

SUMMER 2021

 MONTANA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

Spokesman

WE CARE FOR THE COUNTRY



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ON THE COVER:
Craig and Conni French received the Leopold Award for their holistic resource management at their Malta ranch.

Photo by Isaac Miller

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Hans McPherson
President, Montana Farm
Bureau Federation

“Your Montana Farm Bureau Federation membership not only gives you respected lobbying power in Helena, but also in Washington, D.C., with the powerful American Farm Bureau Federation.”

Trying times call for **Farm Bureau membership**

I'm sure everyone knows the story from the Old Testament about Joseph and his coat of many colors. He was sold into Egypt as a slave and he interpreted the pharaoh's dreams of the fat years and lean years. By storing grain during the fat years, they were able to save the country and even more importantly, his family from starvation.

In agriculture, we know both fat and lean years, although it seems that the fat years are singular as well as few and far between; the lean years come along much more frequently and with a longer duration.

Now more than ever we are battling bureaucrats and politicians in Washington D.C. as we try to protect ourselves during these lean years. For the past few years, agriculture was in the driver's seat politically. We had a secretary of agriculture who was extremely friendly to the American Farm Bureau and Farm Bureau members nationwide. We had a president who flew in to speak at the American Farm Bureau Annual Convention three years in a row. That administration invited the American Farm Bureau president to the White House regularly to meet with agricultural business leaders.

Ever since I wrote my first editorial for the *Spokesman*, I have reiterated that our members need to urge their neighbors and friends to join Farm Bureau. Even when we had an ag-friendly administration, it was essential to have an informed membership regarding legislation coming down the pipeline. Today, with an administration that has not been kind to rural America and agriculture in general, it's more critical than ever to join Farm Bureau and get involved. Your Montana Farm Bureau Federation membership not only gives you respected lobbying power in Helena, but also in Washington, D.C., with the powerful American Farm Bureau Federation.

At the beginning of the pandemic, it was the first time in my 68 years that I have seen grocery stores with completely empty shelves. I thought surely people will

recognize how much we need farmers to keep putting food on the table. Fortunately, some of them did. The pandemic slowed down the economy, but it didn't slow down farmers and ranchers. They continued to farm and ranch, providing food for the American consumers, without stopping. The lack of groceries was the result of breaks in the supply chain, and it wasn't the farmers and ranchers causing it.

What have we received as a reward? Increased regulations and the return to old policies that were proven to be erroneous. Today, we are threatened to be taxed right out of existence with policies like the elimination of the stepped up in basis in capital gains. This devastating policy will completely destroy the generational transfer of agriculture and small businesses.

Please don't think the crazy ideas being tossed around by people ignorant about agriculture will not affect us. Sometimes I feel agricultural groups should take a page out of the playbook of the environmental groups and run Doomsday ads that say, "Want to starve?

Overregulate farmers."

We are fortunate to live and farm in Montana and, thankfully, we have an agriculture and business-friendly governor who knows and appreciates where his food comes from and who is producing it.

We can do our best to defeat the bad laws and support the good ones, but the one thing we don't have control over is Mother Nature. Farmers and ranchers are having a hard enough time dealing with drought and other bad weather. I am praying that by the time you read this editorial we will have prayed the drought away.

I look forward to seeing you all at our MFBF Convention in November, and I hope your summer goes well with moisture, abundant crops and no grasshoppers.

Remember, it's more important than ever to ask a friend to become a member of Montana Farm Bureau. Do it today. It's only a click away at www.mfbf.org.



It's baaack: WOTUS and the government land grab

We've all seen it happen; the professional football player who spiked the ball before he got to the end zone or slowed down to dance and got tackled short of the goal line. The runner who slows before the tape only to be passed by someone who finishes strong. Just when we thought we had the win firmly in our grasp, someone comes and drags us back to the real world.

It happened for me recently. I had been doing my victory dance on the repeal of the 2015 Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) Rule when the Army Corps of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency announced that they intended to reverse the Navigable Waters Protection Rule. Just when we felt we were across the finish line on this issue, we were pulled back into political reality. Farmers and ranchers care about clean water and preserving the land, and we supported the Navigable Water Protection Rule. The rule brought about clarity and certainty to clean water efforts.

After spending a significant amount of money in courts to get the Obama era rule, which would have placed nearly 90% of the land in Montana in the control of the Corps and EPA under the guise of water quality, WOTUS was thrown out. Resource industries and other stakeholders spent three years working with landowners, conservationists and others to develop a workable plan only to now hear it announced that it was going to be reversed. It was very disappointing since I had heard Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack state early on in the Biden Administration that this administration had no intention of returning to the overreaching regulation of the past and even hearing EPA Administrator Regan assure us just a few short weeks ago that he

realized the flaws in the 2015 Waters of the U.S. rule and pledged that he had no plans to return to those onerous regulations.

There is some confusion about what the EPA is proposing but they are definitely saying that they are going to repeal and replace. They will focus on ephemeral features and adjacent wetlands. This will definitely be a step back from the clarity that the Navigable Waters Protection rules provided. When we start including ephemeral features which only have water in them when it rains or during runoff events, you are going down the road to land use regulation, not water quality. The line between where water ends and land begins will most likely again be blurred and it will leave a question mark on the landscape. If it is about protecting water quality, rest assured that the Navigable Waters Protection Rule did that. If it is more about controlling land use, we will need to make our voices heard throughout the process in order to stop this land grab. This will be an important test for Administrator Regan and will be pivotal to his ability to earn the trust of farmers and ranchers on this and other administration priorities. He must keep his word to recognize the efforts of agriculture and give them the opportunity to have a say in the final rule or we may return to the regulatory land grab that was the 2015 WOTUS rule.

I should have learned long ago in my career that nothing in politics is ever over and we need to be continually vigilant and keep our foot on the gas at all times. Clean water is important to our livelihoods but clarity of rules is important as well. We shouldn't need a team of lawyers and consultants just to farm our land.



John Youngberg
Executive Vice President, MFBF

“ When we start including ephemeral features which only have water in them when it rains or during runoff events, you are going down the road to land use regulation, not water quality. ”

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“For generations, ranchers have done their part to protect the land and ensure our children and our grandchildren can enjoy the wide open spaces we cherish across our great country.”

Ranchers Caring for **Our Shared Wide-Open Spaces**

Take a drive through the countryside in many states, and chances are you'll catch the familiar sight of cattle roaming pastures and rangeland. As you move West, the rangeland gets more expansive, and you'll see fewer private property signs. In Western states, the federal government owns every other acre of land, which has been placed in the public trust for all Americans to take part in enjoying, using and conserving.

Americans are taking to the road again this summer to enjoy our nation's wide-open spaces, forests and parks. These lands are under watchful care no matter the season. Many people are surprised when I tell them America's ranchers are often the first caretakers and first responders to ensure the safety and sustainability of our public lands.

For more than 40 years, federal law has protected "multiple use" management of public lands, which permits a wide range of activities from recreation to ranching. Nationwide, more than 200 million acres of public lands are used for grazing, mainly in the West.

Grazing on public lands is critical to conserving our nation's vast open lands. It helps reduce the risk of devastating wildfires, slows the spread of invasive weeds, helps build robust root systems and spurs forage growth. In some areas, wildlife will follow cattle herds to eat the new forage that grows once the herd has moved on. This cycle helps increase the health of wildlife habitats.

Ranchers often serve as volunteer caretakers, spotting wildfires, clearing debris and reporting dangers to local law enforcement. A 2017 report from University of Wyoming Extension found that for each pound of beef raised on public lands, we get \$0.44 in ecosystem related returns. These returns are benefits like habitat maintenance, biodiversity, forage production, recreation

and tourism. Both public and private rangelands support over 23 million head of cattle, and our beef cattle ranches are responsible for 2.1 million jobs across the country.

As some of the original conservationists, America's ranchers work hard to responsibly manage and conserve rangeland, both public and private. Recently the Biden administration laid out principles to help the federal government reach its goal of conserving 30% of our nation's land by 2030. We must remember—and remind lawmakers—that conservation and productive use of land go hand-in-hand. The work ranchers do on public lands already plays an important role in conservation, and I was happy to see that the administration acknowledged the importance of working public lands in their report.

Ranchers could be even more effective at conserving our nation's public lands if we further streamlined the regulatory process for grazing permits. The National Environmental Policy Act was passed in the 1960s with the goal of helping protect and enhance our environment. Today, bureaucratic red tape and backlogs can result in ranchers waiting more than a decade for the environmental review process as they seek a grazing permit. Worse yet, these delays often occur on renewal applications.

Responsible management of our rangeland benefits all stakeholders. We are each one of those stakeholders because our public lands are for everyone. Farmers and ranchers know firsthand the importance of conservation in keeping all our nation's land productive and thriving. For generations, ranchers have done their part to protect the land and ensure our children and our grandchildren can enjoy the wide open spaces we cherish across our great country.





I don't want to leave
my family to cover:

- Mortgage debt
- Monthly expenses
- Funeral costs
- Kids' college tuition

I know you say I need **life insurance**, but **do I really?**

Yes! While the reasons for having life insurance vary from person to person, coverage is a smart move no matter what stage of life you're in. Talk to your agent about the many ways life insurance can help protect you and your loved ones.

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Weather Man Says...

BY MARIAH SHAMMEL

Here we are, sitting in the middle of the worst and shortest haying season I've ever seen. In some ways that doesn't mean much since I've only been on our ranch for 12 years, except Favorite Farmer and everyone else around here says it's the worst one they've ever seen. When you talk amongst the community, a lot of comparisons are being made to the 1980s when drought dried everything up and made the whole farming/ranching thing a massive struggle.

Between a dry winter, late freezes into the end of May and no measurable moisture to speak of, things are not looking good. Our barley looks okay but is dwindling quickly with no rain. The wheat is so short we're not even sure it will have enough growth to get any straw. When we step into a hay field, we have to decide if it's worth cutting, as it would only amount to a third of a normal year's hay crop at best; would it be better to keep on the stem so our cows have something to eat this summer/fall? Assuming they can out-eat the grasshoppers, who have so graciously decided to call our fields their home.

