Social
7pm	YF&R Social & Dinner

Thursday, November 8

6:45am	Century Club Members Only Breakfast Keynote: Tim Williams, Dept. of Interior
7:30-6pm	Registration & Trade Show Open DoubleTree Hotel
8:00am	Opening General Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of Colors National Anthem President's Address Keynote: "Searching for the Wizard of Oz", Dr. Gary Moore, retired Professor at North Carolina State University
9:10-10:30am	Workshops <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large Animal Vet Panel - Katie Ryan, Beth Blevins Ag Safety Training - Jim and Ron Larson Tax Reform Impact on Ag Producers - Wipfli Farm Bill Update - Andrew Walmsley, AFBF
9:10-11am	YF&R Committee Meeting
10:30-11am	Coffee Break
11:00am	Audit Report
11:15am	Open Resolutions Session
12-1:15pm	Lunch hosted by YF&R Committee Keynote: "A Dangerous Disconnect" Donna Moenning, Center for Food Integrity
1:15-2:30pm	YF&R Discussion Meet - Round 1

Friday, November 9

6:45am	Presidents & Secretaries Breakfast National Issues Update - Andrew Walmsley, AFBF
8am	General Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insurance Report Exec Vice President's Address Roll Call of Delegates Credentials Committee Report Nominating Committee Report and Introductions
10:30am	Resolutions Session
11:45am-1pm	Lunch hosted by Women's Committee Keynote: "Ask In Earnest Project" Darla Tyler-McSherry
1-5pm	Resolutions Session continues
5:30pm	MSU Alumni/College of Ag Social
6:00pm	MFBF Social
7:00pm	Awards Banquet
9:00pm	Entertainment: Tim the Dairy Farmer

Saturday, November 10

8:00am	Resolutions Session
The Board of Directors will meet immediately following the resolutions session.	

99th Annual MFBF Convention

REGISTRATION FORM

November 7-10 * Northern & DoubleTree Hotels * Billings

DUE OCTOBER 29

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

NAME: _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____ COUNTY: _____

EMAIL: _____ PHONE: _____

☐ Voting Delegate

☐ Alternate

☐ Member

☐ Guest

REGISTRATION AND MEALS

Registration Fee (required to attend all events)	\$40	x	_____	=	\$ _____
Thursday Lunch	\$20	x	_____	=	\$ _____
Friday Lunch	\$20	x	_____	=	\$ _____
Friday Dinner & Awards Banquet	\$40	x	_____	=	\$ _____
TOTAL					\$ _____

PAYMENT

_____ Check Enclosed (payable to MFBF)

_____ **You can register online with
a credit card at www.mfbf.org.**

LODGING INFORMATION

Attendees are responsible for making their own room reservations. Call the Northern Hotel at (406) 867-6767 or for overflow, contact the DoubleTree Hotel at (406) 252-7400 and request the MFBF room block for special conference rates. Be sure to book your room by **October 30!**

Please return registration form by **October 29 to:**

Montana Farm Bureau Federation, 502 S. 19th Ave, Ste 104, Bozeman, MT 59718 or fax (406) 587-0319
Call the MFBF office at (406) 587-3153 or e-mail info@mfbf.org with questions.

Convention Highlights

Searching for the Wizard of Oz



Dr. Gary Moore is a retired Professor of Agriculture and Extension Education at North Carolina State University. His presentation will use the Wizard of Oz to illustrate key points that will challenge and motivate you. As the world is rapidly changing around us, how do we adapt to continue to be relevant and meet the challenges

of the future. We need a brain, courage and heart, but who is the Wizard of Oz? Join us and find out!

A Dangerous Disconnect

The Center for Food Integrity is a non-profit organization that empowers those in the food system to meaningfully engage with their most important audiences on issues that matter.

