

# Organic Matters

Winter 2021 Volume 19 - Issue 1



## MOA Meets with Mike Foster, Montana House Agriculture Committee

Becky Weed, MOA Chair and Jamie Lockman, MOA Executive Director were invited Zoom guests of the Montana State House of Representatives Agriculture Committee for its first meeting on January 12, 2021. The Committee is chaired by Josh Kassmier (R), Fort Benton and co-chaired by Julie Dooling (R), Helena and Andrea Olsen (D), Missoula.

Union, Montana Farm Bureau, Montana Stockgrowers, as well as lobbyists for the Montana Woolgrowers and Montana Agriculture Business Association also introduced themselves to the Committee.

Jamie introduced MOA to the Committee and indicated some of its priorities for the session including legislation that supports organic farming and ranching, value-added initiatives, soil health, and pollinator support.

The House Agriculture Committee meets Tuesdays and Thursdays at 3 PM in Room 137 and also via video link. The Montana Senate Agriculture Committee is chaired by Mike Lang (R), Malta and co-chaired by Kenneth Bogner (R), Miles City and Susan Webber (D) Browning. It meets Tuesdays and Thursdays at 3 PM in Room 337.

Contact Jamie at [moamembership@gmail.com](mailto:moamembership@gmail.com) for the complete list of members with contact information for both Montana House and Senate Agriculture Committees.

The Committee also heard from Mike Foster, Secretary, Montana Department of Agriculture and some key staff members. MOA was grateful to have Secretary Foster attend its virtual annual Board meeting to meet him and learn about his priorities that include working with the Department of Transportation to ensure infrastructure is safe and adequate for transporting agriculture products.

MOA urges you to be in touch with your State legislators and to keep them informed of policies and legislation important to organic agriculture.

Mike Honeycutt, Executive Officer, Montana Department of Livestock and representatives from the Montana Grain Growers, Montana Farmers

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# Unique Opportunity with Terrapin Farm

*The Montana Organic community supported me through OCAM when I moved to this "new" farm 27 years ago. Change is never easy. So it is with very mixed feelings that I am writing the following listing. Please do feel free to share it appropriately and to ask me questions.*

*Thank you all,  
Judy, Terrapin Farm*



Inquiries to [terrapin@aboutmontana.net](mailto:terrapin@aboutmontana.net)

## **Vegetable/Seed organic Farm and Business: For Sale or Lease:**

Experienced farmer (s) wanted for a 27-year certified organic vegetable farm. 7+ acres under cultivation in beautiful NW Montana, tucked in the woods 45 minutes from Glacier National Park. Primarily vegetables and seed crops under contract also established perennial berries, asparagus, and herbs, and more. Infrastructure a-plenty.

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# MOA publishes OPED in *The Missoulian*

The MOA Board and Policy Sub-committee helped draft a public response to comments about the focus of Montana's incoming Gianforte administration published in *The Missoulian* and other Lee Enterprises' Montana newspapers. The OpEd was published on January 6, 2021.

After consultation with his Agricultural Advisory Committee, Governor Gianforte recently appointed a new director for the Department of Agriculture, Mike Foster, formerly Farm Services Administration (FSA) director, legislator in the 1990s, and teacher and coach from Townsend.

In late November, Lee Newspapers carried an article by Tom Lutey reviewing this advisory committee and framing the incoming administration's potential influence on food and agriculture. The news piece began with hope from John Youngberg, executive vice president of the Montana Farm Bureau, for "more support of large, commercial-scale agriculture and less emphasis on crops sold locally on a folding table." Other voices on the committee, however, are weighing in (e.g. entrepreneurial farmers Bob Quinn and Dean Folkvord), so it is premature to predict Gianforte's direction for Montana agriculture.

The Montana Organic Association (MOA) suggests considering the following: Organic grains are currently a small fraction of the total grains produced in the U.S., but organic food sales have consistently increased market share while non-organic food sales are stagnant.

Montana has the second-most certified organic acres in the U.S., ranked No. 1 in organic wheat, emmer, spelt, lentils, chickpeas, and No. 2 in organic flaxseed production. Demand for organic products is so high that the U.S. imports organic grains, meat and other foods from Turkey, Mexico, Italy, Peru and Ecuador. Because of inadequate supplies of U.S.-grown organic grains, imports of organic grains and soybeans soared from \$42 million in 2011 to \$401 million in 2016, according to the Organic Trade Association (OTA).

Furthermore, while the U.S. does not export as much as it imports due to strong domestic demand, the more desirable export markets like Canada, Mexico, European Union, Japan and Taiwan, seek healthful organic food supplies. While Youngberg insists, "we need some folks who are going to step up for commercial ag, the guys who are raising the grain

and cattle," the innovators in agriculture want to step up for crop, food, animal, and human diversity. That means including "the guys raising grain and cattle" as part of a diversified, fair, and de-centralized system. A system that can withstand and mitigate the buffeting of climate shifts, disruptive pandemics, political winds, and holds high nutritional standards, whether for our families, our neighbors, our hospitals and schools, or our trading partners.

Innovation in agriculture is not limited to the certified organic community. Organic is one well-known benchmark, but it is linked in spirit and practice with an array of farm communities experimenting, thriving and struggling in countless ways, reaching into "commercial" ag when minds are open enough.

Innovations in cover-cropping, crop-livestock integration, reduced dependence on chemical inputs, local processing for both local and distant markets, and farmers markets all correlate not so much with size as with creativity. Terms like agroecology, regenerative, sustainable, and local food are proliferating because they are interesting, forward-looking, accessible, healthy and even successful. "Success" can be defined by nutritional value, profitability, resilience, farmers' health, the health of ecosystems and communities that we all reside in — not just by the size of tractors or government safety nets. Governor Gianforte's mantra of "bringing good-paying jobs to Montana," repeated throughout multiple campaigns, suggests that he understands that innovation begins with early adopters that often start small and evolve with success. So, let's expand the vision of "good-paying jobs in Montana" beyond the high-tech screen and include jobs we can grow here, literally, from the ground. The citizens of our state can strive for such an inclusive and far-reaching vision of agriculture if we are bold, creative and clever.

**Becky Weed, MOA Chair**

**Jamie Ryan Lockman, MOA Executive Director**



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# NCAT Publishes New Guide on Soil Health Indicators and Tests - FREE!