We're not the only ones. I'm guessing if you're reading this and you're on the southern or eastern half of our state, the same thing is happening to you. This drought and resulting "time to panic" is wide-spread, which in some weird way is comforting to know we're all in the same boat. In other ways, like trying to find hay, it is really disconcerting. Everywhere I go, people are talking about the current state of the range. They are asking if we have extra hay available—no, do you? We are trying to be optimistic that rains will finally come that could possibly produce a second cutting and be enough to let

our grain crops hang on. I've heard creative plans in order to avoid selling cows, but in the end, nobody really knows what will happen or how long this new weather pattern—which has slowly been sneaking our way over the last couple of years—is going to stick around. We've been lucky up until this year and even until a couple of weeks ago. We were hopeful we would be able to pull out another successful hay crop, then an antelope walked through and Favorite Farmer turned to me and said, "That alfalfa is only up to its ankles, right? I'm not imagining things?" Yep, that's correct.

This whole living-off-the-land thing is not for the faint of heart. Don't tell Favorite Farmer but sometimes, when things get very bad, I find myself thinking about the times before I got married and moved to the middle of nowhere; when I was naïve to how important weather can be. This is one of those times. I remember very fondly the days when the only time I looked at the weather was if I was going out on the town and needed to know whether or not to take a jacket, or when I would get irritated that it was raining while I was trying to enjoy a camping trip with friends. Oh, to have my head in the clouds again, how worry-free that was. I still occasionally run into people who don't give the weather a second thought, but these days it seems everyone is aware of the scary situation plaguing the western (and some mid-western) states.

I can't say I've ever been in this type of scenario before where we're literally watching our crops dry up and discussing selling our heifers, the group

MARIAH HEITZMAN PHOTOGRAPHY



Mariah Shammel is a rancher, wife and mom who lives in Hilger, MT. She has four kids, lots of dogs, cats and chickens and even more cows.

we've painstakingly selected to carry on the genetics we've worked so hard to pinpoint, the same ones we've hand-fed cake to since they were weaned from their mamas. It isn't fun and I hope this uncertain time passes everyone quickly, that this is one of those "remember when" stories we'll look back on not so fondly.

No matter what happens, though, you don't have to go far to be reminded of how much tragedy there is in the world, how fragile life is, how much worse things could be. It's easy to get caught with our blinders on and to find ourselves totally consumed with the parts of our lives we can't control and what we can't change. When we rely on the land, our cows and the health of both those things for our livelihoods, it's hard to see past the vacant hay corrals and crispy crops that surround us, but there's so much more to life, so much to be thankful for. It's more important than ever during trying times like these to put our heads up, open our eyes and see all the good we have. In the end it doesn't matter how good the farming side of our existence is, it's the people we surround ourselves with and the relationships we have that make our lives worth living. Without that, everything else can go up in dust.

Help Is Available

Thomas Paine may have written "These are the times that try men's souls" regarding the American Revolution and patriotism, but those words can certainly be applied to times of bad drought in farm and ranch country. There is help for experiencing mental health issues. Visit American Farm Bureau's Farm State of Mind website, www.fb.org/land/fsom and Montana State University's Ag Producer Stress Resource Clearinghouse, msuextension.org/wellness/stress-management/mt_farm_stress_clearing_house.



Preparing For the Storms

Storms will come and go but getting scammed by vendors and unprofessional contractors in a time of need can make the effects of a storm seem to last forever. In the rush to get your home repairs completed so you can enjoy the rest of the summer, be sure to take the time to educate yourself and avoid contractor scams. Schedule a time with your local agent to review your current coverage to ensure it reflects the unprecedented rate increases in building supplies and materials. Be prepared, be educated and be ready for whatever mother nature brings your way.

Tips To Avoid Contractor Scams:

- Work with only licensed and insured contractors and ask for their credentials.
- Be wary of contractors selling door-to-door and think twice about high-pressure sales tactics.
- Make sure the contractor secures required permits.

- Do not pay in full or sign a completion certificate until the work is completed and you have taken the opportunity to inspect it. Payment schedules should be based on completed work only.
- Never sign a contract with blanks, and make sure all conditions are noted in the contract. These should include the cost, work to be completed, time schedules, guarantees, payment schedule and other items discussed outside the original contract. Do not let the work begin until you are satisfied with the contract.
- Check Out the Contractor:
 - Ask for local references.
 - Verify with your local BBB and/or state insurance office.
 - If you use an out-of-state contractor, ask if they have a relationship with a local contractor who will do any warranty repairs. Once an out-of-state contractor leaves, any problems, issues, or



warranties may not get handled.

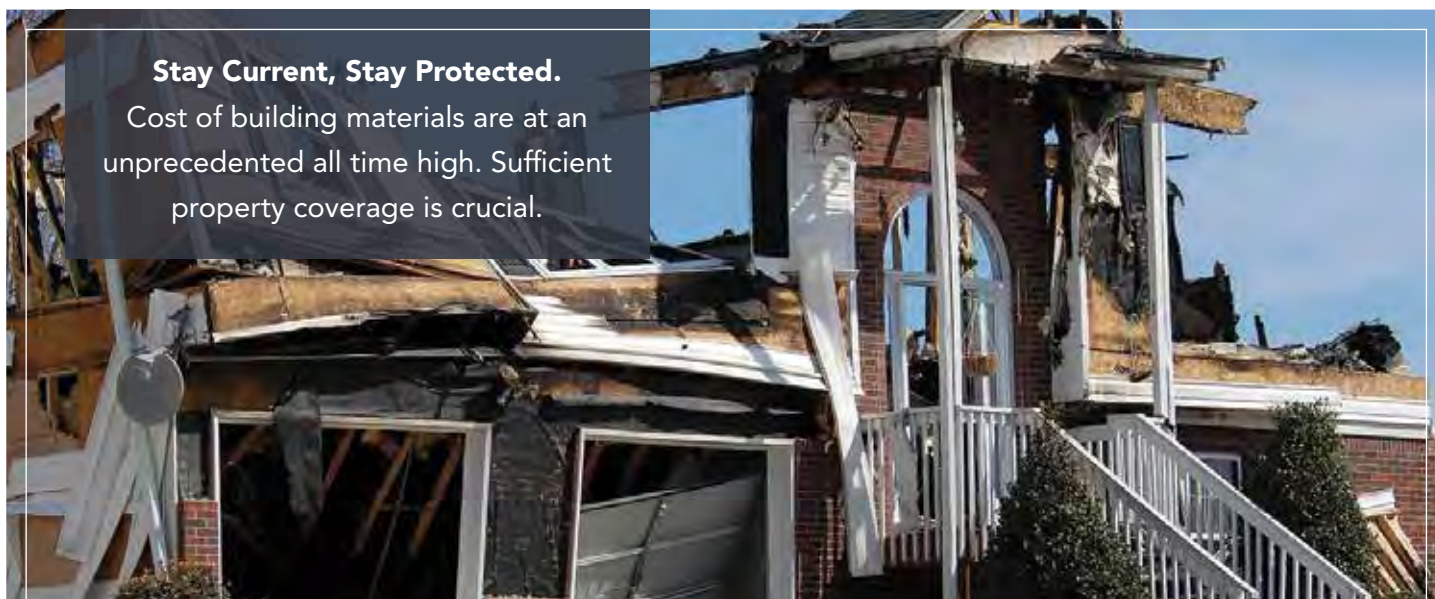
Your insurance company will inspect your property when a claim is submitted. Avoid contractors who pressure you to let them do an inspection, write a bid for you to give to your insurance company, or offer to take care of business with your insurance company. They may make it sound like it is one less hassle for you this summer, but unfortunately it may create additional concerns or headaches that your insurance company cannot handle.

Keep in mind, it is your property that has been damaged. You are responsible for your insurance policy, and you need to remain involved and consulted on any damage and subsequent repairs.



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Preventing accidents while haying this summer

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

Operating large machinery has never been my strong suit. I am accident prone, not the least bit mechanically inclined, and to be quite frank, not the greatest operator. My family in Townsend and my old bosses could attest (sorry Jim and Jess). So, I am writing this article for all the people like me who should take extra care when driving tractors; who need the constant reminder to slow down; the reminder to take off those dang spurs; when in doubt, shove the tractor in neutral and hit the brakes.

Mid-June and early July marks the beginning of haying season on Montana's farms and ranches. It is extremely busy, where 18-hour days are not uncommon, and hundreds of

thousands of dollars' worth of equipment is being used all over the ranch. In 2019, farms and ranches were the most fatal occupational location in Montana with the majority of those fatalities involving a tractor, pickup, or four-wheeler. This is the time of year we see an increase in machine related accidents and injuries, so share this article with everyone working on your farm or ranch.



Austin
Grazier

Maintaining equipment is crucial for safe operation. Ensuring tractors, balers, rakes, swathers, and other equipment is in good condition can alleviate a lot of stress and lost time. By preventing breakdowns, you can ensure more time to operate safely and efficiently, versus rushing and trying to beat the rain (Lord

willing we get some).

- Check and replace broken and worn parts
- Grease all moving components
- Shields and guards are there for your safety; replace broken ones and put them back on after removing

When operating haying equipment, it's important to recognize the risks involved with haying. These include being run over, entanglement with the power take-off (PTO), and serious cuts or lacerations from sharp components. As owners or managers, be sure to train employees and family members how to operate equipment properly, discuss the hazards, and follow the safety tips below:

- Ensure PTOs and hydraulic equipment is stopped and isolated before working on or around the machinery.
- Keep clear and out of the path of running equipment.
- Maintain a proper setting and speed, and only travel at a speed that the

equipment can handle.

- Never try to unplug a baler until the tractor is completely shut off and the PTO is disengaged.
- Be sure every tractor has a charged fire extinguisher and first aid kit.
- Always supervise inexperienced operators.
- If you get out of the tractor or machinery to fix something, take the keys with you to prevent someone starting the equipment when you're under it.

