



# Organic Matters



Photo: Mark & Jane Smith's Aspen Island Ranch, Lavina, MT



Mark Smith and Pat Hatfield in hayfield.  
Photo credit—Alexis Bonogofsky, East of Billings

## Mark and Jane Smith Host Annual MOA 2020 Farm Tour

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Mark and Jane Smith hosted the 2020 MOA farm tour at their [Aspen Island Ranch](#) on June 13, 2020. Due to COVID-19 safety concerns, the tour only included eleven participants, including [Montana PBS](#) videographer Abbey Wenger and professional photographer [Alexis Bonogofsky](#).

The Aspen Island Ranch is located about five miles west of Montana Highway 3, halfway between Lavina and Broadview in Golden Valley County. The ranch is small-scale with 65 certified organic grass-fed cow-calf pairs and long yearlings awaiting harvest. The tour required ATVs to cross four contiguous sections from north to south. Pat Hatfield, Ph.D., [Montana State University, Range Management](#), Wes Henthorne, [B Bar Ranch](#), and [Montana Organic Producers Co-op \(MOPC\)](#) facilitated Mark's discussion. Sam Schmidt, MOA Farm Tour Chair and [Organic Advisory and Education Council \(OAEC\)](#); Becky Weed, MOA Chair; Jamie Lockman, MOA Executive Director; and Jeff Schahczenski, Economist, [National Center for Appropriate Technology \(NCAT\)](#) also participated in the tour.

Mark and Jane turned to organic after Jane, a retired pediatrician, suffered severe health issues due to household mold exposure. Other family members also experienced health difficulties, and the family turned to organic food to remedy their compromised health. As their health improved, the Nevada fami-

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## *Farm Tour—continued from page 1*

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ly began searching for a solution to live healthily and raise the beef they sought for their consumption. They looked at ranches in various Western states, finally buying their ranch, located south of the Musselshell River and west of the Bull Mountains, in the mid-2000s. The Smith's went straight into organic ranching, obtaining certification in 2007.

The Smith's have a holistic strategy centered on nurturing land, grass, water, and cattle in harmony to produce healthy and tasty all grass-fed beef. They seek to manage the ranch so that it is not brutal to the cattle, the environment, or people. The scale of the certified organic operation, the size, number, and temperament of the cattle, allow Mark to steward the land to improve its vitality and to know every aspect of the operation intimately. Mark, Jane, and their three sons have all weeded portions of the ranch by hand. Mark hand seeds alfalfa using a broken shovel as a modified furrow hoe. He knows the trouble spots where weeds like cheatgrass, Russian knapweed and hound's tongue are likely to pop up and can target those areas for extra care. There is a marked contrast in the quality and diversity of grass species between his operation and the neighboring non-organic cattle operation. Mark owns extraordinarily little equipment and accomplishes most of the ranch work using four-wheelers and pickup with a cattle trailer. He has his hay custom-cut by a neighbor, so he does not own the usual mower, swather, bailer, grinder, and other equipment. This freedom from equipment also frees up time and reduces his expenses by not dealing with equipment breakdowns. The scale of the operation allows Mark to be nimble and adjust as the weather and conditions change.

The tour group trekked from the house to the winter-feeding pasture, hayfields, springs, and range areas on the ranch. Mark described his rotational grazing scheme and hayfield improvement that relies partially on hand interseeding alfalfa. The Aspen Island Ranch has excellent water, and thanks to developed wells and developed, and natural springs that serve to both irrigate and water the cattle. Mark uses solar power to pump water at the two wells, one of which he discovered was used by bootleggers during prohibition, the other well has over 1 ½ miles of gravity-fed pipeline to dispersed water stations.

He generally supplements his year-round grazing with hay for about three winter months. His calving dates are later, avoiding wintry weather that is hard on the cows and calves. He has four Angus X Tarentaise bulls and is considering adding a new bull for genetic diversification. The cattle are cross-bred Angus X Tarentaise and range anywhere from Full Angus to 3/4 Tarentaise. The average cross-breeding of this year's calves was 5/8 Angus X 3/8 Tarentaise. In addition to being smaller and easier to handle, Tarentaise genetics improves utter and foot conformation. Mark notes he hasn't had a foot rot case in ten years. He markets his beef directly and through the MOPC. COVID-19 has brought increased demand for Aspen Island Ranch Grass Fed Beef. Montana has six certified organic meatpacking facilities, including [Pioneer Meats](#) in Big Timber and [Stillwater Packing Co.](#) at Columbus. However, demand is hindered by the limited available meat processing workers in Montana. The Smith's reinforced their mission to produce healthy organic beef humanely and wisely with a delicious hamburger lunch. The Smith's note they value their customers' lives and health and that their products' quality reflects that care.

*A big thank you to Smith's for their warm hospitality. Thank you, Mark, Wes Henthorne, and Joe Nelson, for providing transportation and Abbey Wenger and Alexis Bonogofsky, for documenting the tour. Thanks to Pat Hatfield for sharing his expertise and good humor. Thank you, too, Jeff Schahczenski and NCAT for covering the costs of the videographer and video editing. Thanks to Sam Schmidt and OAEC for help planning the tour. Watch for the video sometime this fall. It will be posted on the [MOA website](#) and promoted via [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).*



*Mark shows development of natural spring on the farm tour. Photo credit—Alexis Bonogofsky, East of Billings*



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**Jeff VanPevenage**, President and CEO

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## MOA Announces the 18th Annual Conference Programming and Business Meeting

Planning for MOA's annual conference is underway for in-person and virtual conference events. Beginning in September, presentations will be delivered virtually over several weeks and culminate with a (hoped for) in-person conference December 3–5 at the University of Providence. An in-person event is contingent on whether public health conditions and guidelines allow the event.

The MOA Business Meeting will take place in-person or virtually at 12:30 pm on December 5. Policy discussions will occur prior to the Business Meeting. Instructions on elections will be out at least one month prior to the Business Meeting. Please follow us on Facebook for the latest news.

Fred Provenza, Professor Emeritus, Utah State University will deliver the keynote address "Let Feed and Food be Our Medicine" December 4 at 1 pm.

- The [Call for Speakers](#) is now open with submissions due by August 31, 2020.
- The [Call for Student Posters](#) is open with submissions due by November 1, 2020.

If there is an in-person event, all current public health guidelines will be followed, including sanitizing stations, temperature checks, strict attendance lists, masks, social distancing, additional cleaning, etc. MOA will rely on conference attendees to assist with keeping everyone safe and reserves the right to ask those who will not follow the guidelines to not participate.

## MOA Policy Proposal Submission Process

As a trade association, part of MOA's mission is to lobby for issues relevant to organic. The MOA Policy Sub-Committee has been busy since the start of the year refining procedures, documenting passed resolutions, and publicizing its positions and processes.

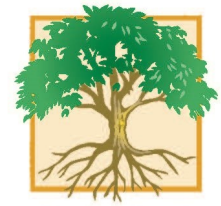
Co-chaired by Doug Crabtree and Nate Powell-Palm, the committee has established guidelines for submitting policy proposals for consideration of adoption by the MOA membership at the annual meeting. In the recent past, the Policy Sub-Committee has strived to move proposals forward, only to learn that membership frequently did not have enough information to pass a resolution.

It is hoped that with 90-days lead time before the December meeting, MOA can provide sufficient background information for a given proposal so that the membership is well-informed about the issues put before the membership. The proposals will be published in October in the *Organic Matters* Fall Issue. Proposals must be submitted by **September 6, 2020** via the MOA website.