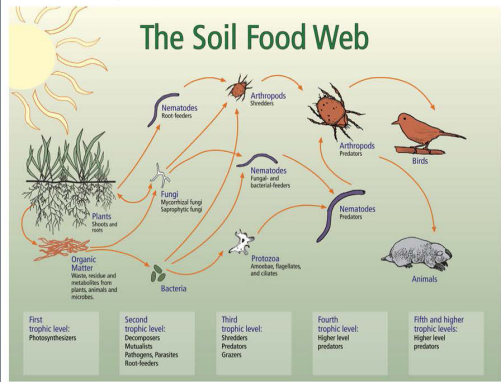
## Soil Health Indicators and Tests

By Barbara Ballouws,  
Texas Institute for Applied  
Environmental Research;  
Mike Morris, NCAT; and  
Colin Mitchell, NCAT  
Published November 2020  
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IP003

Until recently, most soil testing procedures assessed soil fertility, in order to guide appropriate application of nutrient-based fertilizers. Soils do a lot more than just make nutrients available, however. They hold and filter water, cycle nutrients, stabilize organic matter, create habitat for a vast array of organisms, and potentially mitigate against climate change by binding carbon within the soil. Recent years have seen an explosion of new soil health tests that measure organic matter decomposition, nutrient cycling, aggregate stability, carbon sequestration—all of which depend on the activity of soil microorganisms. This publication describes several of the most common soil health assessment methods, including total soil organic matter, active organic matter, soil respiration, aggregate stability, and the Haney soil test. We identify benefits and limitations for each method and provide suggestions and resources for conducting these analyses on your farm or ranch.

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- What Tests Can Use to Assess Soil Health in My Fields?.....5
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The soil food web focuses on micro and larger organisms involved in decomposition. Microorganisms provide many other services and benefits. Source: Ingham, no date

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This material is based upon work supported by the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program through Research and Education grant award number L34-264. Indicators and Soil Conservation Practices for Soil Health and Carbon Sequestration.

ATTRA (www.attra.ncat.org) is a program of the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT). The program is funded through a cooperative agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture's Rural Business-Cooperative Service. Visit the NCAT website (www.ncat.org) for more information on our other sustainable agriculture and energy projects.

### Introduction

While farmers have understood the importance of good-quality soil since the dawn of agriculture, and described it with terms like "soil tilth" and (in some cultures) "fat soil," the concept of soil health only began attracting the attention of scientists and educators in about the 1980s. When synthetic fertilizers were developed in the early 1900s, many soil scientists focused their research on how farmers could either apply more fertilizers or apply them more effectively, to overcome the problems of soil degradation due to erosion or nutrient loss due

Knowing your soil health profile is critical. NCAT recently published a free guide, "Soil Health Indicators and Tests" that helps you evaluate the tests that are best for your operation. This guide is a valuable tool for your soil health toolbox.

"Recent years have seen an explosion of new soil health tests that measure organic matter decomposition, nutrient cycling, aggregate stability, carbon sequestration—all of which depend on the activity of soil microorganisms. This publication describes several of the most common soil health assessment methods, including total soil organic matter, active organic matter, soil respiration, aggregate stability, and the Haney soil test. We identify benefits and limitations for each method and provide suggestions and resources for conducting these analyses on your farm or ranch."

## Additional Recent Resources from NCAT - FREE!!

### REDUCING TILLAGE INTENSITY IN ORGANIC PRODUCTION SYSTEMS

By: George Kuepper

### Podcast Episode 178

### Blockchain and Agriculture



Calling all organic farmers, growers and ranchers: join **Organic Trade Association** in our efforts to promote and protect organic food and farming!

If you are a small- to medium-sized organic farm and already have a membership in one of the organizations allied with OTA's Farmers Advisory Council, you can become a direct member of OTA for only \$50.00! Farmstead members receive full OTA membership benefits and a vote in OTA Board of Directors elections. Take advantage of this opportunity, and for less than the cost of a tank of diesel fuel, you can have a direct role in making OTA the best trade association it can be for the full spectrum of certified organic operations.

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*"In these challenging times, Columbia Grain is taking numerous measures to ensure all of our farmers and employees are supported and safe. We are increasing processing hours at our specialty pulse processing facilities, following all CDC guidelines, following Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), maintaining stringent Food Safety Programs, and adding more team members at our elevators to help farmers stay in their trucks while delivering their grains and pulses. The food supply chain is essential, and we are doing everything necessary to keep all safe and food flowing to nourish the world."*

**Jeff Van Pevenage**, President and CEO



# Value Added Producer Grants



## What does this program do?

The Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) program helps agricultural producers enter into value-added activities related to the processing and marketing of new products. The goals of this program are to generate new products, create and expand marketing opportunities and increase producer income.

You may receive priority if you are a beginning farmer or rancher, a socially-disadvantaged farmer or rancher, a small or medium-sized farm or ranch structured as a family farm, a farmer or rancher cooperative or are proposing a mid-tier value chain.

Grants are awarded through a national competition. Each fiscal year, applications are requested through a notice published in the Federal Register and through an announcement posted on Grants.gov.

Maximum Grant Amount: Planning Grants \$75,000; Working Capital Grants: \$250,000.

Matching Funds Requirements: 50 percent of total project costs.

## Who may apply for this program?

Independent producers, agricultural producer groups, farmer- or rancher-cooperatives, and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures, as defined in the program regulation, are eligible to apply for this program.

## How may funds be used?

Grant and matching funds can be used for planning activities or for working capital expenses related to producing and marketing a value-added agricultural product. Examples of planning activities include conducting feasibility studies and developing business plans for processing and marketing the proposed value-added product. Examples of working capital expenses include:

- Processing costs.
- Marketing and advertising expenses.
- Some inventory and salary expenses.

## How do I get started?

Before you apply:

Request a Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number if your organization doesn't already have one. It should not take more than a few business days to get your number. However, you should plan on requesting it at least a month before the application deadline because you will need that number for the next pre-application step (see below). Register your organization with the System for Award Management (SAM) if you aren't already registered. The registration is free, but you need to complete several steps. It's a good idea to start the registration process at least a month before any application deadline. Before you start the registration process, we suggest reading through the HELP materials available on the SAM website. Then, you will need to create an account. After you create your account by setting up a user ID and password, you can register your organization. Remember, you will need your DUNS number to complete your registration. Also, make a note of your CAGE (Commercial and Government Entity) code and expiration date because you will need those for your application.