Stacking and storing hay presents its own set of unique dangers. These include falling from elevation, being crushed by falling bales or suspended loads, and contact with machinery in operation. Reduce the chance of an accident occurring by following these safety guidelines:

- Keep foot traffic out of the loading/unloading/stacking zone.
- Keep stacks straight, if they begin to lean, unstack and start again.
- Use equipment that is large and powerful enough to handle the bales.

☞ Beat the Heat

With the unusually hot and dry weather Montana has seen this summer, heat related incidents and respiratory issues due to wild fires will be a common theme for Montana's agriculture industry.

To prevent heat-related illness or death remember three key words: water, rest, and shade.

- Allow employees to become acclimated to working in the heat.
- Drink water every 15 minutes.
- Pay attention to signs of heat illness which include headache, nausea, dizziness, weakness, or a body temperature greater than 104 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Wildfire smoke is harmful to our health and can cause significant issues for workers who have respiratory issues.
- Monitor air quality and limit outdoor activity when the air quality is poor. If you must be outside where an N95 mask and provide them to employees.

- When working on top of stacks, remain clear of edges and ensure a safe method to access the top of the stack.
- Never stand underneath a suspended load.

Minimizing risks, reducing costs, and increasing profits are staples in the agriculture industry. However, many do not realize that increasing safety is a key aspect in reducing costs and

minimizing risks. By cultivating a culture of safety on your farm or ranch you can minimize lost time from injuries, reduce your liability, and most importantly keep yourself, your family, and your employees from being injured or killed. For more information visit www.mtagrisafety.com or contact Austin Grazier (406) 587-3153.



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2021 MFBF SUMMER CONFERENCE

JUNE 7-9 * HERITAGE INN * GREAT FALLS



SUMMER CONFERENCE TACKLES POLICY CONCERNS, CELEBRATES SUCCESSSES

Farmers and ranchers attending the 2021 Montana Farm Bureau Summer Conference received a wealth of information on advocacy and policy, as well as updates from Montana Governor Gianforte. More than 200 agriculturalists traveled June 7-9 to Great Falls to attend committee meetings and learn more about ag issues.

A visit to the Bandel Farm June 6 by the MFBF Board of Directors kicked off the Summer Conference.



MFBF Vice President Cyndi Johnson and State Affairs Director Rachel Cone examine a sprayer.

People



Women's Leadership Committee Chair Carla Lawrence, on behalf of the WLC, presents a donation to Kerianne Nadue of the Great Falls Children's Receiving Home. The home provides temporary foster care to victims of abuse and neglect.



Governor Gianforte cited the successes of the 67th Montana Legislative Session including increasing funds to help with livestock recovery, addressing irrigators' concerns to address critical infrastructure projects, and tripling the Business Equipment Tax exemption to \$300,000.



Past MFBF President Dave McClure visits with Michelle Miller, a/k/a The Farm Babe who talked about advocacy. She said that it's best to debunk myths by sharing the message and bridging the gap.



Ed Bandel talks about the family farm's history.

Committee Meetings and Workshops

Ten issue advisory committees, as well as the Women's Leadership Committee, Promotion & Education Committee and Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee met during the conference. The conference also featured three breakout sessions on leadership/advocacy, legal and collaboration.



Will Trachman, Mountain States Legal Foundation (pictured) and Hertha Lund, Lund Law, covered current lawsuits and threats to private property and water law during a breakout session.



Cid Klebenow, former manager of the Bozeman Saddle Outlet, advised the Equine Committee on proper saddle fitting. Powder River-Carter County FB President Darcia Patten of Equine Align, explained chiropractic work on horses.



Dave Salmonsens, policy director, American Farm Bureau, Zoomed in to the Farm & Trade Committee to cover the future of ag trade agreements with the Biden Administration.

MFB Foundation Fundraiser

The MFB Foundation featured two events: a golf scramble and "Best Dam Fundraiser" at the Ryan Dam. The Best Dam Fundraiser event featured great food from the Cattleman's Cut, music from the Teccas, the "Pluck a Duck" competition and district baskets up for auction. The MFB Foundation raised an astounding \$30,000.



The "ag group" golf team included (left to right) Charlie Triplett, Alison Vergeront, MGGA, Nicole Rolf, MFBF and Walt Anseth, MT Dept. of Ag.



Maysa and Meredith Standley did a great job selecting ducks from the "river".

Tours

During the Wednesday tour, participants had the opportunity to see "Farm to Plate" in action, where the McCafferty family talked about their unique way to raise grass fed beef. The group visited Central Avenue Meats, a custom butcher shop in downtown Great Falls, where owner Drew Hicks shared how the meat shop interacts with consumers to bridge the gap. Lunch tied in the "Farm to Table" theme with tasty burgers from the Roadside Diner which were sourced from the McCafferty Ranch and processed through Central Meats.



The group at McCafferty Ranch in Belt.



Joel McCafferty explains how hydroponically grown, high-protein sprouted barley is used to finish their cattle.



Drew Hicks, Center Avenue Meats and Butcher Shop, sells McCafferty beef from his meat case to consumers and to local restaurants.



Lane Nordlund, Western Ag Network, performed a stellar job as auctioneer, cheered on by Bonnie Marchesseault.



The "Dam These Rising Prices" District 4 basket featured a variety of gift cards for supplies.



District 5 Director Gary Heibertshausen worked hard to get the bids up on his district basket.

LEGISLATORS receive awards DURING FARM BUREAU SUMMER CONFERENCE

Five legislators received awards for support of agriculture and rural Montana during the Montana Farm Bureau Summer Conference June 7-9 in Great Falls.

Representative Josh Kassmier, HD 27, Fort Benton and Senator Mike Lang, SD 71, Malta, received the Outstanding Friend of Farm Bureau Award. This award is given to the Senator and Representative who had the highest overall scores on MFBF's legislative scorecard; these legislators demonstrated their support of Montana agriculture through their voting record, bill sponsorship and leadership within various committees.

Senators Duane Ankney, SD 20, Colstrip, and Brian Hoven, SD 13, Great Falls, received the Distinguished Service Golden Plow Award. This award is given to a termed-out legislator who has exhibited exemplary service and dedication to agriculture in their tenure as a Montana legislator.

The Rookie of the Year Award is presented to a freshman legislator who went above and beyond in learning the legislative process and doing his best to serve agriculture and rural Montana. This year, the recipient was Representative Kenneth Walsh (HD 71). Walsh attended the MFBF Campaign School in March 2020 where Farm Bureau began its friendship with him.



Montana Farm Bureau Senior Governmental Affairs Director Nicole Rolf, State Affairs Director Rachel Cone, Representative Kenneth Walsh (HD-71) and MFBF President Hans McPherson.



MFBF State Affairs Director Rachel Cone, Senior Governmental Affairs Director Nicole Rolf, Senator Mike Lang (SD-17) and MFBF President Hans McPherson.



MFBF Senior Governmental Affairs Director Nicole Rolf, State Affairs Director Rachel Cone, Senator Duane Ankney (SD-20) and MFBF President Hans McPherson.



Montana Farm Bureau Senior Governmental Affairs Director Nicole Rolf, Senator Brian Hoven (SD-13) MFBF President Hans McPherson and State Affairs Director Rachel Cone.



MFBF State Affairs Director Rachel Cone, Senior Governmental Affairs Director Nicole Rolf, Representative Josh Kassmier (HD-27) and MFBF President Hans McPherson.

MFBF Report Card rates legislators

The **Montana Farm Bureau 2021 Legislative Report Card**, which provides a comprehensive look at the voting record of Montana legislators, is now available online. The report card, which grades all legislators' voting records in the House and Senate, was scored using a methodology that included floor votes and committee votes as well as points for sponsoring bills that MFBF prioritized. Legislators who sponsored MFBF-opposed bills received a negative score for that category. This report card includes summaries of MFBF's priority bills for the session. Visit mfbf.org/Policy-Advocacy/Legislative.

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YOUNG FARMERS & RANCHERS

Ranch memories lead to **homestead art**

BY REBECCA COLNAR, SPOKESMAN EDITOR

Memories inspire artist Carol Hartman. As a young girl growing up on a Montana ranch 60 miles from Sidney, Hartman clearly remembers the sounds and smells of the ranch.

"We were always outside doing things, and on a ranch, you learn to be creative. I was always drawing," Hartman shared. "Even before the age of two, I remember seeing the old homestead buildings that had been torn down. I still remember what they looked like, sounded like and tasted like. These are my memories and I am so fortunate that I get to bring those memories to life. It means so much to me."

Without any formal art training, Hartman enrolled in MSU-Bozeman's Experimental Section to either "sink or swim" with nationally recruited artists. Hartman loved it and went on to get her master's degree in fine arts from California State University-Fresno. "I've been fortunate to work in arts all my life, exhibiting across the U.S. and Europe, eventually teaching art and directing the campus art galleries at CSU Fresno and CSU Sacramento."

Through her years helping on the ranch, her family raised Herefords, and then Piedmontese and Angus, although today, they just have Angus. Even when she moved away, her agricultural roots kept her grounded. She admits that doing illustrations for agricultural books helped fund her graduate school, and when she was teaching, she had her graduate students create art using cattle markers. Montana and her love of the land and the ranching way of life drew her back to the state in 2009.

The Carbon/Stillwater County Farm Bureau member has a gallery in the Roosevelt Art Center in Red Lodge. The art



Red Lodge artist Carol Hartman's paintings evoke feelings of homesteads across Montana.

center sits at the south end of town in a large old school building with high ceilings and huge windows. It's the perfect place for the artist to get the right amount of light as well as a feeling for the west.

"My appreciation for those farmers, ranchers and homesteaders who came before me coupled with my love of Montana's western history influence my work more than anything else. The state's rich heritage is near and dear to my heart. Pride in our forefathers and the stories of those who tended the land before the 19th century needs to be recognized, so I find the significance of these stories and their effects upon the land."