To submit a proposal for consideration and to view the complete MOA Policy Procedures, visit the MOA website.

[MOA Policy Page](#)

Find resolutions passed by the MOA Membership on the following page.



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## RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE MONTANA ORGANIC ASSOCIATION

*To date, the following resolutions have been passed by the MOA Membership at its annual meeting.*

**Resolution 1.** Montana Organic Association supports the GMO liability for either the company that produces, develops or releases those organisms or livestock products. *Adopted February 6, 2005.*

**Resolution 2.** Montana Organic Association supports the establishment of organic acres at the Montana Research Centers. *Adopted February 6, 2005.*

**Resolution 3.** The Montana Organic Association urges the United States Department of Agriculture to provide funding to assist the Montana Department of Agriculture to become an ISO 65 accredited certifier. *Adopted February 6, 2005.*

**Resolution 4.** The Montana Organic Association supports the inclusion of mobile slaughter units in the definitions in the Montana Codes of licensed inspected slaughter establishments. *Adopted February 6, 2005.*

**Resolution 5.** The Montana Organic Association supports a preference for Montana grown or processed food for State-funded institutions. *Adopted February 6, 2005.*

**Resolution 6.** Whereas the Montana Wheat and Barley Committee has funded organic projects in Montana, the Montana Organic Association supports the voluntary check-off for organic wheat raised in Montana, and its continued support of organic research, projects, and education. *Adopted December 2, 2007.*

**Resolution 7.** MOA supports the position that seed patent holders to demonstrate that their GMO seeds contain mechanisms to prevent genetic drift or outcrossing as well as to prevent contamination of non-GMO crops in the food handling system before any new GMO crops are approved. *Adopted December 6, 2014.*

**Resolution 8.** MOA supports the current proposed farmer/consumer protection act which gives more power to the National Organic Program to control fraudulent imports of organic grains and other products. *Adopted December 9, 2017.*

**Resolution 9.** MOA supports organic research being funded closer to the percentage of organic food sold in the US. *Adopted December 9, 2017.*

**Resolution 10.** MOA supports the enactment of the proposed livestock rule. *Adopted December 9, 2017.*

**Resolution 11.** Montana Organic Association is a registered non-profit membership organization 501(c) 6 and does not discriminate in its employment, membership acceptance or board selection practices on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identification, color, national origin, age, religion, marital status, political ideas, creed, or disabilities. *Adopted December 7, 2019.*

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Have you renewed your MOA membership?

### **Nominations and Notice of MOA Board of Director Elections**

The direction of the Montana Organic Association is only as strong as its leadership. MOA welcomes energetic, committed dynamic leaders to join us to ensure the continued success of MOA. The Board of Directors election will take place as part of the virtual MOA Conference Annual Business Meeting on December 5, 2020 at 12:30 pm. Please check the MOA website for voting instructions mid-fall.

Directors serve three year terms and can be re-elected for subsequent terms. The Board of Directors usually meets in person one to two times each year and as needed by conference calls. Other volunteer committee work, including leadership, is expected. Since MOA is not in a position to provide monetary compensation for Board work, Directors will receive board experience advising a growing, statewide organic organization. Directors may be reimbursed for travel and communications expenses, if they choose.

Current directors who are up for re-election for the 2020 Business Meeting are:

- Gary Iverson
- John Porterfield
- Becky Weed

Directors seeking re-election, or anyone interested in serving as a new Director, should contact the MOA Nominations and Election Committee Chair Sam Schmidt at [sam@montanamilling.com](mailto:sam@montanamilling.com). It is encouraged that anyone seeking a nomination to the board spend time volunteering on one of MOA's committees.

Because the business meeting may be virtual, all 2020 Director nominations must be submitted no later than **one month** prior to the Annual Business Meeting.

Candidates will be introduced prior to the Business Meeting with elections taking place during the Business Meeting. Results will be published in the Winter issue of [Organic Matters](#).



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## MOA Supports Short-Term and Long-Term Local Montana Food Systems Needs

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### Montana Food Providers Project – Short Term

The Montana Organic Association (MOA) and AERO continue their partnership to raise funds, purchase Montana-grown and processed food, and promote awareness to address two needs:

Many people in Montana need food now, which Montana producers across our state could provide.

We need to accelerate efforts for building resilient, values-based regional food systems NOW.

The [MONTANA FOOD PROVIDERS PROJECT](#) set a specific short-term distribution goal to address the immediate crisis by getting Montana food products in the hands of the [Montana Food Bank Network \(MFBN\)](#) and other organizations for distribution across the state. After the crisis, we intend to build long-term infrastructure and means for thoroughly engaging communities to build resilient regional food systems across our state. In addition to the generosity of individual donors, MFPP received Montana CARES Grant from the State of Montana and funds from the Silicon Valley Community Foundation. MOA and AERO will split 15% of the funds for administrative fees and banking fees; otherwise, all of the funds support purchasing food from Montana farmers, ranchers, and processors to support our Montana neighbors in need.

Beginning at the end of March this year, the following projects have been undertaken and completed to date:

- Montana Milling provided two totes (2,000 lbs.) of whole-grain organic flour to MFPP at a discounted rate. North Park Transportation delivered the two tons of flour to the Lake County Community Development Corporation's Mission Mountain Food Enterprise, who repackaged it into 50 lbs. bags. The Montana Food Bank Network transported the re-bagged flour to the Livingston Food Resource Center Bakery, where the flour was baked

into bread and distributed to local families in need.

- The Oil Barn out of Big Sandy provided discounted safflower oil to the Montana Food Bank Network, and Timeless Foods provided 2500 lbs. of lentils, also to the MFBN. Montana families in need received these products distributed by the Montana Food Bank Network,
- Hopa Mountain of Bozeman provided funds to MFPP that purchased 250 lbs. of grass-fed ground beef from the Rising Trout Café in Lewistown that went to the Red Paint Coop at Hayes/Lodge Pole.
- MFPP purchased two pallets (2,500 lbs. each) of whole-grain organic flour from Montana Milling and transported it to Farm Hands – Nourish the Flathead. FH-NTF distributed the flour to Flathead Valley food pantries as well as to FAST Blackfeet in Browning. Blue Truck Bakery at Power and Sunflower Bakery in Helena also received flour distributed from this project. These artisan bakeries trans-



Jamie Lockman, MOA and Gretchen Boyer, Farm Hands – Nourish the Flathead meet in Whitefish to transfer flour from Montana Milling's Conrad Plant, June 2020 for MFPP.

formed the flour into delicious bread loaves and distributed them to local food pantries and families in need.

- MFPP purchased 100 lbs. of beef from Life-line Farms in Victor to be distributed to Soft Landing Missoula families. MFPP purchased 200 lbs. of flour in 5 lbs. bags from Great Harvest Bakery and 200 lbs. of lentils from Western Montana Growers Coop that SLM distributed to its 45 family clients.

MFPP thanks the very generous donors who are contributing to this project. It will be an on-going enterprise to connect Montana's producers with families in need during the pandemic. The MFPP welcomes contributions and participation in this project. Contact [Jamie Lockman](#) if you would like to be part of this venture.



### **Montana Meat Processing Action – Longer Term**

At the request of its organic producers, the Montana Organic Association initiated a discussion series on local meat processing. The inaugural conference call included more than a dozen agriculture, food, economic development, and Montana government officials. More than two dozen folks attended the second meeting. A third Zoom meeting (video or phone) will take place on Tuesday, August 18, at 10 am.