## Additional requirements:

Please read the Federal Register notice for the details on how to apply. Applicants should put together the required information at least a month before the application deadline. The extra time allows collection of other required materials such letters of commitment or support from other organizations, a work plan and budget, and other information. Copies of required forms are available from your nearest Rural Development Office. See the Forms & Resources tab for optional forms that may assist you in developing your application.

## Who can answer questions?

If you have questions, you can contact your nearest Rural Development Office.



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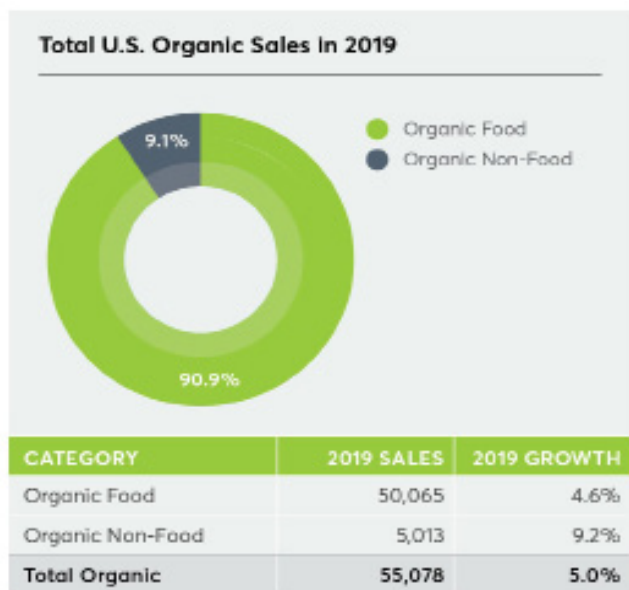
# OTA: COVID-19 will shape organic industry in 2020 after banner year in 2019

Maggie McNeil [mmcneil@ota.com (202) 615-7997]

Washington , DC US(June 9, 2020) -The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic this year -- and its enormous impact on our everyday lives – has already had dramatic consequences for the organic sector in 2020. As shoppers search for healthy, clean food to feed their at-home families, organic food is proving to be the food of choice for home.

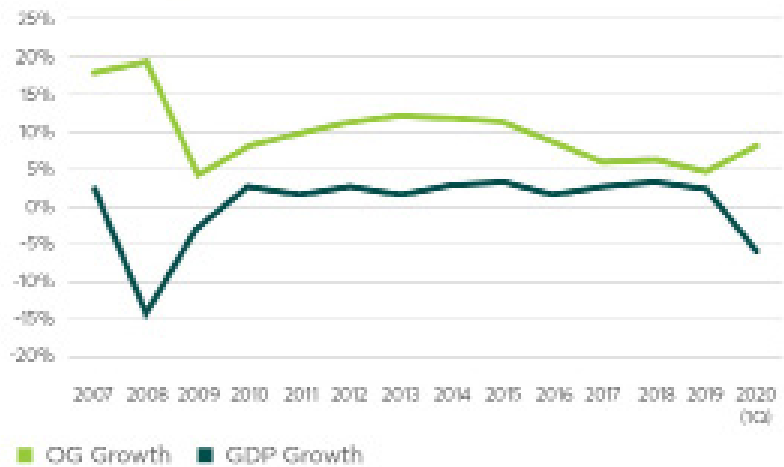
Never before has the food we provide our families been more important, and consumers have turned to the trusted Organic label. Many solid-growth organic categories have seen demand exploding. Organic produce sales for one, after jumping by more than 50 percent in the early days of kitchen stocking, were up more than 20 percent in the spring of 2020. Other categories experiencing softer growth have been seeing big boosts in demand: the run on groceries meant organic milk was in high demand, for example, and sales of organic eggs skyrocketed. Packaged and frozen organic foods saw double-digit growth as consumers upped at-home meal preparation.

Today’s interest in organic may be intensified, but organic’s growing popularity isn’t new. Consumers are eating more organic food and using more organic products than ever before, according to the 2020 Organic Industry Survey released Tuesday by the Organic Trade Association. The U.S. organic sector posted a banner year in 2019, with organic sales in the food and non-food markets totaling a record \$55.1 billion, up a solid 5 percent from the previous year.



Source: Organic Trade Association's 2020 Organic Industry Survey conducted 2/7/2020-3/27/2020 (\$mil., consumer sales).

### Growth of Total Organic Sales vs. U.S. Gross Domestic Product



Source: Organic Trade Association, International Monetary Fund, Bureau of Economic Analysis

Both the food and non-food markets shattered major benchmarks. Organic food sales hit \$50.1 billion, up 4.6 percent. Organic non-food sales totaled just over \$5 billion, up a strong 9.2 percent. Both sectors easily outpaced the general market growth rate of around 2 percent for total food sales and of just 3 percent for total non-food sales.

“Our 2020 survey looks at organic sales in 2019 before the coronavirus outbreak, and it shows that consumers were increasingly seeking out the Organic label to feed their families the healthiest food possible. The pandemic has only increased our desire for clean, healthy food,” said Laura Batcha, CEO and Executive Director of the Organic Trade Association. *Continued on page 13.*



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Continued from page 11.

“Our normal lives have been brought to a screeching halt by the coronavirus. The commitment to the Organic label has always resided at the intersection of health and safety, and we expect that commitment to strengthen as we all get through these unsettled times.”

In the early stages of the COVID-19 outbreak, the Organic Trade Association undertook a multi-pronged effort to look not only at shifting patterns in organic shopping since the crisis began, but to gather intelligence on the overall retail landscape for organic, and on the organic supply chain: where the supply chain is holding together and where it is being challenged. The association worked with Mercaris Data Service and Category Partners strategic insights company to put together the latest insights and outlooks for the organic sector.

**U.S. Organic Food vs. Total Food Sales, Growth & Penetration, 2010–2019**

CATEGORY	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Organic Food	22,961	25,148	27,965	31,378	35,099	39,006	42,507	45,209	47,862	50,065
Growth (%)	8.0%	9.5%	11.2%	12.2%	11.9%	11.1%	9.0%	6.4%	5.9%	4.6%
Total Food	677,354	713,985	740,450	760,486	787,575	807,998	812,907	822,160	840,972	860,583
Growth (%)	1.2%	5.4%	3.7%	2.7%	3.6%	2.6%	0.6%	1.1%	2.3%	2.3%
<b>Organic (as % Total)</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	<b>3.5%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>4.8%</b>	<b>5.2%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>	<b>5.8%</b>

Source: Organic Trade Association's 2020 Organic Industry Survey conducted 2/7/2020 - 3/27/2020 (\$mil, consumer sales).

