

WINTER 2023

 MONTANA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

# Spokesman

WE CARE FOR THE COUNTRY



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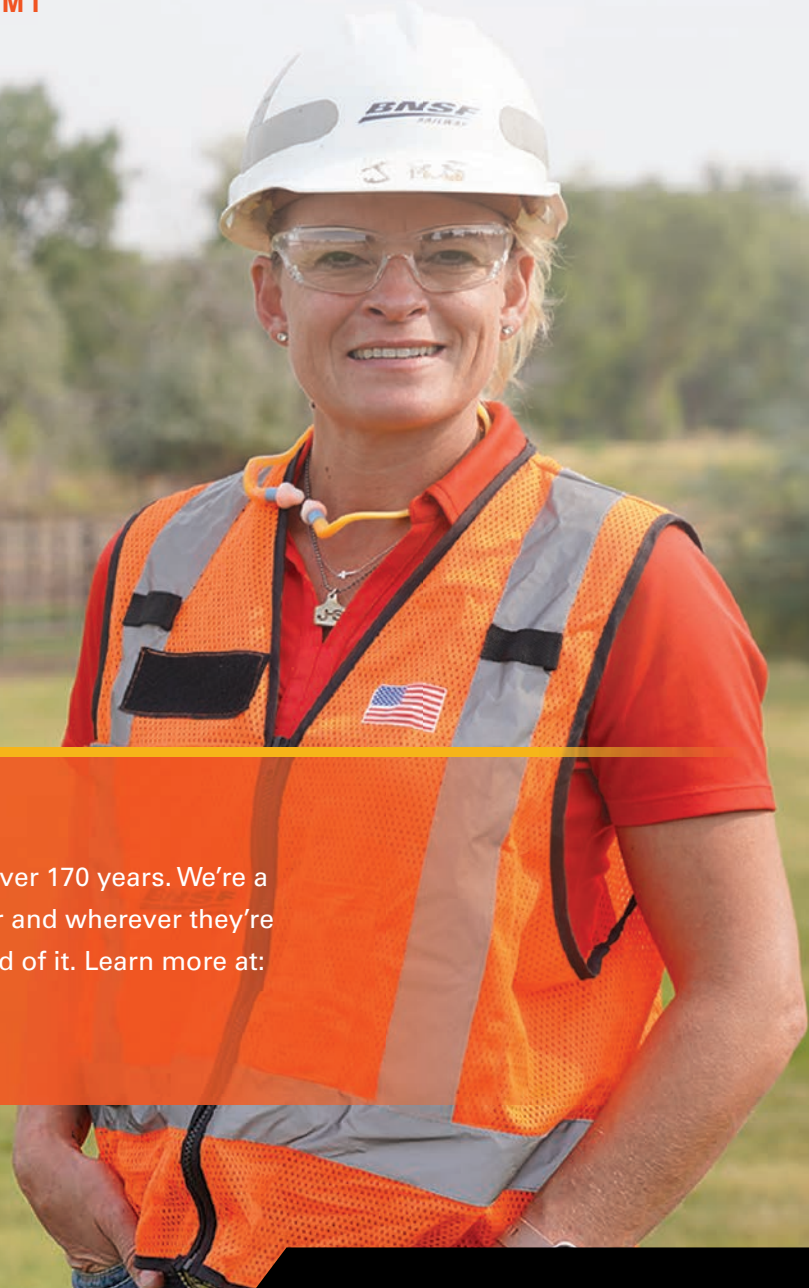
**MFBF CONVENTION  
PHOTO GALLERY**

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A publication for the more than 20,000 member families of the Montana Farm Bureau Federation

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INDUSTRY THAT SUPPORTS  
AMERICAN FARMERS.”

JESSA, DIVISION ENGINEER, BILLINGS, MT



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# Spokesman

**MF** MONTANA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

WE CARE FOR THE COUNTRY



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Josie guards her sheep.  
*Photographer Renetta Phillippi received second place in the WLC Photo Contest with another photo of Josie.*

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# Reflecting on the past year

**A**s I reflect on the past Montana Farm Bureau Federation year, I think of the events and changes that occurred and believe the 2022 ride is one for the history books.

This organization began 2022 deep in building project decisions and oversight. We ended the year moving into a new building. Isn't the dead of winter a wonderful time to move? (The 2023 MFBF Summer Conference will bring opportunities for members to visit, tour and enjoy our new space.)

The many leadership development and member engagement activities offered, sponsored or wholly directed by the Montana Farm Bureau Federation began early in 2022. The ACE class attended their first gathering in January and proceeded through the year until their final presentations and celebrations in November. REAL Montana struggled with COVID restrictions but the last class was able to wrap up their training with a May class

trip to the semi-international destination of Puerto Rico followed by a quick visit to the dramatically different agriculture and natural resource industries surrounding the Houston, Texas area. The new REAL Montana class began their two-year commitment in September.

The MFB Foundation Youth Speech Contest, held in conjunction with the Annual FFA Convention in March, was a great success, with many participants in grades 7-9 having the chance to compete for cash prizes while they delivered prepared speeches to Farm Bureau member judges. Shortly thereafter, the MFBF Summer Conference brought

many members to the table to discuss potential legislative issues, current political affairs, and critical policy topics that needed attention, research and proposals for resolution. We listened from several great speakers who brought topics such as a beef industry update, an agriculture economic outlook, an insight into water in Montana, and the future of the role of the Department of Revenue in agriculture. I am usually amazed at the amount of information there is if one takes the opportunity to attend these meetings.

As a leader for the Montana Farm Bureau Federation, there were several chances to expand my leadership portfolio. Following all the training and workshops at the American Farm Bureau Convention in Atlanta, the Western Leadership Conference convened in southern Utah late in January to exchange ideas and brainstorm for new ways to engage members both young and old. The AFBF Council of

Presidents along with the Western Presidents, Administrators and National Affairs meetings were both held in July.

A special event for the year was a Montana visit from American Farm Bureau President Zippy Duvall and his lovely wife, Jennifer, which wrapped up our summer. My favorite adventures of the entire year, though, were when I got the chance to visit members at their homes, tour their ranches or farms, and learn about their family histories and businesses. Montana Farm Bureau has a strong foundation of member families and every one makes me proud to be one of you.

The year has also brought us change and loss. We wished a happy retirement to our long-time governmental relations partner executive vice president and friend, John Youngberg. Scott Kulbeck, after serving Montana Farm Bureau in many capacities and growing our programs, services, and benefits, became our new executive vice president the first of September. He hit the ground running and is making some exciting changes while keeping programs and staff strong. We said our final goodbyes to several long-time Farm Bureau members who served our organization for many, many years. These folks were responsible for growing our MFBF membership, establishing our Montana Farm Bureau Foundation for fundraising and education, encouraging the establishment of our Political Action Committee and Young Farmer & Rancher program, and too many other accomplishments to mention. We will miss them. With them in mind I jotted this down and wanted to share.