CFI's annual research goes deep and wide to understand what's on the minds of today's consumers when it comes to food – how it's produced, who's producing it, what's in it, how it impacts health, animals and our planet – and which sources they trust. The 2018 results

show disturbing shifts in trust in food and agriculture, differences in where various consumer segments source food information, and a growing interest in food production practices. CFI's Donna Moenning will highlight this insight and what it means for food and agriculture.



Polaris Ranger Up For Grabs

Polaris and the Young Farmer & Rancher Committee are upping the ante again this year! The winner of the 2018 MFBF Discussion Meet will take home a brand new Polaris Ranger 570 plus an expense paid trip to New Orleans, LA to compete in the national YF&R Discussion Meet. All voting members ages 18-35 are eligible to compete for this amazing prize package.



Encourage members from your area to attend the convention on Thursday, November 8 for a great day of events for YF&R-aged members. For more information contact, Sue Ann at sueanns@mfbf.org.

TIM THE DAIRY FARMER

Agricultural Comedian



Tim the Dairy Farmer

Tim is definitely not a politician, salesman, or motivational speaker. Tim is a Florida dairy farmer and stand-up comedian. His experiences on and off the farm allow him to bring out the humor of everyday farm life. You don't have to be a farmer to understand Tim's humor. Whether you are blue collar, redneck, or even a city slicker Tim will have you doubled-over with his laughs-per-minute style.

Tim travels the U.S. and Canada performing at agricultural related events. Tim's true passions in life are farming, eating beef jerky and making people laugh. Don't miss this opportunity to get some great laughs in at the Friday evening Awards Banquet!

Ask In Earnest

Darla Tyler-McSherry will address members about how to have candid and compassionate conversations about suicide within the farm and ranch community. Although



the CDC is currently re-calculating data from its 2016 report that showed farming has the highest suicide rate per occupation, it's still clear the suicide rate is much higher in rural areas. Researchers have demonstrated that one suicide deeply impacts 25 people, and another 115 are exposed to suicide's devastating

impact. 140 people can be a significant portion of many communities in Montana and other frontier/agricultural states. We need to take action now to save lives. Plan to attend the Women's Leadership Committee luncheon and learn more about this difficult but extremely important topic.

COUNTY NEWS

National Read A Book Day

County Farm Bureau members headed to their local schools to read Accurate Ag Books to kids for National Read a Book Day September 6. Participating members hailed from Big Horn, Custer/Fallon, Powder River/ Carter and Yellowstone County Farm Bureaus. The Montana Farm Bureau Foundation provided the books for the readings; the teachers get to keep them to add to their literacy collections.

MFBF District 5 Director Gary Heibertshausen, Powder River/Carter County Farm Bureau President Darcia Patten and PRC member Kathy McDowell read to classes in Broadus. **Southwest County Farm Bureau's** volunteers read

"Who Grew my Soup?" to elementary schools in Dillon as well as in neighboring rural schools.



Lillian Ostendorf, **Custer/Fallon County Farm Bureau** reading in Miles City.



Sarah Noyes, **Big Horn County Farm Bureau**, reads "How Did That Get in My Lunchbox" to first grade students at Hardin Primary School.

Candidates Forums

As election time nears, county Farm Bureaus held candidate forums to ensure voters are well informed.



Sweet Grass County Farm Bureau's candidate forum.

County Annual Meetings

September is annual meeting time when members from county Farm Bureaus meet to review the past year, find out what's happening with Montana Farm Bureau and receive updates on ag issues. It's a time to surface resolutions that will be voted on at the state level during the MFBF Annual Convention, slated this year for November 7-10 in Billings. Breakfast, lunch and dinner meetings take place in all of the county Farm Bureaus where the grassroots organization's policies start. Following are some shots snapped at the meetings.



Roosevelt County held a lunch meeting at the Sherman in Wolf Point.



Phillips County meeting speaker Rep. Mike Lang talks about ag issues.



Chouteau County members listen to Laura Nelson speaking about how Farm Bureau impacted Chouteau County agriculture over the past 100 years.