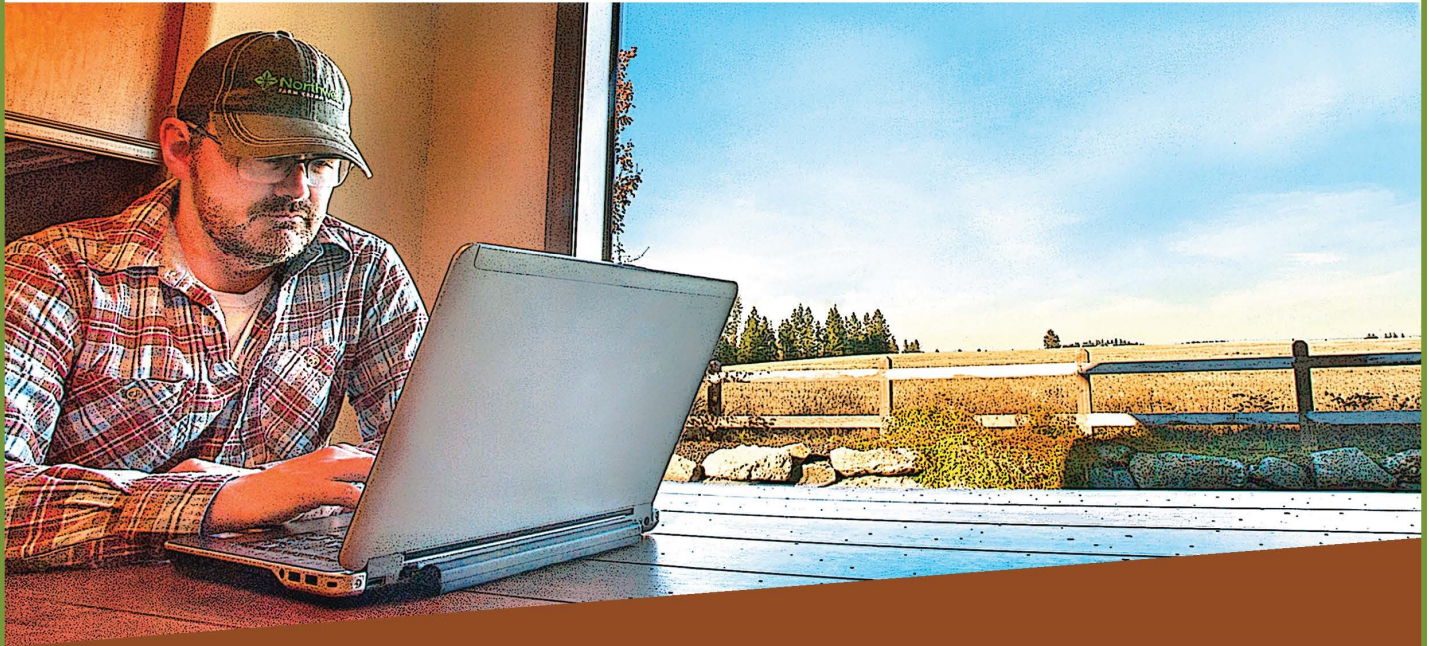
The first two meetings represent steps towards achieving the long-term goal of building resilient, values-based regional food systems. MOA convened ranchers, meat-packers, economic development professionals, state and federal government representatives, entrepreneurs, and more to create momentum to develop Montana's meat processing capacities and markets.

Among the groups supporting and participating in these meetings are AERO, Montana Farmers Union, NCAT, Northern Plains Resource Council, Western Sustainability Exchange, Montana Department of Agriculture, Governor's Office of Economic Development State of Montana, Montana Organic Producers Coop, Montana Meat Processors Association, Montana Cooperative Development Center, and others. Representatives for Governor Steve Bullock, US Senator Jon Tester, and US Congressman Greg Gianforte attended the last meeting on Tuesday, July 21.

Discussions focus on small, decentralized meatpacking, recognizing that meatpacking is not isolated but includes many different industries.

Please contact [Jamie Lockman](#) if you are interested in learning more or supporting and participating in these discussions. Montana's sustainable and organic producers are at the heart of the discussion.

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## USDA TAKES COMMENTS ON AGRICULTURE INNOVATION AGENDA

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### MOA Participates in Discussion Session

This spring, the USDA released its [Agricultural Innovation Agenda \(AIA\)](#) and is seeking written stakeholder input on the research goals that would facilitate the transformation to reach the production goals it lays out. Specifically, to meet the needs of the projected 2050 global population for food, fiber, and energy, the USDA seeks to increase agricultural production by 40 percent while reducing the environmental footprint of US agriculture in half. To achieve this goal, the USDA is committed to creating a comprehensive US agriculture innovation strategy that will align private and public research efforts, integrate the latest conservation technologies and practices into USDA programs, and increase and improve USDA data collection and reporting. [The USDA invited stakeholder comments to prompted questions by August 1, 2020.](#)

The National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT), the Organic Seed Alliance (OSA), and National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) held a stakeholder meeting on the USDA Ag Innovation Agenda on June 30. Nearly 200 farmers, ranchers, conservationists, and more from around the US attended the virtual event. Commenters included MOA members Wes Henthorne and Bob Quinn. [The MOA Policy Sub-committee has discussed this request for comments and the AIA itself and recognized the very broad scope of this problematic agenda.](#) NCAT, OSA, and NSAC can provide excellent organizational support to make MOA's concerns known and aggregate comments from other organizations as well. As always, these organizations welcome stakeholder comments and want to hear from you.

The plan is heavily focused on "innovative conservation technologies and practices" to increase production. However, lacking from this agenda is a focus on un-modified genetic crop and livestock diversity and working with nature, not technology, to ensure that the nutrient qualities of that production, particularly relevant to consumer health, are

maintained and improved. Further, the scale of increased production that would support the viability of small-scale farmers and ranchers as opposed to large scale industrial farms needs to be included.

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### Farmer/Rancher Jess Alger Responds to the USDA's Ag Innovation Agenda

MOA Board Member and long-time certified organic farmer and rancher, **Jess Alger** from Stanford, MT shares his thoughts on the USDA AIA. In response to this broad overarching agenda, the following narrower-focused points, specific to grass-fed beef, highlight the problems with the USDA agenda.

What would help consumer health, increase the bottom line for beef producers and help crop producers find new crops?

What are the best opportunities to increase productivity and decrease environmental footprint AND support small-scale family farms and ranches over the next 10-30-year time?

As written, the agenda does not include any reference to the quality of increased production and whether it would include those farmers and ranchers who strive towards sustainable systems and high-quality, nutrient-dense crops and livestock production. The solution? Raise more grass-fed beef, sheep, hogs, and poultry. Plant more land to forages that are cheaper in the long run. The animals can graze it, storing carbon in the soil, and building up soil organic matter and fertility. Fewer chemicals and fertilizer would be needed. This would help the environment, and because other crops could be grown, it increases plant diversity. Grass-fed meat has a proper balance of Omega-3 and Omega-6 fatty acids plus iron and minerals, important for human health.

Looking 10 to 30 years into the future, the USDA wants input on what we should be doing to feed the world? The USDA foresees large super farms that will use all the newest technology in seeds, (GMOs) fertilizer, and technical improvements (Autosteer, driverless tractors).

The USA was founded on the principle of individual ownership. When people own the land they work on, they make sure the animals are tended to accurately, and the crops are seeded on time. We have big farmers in our area, they did not finish harvesting. Crops were left in the field this winter. Those of us with average size farms (1500 acres) finished our harvest.