Hartman is working on her "Homestead Series" which involves research, conversations and visits with Montana farm and ranch families. "Many of them reveal intimate memories and experiences, and those are what I reflect on in the commissioned paintings I do. It's a way for them to hold onto those memories. Since my heritage goes back to those days, I am especially intrigued with stories I hear about the hard-working settlers from their descendants and I don't want those people and their land to be forgotten."

When planning to paint a homestead, Hartman travels to the area, doing her sketches on site and taking photos so she can truly recreate not only the view but capture the feeling of the land and those who were part of its past.

She explained, "Art is the visual way of honoring our agricultural world. You can write about it, but I say art preserves the memories of that land and the people who worked so hard to make that ranch not only for themselves, but for their families and future generations."

On Display

From August 1-14, 2021 Hartman will be at the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument Artist in Residence. She has a solo exhibition "Riverways Part 1" August 1-31 at the Fort Benton Interpretive Center; "Wild Bunch" Art Show August 18-21 at the Great Falls Hampton Inn and is slated to be a solo exhibitor the month of September at the Fort Benton Interpretive Center.

To view Carol Hartman's art, as well as find the dates of her future exhibits, visit www.carolhartman.biz.



MONTANA FARM BUREAU FOUNDATION

2020 Annual Report

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Believe in the Future of Farming

In 1967 I learned the FFA creed, and I believe in the future of farming. I believe in the future of Montana Farm Bureau because of the leadership abilities we've instilled in the 4-H kids, the FFA kids and the Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers. Montana Farm Bureau Foundation has been a major supporter of and an advocate for the education of our youth and their role in the community. Our future is not with my generation of farmers and ranchers. Our future is with the young farmers and ranchers. Thanks in part to our support and the work of the Montana Farm Bureau Foundation, the future of agriculture is very bright.



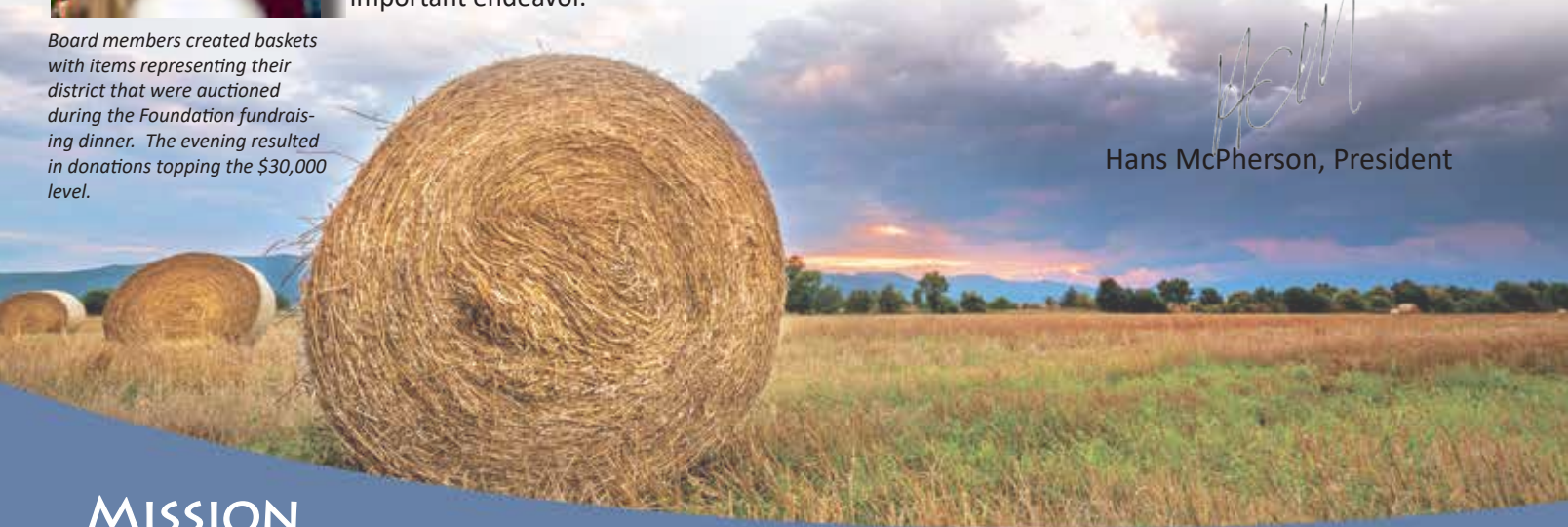
In this annual report you will see an abundance of our Foundation programs and financial backing for efforts that further our mission, which is to support Montana agriculture through education, research and community support, with a special emphasis for the development of our youth. During 2020 and into this year we have spent more than \$30,000 to aid in the efforts of youth leadership development and another \$10,000 on scholarships. We've issued over \$10,000 to fund agricultural education programs and \$5,000 to purchase agricultural education books and supplies for Montana classrooms. Overall, our Foundation issues well over \$125,000 annually in community support, youth leadership development and educational programs.



Board members created baskets with items representing their district that were auctioned during the Foundation fundraising dinner. The evening resulted in donations topping the \$30,000 level.

We couldn't accomplish any of this without the support, both financially and in our program of work, by the generous and talented members of Montana Farm Bureau Federation. In June, our members raised over \$30,000 during our annual fundraising dinner. Amazing! To all of you who have contributed to our growth and success of our Foundation efforts, I say thank you! To anyone who, like me, believes that together we will lead agriculture and rural Montana into a bright future, I say join us in this most important endeavor.

Hans McPherson, President



MISSION

Support Montana agriculture through education, research, and community support, with a special emphasis for the development of our youth.

PROGRAM OF WORK

PROVIDING ACCURATE AG EDUCATION MATERIALS



Montana Farm Bureau Foundation provided more than \$5,000 worth of agricultural education materials to classrooms and organizations throughout Montana. We gave out 5,000+ Food and Farm Facts, Ag Mags and pencils printed with farm facts. These materials provide students with accurate information about how agriculture feeds the world and cares for the environment.

SUPPORTING AG EDUCATION & AWARDING SCHOLARSHIPS

MFBFo supports youth education and leadership development by working with organizations such as Montana FFA Foundation, Montana 4-H and Montana Youth Agriculture Literacy. Our Foundation provided over \$10,000 in scholarships during 2020-2021, including the Future of Ag Honor Scholarship, the Collegiate Young Farmer and Ranchers Scholarship and the Bernard Greufe Honor Scholarship so that

Montana youth can receive the training and education they need.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Our Foundation is in our 7th year of providing tuition scholarships for members of the REAL Montana program (Resource Education and Agriculture Leadership) and third year of supporting the MBBF ACE (Advocate, Communicate, Educate) program. We also provide funding for leadership development workshops and speakers to benefit attendees at Montana Farm Bureau events.



2020 ACE program graduates.

YOUNG FARMER & RANCHER SUPPORT

The Foundation annually provides \$6,000 in program funding for Collegiate Young Farmer & Rancher organizations at Montana State University, University of Montana Western, Miles Community College and Dawson Community College. This program support allows the Young Farmer and Rancher clubs to attend leadership development training events, conduct community support projects and network with other students who are working toward a career in agriculture.

MINI-GRANTS

Montana Farm Bureau Foundation awarded ten \$1,000 mini grants during our 2020 fiscal year. Here are a few examples of the Mini-Grants awarded and projects supported:

An Agricultural State of Mind

Boys & Girls Club of Lewistown - "An Agricultural State of Mind" will explore the many facets of agriculture and include hands-on opportunities for 70 youth (capacity is limited this summer due to COVID-19) to visit local agriculture producers, grow their own food, and learn from local experts about the economic, cultural, and nutritional aspects of agriculture.

Montana Range Days

Montana Range Days Committee - Montana Range Days offered workshops, speakers, and tours to teach youth and adults about rangeland ecosystems, how they work, and how to best manage and care for them. Landowners, agency employees, outdoor enthusiasts, and people of all ages and occupations benefited by learning how to sustainably use and manage Montana's

rangelands in a way that promotes healthy soils and native plant species, optimizes wildlife habitat, and maximizes production.

AgriScience Fair

Corvallis High School - Our Foundation mini-grant helped fund the science fair and provide awards to high school students who participated in the science fair. Students worked all school year to create an agriscience fair project that addressed a local issue in agriscience.

Map My Drone Congregation Area (DCA)

Lewis & Clark County Extension - Our mini-grant helped to create curriculum to help youth and educators participate in the Map My DCA citizen science project. Queen bee pheromones were attached to a UAV in an area believed to contain bee drone congregations. The UAV was equipped with a camera that captures whether or not drones were drawn to the pheromones and maps the location of DCAs.

Fall Festival Weekend

Heart of Montana Farm in the Dell - This mini-grant helped fund their first annual

Farm Festival Weekend. The Festival was an opportunity for the community to visit the Farm in the Dell and learn about agriculture. The event included two days of activities, including a petting zoo, a maze, live music as well as pumpkin picking and decorating. A local 4H program taught how chickens, goats, sheep, turkeys, and wheat bring food to our tables.



Above: Heart of Montana Farm in the Dell's Fall Festival goers enjoy a hay ride while learning about Montana agriculture.

COMING TOGETHER TO SUPPORT AG EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



Montana Farm Bureau Foundation was unable to hold our 2020 Fundraising dinner due to COVID-19 restrictions. This annual dinner helps to fund our yearly program of work. 2021's event made up for last year's missed opportunity and then some.

Over 150 Farm Bureau members and guests gathered at the Ryan Dam Clubhouse for the Best "Dam" Fundraiser Ever! Mountain West Farm Bureau MIC and BNSF Railway sponsored the event. Montana Farm Bureau Federation and Foundation board members donated themed baskets that represented their local communities. Those baskets were auctioned with the proceeds going to our Foundation.