The association also conducted an online flash poll of 3,188 “likely organic” shoppers in late April and early May. More than 90 percent of respondents indicated that in their current food shopping, organic is more important than ever.

For more information on COVID-19 impacts, see the webinar presented by the trade association in May on organic’s shifting retail landscape as a result of the coronavirus.

## The way it was in 2019:

### Organic produce maintains top position.

Say organic to food shoppers and the first things many of us think of are organic apples and strawberries, organic carrots and lettuce. In other words, produce. Organic generally still matters most to us when we’re shopping in the fresh produce aisles. Organic fruit and vegetable sales in 2019 were up nearly 5 percent, hitting \$18 billion, as the category continues to be the star of the organic sector, and often the starting point for organic food buying. Millennials and younger generations have grown up with organic, and remain the growth drivers for this category. Organic produce makes up almost a third of all organic food sales, and organic fruits and vegetables, including fresh, frozen, canned, and dried, have now captured 15 percent of the fruits and vegetables market in this country.

### Organic dairy working its way out of oversupply; meat and poultry showing robust growth.

In 2019, growth remained low for organic dairy, but late in the year, the category slowly started to move away from the period of oversupply of skim milk and not enough butterfat that hampered growth in 2017 and 2018. Overall, the \$6.6 billion category grew at a rate of almost 2 percent. Organic dairy is holding its own, and growing faster than the conventional market, with the overall dairy category growing only 0.2 percent. Organic dairy & eggs accounted for just over 8 percent of the total dairy and eggs market. Organic meat, poultry, and fish remained the smallest organic food category in 2019, with \$1.4 billion in sales, but the segment also saw almost 10 percent growth, the highest growth of any organic food category. Organic poultry remained the organic protein of choice, and the \$865 million poultry market made up more than half of the sales for the organic meat, poultry and seafood category. *Continued on page 15.*



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*Continued from page 13.*

### **Spicing up home cooking with organic condiments.**

What to have with your organic meat? Organic ketchup, of course, or maybe organic chipotle or curry sauce for the more adventurous. Although it is the second smallest organic food category, the products in the organic condiment category saw some of the biggest growth. Sales of organic ethnic sauces – curry, chipotle, sriracha, Korean BBQ – reached \$77 million for the strongest growth rate ever of more than 23 percent. Organic ketchup sales also spiked in 2019 to \$57 million, up almost 16 percent, thanks to healthier versions of this classic condiment, including sugar-free and low sugar offerings. Organic spices recorded \$345 million in sales with more than 15 percent growth.

### **Outside the organic food tent, good growth in the non-food market.**

The organic non-food market crossed the \$5 billion mark in 2019 for the first time, with strong growth of 9.2 percent. It now accounts for just over 9 percent of total organic sales. Growing concerns about toxins and chemicals not just in our bodies, but also on our skin, in our homes, and in our environment, along with wider availability of products, have created a robust market for the organic non-food sector. Fiber sales – sales of clothing, bedding, mattresses -- continued to lead the sector, and crossed the \$2 billion mark in 2019, up just over 12 percent. Organic dietary supplements also were a standout, with sales up just over 10 percent to a record \$1.7 billion.

This year's survey was conducted early in 2020 from February 7 through March 27 and produced on behalf of the Organic Trade Association by Nutrition Business Journal (NBJ). Nearly 200 companies completed a significant portion of the in-depth survey. Executive summaries of the survey are available to the media upon request. The full report can be purchased; online orders can be placed on this page.

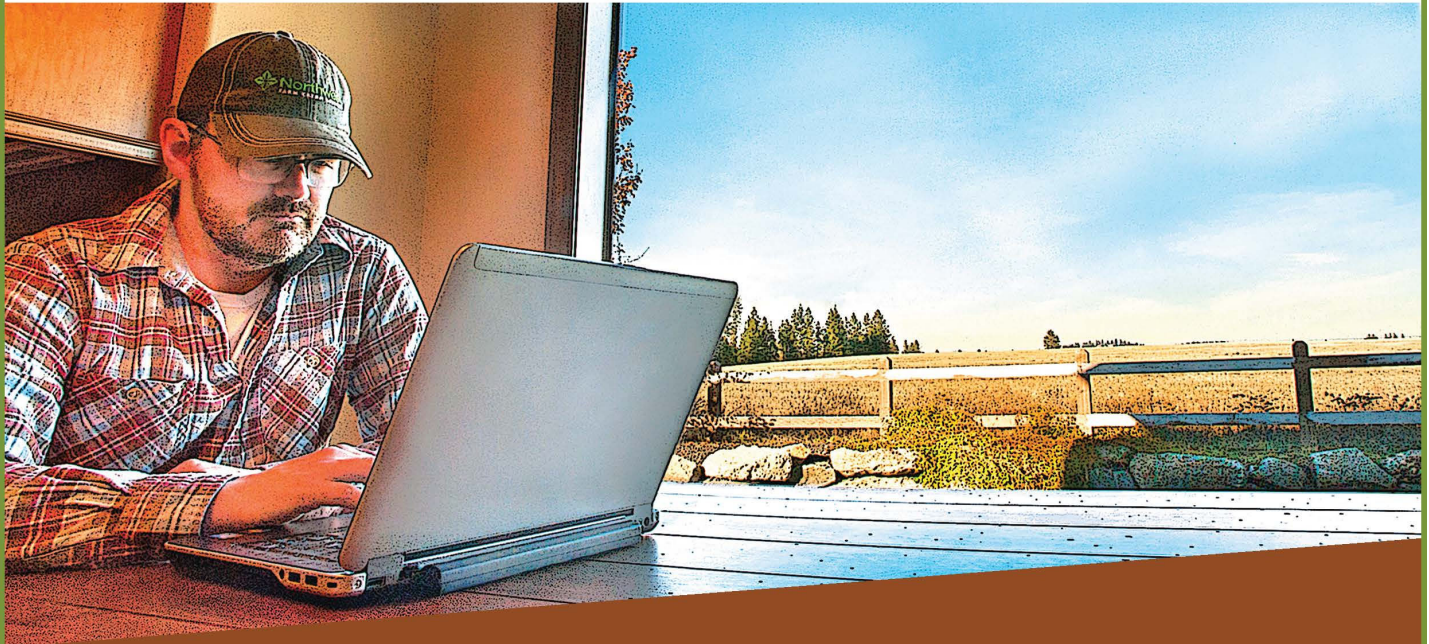
## **What's ahead?**

While there were certain growth trajectories taking shape going into 2020, the onset of COVID-19 turned the organic food marketplace upside down early in the year. Prior to 2020, the organic market has been growing steadily year over year. The U.S. economy has been battered by the pandemic, and experts say there are a few ways that could play out for organic. Because people are price sensitive, there could be a slowdown in the growth of organic sales. Or, because people are increasingly aware of their health and looking for cleaner products, they may be willing to invest in premium products.