Grow the economy and feed the world, give the farmer a fair price plus a fair profit. Enact the Stegall Amendment, which gives farmers 90% of parity. The economy would be very good. Producers could hire more help putting more people to work. When agriculture is making a profit, the economy soars. The producers can buy more equipment, or new rugs for the house, or even remodel a kitchen.

The USDA's plan for super farms does not put people to work. They are thinking about corporate profits and not the economy. It assumes we will lose more producers, which will dry up our rural areas, brings more unemployment. For every dollar earned for the producers, it creates \$7 in the economy.

The USDA has been captured by the chemical companies, the big seed companies, and agri-business companies. They make decisions that hurt the producers and help corporate earnings.

The executives of the big companies are in charge of the USDA, they are more concerned with CORPORATE profits than the good of the country and what will help the individual landowners.

Sonny Perdue should be replaced with a producer with excellent management skills, as its head who could cull out some of the corporate riff-raff. Let's

have a USDA that helps the producers, not big agri-business.

To help consumers in the USA, we need to enact Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) on beef and hogs. Consumers need to know where their meat comes from. Cattle people deserve a fair profit. Importing beef at a cheap price helps the big packers make a big profit; this destroys our domestic market by lowering prices to producers.

We need smaller packing plants! Our local packing plants are booked nine months ahead. (COVID-19) Huge International conglomerates buying our grains and livestock is a disaster—a buyer's market with no competition.

Large-scale feedlots, like those operated by Cactus Feeders that have facilities in Texas, Iowa, and South Carolina, feed out over 1 million cattle yearly. Cactus Feeders put 120 grass-fed genetic steers (Pharo Cattle Co.) grazing under overhead pivots. It worked so well the next year they grazed 1000 grass-fed genetic steers on the pivots. They used less fuel, less labor, and the machinery costs were significantly less. The grass-fed meat sells at a higher price. While this is a large-scale solution, it omits the individual landowner who stewards soil, supports rural communities, and cares for their animals and customers.

Many of the nation's health problems are caused by chemicals sprayed on the crops. Roundup is a very unhealthy chemical, many health problems are cleared up by eating organic foods! Fungicides put on corn and soybeans kill the honeybees.

- Jess Alger





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# OFRF Partners with FFAR to Fund Soil Health Research at Montana State University

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Brise Tencer, Executive Director, OFRF, (831) 426-6606, brise@ofrf.org  
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OFRF and FFAR Partner to Fund Soil Health Research at Montana State University

June 4, 2020 – The Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) and the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research (FFAR) awarded a second year of funding in the amount of \$20,000 to Dr. Jed Eberly at Montana State University based on the promise shown in his first year of organic lentil trials. Eberly and his team are incorporating lentils into organic cropping systems to enhance soil health and improve the economics of organic operations. The outcomes of this research will help organic lentil growers improve yields and nutritional quality leading to better returns on investments.

The amount of lentil seeds planted on each acre (i.e., seeding rate) affects nutrient acquisition, weed management, and yield potential. Researchers have yet to identify the optimum lentil seeding rate that maximizes these benefits in organic systems. Eberly is addressing this knowledge gap by exploring the relationship between seeding rates, lentil yields, and soil health.

Trials performed in 2019 showed that increasing seeding rates significantly increased lentil yields and reduced weed density by an average of 40 percent. Based on these results, Eberly and his team are further increasing seeding rates this season to ensure they capture the maximum weed suppression and yield response. The research team is also performing a cost-benefit analysis to determine if higher seeding rates and yields are economically beneficial for organic farmers.

Eberly's grant is the first of thirteen research projects OFRF will fund this year focused on the most pressing challenges facing organic farmers and ranchers today. This is the most grants OFRF has awarded in a single grant cycle. "Every year, we are impressed by the number of strong research proposals we receive from across North America," said Brise Tencer, Executive Director at OFRF. "Thankfully, we were able to confirm that all of the research projects we selected to fund this year will be able to move forward despite the current pandemic."

OFRF and FFAR began partnering in 2019 to increase research funding for projects improving soil health and reducing the environmental impacts of agriculture. "FFAR is thrilled to partner with OFRF for a second year to enhance soil health and support thriving farms," said FFAR's Executive Director Sally Rockey. "This research has the potential to improve yields, increase profits, and reduce environmental impact."



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Connect: @FoundationFAR | @RockTalking



The **Organic Farming Research Foundation** is a non-profit foundation that works to foster the improvement and widespread adoption of organic farming systems. OFRF cultivates organic research, education, and federal policies that bring more farmers and acreage into organic production. Overall, OFRF grant funding has advanced scientific knowledge and improved the practices, ecological sustainability, and economic prosperity of organic farming. Their grant program is focused on supporting researchers and producers working collaboratively to verify and document innovative organic practices that support the improvement and widespread adoption of organic agriculture. All project results are shared freely. OFRF also provides free access to its educational materials and resources.







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## From the desk of Faith Hill: Greetings from Montana's First USDA Beginning Farmer Rancher Program Coordinator

Hello, my name is Faith Hill and I am the coordinator for the USDA Beginning Farmer Rancher Program in Montana.

The 2018 Farm Bill directed USDA to stand up a new team to focus on serving beginning farmers and ranchers. Here in Montana, the USDA representatives on the team include Kris Nicholson with Farm Service Agency (FSA), John Lockie with Risk Management Agency (RMA), Marlee Sandry with Rural Development (RD), and me for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

We offer technical assistance and help guide new farmers in navigating the many resources USDA has to offer by working with them one-on-one. Our team also works with organizations that serve beginning farmers and ranchers. By collaborating with stakeholders and service providers, we increase awareness and understanding of USDA programs and resources as well as help these organizations get resources to support their work.

While many USDA programs support all farmers, regardless of how long they have been farming, we also offer special provisions just for beginning farmers and ranchers. Some USDA programs have targeted funding, while others have reduced or waived fees for beginning farmers. Programs that are competitive may award additional points to beginning farmers when they are considered for funding. USDA considers anyone who has operated a farm or ranch for less than ten years to be a beginning farmer or rancher.

For beginning farmers who are just starting out and don't have an operation of their own, we have information and resources on business planning, getting started with USDA, and helping them connect to local workshops offered through different organizations.

I myself am a beginning farmer. Born and raised in Montana, I grew up with a love for the livestock industry. Together with my husband, we have a handful of commercial cattle and are trying to find

our place in agriculture. For the past two years, I have been a civil engineer for the NRCS in Great Falls, Mont., and am now excited to add the duties of Beginning Farmer and Rancher State Coordinator. I am passionate about Montana agriculture, conservation, our role in producing food and fiber for the world, and preserving the rural life we hold so dear.

Beginning farmers can explore the resources USDA has to offer by visiting [newfarmers.usda.gov](http://newfarmers.usda.gov), [farmers.gov](http://farmers.gov), or by contacting your local office.

If you are a new producer and you'd like some help getting started with USDA programs, please feel free to reach out to me. I can be contacted at (406) 770-4313 or [faith.hill@usda.gov](mailto:faith.hill@usda.gov).



Faith Hill, Montana USDA Beginning Farmer Rancher Program Coordinator

*USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.*

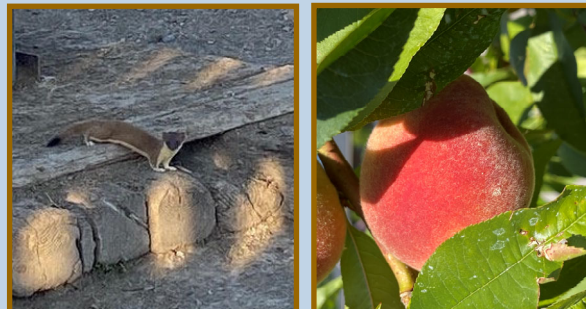
## MOA Board News

The MOA Board thanks Heather Estrada for her years of service to MOA. As a gift of thanks, Heather will receive a lifetime MOA membership. Heather has served as Treasurer for the past several years. John Wicks was elected unanimously by the Board to serve as Treasurer for the remainder of the year.