*A year of amazing beginnings, a year of cherished endings, a year of significant loss and a year of incredible growth.*

*I will miss you, the cowboy, long in the saddle and rich in wisdom and insight to guide us as we seek to serve the young.*

*I will miss you, the farmer, abundant in experience and generous in ideas as we seek to grow into your vision.*

*And I will miss you, the leader, designated so by your peers because you did lead us to places we thought not possible and you forged partnerships where none were known.*

*We have grown in spirit, in strength and in confidence and we have all of you to thank.*

*Remember your roots, remember your blessings; remember your gifts and how important it is to share them.*

May your new year be filled with many blessings, good health, work/family balance, and great times spent in the company of those who love you best.



**Cyndi Johnson**  
President, MFBF



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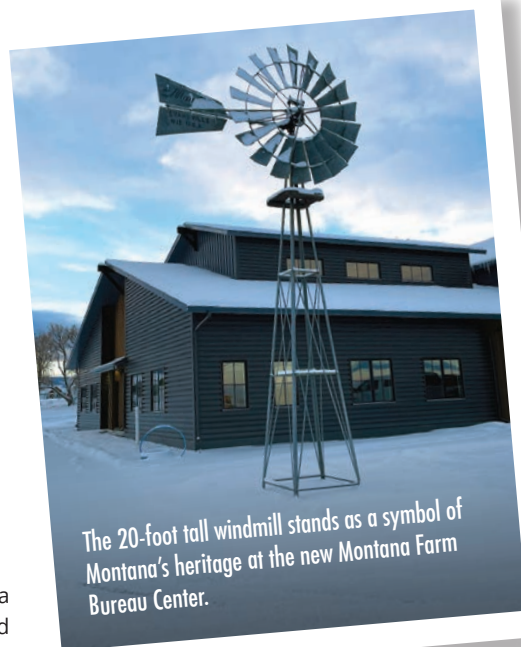
# A New Year Full of **New Opportunities**

**W**inter is my favorite time of year. I love the cold, crisp mornings of waking up with a cup of coffee and looking over a snow-covered landscape at the breathtaking sunrises we are blessed with in Montana. I love coming home to a neighborhood lit up to celebrate Christmas and the cozy nights spent with family. I love being fortunate enough to have a rewarding job, and even when everything doesn't go our way, we can look back at our accomplishments and feel proud of the hard work we put in throughout the year. I love looking forward to the possibilities that await each new year.

While I am sure Montana Farm Bureau will face many challenges during 2023, we will also be presented with many new and exciting opportunities. Delegates to the MFBF Annual Meeting in November elected our board of directors and set policies for the upcoming year. We were handed the keys and began operating from a new Farm Bureau Center before December was through. In early January, we moved part of our staff to Helena to represent Farm Bureau members at the beginning of the 68th Legislature. In these instances, much planning and work have been done to capitalize on these opportunities.

The Farm Bureau building on South 19th Street in Bozeman served our organization for 40 years. When maintenance and repair costs made it evident a new home was needed, Montana Farm Bureau Federation and Mountain West Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company leadership purchased land, commissioned the construction of a new Farm Bureau Center, and sold the current building. At the end of December, we moved into the new building at the corner of Huffine Lane and Red Mountain Drive west of Bozeman. Although the cost of constructing the new building has been above the amount we received for the old building, we estimate the amount will be recouped in five years thanks to a lower cost of operation.

Although the structure is new, the people working inside this Farm Bureau Center retain the culture, purpose and priorities that have guided our organization for over 100 years. One feature of the new building is a 20-foot-tall windmill, to remind those who enter the structure of that culture and purpose. The windmill is a credit to the generosity and dedication of board members Don Steinbeisser, Jr. and Ed Bandel, along with Ed's wife Kayla and son Jess. Estimated to be older than the Farm Bureau itself, the windmill was on Don's property near Sidney, Montana. Don donated the windmill, and



The 20-foot tall windmill stands as a symbol of Montana's heritage at the new Montana Farm Bureau Center.

Ed and Kayla picked it up and transported it back to their farm in Chouteau County, where Ed and Jess made a few repairs. Ed, Kayla and the windmill finished their 1,000-mile trek through Montana in November, where the windmill now represents the Farm Bureau Center in Bozeman.

January 2, 2023, will be the first of the 90 working days comprising the 68th Legislative Session in Montana. Our Senior Director of Governmental Affairs, Nicole Rolf, our Director of State Governmental Affairs, Rachel Cone, and many of our officers and board members will be on hand to defend and promote Montana Farm Bureau policy. There are already 4,100 proposed pieces of legislation for the upcoming session. Many of these bills will present opportunities to further MFBF policy. Legislation that streamlines the process of changes, mitigations and exemptions for water rights will be introduced. Another bill would provide continuity between water right adjudication and administration of the final decrees.

Montana Farm Bureau recognizes the importance of this legislation and will be at the table to protect senior water rights.

Taxes will be another area where we can promote legislation that benefits Montana's farmers and ranchers. I recently attended the Montana Taxpayers Association annual meeting, where Governor Gianforte announced his plans

to cut taxes for Montana's small businesses, farmers and ranchers.

The Governor's budget includes \$1 billion in income and property tax cuts for Montanans.

Governor Gianforte has also proposed expanding the state business equipment tax exemption threshold from \$300,000 to \$1 million. We are thankful to partner with an administration in Helena working on cutting red tape and providing leadership to make Montana a better place to do business for our farmer and rancher members.

Montana Farm Bureau provides many ways to keep up with our efforts during the legislative session. Century Club members receive a weekly update via email on all of the legislation that MFBF is following. If you aren't a Century Club member, upgrading is easy and worth the investment. Contact our Office Manager, Alisa Kopp, [alisak@mfbf.org](mailto:alisak@mfbf.org). If you are a Century Club member, think about upgrading your level. Be sure Alisa has your email by sending

her an update at that address.

No one knows what 2023 will have in store for agriculture, rural Montana, and Montana Farm Bureau Federation. However, what we make of this new year is in our hands, and the possibilities are endless.



**Scott Kulbeck**

Executive Vice President, MFBF



# Winter—the season we love, then hate

BY MARIAH SHAMMEL

Winter is a double-edged sword. I love it until I hate it. In the beginning, I'm always excited for fall to give way to the frosty weather Montana is known for. There's just something about winter in the middle of nowhere that I wish everyone could experience. Standing in a field with a blanket of snow so pristine, the only thing disturbing the landscape is the crisscross tracks of the resident four-legged creatures or the leftovers of a sled run made by two-legged adventure seekers is serenity at its finest. Even when the wind howls, there's a quietness you can't experience anywhere else. The sunrises are more spectacular, the sunsets more vivid and the stars so close it feels like you could reach out and grab Orion's belt.

The days are shorter, which means less time to get chores done but more time to spend inside as a family. The cows still get fed but the dark evening hours allow cards to be played, puzzles to be worked on, hot chocolate to be sipped, kids to be snuggled, and movies to be watched. Summer is a never-ending flurry of things to get done, moving from one project to the next, cow work, field time, and the (never-ending) list goes on. Winter

seems to be the universe's response to the aforementioned maladies, a forced slowdown.