Influenced by COVID, all of the staples categories, from dairy and eggs, to breads, pastas, rice and grains and baking supplies, such as flour and baking yeast, are expected to see increased growth in 2020, provided supply can meet demand. In the non-food organic market, organic vitamins and immunity-related products are expected to see strong growth, as are organic supplements and household products.

“It's hard to know what's ahead of us, but consumers will continue to trust in and depend on the Organic label,” said the Organic Trade Association's Batcha. “Organic producers and processors – indeed the entire organic supply chain – have been working around the clock through this difficult time to keep our stores filled with healthy, toxic-free and sustainably produced organic food and products. Organic is going to be there for the consumer.”

*The Organic Trade Association (OTA) is the membership-based business association for organic agriculture and products in North America. OTA is the leading voice for the organic trade in the United States, representing over 9,500 organic businesses across 50 states. Its members include growers, shippers, processors, certifiers, farmers' associations, distributors, importers, exporters, consultants, retailers and others. OTA's Board of Directors is democratically elected by its members. OTA's mission is to promote and protect ORGANIC with a unifying voice that serves and engages its diverse members from farm to marketplace. MOA is an OTA member.*



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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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Jamie Ryan Lockman

Organic Matters is published quarterly by the Montana Organic Association. Send queries, suggestions, letters, and requests to:

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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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1/2 page ad -- \$65 (Size: 7-1/2W x 5H") -OR-  
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1/4 page ad -- \$40 (Size: 3-1/2W x 4-1/2"H)

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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

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*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)



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

*All Memberships renew on December 1, 2021.*

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

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

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Numbers: \_\_\_\_\_

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

MOA communicates via email several times per year.

Please check this box to receive email notifications:

Membership Level (select one):

Basic Membership		Premium Memberships	
<b>Individual</b> - \$30		<b>Lifetime</b> - 2 memberships, 10% discount on ads, website directory listing - \$750	
<b>Household</b> - 2 memberships - \$50		<b>Lifetime Business</b> - 2 memberships, 10% discount on ads, website directory listing - \$2500	
<b>Farm/Ranch Business</b> - 2 memberships, 5% discount on ads, website directory listing - \$75			
<b>Organic Business</b> - 2 memberships, 10% discount on ads, website directory listing - \$250			

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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)

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# Montana Coop Development Center: Is a Coop Right for You?

## Cooperative Structure

A cooperative is a state-chartered business, organized and operating as a corporation under applicable state laws.

**CONTROL.** Management is controlled by a board of directors who are elected members. Each member has only one vote regardless of the amount of equity the member has in the cooperative.

**CAPITAL.** Equity comes from the members, rather than outside investors. The member's liability is limited to the amount he/she has invested.

**EARNINGS.** Earnings (or losses) are allocated to the members based on the use of the cooperative during the year, not the equity held. The allocation may be distributed in cash or retained as additional equity.

**TAXES.** Earnings are taxed once, either as the corporation's income when earned or as income of the members when allocated to them.

**LIFE.** A cooperative usually has perpetual existence. Members can routinely join or resign without disrupting ongoing operations.

## Business Model Comparison

MODEL	OWNERSHIP & CONTROL	BENEFITS	CONSIDERATIONS
<b>Cooperative</b> <i>Create wealth, provide services, and benefit members</i>	<b>Members:</b> ownership based on holding share of common stock. Financed by sale of shares to members. Limited legal liability. Members democratically set policy and elect board of directors. One member, one vote.	Social business founded to provide services for members and community. Legally considered a corporation. Earnings from business are taxed once.	Profits are allocated to members based on level of use (patronage). Each member has equal voting power.
<b>Sole Proprietorship</b> <i>Generate wealth for owner</i>	<b>Individual owner:</b> Financed by owner. Full legal liability. Owner sets policy and manages business.	Simple and inexpensive to start. Owner reports on personal tax return.	Owner personally liable for business debts.
<b>General Partnership</b> <i>Generate wealth for partners</i>	<b>Partner owners:</b> Financed by partners. Full legal liability. Partners vote in proportion to investment. Partners set policy and manage business.	Partners report on personal tax returns.	Partners personally liable for business debts. Profits distributed in proportion to investment.
<b>Corporation (C)</b> <i>Generate wealth for shareholders</i>	<b>Stockholder Ownership:</b> Ownership determined by number of shares held. Financed by sale of stock. One vote per share of common stock. Policy set by Board of directors elected by majority stockholders. One vote per share.	Owners have limited personal liability for business debts. Owners can split corporate profit among owners and corporation, paying lower overall tax rate.	Most expensive to start. Separate taxable entity. Taxed twice, once at the corporate level and then at the individual level.
<b>Nonprofit Corporation</b>	Board Members elected or appointed by founder or	Founded around societal interests or causes.	Cannot return profit to their

<i>Benefit the public</i>	members. Board sets policy based on set by-laws and articles of incorporation documents.	Corporation doesn't pay income taxes. Contributions to charitable corporations are tax-deductible.	members. Membership does not grant ownership. Full tax advantage available only to groups organized for charitable, scientific, educational, literary or religious purposes.
<b>Limited Liability Company</b> <i>Generate Wealth for partners</i>	2 or more Partner owners. Financed by partners. Limited legal liability. Partners vote in proportion to investment. Partners set policy and manage business.	Owners have limited personal liability for business debts.	Profit and loss can be allocated differently than ownership interests.

## The 7 Cooperative Principles

Cooperatives follow seven internationally recognized principles that guide their business conduct.

1. **Voluntary and Open membership.** Anyone can join a co-op.
2. **Democratic Member Control.** Members control their business by deciding how it's run and who leads it.
3. **Member Economic Participation.** Members contribute to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative.
4. **Autonomy and Independence.** Co-ops are independent organizations controlled by their members.
5. **Education, Training, and Information.** Co-ops provide education and training so their members may effectively run the cooperative.
6. **Cooperation Among Cooperatives.** Co-ops believe working together is the best strategy to empower their members.
7. **Concern for Community.** Co-ops contribute to the sustainable development of their communities.