The highest basket was donated by District 10 and went for over \$1,000 earning them a catered dinner and social hour to be held at this year's District Caucus meetings during our November Convention. The evening was a huge success, bringing in over \$30,000 to support our mission, which includes youth leadership development and support for agricultural education programs. **Our Foundation Board of Directors and staff extend our heart-felt thanks to all of the generous members and guests who gave of their time and gave their financial support!**

GET YOUR FOUNDATION LICENSE PLATE!



All of the great educational opportunities, grants and scholarships mentioned in this Annual Report are funded in part by the proceeds the Foundation receives from its very own "Supporting Montana Agriculture" license plate. If you don't already have this plate on your vehicle, please consider upgrading the next time you renew your vehicle

registration. Your County Treasurer's Office will have all the details.

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Help us fulfill our mission by returning the form below or go online to mfbf.org/foundation to donate. Your donation to Montana Farm Bureau Foundation will make a difference in keeping rural Montana values alive, supporting agricultural education and aid in youth leadership development. Your gift is going to an organization with a proven track record of working for agriculture and rural Montana. MFBFo is a qualified charity under IRS tax code 501 (c) (3) making all donations tax deductible for our donors. In addition to supporting the educational and leadership development programs we offer, know that your dollars are also working for you.



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Heritage Inn
Havre Rental & Hi-Line Polaris
Kristopher Kumlien - Edward Jones
Max Casino
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Sky Anderson and Monica Switzer
In memory of Sarah Zimmer

Sweet Grass County Farm Bureau
In memory of Lee Boyer

Tom and Sherri Cunningham
In memory of Lee Boyer
In memory of Sarah Zimmer
In memory of Sie Schindler



VISION

MFB Foundation envisions a future where agriculture is thriving in Montana, younger people are attracted to our farms and ranches, urban and rural residents understand and support agriculture, and the communities where Montana's ranch and farming families reside are healthy and vibrant.

New grass management concepts on the Hi-Line

Craig and Conni French receive the Leopold Conservation Award

BY REBECCA COLNAR, *SPOKESMAN EDITOR*

Regenerative agriculture has been defined as a holistic land-management practice that uses the power of photosynthesis in plants to sequester carbon in the soil while improving soil health, crop yields, water resilience, and nutrient density. That's part of Craig and Conni's belief system as they strive to continually improve the soil and grass on their ranch. The Frenches, who are Phillips County Farm Bureau members ranching south of Malta, proudly received the 2020 Leopold Award for Conservation. This was the second year for the award to be given in Montana. Last year's recipients were Bill and Dana Milton of Roundup. Leopold Conservation Awards recognize extraordinary achievement in voluntary conservation, inspire landowners through their example and help the general public understand the vital role private landowners can and do play in conservation success.

Tell us about your ranch:

Craig: We are in South Phillips County where we raise Black Angus cattle. We consider ourselves a grass ranch where we grow grass and our goal is to harvest that grass by grazing instead of haying. We had been ranching with my family, but three years ago Conni and I decided to go out on our own and start tracking towards high-intensity, short-term grazing. It's a constant learning process and we're just at the front end of that process. We have a long way to go; however, it's working for us as we've been able to meet our financial obligations and we are seeing an improvement in our land and our soil.

What made you decide to try this grass management system?

Craig: We had heard about this type of grass management so we attended a workshop in 2013 on holistic resource management. What we gleaned from that workshop was the importance of monitoring your grass growth. That year was a wet year, and by using what we learned at the workshop, we realized we had left cattle on the grass for too long. That's the worst thing we could have done because we ate that grass too soon for it to have its second growth period. That was further made evident when a Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) employee pointed that out to us. We were very upset to discover we weren't managing our grass well, and decided to work towards better grass management. Our son had read Alan Savory's holistic resource management research and shared that information with us. This inspired us to attend the Ranching for Profit School, and because of what we learned, we opted to implement their range management strategies. Now we are often able to give the owners and operators of our C Lazy J Livestock—that's Conni and myself—a raise!

Craig and Conni French, C Lazy J Livestock, on their Malta Ranch.
The couple received the 2020 Leopold Conservation Award.

PHOTOS BY ISAAC MILLER



How does this type of grass management work?

Craig: The basis of holistic grass management is high-density, short duration grazing. Of course, you first need to train your animals to accept an electric fence. That gives you the ability to put your cattle into areas they don't want to be in, but that have sufficient feed. Think of it as making a kid eat his lettuce. These cattle have to "eat their lettuce" and then you move them to a new pasture. That grass regrows and it's good. Because we are able to graze areas where the cattle would not have gone on their own, we have literally increased the utilization of our place. This method can enable you to either increase the carrying capacity or you can graze longer. We were able to increase the number of AUMs (Animal Unit Months) we had on our place instantly, just by making the animals "clean their plate."

The reason we do this is we like the low-stress stock handling and we don't like running a bunch of machinery. We move our cattle with horses, dogs, with an ATV, or on foot. We focus on cattle nutrition and cattle movement. We have our grazing paddocks which we need to monitor. When the grass grows quickly, because we have good moisture and it's the right temperature, the cows won't be in there for more than three days. Don't graze it too soon a second time. It will start trying to regrow three days after it's bitten. If you're in a slow growth stage,

the cattle can stay in longer. How long the cattle stay in one "paddock" depends on the number of cattle and the available water. Don't graze it too soon the second time; leave some cover and a green leaf so photosynthesis can occur. You might graze more severely if something hasn't been grazed for a long time. The big principal is not to overgraze. To us, overgrazing is defined as "biting a plant too soon a second time before it has time to recover."

What positive results have you seen?

Craig: In the few years we've been doing this, we have been seeing higher plant density which means more plants per square foot. We had a former NRCS employee with experience in range serve as a third-party observer and verify that. It's exciting.

It's critical to not keep depleting our


natural resource, so we want to reverse the trend of organic matter depletion. With this new method of grass utilization, we are seeing more dung beetles and better microbiology underground. We've hired a third party to document this which interestingly ties in with cattle nutrition. Our third party will send the manure samples to a lab that will give a projection on how your cattle are doing. This will scientifically let us know how the plants are performing and what nutrition our cattle are receiving from those plants. We're turning our bulls out soon, so we're concentrating especially on the nutrition of our mother cows. Are they going to keep producing for us? Once we get that data back, we will know if we need to offer a supplement, especially in a dry year like this one.

Another positive is when the cheat grass comes up and is green, you can target your cows to eat it. We are



Craig works to bring water up to the cows from Beaver Creek.





Stringing electrical wire move “paddocks” is part of implementing the high-density, short duration grazing strategy.

fortunate at our ranch that we are not dealing with some of the more invasive species like knapweed and leafy spurge, but this high-density, short duration grazing certainly helps keep the weeds down as well as improves riparian areas. We’ve found that by using this system, we get our cows working for us instead of us working for them.

Any negatives to this management style?

Craig: Using this way of ranching is certainly not a slam-dunk. The way we are doing this doesn’t answer everybody’s questions or solve everybody’s problems. There are always going to be challenges no matter what your style is, and when you change it up, you find you don’t know everything. We’re always adjusting. Every rancher has his own way of doing things and everyone has different climate, soils and topography. Between the livestock, water and grass, everyone has their own

way of putting it together and you need to figure out your own artistic style.

How are you handling the drought?

Craig: I’m old enough to say “I’ve seen it worse” but I haven’t seen worse when it comes to grasshoppers. We’re in a country that gets pretty dry in the summer, but what’s not normal is how low our stock water is. Even people who generally have abundant stock water are concerned. We have heavy clay soil and some of those reservoirs that always fill easily are dry. People are close to making some hard decisions. We got a little rain so our place still has some green right now, but we are already in slow growth for grass. At this point, I’m about 50 percent sure we can make it to fall. We are working toward grazing out, although we haven’t made winter grazing out exclusively into our rotation, and sadly we won’t be able to implement it this year with the grasshoppers taking all of our feed.

I’ll be honest, I’ve had to wean myself away from thinking about traditionally feeding hay all winter. I will admit that I

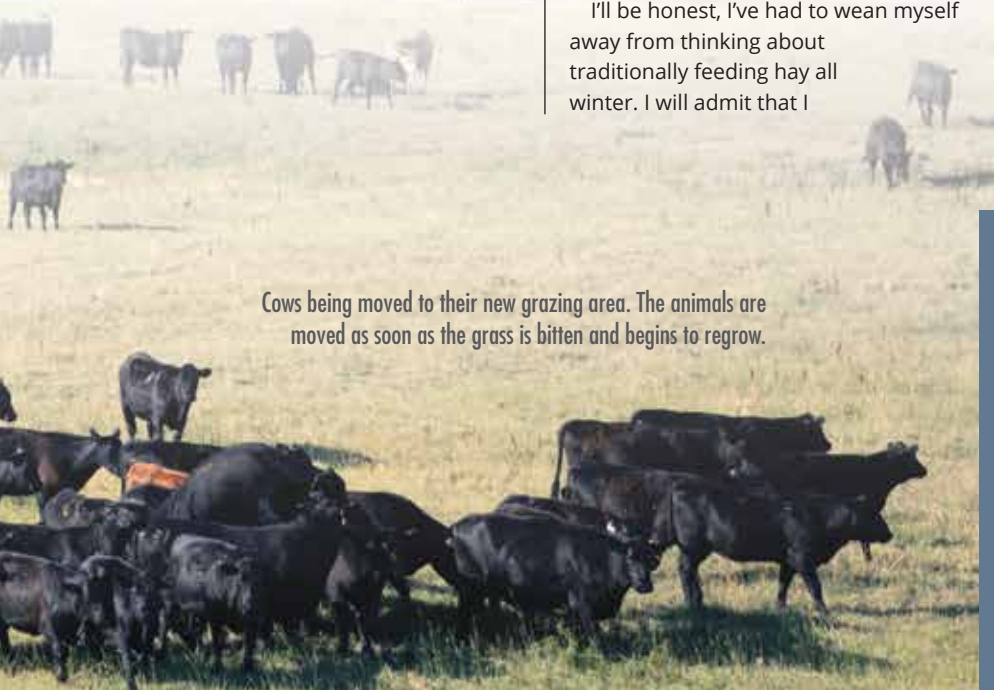
don’t like doing mechanical work, turning a wrench and driving machinery, so having cattle grazing out appeals to me. I like to focus on grass management and let my cattle do the haying. But I also admit that we live in an area where we will always have to have a pile of hay ready to feed.