MOA Executive Committee elections are held in January at the annual orientation Board meeting.



Solar powered well, Aspen Island, photo: Alexis Bonogofsky



Weasel, photo: Jess Alger Peaches, photo: Jamie Lockman

Send MOA your photos! They can be used in the newsletter, on social media, and in other documents. Don't forget to tag MOA in your social media posts.

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## OTA Awaits USDA Action: Strengthening Organic Enforcement Proposed Rule

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The Strengthening Organic Enforcement (SOE) Proposed Rule pre-published as an [unofficial draft](#) on the U.S. Department of Agriculture website has yet to be officially released. As a resource for OTA's members, OTA has prepared a [10-page summary](#) of the 124-page document. The proposed rule is expected to publish on the *Federal Register* "soon." At that point, a **short 60-day comment period** will begin.

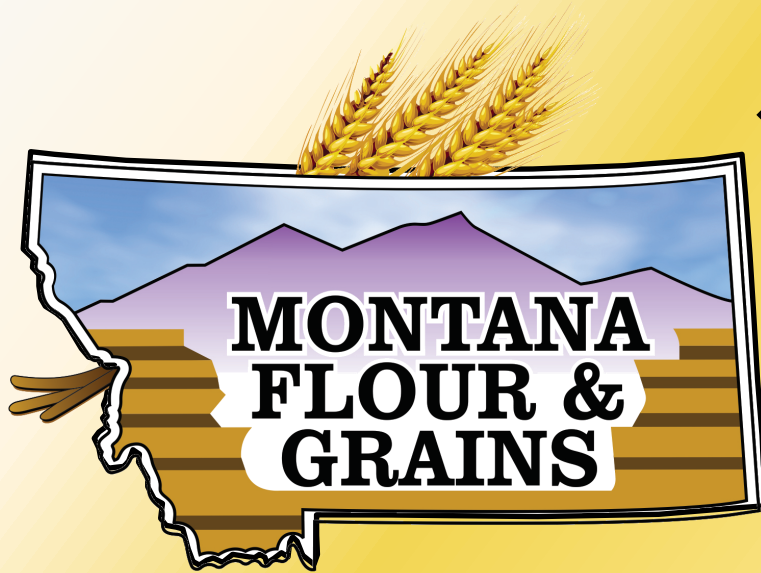
OTA welcomes USDA's efforts to boost the integrity of the global organic market through transforming the oversight and enforcement of organic production worldwide.

The Organic Trade Association has been in the driver's seat with Congress in the 2018 Farm Bill debate leading up to this historic rulemaking,

and will continue working on behalf of its members to engage in this critical rulemaking opportunity.

**More background, [including OTA's full statement on the proposed rule](#), is available on OTA's Organic Oversight and Enforcement web page. Although meetings are already underway, it's not too late to [OTA's diverse member task force](#). Follow-up meetings are scheduled weekly through July and August [on Wednesday at 11 a.m. Pacific / 2 p.m. Eastern](#).**

**OTA will notify members via the U.S. Government Affairs Forum when the proposed rule officially publishes.** In the meantime, please check out our [summary](#) and reach out to [Gwendolyn Wyard](#) with questions.



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## MOA Takes Part In Policy Discussions

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MOA works with an array of organizations that help amplify members' concerns as a group of other like-minded folks. Among the organizations that help to make MOA members' concerns heard are National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC), Organic Trade Association (OTA), National Organic Coalition (NOC), Organic Farmers Association (OFA), Alternative Energy Resources Organization (AERO), Organic Consumers Association (OCA), and Community Food and Agriculture Coalition (CFAC), MOA has taken part in quarterly meetings with [Grow Montana](#), a food policy coalition of more than a dozen organizations led in part by NCAT.

The Grow Montana Food Policy Coalition formed in 2005 to advocate for changes in state policies that would strengthen Montana's food and agriculture economies. It is a broad-based food policy coalition whose common purpose is to promote community economic development and education policies that support sustainable Montana-owned food production, processing, and distribution, and that improve all of our citizens' access to healthy Montana foods.

The coalition has identified the following topics and solutions for the 2021 Legislature.

### State Soil Health Policy Solutions

- Adopt a Montana Healthy Soils Program to cost-share soil building practices and collect data on their benefits—including improving access to affordable and reliable soil health tests.
- Fund Montana's conservation districts to provide additional on-farm and ranch technical assistance.
- Increase Montana processing capacity to support a more resilient and community based food system, able to make use of a diversified crop-livestock mix that can benefit healthy soils.
- Create a database of "Soil Champions" who

exemplify soil stewardship. Through the MT Department of Agriculture and NRCS, develop a mentorship program to enable soil champions to assist other growers who want to experiment with or adopt soil health practices.

### Farm to School Policy Solutions

- Funding mechanisms to offset school costs through appropriations, grant programs, or reimbursement structures.
- Funding for a state farm to school coordinator to be housed within the Office of Public Instruction.

### Food Security Policy Solutions

- Funding to support the statewide SNAP matching program, Double SNAP Dollars that incentivizes SNAP recipients to purchase Montana grown fruits and vegetables while increasing revenue for farmers.

### Mid-Scale Food Processing Goals

- More Montana meat processed in-state.
- Increased number of state-certified small, medium and mobile processing units.
- Asset mapping of meat processing in Montana.
- Increase capacity of storage, packing and processing facilities in rural Montana communities.

Grow Montana is led by Bonnie Buckingham, CFAC, Missoula; Jan Tusick – Lake County Community Development Corporation, Ronan; Steve Thompson – NCAT, Butte; Lindsay Ganong and Robin Kelson – AERO, Helena; Tracy McIntyre – Montana Cooperative Development Center (MCDC), Great Falls; Kim Mangold – Montana Farmers Union (MFU), Great Falls; Caroline Canarios and Tai Koester – Northern Plains Resource Council (NPRC), Billings; Gretchen Boyer – Farm Hands, Nourish the Flathead, Whitefish; Amy McNamara – Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), Bozeman.



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# Farm to Grocery

**Registration is OPEN! / August 26, 10am to noon**



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AGRICULTURE

Are you a specialty crop producer, grocery store vendor, or community member interested in learning more about farm to grocery in Montana?

Buying local is a trend that continues to grow every year and though each Farm to Grocery relationship is unique, they generally share similar values and goals: seeking to provide nutritious, locally-sourced food while supporting local economies and educating communities about the value of Montanan agriculture. For farmers and food processors, building a relationship with a grocery store can diversify your customer base, create a stable market for your products, and provide opportunities to engage the community in your agricultural operation. For grocery store managers, buying fresh food from local producers can earn your store recognition and increase sales, improve the taste and quality of your products, and provide more information about the safety and origins of your food.

**When: August 26th, 2020 from 10am to noon.**

**[Complete a Registration Form Now!](#)**

*There is no limit to the number of registrants.*

### Speakers

Dave Prather, Western Montana Growers Cooperative

Gail Nickel-Kailing, Timeless Foods

Michael Vetere, 2J's Fresh Market

Tom Tschida, Yellowstone Valley FoodHub

Jake Palmer, Real Food Deli and Market

Maura Henn, Montana Harvest of the Month Program

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# Conservation Agricultural Mentoring Program (CAMP):

Natural Resources Conservation Service



## What Is It?

A state-driven, partnership and field-based program to build strong employee-producer relationships and increase employees' knowledge of production agriculture in their local areas.