Even when the lull of winter turns into calving and barns get full of bellowing bovines, I still really enjoy it. Sitting on a straw bale in the quiet, waiting for a heifer to give birth and listening to the mamas talk to their calves in the peaceful barn are some of my favorite pastimes during the cold months. It's hard to get enough of winter on the ranch.

But then it's more than enough. The cold is biting, the wind is relentless and all I can think about is anything but winter. I find myself dreaming about green when all I can see is white. Being inside with four kids who are not created to be within four (tight) walls for extended periods of time gets old, really fast. The cards have been lost, all the puzzles done, the hot chocolate has gone cold, and everyone just wants space. The pristine snow is dirty with sludge and animal poo, and we spend our days breaking ice for animals to have some running water to drink.

The only animals left in the barn are the ones needing some "extra help," whether cows or calves. The house gets a certain unpleasant aroma, one that includes

cow poop, afterbirth and calf slime and no matter how many air fresheners or matches you light, it doesn't work. The smell has soaked into the walls. The pile of smelly boots and dirty winter clothes on the back porch could rival Mount Everest. The bigger the kids get, the bigger their stuff gets and the smaller our space gets and the higher my stress level gets.

By the time the end of winter rolls around, let's just say spring and summer cannot come fast enough. I would give anything for some warmth, longer days and the ability to open windows to air out any lingering odors. The cows are out to pasture and the kids have age-appropriate activities to attend to, so it's not the end of the world if they happen to find themselves stuck in the same place together. But, before I know it, I'm tired of the heat, constant workload and unwanted bugs, and looking forward to the colder months of fall and winter.

Our last few summers have been abnormally hot and dry. That has caused water issues, hail, grasshoppers, hay shortages and lots of stress and anxiety. The winter of 2021 was one of the warmest and mildest I remember having and while it was gorgeous weather, it was hard too. The warm temperatures felt nice but did not help the three massive wildfires that broke out in our area. It has made this winter, with the consistent snow and close-to-average temps, much more enjoyable. I never thought I would find myself reveling in the blustery forecast, but here I am.

The future forecast shows "abnormally hot and dry" over Fergus County for the third summer in a row. That scares me to no end, but there is nothing I can do about it. For now, I'm going to be thankful for the four seasons and everything "average" they might bring. Until spring rolls around, I'm going to enjoy each snow flurry, frigid temperature, and aromatic boot to the best of my ability. Who knew normal could smell so good?

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





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# Fez: Stock dog helps heal a heart

AMERICAN FARM BUREAU DOG OF THE YEAR RUNNER-UP

BY REBECCA COLNAR, SPOKESMAN EDITOR

Lexi Coniglione spotted the information about the American Farm Bureau Farm Dog of the Year Contest a few years ago on Facebook. She watched the videos of past winners, pleased that they provided a showcase for what actual working ranch dogs do.

"Before Fez, I had a few working dogs, but reading about the contest motivated me to look into the formalities of training," the 31-year-old cowgirl from Glasgow admits. "I'm one of those research-bound people, reading books and online, and that stemmed into a mild addiction to training stock dogs."

Fez came into Lexi's heart at a low point in 2021. She had lost one family member to a tragic accident, and she had just come back from a branding when she learned that her best friend since college had taken his own life.

"I was at a low point dealing with the grief. I had gotten in touch online with a wonderful family in Ekalaka who were proud of their stock dogs—rough-coat border collies with a quarter Australian shepherd. I didn't know if getting a puppy would work out and if I had room emotionally," Lexi said. "Fez has become my best friend. He will work a 30-mile day or help me with small jobs at the feedlot. He's been my right hand. I watched him



Fez, AFBF Farm Dog of the Year Western Region Runner-Up.

stop for a minute to look around and see my end goal. He is a little mind reader. That's what I value most about him, the connection we have.

Although she grew up in a military family in New Jersey, she made her way to Dillon in 2009. While training cow horses in that area, she made contacts with clients and breeders in the Glasgow area and moved her business there.

The self-employed young woman trains performance reined cow horses for a living in the summer months and works in her off-season on ranches. She likes blending the working cowboy culture where she can rope and work cattle on the range, with training performance horses for the Montana Futurity and derbies.

Dogs need an innate drive to be outstanding stock dogs. "I have had a few dogs in the past, and they wanted to please me, but they didn't have that natural drive towards stock. They figured out how to be helpful instead of having that instinct to help me," Lexi explained. "I'm not a professional dog trainer, but the process goes smoother and easier if they have a natural drive towards stock to direct instead of convincing them."

Because she is always around stock, she pays attention to see if a dog wants to help, even at about nine months. "Of course, I try to protect them and give them safe little jobs, such as moving around a bottle calf. I've had some dogs that weren't quite ready at that age."

Questions for the Farm Dog of the Year competition, sponsored by Purina, included how the dog contributes to the day-to-day work on the farm/ranch, how the dog contributes to your personal life, and how you care for your pup. Applicants needed to submit a video and photos, and Lexi's video showed Fez doing different chores and working in the big country just south of the Canadian border.

Lexi was thrilled to learn that Fez had been named a runner-up in the western region division of the competition. "There are outstanding working dogs, and having them recognized in a national competition is fantastic."

She happily shared two Fez stories: the first occurred when Fez was seven months old. "I had a few new pairs on my property that were small-frame, late calvers with tiny calves. Fez was at my heels. I was mindful of the pairs, and the

## Farm Dog of the Year

The Farm Dog of the Year contest celebrates farm dogs and the many ways they support farmers and ranchers in producing nutritious food for families and their pets across America. Farmers submitted nominations for the 2023 Farm Bureau Farm Dog of the Year contest, supported by Purina.

The grand prize winner – Farm Bureau Farm Dog of the Year – wins a year's worth of Purina Pro-Plan dog food and \$5,000 in prize money. The winner is recognized at a Farm Dog of the Year award ceremony at the American Farm Bureau Federation Convention in January 2023. Up to four regional runners-up\* each win \$1,000 in prize money.