Montana Cooperative Development Center

406-727-1517  
PO Box 3027  
Great Falls, MT 59403

[mcdc@mcdc.coop](mailto:mcdc@mcdc.coop)

[www.mcdc.coop](http://www.mcdc.coop)



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Tuesday, January 19, 2021

**CONTACT:**

Walt Anseth, Montana Department of Agriculture, (406) 444-5420

Chelsi Bay, Montana Department of Agriculture, (406) 444-3684

**Junior Ag Loans Available Through Montana Department of Agriculture**

*Loans up to \$8,500 available to young Montana farmers and ranchers*

**Helena, Mont.** – Montana youth ages 21 and under may be eligible for up to \$8,500 in loan financing through the Montana Department of Agriculture’s (MDA) Junior Agriculture Loan Program.

“With the average age of farmers and ranchers being nearly 60 years old, supporting the next generation is vital to Montana’s livelihood,” said MDA Director Mike Foster. “The Junior Ag Loan Program plays an important role in connecting young people who are passionate about pursuing projects in agriculture with the financing they need to get started.”

More than 60 young farmers and ranchers currently participate in the Montana Junior Agriculture Loan Program which was developed to assist rural youth in developing or expanding agribusiness projects. Program benefits often far exceed the actual loan for program participants. Many young men and women that were unable to secure conventional financing due to age or inadequate collateral have utilized the program as a means for establishing financing experience and advancing their project’s monetary value.

Projects can involve crop and livestock production, custom farming, marketing and distribution, processing, and other financially feasible activities. Up to 90 percent of projects can be financed through the program with repayment taking place for up to five years. Junior Agriculture Loan Program applications are available on the department’s website at [agr.mt.gov/I-Want-To/Apply-For/Grants-Loans/Junior-Agriculture-Loans](http://agr.mt.gov/I-Want-To/Apply-For/Grants-Loans/Junior-Agriculture-Loans).

The Montana Department of Agriculture’s mission is to protect producers and consumers, and to enhance and develop agriculture and allied industries. For more information on the Montana Department of Agriculture, visit [agr.mt.gov](http://agr.mt.gov).

###





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## MOA has a YouTube Channel!

This year, MOA had a virtual field tour and needed a place to post the videos. Thus, MOA gained a YouTube Channel.

In addition to videos of the farm tour at Mark and Jane Smith's Aspen Island Ranch, you'll find recorded presentations from this Fall. Make sure to subscribe to the MOA Channel to stay up-to-date with the latest videos.

Do you have a video you'd like to share on the channel? Let's do it! Reach out to Jamie at [moamembership@gmail.com](mailto:moamembership@gmail.com)

Click [Montana Organic Association YouTube Channel](#) here to connect to MOA's videos.

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# Integrated Livestock in Fruit and Vegetable Production

Fall 2020  
Amy Hutton  
MSU Western Agriculture Research Center

Livestock have been integrated into crop production systems for most of agriculture's history, contributing soil fertility, residue breakdown, and essential weed and pest control to farm systems. Expanding crop production enterprises by incorporating livestock can benefit farmers' bottom line and conserve resources. However, integrated systems also come with unique risks and costs that may make them unfeasible for some producers. At the Western Agricultural Research Center (WARC), we hope to help Montana fruit and vegetable producers access more market opportunities, improve farm efficiency, and diversify enterprises to better weather the challenges of modern agriculture.

WARC's Integrated Livestock project investigates the effects of livestock grazing on food safety, weed control, and soil health for fruit and vegetable farms. Through research trials and producer input, we are compiling information to guide Montana farmers in making low-risk and profitable decisions about integrated management systems.

Organic specialty crop producers struggle to compete in many markets, with the odds stacked against them in terms of labor costs, processing and marketing burdens, and simple economies of scale. Integrating livestock can make farm businesses more sustainable, both financially and environmentally, but comes with a unique set of challenges. Most notably, introducing animals and fresh manure into crop production areas can contaminate produce. Produce accounts for 46% of foodborne illness

outbreaks every year in the US, making up a larger share of hospitalizations and deaths than any other food category, including dairy and meat. This health and liability risk is especially important to consider with crops eaten raw such as dessert apples and leafy greens. Other concerns with integrated livestock systems include damage to crops, soil compaction, predation risk, and high labor cost. However, the long term benefits to farm income, soil health, and crop vigor can outweigh these risks if managed deliberately.

Especially for produce wholesalers, regulatory burdens may add a significant layer of cost and make integrating livestock or manure into crop production very difficult. Adhering to a three or six month time window between livestock presence and crop harvest - as required by organic certification - might actually



negate most of the valuable benefits to weed and pest control. However, the 90 and 120 day regulations many farmers adhere to are based on very little empirical data, and regulatory agencies have reached out to researchers for more studies to inform these rules moving forward. By using an immature cider apple orchard for the bulk of the study, we are able to raise livestock in the orchard right up until "harvest" season in October without any danger from foodborne pathogens, testing for bacteria on the soil surface from just 7 days to the full 90 days after livestock presence. We are replicating the study each season with poultry and sheep within two mature apple orchards with different ground covers and irrigation systems to better understand factors other than time that may significantly affect bacteria die-off.

We are testing for the four types of pathogens most likely

to cause foodborne illness in produce: salmonella, listeria, campylobacter, and E. coli. Thus far, listeria and campylobacter haven't turned up in any of our 108 samples, but two samples did test positive for traces of salmonella. Both contaminated samples were sourced from plots collected within two weeks of livestock presence. After compiling our first two seasons of data, enterobacteria appear to die off much more quickly on the bare soil plots than on plots with thickly vegetated orchard floor, and pathogen numbers consistently drop after the first two weeks. We don't have a large enough data set to confirm safe management practices, but we can advise that producers take more caution and incorporate a longer time window before harvest when grazing livestock on vegetated soil surfaces and when using spray rather than drip irrigation. And while there are never guarantees of good animal health, maintaining stock in low-stress environments with adequate space and frequent paddock rotations does reduce the chances of gastrointestinal bacteria overgrowth and consequent

contamination. We also highly recommend that producers include their own pathogen testing in on farm food safety plans, and we are always available to advise producers on cost-effective testing strategies.