## How Does It Work?

NRCS will match producer volunteers who are passionate about conservation and teaching with field employees who have fewer than three years of experience or who are new to an area. The producers will have an opportunity to mentor the employees through "on-the-land," hands-on learning to help them develop their knowledge of:

Common agricultural practices, equipment, inputs, and other agricultural factors in the local area, including:

- The types of challenges and decisions producers face day to day.
- Local resource problems and concerns.
- How NRCS and local producers address resource problems and concerns.

The program provides the opportunity for mentor producers to engage with mentee employees several times over the course of the program, which lasts 1-1.5 years for each participating employee.

By focusing on field-based, hands-on learning, we aim to accelerate employees' early career development and increase their ability to provide customer service of the highest quality, while also increasing their confidence, connection to their local communities, and their understanding of producers' needs.

## Who Is Involved?

There are three main groups of people who are involved in the program:

1. Volunteer producers (mentors) who are passionate about conservation and teaching.
2. NRCS and conservation district employees (mentees) who have fewer than three years of experience or who are new to an area.
3. The NRCS and conservation district employees who supervise participating employees.

## What Is the Time Commitment?

The time commitment is minimal. Producer mentors commit to engaging "out on the land" with their mentees a few times each year, at times that are convenient for the mentors.

## Who Can Participate?

Producers who are passionate about conservation and teaching, and who agree to provide a safe learning experience for program mentees can be a mentor.

## How Can I Get Involved or Learn More?

To get involved or learn more, please reach out to your local District Conservationist.

To find your local service center go to [www.nrcs.usda.gov/contactstates](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/contactstates)





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## Organic Inspections and COVID-19

On-site inspections for your organic operation means having an inspector visit your operation. What do you do in a time of social distancing due to COVID-19? Georgana Webster, Organic Program Manager, Montana Department of Agriculture, provided the following guidance for on-site inspections.

At this time there will be no on-site inspections until further notice. You can expect updates regarding inspections, scheduling, and alternatives as the situation progresses.

If you are a new producer, your inspection will be prioritized. When on-site inspections are deemed-safe, every effort will be made to complete your inspection in person as required.

The following should be maintained and saved by each of you this season to enable verification for organic certification:

1. Photographs of seed packets, bags or saved seed including tags, labels, etc. These photos should correspond to seed receipts, invoices, inventory, etc.
2. Photographs of seeding with date and field identification noted. Use a landmark in the photo background if possible.
3. Photograph identifying yourself in the plot/field you are seeding for each different crop (practice that selfie)
4. Photograph of any inputs (inoculants) or amendments either by box, bag, bulk, containers, tanks, tags, labels, etc. These should correspond to receipts, invoices, etc.
5. Photographs of buffer zones (if any) clearly showing length and width of zone

There is the possibility that a remote phone, skype, facetime remote desk audit inspection could occur if an on-site inspection is not possible.

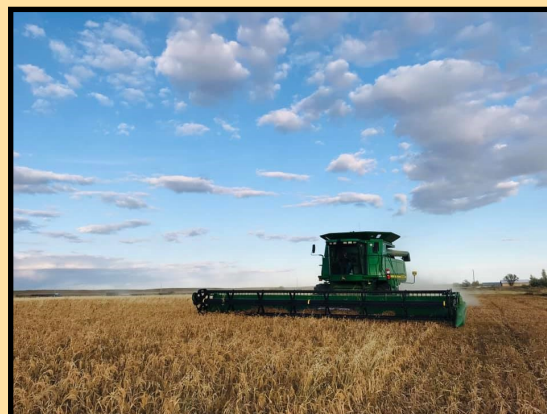
It is also possible that both a remote and onsite inspection with social distancing, may occur, depending on circumstances. An in-person inspection could occur when public health and safety recommendations allow.

It is imperative that photograph verification is taken to ensure compliance with certification and for the Montana Organic Program to meet the requirements of the USDA NOP.

## Do you know that MOA has a Business and Resource Directory on its website?

As a membership benefit, Farmer/Rancher, Organic Business, and Premium Members receive a listing in this searchable directory. Each listing includes space for a logo, a photograph, contact information, list of products and services, and an operation description.

- Please support the farms/ranches and businesses that support MOA.
- Please check your listing and send in any updates, including a logo and photo, social media accounts, or anything missing from your listing that you would help others know about your operation.



[MOA Business and Resource Directory](#)





Dear valued Farmers and Ranchers,

The Montana State University Water-Agriculture-Food-Energy Research nexus project requests your participation in their Diversified Farming, Resilience, and Vulnerability survey assessment. The survey assessment will inform research in how diversified farming systems respond to stressors such as climate change and the COVID-19 (novel coronavirus disease) pandemic. The online anonymous survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete, and \$15 Amazon gift cards will be mailed to the first 300 survey respondents after the survey closes August 4th, 2020.

Diversified Farming, Resilience, and Vulnerability online survey link:

[https://montana.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_8wzJdsvCAkBTLkV](https://montana.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8wzJdsvCAkBTLkV)

Please direct questions to:

Dr Selena Ahmed:

[selena.ahmed@montana.edu](mailto:selena.ahmed@montana.edu)

Teresa Warne:

[teresa.warne@montana.edu](mailto:teresa.warne@montana.edu)



Do you have a value-added product that makes a great gift and ships well? The [Last Best Box \(LBB\)](#) is seeking organic products to include in its new Montana Organic gift boxes.

In addition to one-time only gift purchases, LBB features a subscription service that sends out six boxes of Montana products a year. Already, LBB carries Kracklin' KAMUT® Organic Roasted Wheat Snack, Organic Cream of the West Hot Cereal, and King's Cupboard Organic Chocolates. To date new additions will include Timeless Foods lentils, chickpeas, and grains, Montana Gluten Free Pancake and Waffle Mix, and North Frontier Foods Organic Corn Baking Mixes.

Now is a good time to reach out to Scott Sacry at [admin@lastbestbox.com](mailto:admin@lastbestbox.com) to see if your product is a good fit to include in LBB's attractive and fun boxes. If you're thinking of holiday gifts, including corporate gifts, LBB will have the organic gift boxes available sometime this mid-fall.



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## Three Opportunities To Share Your Stories, Share Your Opinions

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### [Stories of COVID-19 Impact & Resilience](#)

When coronavirus hit Montana, impacts rippled through every sector. Organizations focused on hunger, food security and sustainable food systems in Montana began to meet virtually to discuss challenges and solutions. Members of these impromptu food access discussions are now working to document and amplify stories, to help build more sustainable, equitable food systems.

- Distribute MT products with MT distributors to Montanans in need
- Expand small-scale milling and processing capacity (grains, pulse crops, meat, produce)
- Implement State Directive to allow beef processing in small-scale exempt plants
- Build community-level leadership for food security and accessibility

This work mitigates COVID-19 impacts today and strengthens Montana's capacity to address future crises. Participating organizations include Lake County Community Development Corp, AERO, MFU, CFAC, MOA, Grow Montana, Montana Food Bank Network, Montana Farm to School, Western Montana Growers Coop, QFD, Root Cellar Foods, Open & Local, and Hopa Mountain.

In June, with crisis response well underway, the group discussed how vital it is to capture stories – real tales of pain, pivot, and potential – and share them with people who can help us build more equitable, resilient food systems. This initiative formed to help amplify stories and carry them to audiences that can make a difference: community leaders, food system workers, policy makers, funders, and the general public. Contact Kate [openlocalmt@gmail.com](mailto:openlocalmt@gmail.com) or Robin [rkelson@aeromt.org](mailto:rkelson@aeromt.org).