Any advice for other interested ranchers?

Craig: Talk to producers like myself who are doing this and see if it’s for you. It may or it may not be. It works for us, but we are constantly learning and adjusting. If you really want to pursue this type of grass and soil management, Ranching for Profit is a good resource. They teach it, then you have a source to reference in the future and a network of people with the same education. Everyone’s ranch is different in climate, soil, grass and terrain. I can give someone an idea of what it’s like to do this, but they have to solve their own riddles. You have to know your numbers and see if it can work financially as well as personally.

How did you feel about receiving the Leopold Award?

Craig: It’s very humbling. We’re very pleased that the people who helped us with our decision to do this type of holistic resource management and encouraged us to apply for the award feel a part of what we do. Receiving the award takes us to another level of accountability. We have set a standard and will keep challenging ourselves to learn more.



Cows being moved to their new grazing area. The animals are moved as soon as the grass is bitten and begins to regrow.

➤ The Leopold Award

The Leopold Award was presented by the Sand County Foundation with the Governor’s Office, the Montana Department of Agriculture, the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation’s Rangeland Resources Committee. The award is presented to a private landowner who exemplifies the spirit of this land ethic – an individual or family dedicated to leaving their land better than how they found it. For more information visit sandcountyfoundation.org.



ACE program leads to new projects, storytelling

The Montana Farm Bureau ACE (Advocate. Communicate. Educate.) program continues to empower Farm Bureau members to actively advocate on key industry issues and be confident, effective leaders in their County Farm Bureau and local communities. The 2021 class recently held the next series in their training on the heels of the Montana Farm Bureau Summer Conference in Great Falls in June.

Keturah Moberg, Redstone

In the summer, Keturah Moberg dryland farms in Redstone with her husband, Ethan, and during the school year she serves as the ag educator and FFA advisor at Medicine Lake School. She joined ACE because of her strong desire to develop a Farm Bureau in Sheridan County.

"Farm Bureau has always been an



Keturah Moberg

organization I have looked up to and one that I wanted to be a part of," Moberg said. "When I discovered that the Daniels-Sheridan Farm Bureau disbanded in 2011, I decided my ACE project was going center around reviving it."

She explained that the ACE sessions have given her guidance on how to



Tammy Copenhaver

start her project, and she especially was encouraged during the ACE training June 8-9. "The session with Chris King with the Winnett ACES, and Kelly Beavers with Topos & Anthros gave me excellent direction. They talked about community-based collaboration. Chris explained that to build a group, you need to be organized, but

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most importantly, you have to come from a place of celebration. You don't want to say, 'We don't have this, we don't have that,' but 'We're doing cool things.' You have to believe you come from a happy, secure and inviting community and go from there. For me, that means a mindset change, telling people, 'We're here and wouldn't it be neat if Farm Bureau could be the table where everyone with concerns could come and voice them?'"

The farm mom noted, "Kelly Beavers did a lot of defining what collaborative should be and the reason why you should come from problem-focused, conflict-focused or opportunity-focused. You can rotate through all three of them as you're building and growing and changing. We need to make everyone feel they are part of the process."

Moberg, who was raised in Wisconsin, said she sees people who feel they are stuck in a remote part of Montana. "We're in that forgotten corner of the state, but we need to build our community. Farm Bureau does a good job bringing people together".

She noted that ACE has been wonderful, with very useable content, especially with the

June session that gave her guidelines and inspiration for creating a new county Farm Bureau.

Tammy Copenhaver, Rudyard

When Tammy Copenhaver read about ACE, she was intrigued; but what made her apply was her friend, Doreen McClure, a 2020 ACE graduate. "She thought that since I'm a 'new rancher to the ag perspective' ACE would be good for me. I've always been intrigued by personal development and ACE hits those both personally and professionally for me. I would like to learn to speak with clarity in a positive and efficient manner, which is one of their missions."

Copenhaver had a long career working in non-profits, first with the Montana Medical Association for 20 years and then with Mountain Pacific Quality Health. She coordinated the wellness program for Mountain Pacific which included helping with a television program on wellness. Her husband worked for the Veterans Administration and the couple purchased their farm in 2010. It had a run-down,

mouse-ridden farmhouse that hadn't been inhabited for 20 years. The couple spent the next several years refurbishing it. That home became their haven in 2020 where they could socially distance and work from home.

Although her husband had farmed in Rudyard, Copenhaver says, they, "decided to throw caution to the wind and buy some pasture to start a cow-calf operation. In October 2020, we purchased our land and shipped in our first set of calves."

"It's been interesting in ACE learning how to tell our story and really thinking about why we want to tell our story and what is the message we want to convey," the Fergus County Farm Bureau member said. "The seminars have been amazing and they are building blocks that build on each other. The personal connection with ACE is incredible."

"Ranching is our retirement gig, but when I was in high school, I figured I'd get married, have two kids and live on ranch," Copenhaver shared. "I've achieved all that, the ranch just took a while longer than I thought. I love it."



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- Jenney Paddock, one of the many local district conservationists throughout Montana.

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Meet District 6 Director **Don Steinbeisser, Jr.**

BY REBECCA COLNAR

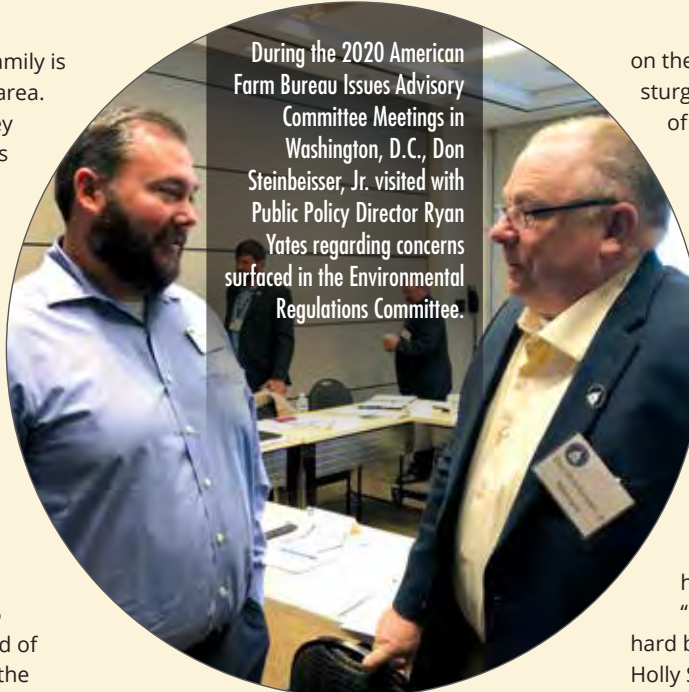
The Steinbeisser farming family is well known in the Sidney area.

Throughout the years, they have produced a variety of crops as well as raising sheep and cattle. They strongly believe in involvement in agricultural organizations and in the community. Don Steinbeisser, Sr., who passed away last summer, termed out in both Montana House and Senate; Jim Steinbeisser has served on the Montana Farm Bureau Board and is currently president of the Montana Stockgrowers Association; and Don Steinbeisser, Jr., is the new Montana Farm Bureau District 6 Director and serves on the board of directors for both the local and the American Sugar Beet Association.

Don Steinbeisser, Jr. is the third generation (the fourth is coming up) of the family to grow sugar beets, soybeans, corn, alfalfa, wheat and barley, along with his other brother Craig and cousin Russell. Jim handles the cattle side of the business. His uncle, Joe, is semi-retired but still helping with projects on the farm.

"I went to college to become an ag education teacher, attending North Dakota State-Williston and MSU Bozeman," said Steinbeisser. "After three years of college, I started student teaching. What the students taught me is that I wouldn't make a very good teacher. I learned a lot about dealing with people, but that career wasn't for me. I came back to the farm."

The Steinbeisser family is a Farm Bureau family. "Jim was involved in the organization, and urged me to get on our Richland County Board. My dad was involved in Farm Bureau, as well. The year after I was elected to the Richland County Board, I was elected county president. I've spent a lot of time in Helena and D.C., and thanks to Farm Bureau, I've learned a lot about testifying. When you become active in this organization, you get a good education of how to manage issues and people. It's getting harder and harder to



During the 2020 American Farm Bureau Issues Advisory Committee Meetings in Washington, D.C., Don Steinbeisser, Jr. visited with Public Policy Director Ryan Yates regarding concerns surfaced in the Environmental Regulations Committee.

deal with urban people who move out here and want us to change, such as not using chemicals on our crops, so it's important to learn how to handle that," Steinbeisser noted.

The long-time farmer explains that growers are continually working to make their farming practices not only more productive, but to have less impact on the environment.

"Because of Roundup Ready™ sugar beets, along with improved genetics, we can make less trips across the field during seed bed preparation. We used to make six or seven trips across the field; today we make two. In addition, some of our fields are no-till. That couldn't happen without Roundup® technology," Steinbeisser said.

Their farm used to flood irrigate 1200 acres, but when they couldn't find help, they started moving towards pivots in the late 1990s. "It's not any cheaper than flood irrigation but it's less labor and it conserves water. The only problem with pivots is they don't leave much ground water to recharge."

Currently, the Sidney farmer is concerned that Army Corps of Engineers is trying change irrigation practices due to the Endangered Species Mandate. "They want to develop a new management plan

on the Missouri River to help the pallid sturgeon. They want to change the times of year they let the water flow out, but if they do, it will flood the pump sites."