Big Horn County discusses a "fake meat" resolution.



Heather and Jody Wills at the **Northwest County** meeting.



Legislator Wendy McKamey visits with **Front Range** member Ken Johnson.

MFBF District 8 Director
Cindy Denning at the
Cascade County meeting,
C.M. Russell Museum.



Mike Honeycutt,
executive
officer, Montana
Department of
Livestock at the
Meagher County
meeting.



Megan Hedges talks about policy at the **Hill-Liberty-Blaine** meeting.



The **Wheatland/Golden Valley Farm Bureau** held their annual
meeting at Gally's Brewery.



MFBF President Hans McPherson at **Prairie County**.



Bonnie and Casey Jones with Jim and Marilyn Dusenberry at the
Lewis & Clark meeting.

YF&R News

Farm Bureau YF&R competitive events offer great prizes, education

Farm Bureau, at both the state and national level, offers excellent opportunities for young farmers and ranchers to hone their knowledge about agriculture and win amazing prizes. The YF&R competitive events include the Achievement Award, Excellence in Agriculture Award and the Discussion Meet.

The Achievement Award recognizes Young Farmers & Ranchers who have excelled in their farm or ranch and have honed their leadership abilities to superiority. Participants are involved in



CREDIT: AFBF

production agriculture with a majority of their income subject to normal production risks. Judges evaluate competitor's excellence in management, growth and scope of their enterprise and self-initiative that have been displayed throughout the farm or ranch.

The Excellence in Agriculture Award spotlights young Farm Bureau members who are agricultural enthusiasts but have not earned a majority of their income from an owned production agriculture enterprise in the past three years. Competitors are evaluated on their understanding of agricultural issues, leadership experiences and achievement, and their ability to communicate their agricultural story.

The Discussion Meet competitive event simulates a committee meeting where discussion and active participation are expected from each participant. This competition is evaluated on an exchange of ideas and information on a pre-determined topic. Participants build basic discussion skills, develop a keen understanding of important agricultural issues and explore how groups can pool knowledge to reach consensus and solve problems.

In 2019, the national winners of the Achievement Award, Excellence in Agriculture Award and Discussion Meet will receive a new Ford truck. The three runners-up will receive a Case IH Farmall 50A tractor. Third place finalists will receive a Case IH 40" Combination Roll Cabinet & Top Chest and a \$500 parts card, as

Women's Leadership Committee

PHOTO Contest



Entry deadline November 2

The contest theme for 2018 is "Stuck in a Rut." The committee encourages members to enter photos that capture what the theme means to them.

Contest Prize

First prize is \$100, second prize \$75, and third prize \$50. The top three winning photographs become the property of MFBF to be used for display and publicity purposes.

"STUCK IN A RUT"

The Montana Farm Bureau Federation Women's Leadership Committee Photo Contest will be held during the MFBF annual convention November 7-10 in at the Northern and Doubletree Hotels in downtown Billings. Photos will be on display and voted on by popular vote. The winners (first, second, and third prize) will be announced at the Awards Banquet, Friday, November 9.

Contest RULES

- The entrant must be a current MFBF member and their membership number must be included with their entry.
- Open to amateur photographers only.
- Photos must be taken by entrant.
- No more than three photos per entrant.
- Photos can only be submitted via email! Please email to the contest coordinator, Mary Hill, at BarJRGeibvieh@3rivers.net with the subject line MFBF PHOTO CONTEST 2018.

QUESTION ?

406-799-9955
Contact Alena Standley

well as \$2,000 of Stanley Black & Decker merchandise. Fourth place finalists will receive a Case IH 40" Combination Roll Cabinet & Top Chest and a \$500 parts card.

"These national competitions allow you to participate at Annual Convention. It's a great program and a lot of value out of it," said MFBF YF&R Chair Gil Gasper. "It can be difficult and rigorous, but if you're interested you won't lose out by putting in an application and going through these competitive events."