Please share your story.

Story Collection Form: [COVID & Montana Food Systems](#).

### [Montana COVID-19 Food SURVEY](#)

This survey is for everyone, no matter your situation. MSU researchers seek input from all Montanans to more fully understand the impacts of coronavirus on food security, food access and health. Findings will be used to help Montana build food systems more responsive to public health crises.

The contact for this is Dr. Mark Quinn, Chair of the Institutional Review Board, (406) 994-4707; email: [mquinn@montana.edu](mailto:mquinn@montana.edu)

Share your experience for a chance to win a \$200 Visa Gift Card: [Montana COVID-19 Food Survey](#)



### [What Organic Seed Policy Issues Matter Most to You?](#)

Organic Seed Alliance wants to hear what seed policy issues matter to you. Over the years our advocacy program has focused on policy issues ranging from seed industry consolidation to restrictive intellectual property rights, to genetically engineered crops and research investments in organic seed systems.

In an effort to ensure our policy platform remains relevant, responsive, and timely, we are asking you to fill out this short survey to inform the future of our policy work. Your responses will also inform collaborative efforts to establish a seed policy platform for the broader seed community and organic community that we work alongside. Contact: Kiki Hubbard [kristina@seedalliance.org](mailto:kristina@seedalliance.org)

Share your thoughts: [What Organic Seed Policy Issues Matter Most to You?](#)



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*- Mary Jane Melendez, Chief Sustainability and Social Impact Officer*



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### Montana Organic Association

is a 501 (c) 6 non-profit organization dedicated to advocating and promoting organic agriculture for the highest good of the people, the environment and the State economy.

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*Organic Matters occasionally includes guest articles and opinions. While we review these for relevance to our mission, the opinions in these articles may not reflect the opinions or policy of the Montana Organic Association.*

Editor: Jamie Ryan Lockman

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\*If you are a Farm/Ranch/Business level member, you will receive a 5% discount on your ad. If you are an Organic Business or Lifetime member, you will receive a 10% discount

### Please Support MOA Advertisers and Sponsors!

*The Montana Organic Association (MOA) brings together people, businesses, organizations, and agencies who are working to develop Montana's organic industry. MOA is proud of its legacy that has led Montana to be a national leader in organic production. But MOA is more than organic production; it also serves to educate about organic products including food, fiber, and non-food items like personal care items and household supplies, and ways to limit the use of chemicals in everyday life. MOA also advocates for policies that protect the environment, promote healthy living, and support individuals, farms and businesses who are actively engaged in developing sustainable businesses and communities. MOA accomplishes this through hosting events, serving as an educational resource, providing network opportunities, and communications.*

*Do you want to support MOA's work?*

*MOA has several affordable membership options. Visit the MOA website to learn more.*

[www.montanaorganicassociation.org](http://www.montanaorganicassociation.org)



# Community Food & Agriculture Coalition

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## FARMER SUPPORT

CFAC helps beginning farmers and ranchers build successful and sustainable businesses through:



**Education on business and production**



**Assistance accessing land, financing, and markets**



**Networking opportunities**





## Two Legendary African American Montana Homesteaders

Homesteading was hard work, but it offered single women a chance to become independent at a time when social mores made it difficult for women to be self-sufficient. Among the many single women who took this opportunity were two African American women who filed homestead claims and did well for themselves. Homesteading allowed Annie Morgan and Bertie Brown to become women of property, and each brought special skills to the communities in which they settled.

Nothing is known about Agnes “Annie” Morgan’s early life except that she was born in Maryland around 1844. By 1880, she was married, had come west, and was a domestic servant in the household of Capt. Myles Moylan and his wife, Lottie. The captain was stationed at Fort Meade, Dakota Territory, along with Frederick Benteen and other survivors of the Seventh Cavalry at the Battle at Little Bighorn. Morgan’s association with the Seventh Cavalry lends credence to the legend that she once had cooked for Gen. George Armstrong Custer.

The U.S. Forest Service now owns Annie Morgan’s cabin (now called the Morgan-Case Homestead), which they rent to vacationers. Photo courtesy State Historic Preservation Office

Sometime after 1880, Morgan, by then a widow, made her way to Philipsburg in Granite County. County attorney David Durfee hired her to care for his uncle who had a severe drinking problem and was very ill. Durfee arranged for Morgan to take his uncle to an abandoned farm on Upper Rock Creek to dry out. There, she cared for the man and brought about an extraordinary cure. When he eventually went his own way, she stayed on at the farm, filing a homestead claim.

One day in 1894, Morgan happened upon Joseph “Fisher Jack” Case lying on the banks of Rock Creek, gravely ill with typhoid. Case was a Civil War veteran from New Jersey who made a living catching fish to sell in Philipsburg. Morgan nursed him

through the often-fatal illness. To repay her kindness, Case fenced Morgan’s homestead. The pair developed a mutual affection, and when the fence was done, Case stayed on at the homestead. Morgan died in 1914, and she is buried in the Philipsburg cemetery.

The Forest Service beautifully restored Morgan’s cabin. In the process, workers discovered a curious object hidden in the upper door frame. Bits of red string, a soap wrapper, and other items consistent with the bundles carried by African root doctors suggest that perhaps Morgan carried these traditions, handed down to her from family members, to the Montana frontier. She certainly proved her skills at doctoring. The Morgan-Case Homestead is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and in 2013, Annie Morgan was accepted into the Montana Cowboy Hall of Fame.

Bertie Brown, born in Missouri, came to homestead in Fergus County. She was in her twenties when she settled in the Lewistown area in 1898. She later homesteaded along Brickyard Creek, filed her claim in 1907, and proved up in 1912.

Brown described herself at different times as an abandoned woman and as a widow. Like many women homesteaders, she supplemented her income in various ways. She raised leghorn chickens, kept a garden, and planted wheat, oats, and barley on twenty-five acres of her homestead. She is, however, best remembered for her moonshine.



The U.S. Forest Service now owns Annie Morgan’s cabin (now called the Morgan-Case Homestead), which they rent to vacationers. Photo courtesy State Historic Preservation Office

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During the 1920s, the rutted road to Brown's place was familiar to many Fergus County locals and to others who had heard of her famous brew. When Prohibition outlawed alcohol, many made their own moonshine and sold it illegally. Bad hooch, however, could cause blindness and even death. Those looking for a place to party away from the eyes of the revenue officer knew to point their cars toward Black Butte and Bertie Brown's place. Her still—according to locals—produced some of the best, and safest, moonshine in the country. Brown carved a niche for herself. The tidy homestead where she lived with her cat was a place of warm hospitality.

Roundup, Montana, artist Jane Stanfel painted the ruins of Birdie Brown's cabin as part of her series "Ghost Ranches." Oil on canvas, c. 2010. Courtesy Jane Stanfel

In May 1933, just months before the end of Prohibition and Brown's main livelihood, the revenue officer came around and warned her to stop her brewing. Brown also took in dry cleaning, using gasoline as the cleaning agent. As Brown multitasked, dry cleaning some garments and tending what would be her last batch of hooch, the gasoline exploded in her face. She died of her injuries some hours later.

While Montana was not immune to racism and discrimination, and African American Montanans endured these undercurrents, both Annie Morgan and Bertie Brown were women beloved by their adopted white communities. The true stories of Morgan's skilled healing and Brown's "safe" moonshine have been passed down by those who knew them. These stories live on in local lore. EB

Learn more about Annie Morgan's homestead by visiting the Montana Historical Society Places page.