Irrigation is the lifeblood of eastern Montana and a drastic shift with water could hit the local economy hard. If the pump station is flooded and irrigation abates, it may cause a decline in irrigated acres, which would result in the beet crop being dropped by 20 percent. That could well result in the demise of not only the Holly Sugar processing facility as well hurt the entire economy of the area.

"It would hit the Indian reservation hard because a third of the workers at Holly Sugar come from Poplar and Wolf Point. They work from October until February, and then go back to their ranches. It's good income and we'd be in serious trouble without them."

He admits to loving farming, especially because he enjoys the variety—every two weeks there is a new job to do.

"Plus, it's very family-oriented. You can always bring your kids and wife along," he noted. "They can ride in the tractor; you get to see them during the day. There are many jobs where you can't bring your family to the jobsite with you. In agriculture, you can. At times, farming is a good way to make a living."

He reiterates that being involved in Farm Bureau is important. "It's grass roots so if you have a problem, you can convince your county policy development committee to help craft policy. That policy will be voted on at the state convention and could make its way to the national level," Steinbeisser said. "When you attend the Montana and American Farm Bureau Conventions, you learn a lot. You meet new people and discover other farmers and ranchers have the same concerns as you do. You learn so much, and you never quit learning. Farm Bureau has a great reputation for doing the right things for the right reasons."



Scholarships

The Montana Farm Bureau congratulates all of the students who received scholarships from the Women's Leadership Committee, the Montana Farm Bureau Foundation and the Collegiate Young Farmers and Ranchers. Congratulations to all of the students who received scholarships from county Farm Bureaus, as well.

Women's Leadership Committee Scholarship

The Women's Leadership Committee awarded two \$1500 scholarships: one to **Joe Lackman** and one to **Katherine Bold**. Joe graduated from Forsyth High School and plans to attend Montana State University majoring in Ag Education – Communication, Leadership and Extension. Katherine, Big Sandy High School, graduated as valedictorian. She plans to attend Carroll College to pursue a major in biochemistry/molecular biology.

Bernard Greufe Honor Scholarship

Sierra Sievers of Vaughn was awarded the \$1500 Bernard Greufe Honor Scholarship. The purpose of this scholarship is to assist Montana Farm Bureau members and children of members with higher education. Sierra will be a freshman at MSU in Fall 2021 majoring in Nursing. Her career goals include becoming a nurse practitioner.

Collegiate Young Farmer & Rancher Scholarship

Andee Baker of Park City was the recipient of the \$1000 Collegiate YF&R Scholarship. The coming junior is currently double majoring in Ag Communications and Psychology at MSU-Bozeman. She was the 2021 state Collegiate Discussion Meet Winner and is currently doing an internship at the American Farm Bureau Federation in Washington, D.C.

Future of Agriculture Honor Scholarship

Jessica Horan of Bozeman was awarded the \$1500 Future of Agriculture Honor Scholarship administered by the Montana Farm Bureau Foundation and made available through generous donations from Seed Source, Inc. of Toston. Jessica will graduate from MSU Fall 2021 with a degree in Pre-Vet Science. She will attend the MSU/WIMU regional program where she will work towards a Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine working with a mixed practice.

County Farm Bureau Scholarships

Each year **Carbon/Stillwater Counties Farm Bureau** awards two \$500 scholarships, preferably one in each county. The recipients are graduating seniors in high school, planning to attend a college, university or trade school in the fall of 2021. The two 2021 recipients are **Sidney Althoff** and **Grace Aisenbrey**. Sidney plans to begin her education at Northwest College in Powell, Wyo., then transfer to MSU majoring in Agro-Ecology. Grace plans to attend Montana State University to pursue a degree in Animal Science and plans to work as a cattle geneticist.

Southwest Counties Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee awarded two \$750 scholarships: one to **Kassidy Broere** from Dell and one to **Madi Ruegsegger** from Dillon. Kassidy is a member of the Montana Army National Guard and will attend Idaho State University to pursue a degree in Nursing. Madi will attend Montana Tech and pursue a degree in Biology.



Carbon/Stillwater Scholarship winners with county board members. (Left to right): Carla Lawrence, Sidney Althoff, Grace Aisenbrey and Sarah Boyer.

Northwest Counties scholarship winner Skyler Shima receives her scholarship from District 1 Director Craig Blevins.



Custer/Fallon County awarded three scholarships: **Sage Zook** and **Skyler David** will be attending Northwest College in Powell and **Robert Phipps** will be attending Sheridan College.

Northwest Counties presented a scholarship to **Skyler Shima** who plans to attend vet school and be a large animal vet.

Cascade County awarded a \$1000 scholarship each to **Sean Lynch** from CMR High School, who will attend Montana State University, and **Rylan Signalness** from Fairfield High School, who will attend Montana Tech.

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COUNTY NEWS

When the MFB Women's Leadership Committee challenged county Farm Bureau WLCs to raise money for family-based charities, **Ravalli County WLC** asked their board for a donation. Their board generously gave them \$1,000 for three worthy organizations: SAFE (women's shelter) in Hamilton; Emma's House Children's Advocacy Center and the Linda Massa Home (short-term youth shelter) in Missoula.

"Shortly after the Ravalli County Board wrote the checks, I presented them to the three places, and they were thrilled to have the donation," said WLC's Lorena Erickson. "The Women's Leadership Committee is very supportive of helping people in need in our communities, especially women and children."



(Left) Staff at the Linda Massa Home shows off their check. (Above) Lorena Erickson, left, presents a \$1000 check to Stacey Uma, SAFE, in Hamilton. (Right) Lisa DeMoss, Emma's House Children Advocacy Center.



COUNTY EVENTS



Fergus County held a well-attended membership event at the Central Feed Brewery in Lewistown where they recruited new members and enjoyed camaraderie.



Northwest Counties held a Ranch Day for students K-2 from Mission Valley Christian Academy. During Conservation Day, hosted by the conservation district, Northwest Counties presented ATV safety training and provided bottled water.

Kids check out a brain mold, which was part of the **Meagher County** Farm Fair and ATV safety training. The brain mold is part of a demo on what happens to your brain when your head hits the ground in an ATV accident. The farm fair included honeybees, soils, farm animals, gardening and making cheeseburgers and ice cream.



Wheatland/Golden Valley County members held a potluck membership event at the Shawmut Community Center June 5. **Chouteau County** held its member appreciation breakfast and had a float in the parade June 26 during the Fort Benton Summer Celebration.

County Farm Bureaus in District 4 are offering a free low-stress cattle handling demonstration Saturday, July 10, with well-known clinician Curt Pate. The event, hosted by **Big Horn, Carbon/Stillwater, Sweet Grass and Yellowstone County Farm Bureaus** will take place from 8 a.m. – noon at Billings Livestock Commission.



Judith Basin County held the Geyser Ag Safety Fair for kindergarten through high school students May 18 in Geyser. There were three “big” stations taking 15 minutes each: PTOs, auger entanglement and tractor rollovers; ATV Safety; and distracted driving. Smaller stations included electrical safety, grain bin safety, weed and insect spraying, water safety, wildlife safety and bicycle safety. Pictured are EMTs explaining the finer points of CPR.

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Montana Ag In The Classroom continues its ag literacy mission

BY LINDSAY OREM, MAITC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

School's out for summer! That being said, MAITC is hard at work planning for late summer and the 2021-2022 school year. After having a year under my belt, I have plans to help our students and educators increase their agricultural literacy through great activities. Look for us at conventions and events this summer and fall. If you have an event you would like to see MAITC at, please reach out and send me the information.

The National Ag In the Classroom Annual Convention is slated for June 28-July 1 in Des Moines, Iowa. Educators and Ag in The Classroom entities across the country will meet to inspire, focus and celebrate American agriculture and resources that are being used. Not only will MAITC be there, but we have two educators who received grants to attend, as well; Shirley Kienenberger-Fisher of Cleveland Elementary in Chinook and Jimi Champ of Browning Public Schools. Thank you to CHS and The Native American Agriculture Fund (NAAF) for the amazing grant opportunities. MAITC is funded by memberships and grants as a public/private partnership. Currently, the funding only supports one half-time employee. Having two educators attend the conference and commit to meeting the needs of our schools is amazing and valuable. Stay tuned for updates.

Aside from organizing, taking stock of and promoting our current resources, I am working on building fun and engaging professional development resources for teachers to be available late this summer. I'm looking forward to interacting with and helping teachers be more confident in putting some ag literacy into their instructional days—think virtual field trips, looking at local agriculture, vocabulary and collaborating with each other. Creating a Montana Agriculture Literacy community is the focus. MAITC is confident in the professional educators around the state. Great things are happening in classrooms and we want to highlight these, replicate these and build on them.

MAITC has designed a program entitled **Montana Ag Book Buddies- Ag Accurate Books Grow Ag Smart Montana Kids**. In order to get the program off the ground, a grant has been applied for with National Ag in the Classroom. If the project is funded, we want to recruit 20 classrooms across the state of Montana to participate. Teachers will receive one book and accompanying activities to integrate into their instruction each month. A social media group will be formed for participants to engage and discuss activities. Sharing student reactions and project outcomes will help us improve activities, instruction and increase the hype of Montana agriculture. Not only are we hoping to have this project funded, but MAITC would love to expand the project to reach more classrooms after the flagship year.

Montana Ag in the Classroom is looking to gain new membership. We need you to help us spread the ag accurate love around the state. There are many ways you can engage and help!



Students at Cascade Schools put together 1,000 Pollinator Education Project folders, which was made possible by the AITC Foundation.

Partner: initial \$10,000 + (annual membership renewal \$1,000)

Steward: initial \$7,000-\$9,999 (annual membership renewal \$1,000)

Friend: \$4,000- \$6,999 (annual renewal within this level amount)

Donor: \$1,000- \$3,999(annual renewal within this level amount)

Contributor: \$1 - \$999(annual renewal within this level amount)

Membership levels eligible to vote and hold office within the Montana Ag in the Classroom Foundation are as follows: Partner, Steward, Friend, and Donor.