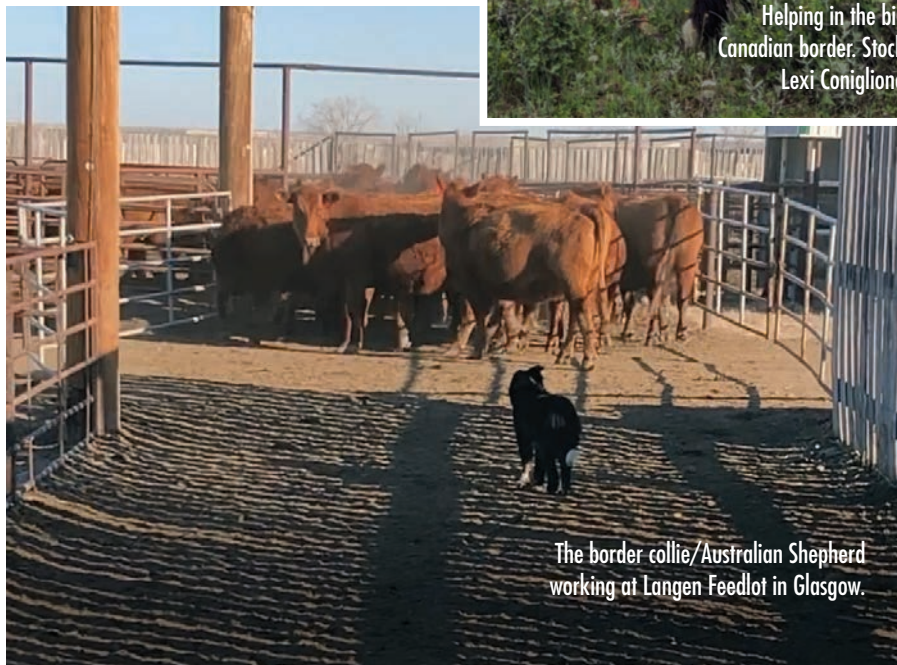
Mike, a border collie owned by Tim Feddes of Manhattan, MT, was a runner-up in the 2021 AFBF Farm Dog of the Year competition.

mommas might be upset about the dog. I had gone through the alley to close a gate when I noticed Fez wasn't with me. He had darted out into the field and was licking a calf's face. Not only did I giggle because he was wagging his tail, but the momma cow wasn't threatened at all. He licked that calf's face and came running back to me. He has a gentle, sweet nature, even with kids and other dogs.

As for Fez's ability to work hard, another story took place on the ranch. "Early last summer, Fez saved the day and stepped up above my expectations as a young dog. I was day working for Cornwell Ranch on their summer grazing

“ Dogs bring a lot to your life that can never be replaced by human friendship. ”

units, and some wild pairs had torn some fence down and headed off into the hills. My help and I had tried to gather the stray pairs and put them back through the hole, but they continued to split and run in every direction. We switched gears and decided to gather what looked like 40 pairs at a time, hold them up on the fence line and slowly pair out through that hole. It made for tedious work as the pairs would scatter with hardly any pressure from us horseback, but Fez quickly figured out what needed to happen. He stayed out wide from the far side of the herd, and when they would try escaping,



The border collie/Australian Shepherd working at Langen Feedlot in Glasgow.

## ➤ Cover Guard Dog

A photo of Josie, pictured on the cover, was captured by owner Renetta Phillipi from Hammond. Another photo with Josie and sheep took second place in the Montana Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee Photo Contest. (See page 29.) Renetta has had the seven-year-old Akbash since summer 2021.

"She was re-homed to us and loves the sheep," Renetta said. "When we first brought her home, we had the sheep locked in for her to bond with. She took her time letting them become comfortable with her. She truly enjoys the camaraderie with the sheep."

The Powder River/Carter Farm Bureau member noted that her family has been raising Corriedales since 1958. Renetta said Corriedales are known for their medium-grade wool, their gentleness and being hardy in cold weather.

In addition to guarding sheep from predators—and teaching a younger guard dog the ropes—Josie keeps the buildings in the ranch yard free from critters like raccoons and mice.

"She's wonderful," Renetta said.

he would fetch them back to that spot on the fence and lie down again to relieve the pressure.

"It did not take long before the cattle began to settle and look for that hole in the fence, find their calf, and quietly walk past my horse and me into the pasture

they needed to be in. Being able to use a dog as another person is invaluable, and for Fez, having the confidence to work on his own on the far side of me was a pivotal moment in training a young dog. We were able to get more than 100 strays paired up and back where they belonged before

dark without any wrecks. I owed that paycheck to Fez."

The Valley County Farm Bureau member said the dog is a well-bonded part of the family who has an old-soul attitude about him and is happy to be with everyone.

"We call him the Little Drummer Boy because when you walk by the mud room, you always hear his tail thump-thump-thump," Lexi said.

"When I first got him, I had so much grief and was detached from him. I felt bad because he was this fluffy, happy puppy, but I didn't have a warm feeling

toward him. After about ten days, he followed me everywhere and wagged his little tail, and I realized that he had been weaned recently and wanted to be my best friend. I started to feel connected as he looked to me for everything. I found solace in him when I couldn't grieve with friends. Fez has consistently been there for me. Dogs bring a lot to your life that can never be replaced by human friendship."



# Transitioning from YF&R to **District 2 Chair**

BY J.M PECK

*During the elections of Montana Farm Bureau officers held during the 2022 Delegate Session at the MFBF Convention in November, J.M. Peck, who “aged out” of being the Young Farmer & Rancher Committee Chair, was elected to replace District 2 Director Rhonda Boyd, who had termed out of that position. Following are Peck’s comments on being a leader in MFBF.*

I am truly dedicated to the MFBF mission of preserving and improving the agriculture and natural resource industries through member involvement in education, political activities, programs and services. It has been an honor to serve on the Young Farmer and Rancher Committee and participate and network with young farmers, ranchers, and agriculturists around the state and the country. The past leaders of the Farm Bureau had great vision in recognizing the importance of the YF&R program and growing the next generation of ag leaders.

After serving on the YFR Committee for several years, I was honored by fellow members and appointed to chair the committee. This was a great honor. I was unaware of the unexpected challenges I would face as our entire world plunged into a global pandemic. The pandemic was in full swing in the first months of my term, and many of the events we looked forward to were canceled. The National YF&R Conference and YF&R Day at the MFBF Summer Conference were canceled. As disappointing as this was, I was comforted by the optimism of our MFBF staff and my fellow FB members. All of us who work in agriculture know that our jobs didn’t stop, cows still had to be fed and crops harvested. Our Farm Bureau mission could not take a break either. We became resourceful and continued our work. I am very proud that our committee persevered and continued to conduct necessary business. We were able to put together successful social media campaigns. We leveraged the public’s uncertainty over the pandemic into an opportunity to bridge the gap between production agriculture and consumers. The YF&R Committee could not host our annual Hoofin’ it for Hunger, but with



J.M. Peck at his family ranch in Melrose with his wife, Amanda, and son, Jude.

the help of our county Farm Bureaus and some generous sponsors, we could still raise money for the Montana Food Bank Network in a time when food and donations were needed more than ever.

There were times over this period when we were not sure if things would ever return to normal, but slowly, they did. Getting to meet together again in person this past year has given me a fresh perspective on our fortunate we are and that we should never take even the most minor things for granted. Over the last year of my term as MFBF YF&R Chairman, I could now meet folks I had only met virtually. We hosted a successful, rebranded YF&R Leadership Conference and again hosted our Hoofin’ it for Hunger race and fundraiser in person. I was honored to take our Montana YF&R members to the National YF&R Leadership Conference in Louisville, Kentucky. I was so proud of all our YF&R members have accomplished, from our collegiate members to the folks who are soon to end their YF&R careers. Our state was well represented and should make our members proud of the up-and-coming generation and the work and challenges they will soon undertake.

I am thankful to our YF&R Committee, our state YF&R leaders, and all of the Montana YF&R members for their hard work and dedication to the Farm Bureau mission. I am excited for the opportunities they have moving forward and am thankful and humbled they chose me to lead.