When carefully designed, integrating farm enterprises reduces costs while diversifying and expanding profits. In addition to studying food safety, our research has measured the effects of poultry and manure using soil testing, annual leaf tissue analysis, and pathogen testing during harvest season. Weed and pest counts in livestock and control plots are recorded to track changes, and tree loss and growth help track effects of each treatment type. To provide growers with financial comparisons of integrated livestock and standard production practices, we've recorded all costs and revenues of the livestock enterprise to compare with expenses for the control plots.

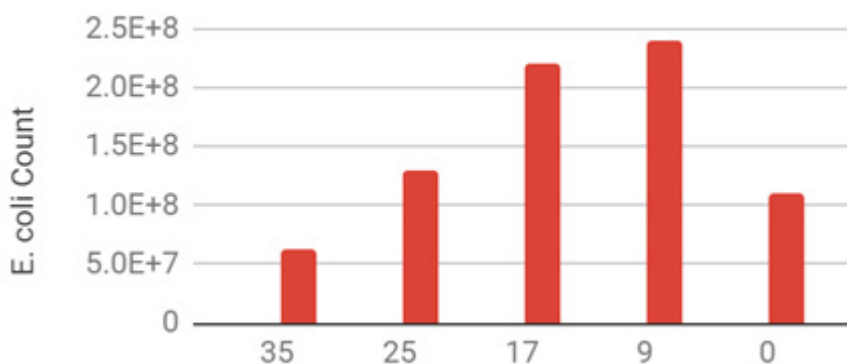
Data trends are helping us guide growers in determining whether integrated livestock can offer savings in labor, input costs,

or resource consumption within their production systems. While industrial-scale production systems are hard to compete with between economies of scale and vertical integration, diversified farm systems have the advantage of both recycling animal waste and utilizing weeds, lost crops, and crop residues. Livestock can also provide producers with additional revenue streams, creating cash flow for more months of every year, or even providing income in the years before a perennial crop like grapes starts producing.

We are always more than happy to work with Montana producers on developing integrated systems, troubleshooting existing systems, or learning from their successes, so please get in contact if you have any questions or suggestions! Learn more on our website or contact our project manager Amy at amy.hutton1@montana.edu.

Website link: [https://agresearch.montana.edu/warc/research\\_current/integrated-livestock/index.html](https://agresearch.montana.edu/warc/research_current/integrated-livestock/index.html)

Mature Orchard E. coli



## Send a Montana Grown and Made ORGANIC Gift Box!!!

MOA teamed with [The Last Best Box](#) to put together an Organic gift box that features a collection of some of Montana's finest organic products just in time for holiday gifts!

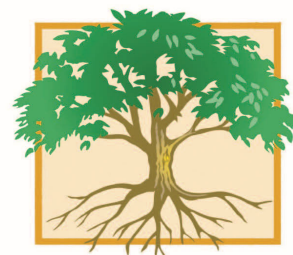
The Last Best Box is a subscription gift box program that sends out a box of Montana-grown and made products every two months. It also provides custom boxes like [The Montana Organic Box](#). Your purchase directly supports MOA's organic farmers and processors. The box is offered at \$39.99 plus shipping. MOA does not receive any proceeds from this purchase, rather it is pleased to support Montana businesses committed to organic.

[The Montana Organic Box](#) includes Organic Hot Fudge Sauce from [King's Cupboard](#) (Red Lodge), [Organic Kracklin' Kamut®](#) from Big Sandy Organics (Big Sandy), Organic Raw Oatmeal from [Montana Gluten Free](#) (Belgrade), Organic Petite Crimson Lentils from [Timeless Seeds](#) (Ulm), Organic Cherry Jam from [The Orchard at Flathead Lake](#) (Bigfork), and Big Sky Organic Coffee from [Hunter Bay Coffee Roasters](#) (Lolo).



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# NAHMS Swine 2021 Small Enterprise Study

2021 Study Launch  
August 2020

From May 2021 through July 2021, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS), in collaboration with the USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), will conduct its third national study of U.S. small enterprise swine operations.

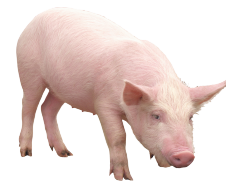
The study will take an in-depth look at small enterprise swine operations (fewer than 1,000 pigs) and provide new information regarding animal health and management practices used on these operations, as well as the alternative marketing strategies they implement.

Approximately 5,000 swine operations from 38 States (Figure 1.) will be asked to participate in the study. These States account for about 95 percent of U.S. swine operations with fewer than 1,000 pigs.

Small enterprise swine production is a growing sector of the U.S. swine industry due to its role as a primary supplier of many niche-market products. Small enterprise swine production in the United States is very diverse, which creates unique information needs for the industry.

Study objectives include the following

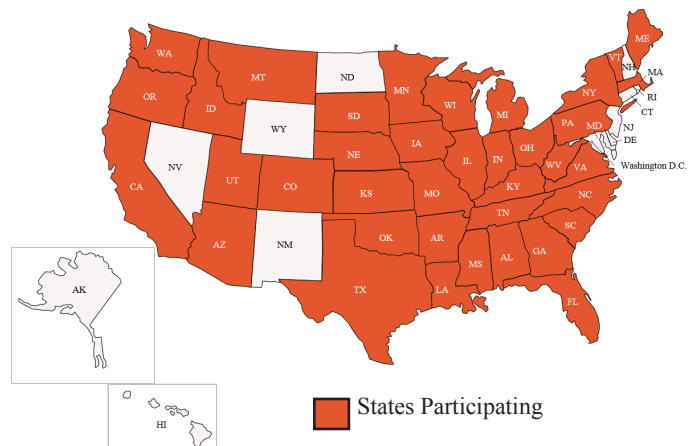
- Describe current health and production practices on small enterprise operations.
- Describe trends in swine health and disease management practices on small enterprise swine operations.
- Characterize movement, mortality, and slaughter channels on small enterprise swine operations.
- Examine differences in marketing practices and movements on small and large U.S. swine operations.



**Figure 1. States participating in the NAHMS Swine 2021 Small Enterprise Study**

## Study Objectives

The focus of this study is to characterize the opportunities, risks and health challenges faced by small enterprise swine producers. Data on health and management practices will be compared with similar data collected in 2007 and 2012, which will provide a picture of trends in U.S. swine production on small enterprise operations.





## Study Activities

As with all NAHMS studies, participating in the Swine 2021 Small Enterprise study is voluntary.