Young farmers and ranchers are urged to fill out the applications at the state level and participate in the events. The Montana Farm Bureau will hold their Discussion Meet Thursday, November 8 at during their annual convention in Billings. The winner of the MFBF Discussion Meet not only receives an all-expense paid trip to compete in the American Farm Bureau Discussion Meet in January in New Orleans, but a new Polaris Ranger® thanks to participating Polaris dealers in Montana. (Gallatin Recreation, Helena Cycle, Sports City Cyclery, Yellowstone Polaris, Beaverhead Motorsports, Riverside Marine & Cycle, Montana Power Products, Jesco Marine, Kurt's Polaris, Redline Sports, Inc. and Lewistown Honda & Polaris.)

For more information contact Sue Ann Streufert, 406-587-3153, sueanns@mfbf.org or visit <https://mfbf.org/programs/Young-Farmers-Ranchers>.

For Discussion Meet questions visit www.mfbf.org.

Montana Ag In Color

Got a kid who loves art? Talk to kindergarten through sixth grade teachers about Montana Youth Agriculture Literacy's 2019 'Montana Ag in Color' drawing contest. This well-established drawing contest, now under guidance of MFBF's Women's Leadership Committee, consists of six entry categories specific to Montana Agriculture: Farm Animals, Crops, Cattle, Noxious Weeds, Grains and Careers.

The winner will be chosen from each category and one overall winner selected from the winning drawings. Montana Farm Bureau will host the winning artists and their families at an awards luncheon in Helena in March 2019. Details of categories and official rules are available on mfbf.org or contact Rikki Swant, 406-231-4422, rikkis@mfbf.org.



Montana Farm Bureau Federation

1919 CENTENNIAL 2019

Montana Farm Bureau turns 100!

We are getting ready to kick off a year of celebration in recognition of 100 years of service to Montana's farmers and ranchers.

Be a part of history and buy a bottle of Farm Bureau Centennial Wine, order your Centennial belt buckle, post a custom Farm Bureau Member farm/ranch sign, follow MFBF on Facebook for historic stories and photos, plus get your copy of the first MFBF History Book...and these are just a few exciting ways we plan to celebrate!

Watch for more information coming throughout the year or contact the state office at 406-587-3153.

YOUR NAME HERE

Montana Farm Bureau Federation

Centennial

31

Montana Farm Bureau Foundation **Centennial** **Community Initiative**

The Montana Farm Bureau Foundation is continuing its efforts with its Centennial Community Initiative to raise \$100,000 that will be distributed via grants during 2019 to improve economic growth in rural Montana. Grants from this Initiative will make a difference in local communities and create long lasting impact. It is our hope that communities use this as a way to leverage additional funding for larger projects that impact their local economy and create jobs.

“ We are excited about Montana Farm Bureau reaching 100 years old. Tom and I were happy to join in the efforts of the MFBF Foundation Centennial Community Initiative project as a way to commemorate a century of Farm Bureau, make a significant difference for local grassroots communities and have a lasting, positive impact. ”

— **Lillian and Tom Ostendorf**, Powderville, Custer-Fallon County Farm Bureau

“Rural areas are the backbone of agriculture specifically and of the community in general. We are thrilled to be able to help energize these communities with our donation to the Centennial County Initiative.”

— **Gina and John Stevens**, Hardin, Big Horn County Farm Bureau



Many Montana Farm Bureau members have generously donated to the \$1K club for this initiative they believe in.

Projects that could be funded through the Centennial Community Initiative could include:

- Creating a business plan that will allow a new rural business to attract start-up capital.
- Provide matching grant money for large economic development projects.
- Purchase equipment needed for a new rural business.
- Community improvement projects that attract new businesses or new residents.