As this chapter comes to an end, another door has opened. My neighbors

again humble me in southwestern Montana, District 2, which includes choosing me to serve as their director.

I am a Southwest Counties Farm Bureau member, which comprises Beaverhead, Madison, Silverbow, Jefferson, Deer Lodge, and Granite Counties. I manage my family’s cattle ranch out of Melrose, Montana, where I ranch alongside my father. We are in Beaverhead County, along Trapper Creek, a tributary to the Big Hole River. We raise commercial black Angus cattle and hay on our ranch. We hold grazing leases with the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service. Our ranch is diverse, having good soil and irrigation, which makes it suitable for growing hay, including alfalfa. As you travel up the creek, the soil becomes rockier but raises very hearty, managed range grasses. My wife is a kindergarten teacher in Dillon. My son just turned four years old and is always thrilled to ride in the tractor. In addition, he is looking forward to skiing this year. My wife and I are both alumni of Montana State University and enjoy supporting Bobcat Athletics.

I look forward to continuing to push the MFBF mission forward for Southwest Counties and Montana. We still have a lot of work to do and many important issues to resolve. We will be busy with an upcoming legislative session discussing the future of the Water Court, changes to the Montana Beef Council, and continuing the fight to reduce regulatory red tape and keep family farms and ranches successful. I am excited to keep working for Montana agriculture and serving District 2 members.



# Safe Winter Driving

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

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

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

regularly. Doing so will help prevent engine damage.

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

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

**Plan Your Route** – Make sure you are prepared, especially if you are planning a long road trip. Check the weather beforehand, and give yourself plenty of time (preferably daylight hours) to get there. Remember that it often takes considerably longer to drive in winter conditions. Make sure to let someone know when you are leaving, the route you

plan to take, and an estimated arrival time. That way, someone will know if you get stuck or your car breaks down.

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

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

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



Wishing You and Your Family Safe Travels this Holiday Season!

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# Montana Ag Safety Program



*Cultivating a Culture of Safety*

## Winter safety tips

### Staying safe in winter takes diligence, preparedness and common sense

BY DANA JANSEN, DIRECTOR OF AG SAFETY, MONTANA AG SAFETY PROGRAM

**W**inter weather conditions have arrived and, according to the Almanac, appear to be here to stay. The days are getting shorter but that to-do list keeps getting longer. While it never seems like there are quite enough hours in the day to get it all done, now is the time to make sure you are set up to weather another on the northern range. Working in the extreme weather conditions of winter is unavoidable, but there are things to do to give ourselves a leg-up come snowfall (or more snowfall, if you weren't quite ready the first time). Make necessary repairs. Fix fences, corrals, feeders, and equipment that will be used heavily during the winter. Some repairs



Dana Jansen, Director of Ag Safety, Montana State Fund

can wait until next spring, but others will dramatically affect your ability to care for your livestock safely and efficiently. Ensure all alleyways and pens are sturdy, can be cleaned easily, and have distinct/clear escape routes. Consider adding additional lighting to make it easier for everyone to work with less day-light hours. Create a plan. Changing weather means changing responsibilities. Family members and employees should be familiar with their duties and capable of performing the tasks

they have been assigned. Be sure to include who, what, where, and when in your plans to help eliminate confusion and frustration. Remember to plan for "worst case" scenarios – what happens if

we can't get to the cattle, what happens if the power goes out, and so forth? Conditions can change rapidly rendering even the best-laid plans worthless, but it is important to stay up to date with current weather conditions and plan to use the forecast in your favor whenever possible. Take care of yourself. This doesn't just mean making sure your coat and coveralls got a good washing since last calving (if you haven't washed them yet, you may as well go ahead and get that done though, too, now that the first real snowfall has hit the ground). Living and working on a good farm or ranch is pleasant as well as challenging, but the challenges can quickly become overwhelming for our mental and physical well-being. The most important asset to the farm or ranch is you. It is important to recognize the sources of stress and signs that the stress has become too much. Warning signs of stress include changes in routine, changes

in appearance or mood, increased illness (cold or flu like illness, aches, migraines), decreased interest, and increased farm/ranch “accidents”. Tough conversations today can prevent a tragedy tomorrow. Professional help can be found at:

- Counseling Access for Montana Ag: Frontier Psychiatry at [frontier.care/beyondtheweather](http://frontier.care/beyondtheweather)
- Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: [988lifeline.org](http://988lifeline.org) or dial 9-8-8
- Farm Aid Hotline: 1-800-FARM-AID (1-800-327-6243)

Dress for the weather. Layers are ideal. Wear a hat (a stocking cap or ‘Scotch Cap’), a scarf – or mask, gaiter, buff – capable of covering your neck, face, and mouth, mittens or gloves, water-resistant insulated coat, water-resistant insulated boots, and several layers well-fitting clothing. Looser clothes will help retain additional heat but pose significant hazards for entanglement. A base layer is a great addition to any outfit to wear under insulated coveralls, bibs, or pants. Multiple layers of thinner clothing provide more protection against the cold than fewer heavy layers. Layers also allow you to adjust to changing tasks and weather conditions. Remove additional clothing items when you feel yourself getting too warm as sweat increases heat loss. Shivering is a sign that your body is losing critical heat; if shivering persists, it is time to go inside to warm up. Use extreme caution to avoid over exertion. Cold weather and extra layers add to the natural strain your body and heart experience. Work slowly and don’t overdo it.

### Recognize the signs and symptoms of cold related illness.

- **Frostbite** most commonly occurs on the nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers, or toes. It can occur rapidly and result in permanent damage. Signs of frostbite: redness or pain in any skin area, skin that feels unusually firm or “waxy”, white or grayish-yellow skin, numbness
- Frostbite can be difficult to notice on your own body. If you notice any of the signs of frostbite:
  - Get to a warm room or shelter.
  - Avoid walking on frostbitten feet/toes or rubbing the affected area

as this increased potential for serious damage.

- Immerse the affected area in warm (NOT HOT) water. Water should be comfortable to the touch to unaffected areas.
- Affected areas may be warmed using body heat - Avoid using heating pads, lamps, stoves, fires, radiators, etc. as the numbed areas can easily be burned.
- Seek medical attention.
- **Hypothermia:** Shivering, exhaustion, confusion, fumbling hands, memory loss, slurred speech, drowsiness, very low energy
- Hypothermia can be deadly if not treated quickly. If you notice the signs of hypothermia, take the person’s temperature. Any temperature below 95° is a medical emergency. Take the following actions:
  - Get the person to a warm room or shelter.
  - Remove any wet clothing.
  - Focus on the core of the body – chest, neck, head, and groin – first. Use an electric blanket

or skin-to-skin contact under dry blankets.

- Warm beverages may be helpful. Encourage them to drink slowly. NEVER try to give fluids if the person is unconscious.
- Keep the person dry and wrapped in a warm blanket, including the head and neck.
- Seek medical attention as soon as possible.
- If the person has lost consciousness and does not seem to have a pulse or be breathing – begin CPR and continue until the person responds or help arrives.