In May 2021, selected producers will be mailed a letter describing the study and be provided with a questionnaire to be completed and returned either by mail or web. Selected producers that don't respond will be called by a NASS representative to arrange a convenient time to complete the questionnaire via telephone interview.



## Benefits to Participating

If you are selected to participate in this important study and choose to do so, the confidential information you provide will benefit the U.S. swine industry by

- Providing transparent, credible information on industry practices that will help counter misinformation;
- Benchmarking current production practices;
- Assisting the U.S. swine industry to understand disease preparedness strengths and vulnerabilities;
- Helping policymakers and industry stakeholders make science-based decisions;
- Providing data that will be used by academia, pharmaceutical researchers, and private enterprises to identify and focus on vital issues related to swine health and productivity on small enterprises; and
- Identifying educational needs related to health and production on small enterprise operations.



## Scientific Approach

NAHMS was established to collect accurate and valuable information on animal health and management in the United States. NAHMS studies are national in scope, science based, statistically valid, collaborative, voluntary, and anonymous.



## Confidentiality

Because NAHMS studies rely on voluntary participation, the privacy of every participant is protected. Only those collecting study data know the identity of respondents. No name or contact information will ever be associated with individual data, and no data will ever be reported in a way that could reveal the identity of a participant. Data are presented only in an aggregate or summary manner.



## For More Information

USDA-APHIS-VS-CEAH  
NRRC Building B, M.S. 2E7  
2150 Centre Avenue  
Fort Collins, CO 80526-8117  
Phone: 970.494.7216  
Email: [NAHMS@usda.gov](mailto:NAHMS@usda.gov)

Or visit NAHMS at: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/nahms>

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**Thank you!**

**MOA Sponsors and Members!**



Thank you Vilicus Farms for Supporting MOA!

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)



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*Growing Montana’s Hemp Industry With Honesty and Integrity*  
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For questions regarding **Montana Industrial Hemp Processing Inc.** please call **Paul Smith 1-303-856-4464**



# The Soil Health Subcommittee Bill: A Strong Montana from the Ground Up

The Montana Soil Health Subcommittee Bill will appoint a soil health task force to explore how the state can promote and support farming and ranching methods that improve the health of our soils, and the yield and profitability of our agricultural lands. By establishing a task force, Montana can identify soil health priorities and ensure limited federal, state, and private resources are most effectively directed to help farmers and ranchers strengthen Montana's soil foundation. Key components of the bill include:

- **Diverse Task Force:** A 15-member task force will make recommendations on the role of a state soil health program, its objectives, and how it would function so that Montana's farmers and ranchers, Tribes, communities, and other stakeholders can reap the benefits of healthy soil.
- **Public Involvement:** The task force will invite broad public input from stakeholders across the state to solicit feedback on local needs and how best to address them.
- **Research and Assessment:** The task force will explore the status of soil health conditions and programming in Montana, identify the practices best positioned to build healthy soils, and report on the ability of soil health investments to contribute to strong rural communities and a healthy environment. The task force will assess barriers to adopting soil health practices and opportunities to address the most pressing needs identified by Montana stakeholders.
- **Reporting:** The task force will share findings and recommendations for a state soil health program by September 2022.

## SOIL HEALTH REQUIRES COORDINATED STATEWIDE ACTION

Keeping soil healthy is especially important to Montana, where agriculture is the leading industry, generating over \$3.5 billion in 2019. Montana statute recognizes the importance of soil health to the resiliency of its economy and working lands. Montana even has a state soil, the Scobey Series, designated by the Montana State Legislature in 2015.<sup>1</sup> Some farmers and ranchers are employing practices to increase soil organic matter and protect the long-term functionality of their soil, which also helps reduce erosion, increase crop yields, and protect against floods and drought. While federal programs support the adoption of soil-building practices and some conservation districts have built soil health programs, state leadership can address existing gaps to increase the pace and scale of practice adoption. The task force established through this bill will identify ways to help farmers and ranchers already employing soil health practices and develop guidance for scaling up the adoption of soil-building practices in Montana.

# *A View From the Director*

*Jamie Ryan Lockman, Executive Director*

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In preparation for the 2021 Montana Legislature 67th Session, MOA became a Grow Montana member, a coalition of more than twenty Montana-based food and agriculture organizations. Its focus is food policy that promotes community economic development and education policies that support sustainable Montana-owned food production, processing, and distribution. Among the coalition's priorities is policies that improve Montanan's access to healthy local foods.

Among the coalition members is the Montana Department of Commerce, the Governor's Office of Economic Development, AERO, Montana Farmers Union, the Intertribal Agriculture Council, Northern Plains Resource Council, and more. The coalition allows MOA to work on policy initiatives and legislation at the state level by networking, accessing professionals experienced with drafting legislation, working with a paid professional lobbyist, and more.

Grow Montana is sponsoring two bills this legislative session; one that would establish a grant program for Farm to School and another that would designate an interim committee to study establishing a statewide soil health program. The Farm to School bill language is not in the final draft form. Still, this initiative's goal would be to establish a state program administered by the Montana Office of Public Instruction that would help schools purchase healthy Montana grown and raised food for their students. This bill would further study the economic impact of this program.

The Montana Soil Health Subcommittee Bill (LC1256) is drafted and will be submitted to the Senate Natural Resources Committee by Senator Pat Flowers (D- Bozeman). If this bill passes, it will designate a soil health task force to explore Montana establishing a soil health program that would identify soil health priorities. The goal would be to coordinate federal, state, and private resources that support farming and ranching methods that improve soil health and enhance agricultural yield and profitability.

Other Montana Legislature bills that you should be aware of are LC3071, Country of Labeling (COOL) sponsored by Rep. Frank Smith (D – Poplar); LC1562, Right to Repair, sponsored by Rep. Katie Sullivan (D- Missoula), Rep. Willis Curdy (D- Missoula), and Sen. Mark Sweeney (D – Philipsburg); HB17, Extend Alternative Energy Tax Credits to All Income Levels, sponsored by Rep. Jim Hamilton (D – Bozeman); HB94, Expand Support for Montana's Next Generation of Ag Producers, sponsored by Rep. Kenneth Walsh (R – Twin Bridges); and HB150, \$10/ton Price on excessive climate pollution, sponsored by Rep. Mary Ann Dunwell (D- Helena).

I urge you to reach out to your legislators to let them know your position on these and any essential bills. The Montana Legislature website has lookup features for bills, legislators, committees, and more. An active citizenry is vital for a robust Democracy; your voice is valued and needed.

*Jamie Ryan Lockman*