How can you help? If you agree with the Foundation Board and feel this is a worthy concept, you can help make it happen. Our Foundation has created a new \$1K Club to help with this initiative. It would only take 100 members willing to donate \$1,000 to reach our goal. We can even break out your \$1K Club donation into monthly installments. Call Foundation Coordinator, Scott Kulbeck, at 406.587.3153 or go to <https://mfbf.org/foundation> for more information.

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Avis Car Rental - Farm Bureau members receive up to 25% off Avis base rates with Avis Worldwide Discount (AWD) number A298826. In addition, enjoy offers like dollars off, a complimentary upgrade, or a free weekend day. Visit avis.com/mtfb or call (800) 331-1212 to make a reservation.

Budget Car Rental - Members save up to 25% off Budget base rates. Plus, get other great offers like a free upgrade, or a free weekend day. Visit budget.com/mtfb or call (800) 527-0700 to make a reservation. Use Budget Customer Discount (BCD) number Y775726.

Coast to Coast Vision Plan™ - Save 20% to 60% on prescription eyeglasses, including frames, lenses and specialty items and 10% to 30% on eye exams at participating retail locations. For the nearest participating location, call (800) 800-EYES or visit coasttocoastvision.com. Reference Group Number 103.

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Delta Hotels Helena Colonial - Enjoy the rate of \$95.00/night for a standard room. Call (406) 443-2100 and request the MFBF LNR rate or go to Marriott.com/hlnde and enter the Corporate/Promo/SET# code FB1. *Valid only in Helena.*

Farm Bureau Bank - Farm Bureau Bank offers a full line of banking services. Call (800) 492-FARM or go to www.farmbureaubank.com.

Reward Signs - Farm Bureau's neighborhood watch program will help protect your property by paying \$500 to \$2500 for information leading to an arrest.* Request your reward sign today by calling (406) 587-3153. **Certain limitations & exclusions apply.*

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Montana State Fund Workers Comp - As a member, and an employer in the agricultural industry, you may be eligible for a dividend on your State Fund Workers' Comp Insurance. Call (406) 587-3153 or go to www.mtagrisafety.com for more information.

Size Matters: Why We Love to Hate Big Food

New Book Navigates the Radical Disruption in Today's Food System

REVIEW BY REBECCA COLNAR

Earning consumer trust in this era of rapid change and tribal communications requires a look back at how we got here and a new approach, as outlined in the new book *Size Matters: Why We Love to Hate Big Food*. Author Charlie Arnot is a recognized food system thought leader, founder and president of Look East, and CEO of The Center for Food Integrity.

The book explores why consumers are increasingly skeptical and critical of today's food system, despite food being safer, more affordable and more available than at any time in human history. As the chasm widens, Arnot explains that the food system must navigate a delicate balance between being responsive to consumer preferences and producing food in a sustainable manner that protects people, animals and the planet.

"We're living in an era of unprecedented disruption in food and agriculture," said Arnot, "There is increasing consumer backlash against the consolidation,

integration and application of technology that led to food being safer, more available and more affordable. That backlash is creating opportunity for innovators and pushing traditional farms and food companies to look for new ways to build consumer trust."

The book provides insights into the origins of consumer mistrust, what can be done to restore it and the remarkable changes taking place on farms and in food companies, supermarkets and restaurants every day as technology and consumer demand drive radical change. Arnot introduces specific trust-building strategies in the book to empower those in food and agriculture to address some of the most pressing challenges. The book highlights case studies and examples that help to tell the story of the pressures and



perspectives, successes and failures, predictions and pathways forward for the food system.

"Food production has more impact on the environment than any other human activity. The impact of diet on health is both a personal and public health challenge globally, and consumers are increasingly making their purchasing decisions based

on their values and social impact," Arnot said. "It's never been more important for food and agriculture to deliver innovative solutions to address these important challenges. But those solutions will only be accepted if they are trusted. Whether a large multi-national company, or an innovative start-up, building trust is essential to both a profitable business and finding global solutions."



Size Matters: Why Consumers Love to Hate Big Food is available at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

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