While there will surely be things that go awry, proper preparation can help reduce the amount of time necessary outside during the worst weather. Remember, livestock, machines, and facilities are replaceable; you are not. For more information regarding the Montana Ag Safety Program or task-specific safety visit [www.mtagrisafety.com](http://www.mtagrisafety.com) or contact Dana Jansen at [danaj@mtagrisafety.com](mailto:danaj@mtagrisafety.com) or (406) 850-9978.



## ➤ Winter Storm Survival Kit

Navigating rural roads can be a challenge in even the best weather. Add snow, ice, lack of maintenance, and expansive stretches of isolated road with spotty cell phone reception, you have a recipe for disaster if you (or your rig) are improperly prepared.

Carry a winter storm survival kit:

- Phone charger
- Blanket/sleeping bag
- Flashlight
- Batteries
- Basic first-aid kit
- Knife. A multitool is an excellent option.
- High-calorie, non-perishable food
- Hygiene products – feminine products, diapers, and toilet paper or paper towels, etc.
- Extra clothing and a spare set of shoes/boots
- Drinking water – remember to pack this each time you leave so it isn’t frozen when you need it!
- Shovel
- Sack of sand or cat litter (for traction)
- Windshield scraper and brush
- Basic tool kit
- Tow rope
- Jumper cables

# Meet Insurance Agent Kay Bright

## 29 YEARS OF SERVING CLIENTS

**K**ay Bright has been a familiar face for 29 years for insurance clients in the Gallatin Valley. The Mountain West Farm Bureau agent has been helping area residents, farmers, and ranchers with everything from life insurance, retirement planning to home and auto coverage. Farm Bureau prides itself on having many agents with a farm and ranch background, and Kay is no exception.

She first came to Bozeman after growing up on a hay, cattle, and grain farm north of Dickinson, North Dakota. Today, her brother runs the farm, and Kay runs her agency in the Gallatin Valley.

"I originally came to the area for school but found so much more that I love," she said. Except for a stint back home in Bismarck, Kay has been in the area ever since. After arriving back in the Bozeman area Kay reached out to Lew Zimmer, whose name has been synonymous with Mountain West Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company for a career with Farm Bureau which was a familiar agricultural organization in which she had several family members involved. She also had a deep-rooted connection with the Farm Bureau agent who took care of her family's farm.

When asked the reason for the longevity in this career she explained, "By far, it is a deep passion for people, and I believe it's important to have a love for people you're working with and a heart for helping them. I love getting to know people, but my career also gives me opportunities to make a difference in my clients' lives, especially in the decisions they make."

Clients encompass a wide variety of professions and businesses, including farmers, just like her own family. She credits her childhood with helping her understand the farming and ranching side of the company.

"I'm familiar with how things tend to work on farms, so I know when the harvest and calving are and when to keep necessary conversations short or another time of the year that may be better. As a former farm kid, I'm familiar with the real-world risks that farmers and ranchers face every day," Kay said.



Agent Kay Bright and family — Jack, a senior at MSU, husband Keith, Kay and Alex, a sophomore at Boise State — enjoy the outdoors.

Other clients have ranchettes and need a policy focused on that lifestyle with horses or 4H animals. In contrast, others live in the growing Bozeman suburbs or are long-time homeowners closer to town. Kay enjoys helping them all.

"Farm Bureau does a great job of training its agents to be so much more than auto and home," said Kay. "Agents spend so many hours training in specialties, including financial and retirement planning. I want our clients to utilize us as a resource in protecting their families and their futures knowing that if we can't provide them with a particular solution to their need, we will put them in touch with someone who can."

She and her family enjoy living and working on their acreage, with a property that includes mini-donkeys and horses. "We love being outdoors, so if we're not at home working outside, we enjoy hiking, camping, fishing and skiing." Kay

especially enjoys everything the Gallatin Valley offers, including being an avid fan of Bobcat athletics.

Her agency has always supported children, sponsoring many baseball teams, football teams, softball teams, and kids heading out on overseas or domestic educational programs. "It's always a 'yes' if kids ask us," Kay said. "We will do what we can."

She wants clients to know how much she appreciates them. Her advice for minimizing their risk and protecting their assets? "Keep the lines of communication open with your agent. Visiting and knowing what's going on allows us to provide some guidance. If we don't know, we can't be of assistance. An open line of communication is so helpful."

After so many years in the business Kay firmly believes "our clients are the best part of everything we do."




# Membership Benefits Save Money

## NEW

 **LandTrust** - MFBF members earn 90% of every completed booking of the member's property. Members also receive a waived first sportsman booking fee when booking their first experiences on the LandTrust platform. Call (406) 587-3153 for more information.

**Budget Truck Rental** - Members can now save 20% off Budget Truck Rental! Use your discount to save on consumer rental rates and mileage charges on Budget Truck's broad range of offerings, from cargo vans up to 26' box trucks! Visit [BudgetTruck.com/FarmBureau](http://BudgetTruck.com/FarmBureau) or call (800) 566-8422 and provide the Farm Bureau Account number 56000127747 to make a reservation today!

## AUTOMOTIVE


 **Ford and Lincoln Bonus Cash** - Receive \$500 Ford Bonus Cash on the purchase or lease of a new Maverick, Ranger, F-150, or Super Duty® and \$750 Lincoln Bonus Cash off the purchase or lease of an eligible new Lincoln vehicle. Some exclusions apply. You must be an MFBF member at least 30 days prior to using the Farm Bureau Bonus Cash. Visit [FordFarmBureauAdvantage.com](http://FordFarmBureauAdvantage.com) or see your authorized Ford or Lincoln Dealer for qualifications and complete details.

## EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES

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**Caterpillar Inc.** - Save up to \$5,000 on the purchase or lease of eligible Cat® wheel loaders, small and medium dozers, backhoe loaders, compact track loaders, multi terrain loaders, skid steer loaders, telehandlers, mini hydraulic excavators and excavators. Members receive an additional \$250 credit on work tool attachments purchased with new Cat machines. You must present a certificate at the time of purchase or lease quote to receive the discount. Print a certificate at [mfbf.org/member-benefits](http://mfbf.org/member-benefits).

 **Grainger** - Get special member prices on all equipment and supplies from Grainger, PLUS get free standard parcel shipping on all standard Grainger products. Get started with your price savings using 3 easy methods: present the Montana Farm Bureau account number at time of purchase - 0854097532, go to [grainger.com/farmbureau](http://grainger.com/farmbureau) to establish a new Grainger.com® account using that account number, or call (800) 472-4643.

 **John Deere** - Members receive an upgraded John Deere Rewards membership (Platinum 1) – which unlocks extra discounts. Go to [JohnDeere.com/FarmBureau](http://JohnDeere.com/FarmBureau) to register, and explore all that Rewards has to offer. Check out the savings on the following equipment categories: Commercial Mowing - \$200 to \$1,700 off, Residential Mowing - \$50 to \$150 off, Utility Vehicles - \$100 to \$300 off, Tractors - \$200 to \$300 off, Compact Construction - \$550 to \$1,400 off.