If you're interested in more about Montana women's influence on agriculture, you may enjoy reading "A Farm of Her Own" and "The Work Was Never Done: Farm and Ranch Wives and Mothers."

*Of the almost 1,800 African Americans who lived in Montana in 1910, approximately 43 percent*



were women. Most lived in Helena, Butte, and Great Falls. A few, like Annie Morgan, Birdie Brown, and this unidentified Great Falls-area homesteader, pictured with her husband on their claim, looked to build a life for themselves on the agricultural frontier. Photograph by the Great Falls Photo View Company, Ken Robison Collection.

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MOA, 3312 Hollis St., Missoula, MT 59801.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Farm or Business: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Num-  
bers: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Level (mark one):

Basic Memberships		Premium Memberships	
<b>Individual - \$30</b>		<b>Lifetime</b> , two memberships, 10% discount on ads, website directory listing - <b>\$750</b>	
<b>Household</b> , two memberships - <b>\$50</b>		<b>Lifetime Business</b> , two memberships, 10% discount on ads, website directory listing - <b>\$2500</b>	
<b>Farm/Ranch/Business</b> , two memberships, 5% discount on ads & website directory listing - <b>\$75</b>		<b>Silver Membership</b> , two memberships, full-page ads, website directory listing, two conference registrations, conference lunch sponsorship - <b>\$1650</b>	
<b>Organic Business</b> , two memberships, 10% discount on ads, & website directory listing - <b>\$250</b>		<b>Gold Membership</b> , two memberships, full-page ads, website directory listing, two conference registrations, conference dinner sponsorship - <b>\$2000</b>	

Tell us more about what you do. Farm? Ranch? Researcher? Student? Supplier?

TOTAL AMOUNT OF YOUR PURCHASE \_\_\_\_\_

Return form (s) with your membership dues/donation to:

Montana Organic Association, 3312 Hollis Street, Missoula, MT 59801

If you have questions, call Jamie Lockman at (406) 546-6572 or email her at: [moamembership@gmail.com](mailto:moamembership@gmail.com) OR to pay online, visit [www.montanaorganicassociation.org/commerce.htm](http://www.montanaorganicassociation.org/commerce.htm)

Rev. 4/7/20



**Thank you!**

**MOA Sponsors and Members!**



Rudy Agro, Inc. • Michael Baerwald • (306) 867-8667  
115 B Saskatchewan Ave. Outlook SK  
www.rudyagro.ca

Dear MOA Members: MOA works with organizations like the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC), the Organic Trade Association (OTA), and more on policy issues. Many times questions are asked about how farmers are interacting with federal programs; are sign ups going well? Are you being sufficiently notified of programs for your farm? What programs do Montana’s organic farmers use? Are there problems with requirements for organic farmers?

Help MOA know what works for you and what doesn’t work for you, at any time, by dropping a line. The squeaky wheel really does get the grease. These organizations have the capacity to amplify MOA members concerns with research, collaboration with other organizations, and with excellent contacts in Washington, DC.

[moamembership@gmail.com](mailto:moamembership@gmail.com)

Jamie

[jamieryanlockman@gmail.com](mailto:jamieryanlockman@gmail.com)



## Montana Industrial Hemp Processing Inc.

*Growing Montana’s Hemp Industry With Honesty and Integrity*  
(Licensed with Montana Dept. Of Ag.)

Are you a hemp producer looking for a safe, reliable place to market your crop? Can you grow, harvest and bale hay? If your answer is yes, check out Montana Industrial Hemp Processing Inc.

Montana Industrial Hemp Processing Inc. will provide you with the seed to grow and pay up to \$400 ton bulk weight on baled harvested hemp. You simply plant, grow, harvest and bale the hemp crop and MHIP will take care of the rest.

**“Your crop” will be processed right in Montana at our new facility in Bonner, MT!**

For more information please join us on one of our daily Go To Meetings at 2pm MDT M-F April 5-May 15.

Montana Hemp Project

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/427986101>

Or call in at 1-312-757-3121 Access Code 427 986 101

For questions regarding **Montana Industrial Hemp Processing Inc.**  
please call **Paul Smith 1-303-856-4464**



Montana Organic Association  
3312 Hollis Street  
Missoula, MT 59801  
montanaorganicassociation.org  
(406) 546-6572  
moamembership@gmail.com

### Do you have questions about COVID-19?

ATTRA has a wealth of resources available to help you including a [COVID resource page](#) that is regularly updated. ATTRA also has Agriculture Specialists producing a series of [videos](#) and [blogs](#) to connect you with real-time solutions to these challenging times.

NCAT is collaborating with partners across the nation to hear from farmers in listening sessions and will consolidate and share broadly information on challenges, opportunities, and innovation.

Please reach out to NCAT/ATTRA with questions or to participate in their listening sessions. They can be reached at: [askanag@ncat.org](mailto:askanag@ncat.org) or 800-346-9140.

## *A View from the Director*

*Jamie Ryan Lockman, MOA Executive Director*

Every year, post-conference, the MOA Conference Committee and I review the conference surveys submitted by people who attended. Every year, it is gratifying to see how much the annual MOA in-person gathering is appreciated and essential to our members, vendors, and sponsors. The Conference Committee continues to plan for in-person conference events, recognizing that current public health conditions mean that if any event takes place, it is likely to be smaller than it has been compared with the last few years. The Conference Committee is also planning virtual events, recognizing Zoom video/phone call presentations are not ideal. The Conference Committee wants to provide the presentations, panel discussions, research updates, and inspiration that our members value.

Planning for the conference begins the year before it occurs. It includes scheduling inspiring and knowledgeable speakers, setting up registration, recruiting vendors and sponsors, working with caterers and venues, designing and laying out the conference program, and more. We are striving to put together a worthwhile schedule at a low cost, which includes the practical presentations and updates on soil health, grains, pulses, and oilseeds, weed management, cover crops, grazing, research updates, and more. The Conference Committee is delighted that Fred Provenza will deliver a keynote address focused on human and livestock health scheduled for December 4 at 1:00 pm.

MOA has taken on new projects this year to serve its membership in diverse ways. These projects include:

- Leading the Montana Food Providers Project that delivers Montana-grown and processed food to Montanans in need.
- Hosting discussions with ranchers, meat cutters, state and federal agency representatives, entrepreneurs, and more to learn about the needs and opportunities for local, decentralized meatpacking.
- More communication with Senator Tester's and Daines's office as well as with Congressman Gianforte's offices.
- Working to bring agronomy training to Montana through the OATS program.
- Lending support to initiatives like the Meat Cutters Journeyman certificate program at Miles Community College.
- Taking a more active role in policy discussions with MOA's affiliated organizations.
- Seeking new ways to connect MOA's members, like filming the farm tour and surveying the membership.
- Promoting and supporting MOA members' businesses.

These days are challenging, but Montana's organic farmers, ranchers, and small business owners are independent and resourceful by nature. Indeed, you can be part of the solutions for durable local organic food supply chains, robust public health, and resilient, decentralized economic activity in our rural communities that will help us adapt and thrive in this unprecedented era. Please reach out should you wish to participate in any of these ventures. Your voice is essential and critical.

The Conference is MOA's primary fundraising event for the year, and not having the event is a grave financial hardship. The MOA Fundraising Committee is working to find new sources of funding, but continuing your memberships, sponsorships, and advertising are vital. Please renew your membership and consider becoming a sponsor. And please, support the businesses that support MOA!

With gratitude - Jamie