The Montana Farm Bureau Foundation is a founding member and supporter of MAITC. The MAITC Foundation is committed to continuing to develop and provide Montana specific, relevant, and accurate agriculture materials to educators, volunteers and organizations. Please consider membership in the Montana Ag in the Classroom Foundation. This is a proactive approach to keeping Montana agriculture curriculum relevant and available for all. If you would like to join our amazing Foundation, contact Lindsay Orem at montanaaitc@gmail.com. Look for our membership flier and other great opportunities to engage on social media. We are on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube! We are excited about the future of Ag in the Classroom in Montana.

County Farm Bureau step up recruitment during May Membership Month

May was slated as Membership Month which served to salute to members as well energize member recruitment. MFBF and its volunteer members do an amazing job advocating for agriculture and educating others about agriculture. Membership month was the ideal time to get the word out regarding why our members are Farm Bureau Proud and many county Farm Bureaus did just that. The stakes were high as the grand prize for the county Farm Bureau that recruited the most members was an MFBF staff-catered BBQ. The top three recruiters were Phillips, Lewis & Clark and Park, with Phillips winning the "Farm Bureau Staff BBQ" top award.

Phillips County President Joy DePuydt: We sent 50 personal letters to people we had targeted as potential Farm Bureau members. I wrote an article in the Phillips County News and posted a video on our Phillips County Facebook page highlighting the importance of being a Farm Bureau member. The main reason people don't join is they've never been asked. Go ask.

Lewis & Clark President Karl Christians: Scott Stoner brought the latest list of memberships that have expired to our board of directors and we each put our names by people we knew. We all made calls and got folks back that way, or went out and talked to people. The ask was easy and it was interesting that the common response was, "We didn't know we could be member without buying insurance!" Of course, you can! I ran out of time for the recruitment contest, but I have a few more people who said they would sign up.

Park County President Garrett Hamm: A few of our board members visited businesses and made phone calls to people they knew and asked them to join. Recruiting members isn't hard; it works best just to knock on doors and make the ask.



Phillips County Farm Bureau President Joy DePuydt shows the article that was published in the Phillips County News about Farm Bureau.

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Young Farmer and Rancher News

Young Farmers and Rancher host conference

2021 will bring some fresh changes to Montana's Young Ag Leadership Conference. Previously the conference had been hosted by a committee comprised of representatives from nine different ag organizations around the state. This year MFBF will be taking the lead as the sole host organization and rebranding it the MFBF Young Farmers and Ranchers Leadership Conference. The conference will serve as an endeavor for the YF&R Committee and will streamline the planning and execution of the event. The conference will continue to be the premier event for young people in agriculture to network, expand their knowledge and develop leadership skills to carry our industry and livelihoods forward. The committee made this decision with the support of the other ag organizations in the state and many will continue to sponsor and be involved. The conference will remain open to any young (18-35) farmer or rancher around the state who wishes to attend.

The YF&R Committee is pleased to announce that this year's conference will be held October 15-17 in Bozeman. The committee is excited about the opportunity to get to meet again in person and will have some great speakers, breakout sessions and networking opportunities. Please check out our website or Facebook page about upcoming details and registration.



Hoofin' it for Hunger Rescheduled

2020 was a tough year for everyone, especially those needing a little extra. The YF&R Committee is so thankful for all of the support and donations that allowed us to raise \$7000 last year for the Montana Food Bank Network in lieu of hosting our annual fundraiser fun run, Hoofin' it for Hunger. With continued uncertainty about a host venue and the YF&R Committee taking on the Leadership Conference, the committee decided to reschedule their annual fundraiser. The YF&R committee is still passionate about supporting the MFBN and ending hunger in Montana, so be on the look out for more information about the new Hoofin' it for Hunger.



Talk and win a Polaris Ranger

It's not too early to start thinking about participating in the MFBF Young Farmer and Rancher Discussion Meet held November 8-11 in Billings. Win the 2021 MFBF Discussion Meet and drive away in a new Polaris Ranger. These questions will also be used for the YF&R Discussion Meet at the American Farm Bureau Annual Convention and at the Collegiate Farm Bureau Discussion Meet at the Young Farmers & Ranchers Leadership Conference.



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Discussion Meet Questions

1. How can Farm Bureau improve its effectiveness at recruiting YF&R members and increasing participation in YF&R programs?
2. COVID revealed several cracks involving the processing of livestock. How can Farm Bureau policy support easing government regulations to ensure long-term economic viability for local animal processing facilities, while ensuring the health of workers and that a healthy product is still delivered to consumers?
3. Studies show more farmers and farm families are experiencing stress and mental health issues. What can farmers, ranchers and Farm Bureau do to proactively promote good mental health in both themselves and their communities?
4. Agriculture is one of the most hazardous industries. What can we, as young farmers and ranchers, do to create a more preventative, rather than reactive, approach to farm safety in our communities?
5. As the world population increases, so will the need for renewable resources. On a local level and across the globe, how can Farm Bureau help farmers and ranchers continue to increase their efficiency in the use of valuable resources and transition to "Green Energy" practices on their farm or ranch?



Ag Processing Solutions Tour

As part of the Montana Farm Bureau Summer Conference in Great Falls, the Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee held a YF&R Day Monday, June 7. Attendees had a workshop on financial tools for young ag producers as well as heard highlights from the 67th Legislative Session. The group took a tour of Ag Processing Solutions where they learned about the company that is developing ways to add value to ag products—at this point, they are working with hemp.



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Women's Leadership Committee

PHOTO Contest

Entry Deadline: November 1, 2021

Theme: Agceptional Agriculture

Contest Prizes:

- > \$75 awarded to winners of each category.
- > Overall winner receives one-year free MFBF membership.

The winning photographs become the property of MFBF to be used for display and publicity purposes.

The Montana Farm Bureau Federation Women's Leadership Committee Photo Contest will be held during the MFBF annual convention **November 8-11, 2021** in Billings. Photos will be voted online and at the convention for combined votes to decide the winners. The winners will be announced at the convention.

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.

Photos can only be submitted via email! Please email to the contest coordinator, Mary Hill, at BarJRGelbvieh@3rivers.net with the subject line **MFBF PHOTO CONTEST 2021**.

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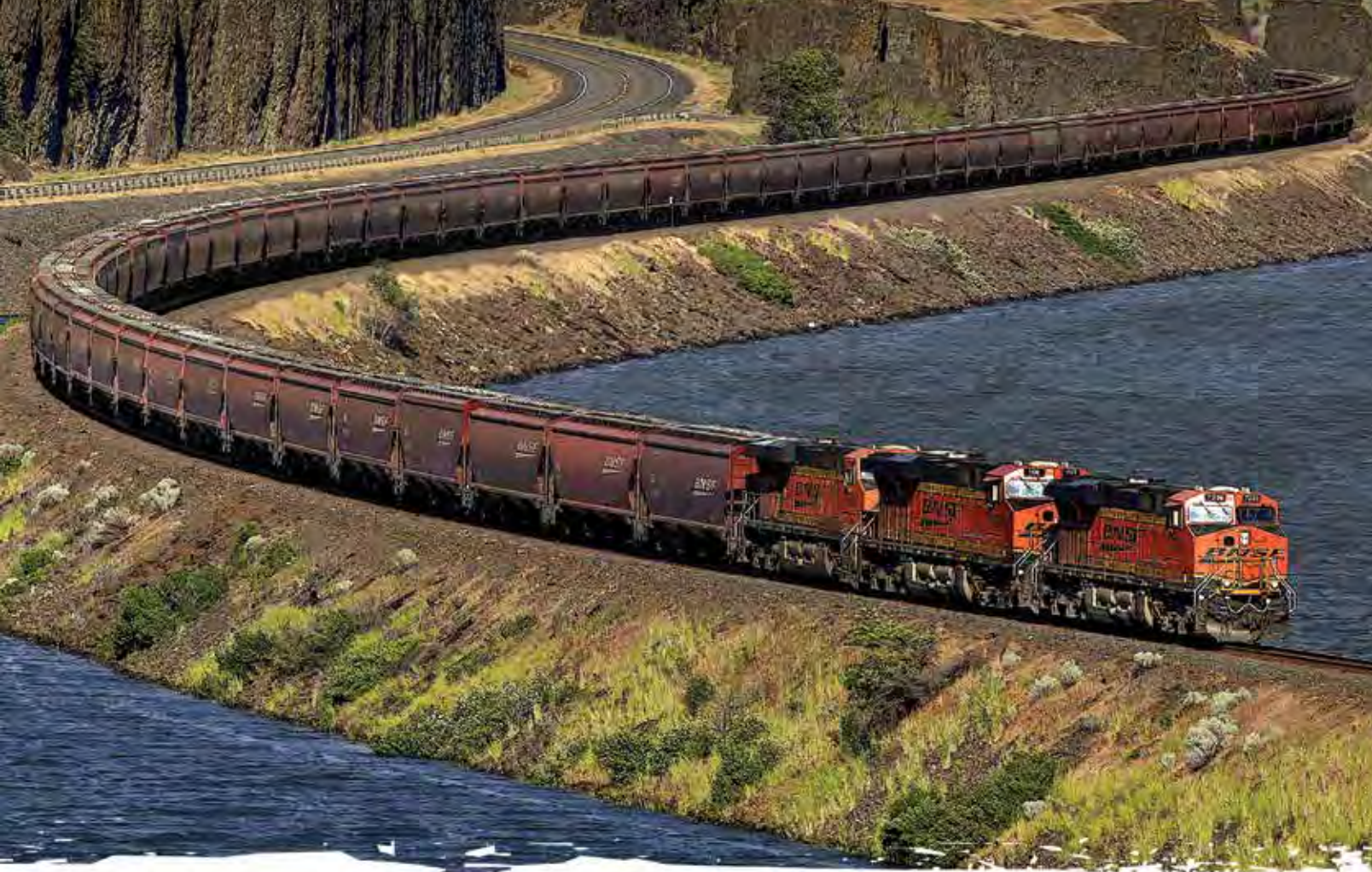


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