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## HOTEL & TRAVEL

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**Budget Car Rental** - Save up to 30% off Budget base rates. Plus, get other great offers like a free upgrade or a free weekend day. Visit [budget.com/mtfb](http://budget.com/mtfb) or call (800) 527-0700 to make a reservation. Use Budget Customer Discount (BCD) number Y775726.

 **Choice Hotel Discount** - Receive up to 20% off best available rates at participating Ascend®, Cambria Suites®, Clarion®, Comfort Inn®,

Comfort Suites®, Econo Lodge®, MainStay Suites®, Quality Inn®, Rodeway Inn®, Sleep Inn®, and Suburban Extended Stay® hotels. Call (800) 258-2847 and use MFBF benefits number 00209680.

**Delta Hotels Helena Colonial** - Enjoy the special corporate discounted rate of 20% off the best available rate for any room type. Call (406) 443-2100 and request the MFBF LNR rate or go to [Marriott.com/hlnde](http://Marriott.com/hlnde) and enter the Corporate/Promo/SET# code FB1. *Valid only in Helena.*

**Thrifty Car Rental** - Whether your travel is for business or pleasure, you'll receive discounted prices on car rentals. Call (800) THRIFTY and use your MFBF Corporate Discount Program Code 3007297.

**TripBeat** - Save 25% on Preferred Weekly and Short Stays. Search for, view availability, and book resort condo rentals as booking typical hotel accommodations online. To book by phone please call (844) 367-6433 and be sure to mention you are a MFBF Member, or visit [www.tripbeat.com/mfbf](http://www.tripbeat.com/mfbf)

**Wyndham Hotels Discount** - Members receive up to 20% off the Best Available Rate at participating locations. For terms and conditions, to book online go to [wyndhamhotels.com/farm-bureau](http://wyndhamhotels.com/farm-bureau) or call (877) 670-7088 and give your discount ID #8000002613 at time of booking.

## INSURANCE & FINANCIAL

**Farm Bureau Bank** - Farm Bureau Bank offers a full line of banking services. Call (800) 492-FARM or go to [farmbureaubank.com](http://farmbureaubank.com).

 **Farm Bureau Insurance** - Members have access to competitive rates on a wide range of insurance plans through Mountain West Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company. Call (307) 745-4835 or go to [mwfb.com](http://mwfb.com).

**Montana State Fund Workers Comp** - As a member and an employer in the agricultural industry, you may be eligible for a partial premium return on your Montana State Fund workers' compensation insurance plan. Call (406) 587-3153 or go to [mtagrifafety.com](http://mtagrifafety.com) for more information.

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

**StoneX®** - StoneX® offers exclusive discounts to Montana Farm Bureau® members on agricultural price risk management tools. This includes customized commodity marketing plans, powerful data management solutions, financial execution products, market insights and education. Go to [www.stonex.com](http://www.stonex.com).



**Zippy Duvall**  
President, American Farm  
Bureau Federation

“ I hope as you reflect on this year, that you are encouraged by what we can do through our united voice and in service to our communities and that you are excited for what’s to come in the new year. ”

# Stepping Up in 2022

Our grassroots advocates were busy in 2022. You all stepped up to calls for action on key issues in record-breaking numbers. AFBF Action Alerts garnered nearly 38,000 engagements over the past 12 months—from comments to federal agencies to emails to lawmakers. That breaks down to an average of more than 100 contacts per day every day of the year. Wow.

We kicked off the year strong with grassroots comments to EPA on the Waters of the U.S. rule and carried that momentum. The Securities and Exchange Commission chair heard from farmers and ranchers, probably more than ever before, as we spoke up on their climate rule proposal that would impact the whole supply chain. When the railroads were on the verge of a strike, you sent thousands of emails to Congress to help ensure these critical lines remained open which kept essential agricultural goods moving from the farm to consumers. Together, we made a difference not only to keep agriculture strong this year, but to ensure its vibrancy in years to come.

Advocacy with our urban and suburban neighbors is critically important, too, and as of the end of this year, 4,333 of you have undergone 9,031 hours of training to become better advocates for agriculture and leaders in your communities, whether in Farm Bureau or the local PTA. Not to mention the thousands registered for online learning with FB University and those who take their advocacy engagement to the next level through programs like PAL (Partners in Advocacy Leadership) and the GO (Grassroots Outreach) Team. And a special congratulations and thank you to our 2022 GO Teamers of the Year! Nancy Caywood from Arizona, April Clayton from Washington and Paula Peterson from Nebraska have exemplified the Farm Bureau advocacy spirit and gone above and beyond with media interviews, engagement with lawmakers and outreach to consumers.

I'm pleased that AFBF's own engagement efforts were noticed in 2022 as we received the gold award for best video from Association TRENDS, competing against trade associations across the country representing every industry. Winning top honors for the "Sustainability: It's Just What We Do" video is a tribute to the power of our members' stories, featuring Tara Vander Dussen from

New Mexico, Doug Darling from Michigan and Kamal Bell from North Carolina.

Farm Bureau continues to be a leader in the agriculture community, and this October, we hosted an unprecedented meeting to tackle Federal Milk Marketing Order challenges. Meaningful change here is long overdue, and we took it seriously when Secretary Vilsack called on the entire industry to come together to discuss solutions. We had a great turnout with over 180 farms, cooperatives, processors and other dairy groups represented. After a couple days of long discussions, we found common ground on recommendations to modernize federal milk marketing.

The strength of the Farm Bureau family also shines through in how we come together to strengthen our rural communities through efforts like Farm State of Mind. Topics like mental health and addiction are not easy to talk about, but together, with partners like National Farmers Union, we are making a difference and reducing the stigma. Just this week, our organizations released a new poll that shows more folks are aware and willing to talk about the opioid crisis. Sixty percent say adults in their community are more aware of the crisis than they were five years ago, and nearly eight in 10 rural adults say they feel comfortable having a conversation about opioids. Being willing to talk about it is a critical piece of the puzzle and this is encouraging progress from where we started five years ago.

Finally, looking back at the past year would not be complete without sharing a bit of the great work of our Foundation for Agriculture in 2022. The Foundation's Feeding Minds Press keeps churning out high-quality children's books that help young consumers learn about how their food is grown. But don't take my word for it. They brought home a Good Housekeeping award for "I LOVE Strawberries!" this year! That's just one example of the work the Foundation is doing to engage learners of all ages and share the innovative world of agriculture with those far from the farm.

I am so proud to be part of this Farm Bureau family, and I could fill pages bragging on you all and the great work you do together. I hope as you reflect on this year, that you are encouraged by what we can do through our united voice and in service to our communities and that you are excited for what's to come in the new year.



November 14-17 – Hilton Garden Inn – Missoula

**FB** 103rd Annual  
**MONTANA FARM BUREAU  
CONVENTION**  
& **TRADE SHOW**

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# 103rd Annual MONTANA FARM BUREAU CONVENTION & TRADE SHOW

November 14-17 – Hilton Garden Inn – Missoula

The 103rd Annual Montana Farm Bureau Convention offered a variety of workshops, speakers, networking, and the heart of the convention—the delegate session—which rounded out an exciting four days.

Century Club Breakfast Speaker Randy Dwyer, American Farm Bureau, enlightened members about the political climate across the country post mid-term elections. He explained that the election showed candidate quality is important, and voters are looking forward, not backward. Opening session speaker Ara Megedirchian talked about leadership, urging the group to remember the purpose behind being a leader, and asking why you want to lead and who you serve.

Tuesday luncheon speaker Jordan Levi, Fed Cattle Exchange, said that the future looks bright for cattle producers, as beef demand is increasing both domestically and abroad, noting, “As people get wealthier, they want to eat more high-end protein. Domestically, consumers are asking for our best choice and prime steaks.”

Roger Rickard, Voices of Advocacy, shared his Seven Actions of Highly Effective Advocates at the Wednesday Lunch, which included believing you can make a difference, being informed, discussing an issue, getting on record, being a resource, volunteering for your cause and contributing money or time. Both Levi and Rickard presented Tuesday workshops to the members, with other workshops focusing on mental health, leadership, water and regulatory issues.

The delegate session Wednesday and Thursday brought together 160 county Farm Bureau members across the state to discuss and vote on what becomes Montana Farm Bureau’s policy for the coming year.

Following the delegate session, the MFBF Board voted on priority issues, which fell under two headings: Preserving and Protecting Property Rights and Traditional Land Uses, and Promoting Sustainable and Profitable Family Farm and Ranch Businesses. Preserving and Protecting Property Rights included policies that prevented federal overreach, protected senior water rights, and supporting incentivizing programs to keep agricultural land in production. Promoting Sustainable and Profitable Family Farm and Ranch Businesses covered supporting tax reform to award productivity, providing a strong safety net for farmers and ranchers in the 2023 Farm Bill, reforming regulations that impede on agricultural production, increasing marketing opportunities, and improving infrastructure.

## Workshops



District 10 Director Jim Willis talks cattle with Jordan Levi, Fed Cattle Exchange/Arcadia Asset Management.



Carmen and Mark Diehl participate in the “How to Ditch Burnout, Stress and Unhealthy Habits” workshop by Michelle Grocke, MSU Extension.

## Media



MFBF Vice President Gary Heibertshausen interviews with Maria Anderson, ABC Fox News.

## Delegate Session



Chouteau County members Bob Quinn and Jess Bandel share thoughts on a policy.



The 160 voting delegates set policy for the coming year during the exciting resolutions session.



Rosebud-Treasure County leaders Laureen and Greg Lackman enjoy the debate on the delegate floor.

# Recognitions

# Social & Trade Show



MFBF Executive Vice President John Youngberg was recognized for his 30 years of service with Montana Farm Bureau. Pictured is MFBF President Cyndi Johnson, Debe and John Youngberg, and the new MFBF Executive Vice President Scott Kulbeck.



District 2 Director Rhonda Boyd and Young Farmer and Rancher Chair J.M. Peck retired from the board. Boyd termed out after six years as director with Peck being voted in as her successor.



Distinguished Service Award winner Theo Yanzick with Carbon/Stillwater board members Rhonda Hergenrider, Sarah Boyer, Carla Lawrence and Tanya Dorvall.



A whole gang of Lewis & Clark County members attended the County Awards Breakfast.



District 6 Director Don Steinbeisser, Jr. visits the Farm Service Agency booth.



MFBF President Cyndi Johnson gives the "scoop" during the Ice Cream Social.



Sarah Boyer picks up swag at the Montana Beef Council booth.



The Winery Association of Montana booth was a popular educational booth.

# Hidden gems of knowledge in ACE program



Stepping up as a leader, especially in agriculture, inspired Lambert rancher Canyon Rehbein to apply for the 2022 ACE (Advocate. Communicate. Educate) class. "I had a Basic Leadership Course (BLC) in the Army, and I took a business leadership class in college, but I hadn't had any training that specifically focused on agricultural leadership," Rehbein explained. "When I learned about this leadership class that is agriculturally based, I knew I wanted to do it."

Rehbein grew up on his family ranch near Lambert. He attended college at MSU-Northern, earning a degree in agricultural operations technology with a minor in business, graduated in the spring of 2016, and joined the Army Reserve in the summer of 2016. He spent six years in the Army and deployed to Kuwait and Qatar in late 2019-2020. He and his wife are on the family ranch where they raise black Angus, and Rehbein serves as the Richland County Farm Bureau president.

His overall takeaway from the ACE program is the importance of agriculture's story. "We must teach our urban



Canyon Rehbein

neighbors what it takes to get food to their plates. It's essential to stand up and get our voices and stories heard," said Rehbein.

The seminar in Helena ranked tops on Rehbein's list. "I learned to walk on the House floor, literally, because my dad was in the legislature when I was learning to

walk. I was a page in Helena for a week in 2011, and I love seeing the Capitol. The mock hearing in Helena was valuable because we practiced how to testify on a bill. Now, if I want to testify, I have the confidence and training to stand in front of our public servants."

On the last day of the ACE program at the Montana Farm Bureau Convention, participants present their ACE project to their class, board members, and other visitors. Rehbein's project is to start a Discussion Meet at FFA. The Discussion Meet is a competitive event developed by American Farm Bureau to simulate a board meeting with ideas exchanged and solutions developed.

"My end goal is to have the Discussion Meet become the new Career Development Event (CDE) for FFA, but I'm starting locally and working with the FFA in Lambert. I plan to work locally to test it, have a county-wide one, then move it to FFA's Big Muddy District," Rehbein said.

The young rancher believes the experience you glean from the ACE program will stay with you forever by

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giving you a chance to learn and better yourself. "You come away with a greater understanding of Farm Bureau, and you build relationships you will have for years to come. Everyone should get involved in ACE to receive the many valuable learning

experiences."

Rehbein noted that a hidden gem of the program is the learning derived from other ACE participants. "After our ACE group dinner one evening, we were sitting around and sharing what we learned from

the speakers that day, and I realized that by talking to each other, we learned even more. We had time to reflect on what we learned from those sessions. That's the networking value of ACE."



## ACE graduates **class of 2022** program

**L**earning how to advocate for agriculture and support local communities has been a one-year endeavor for seven enthusiastic Montana Farm Bureau members who graduated from the ACE (Advocate. Communicate. Educate.) Leadership program November 14 during the MFBF 103rd Annual Convention in Missoula. On the first day of the MFBF Convention, ACE class members each delivered presentations regarding the final projects they are organizing in their local communities and county Farm Bureaus.

ACE emphasizes leadership development, issue education and the engagement of local communities. The participants spent 2022 honing their skills at six seminars to make a difference in the public's impressions about agriculture.

### The 2022 ACE Graduates:

**Andee Baker - Park City, Carbon/Stillwater County Farm Bureau** -Project: Work with Collegiate Farm Bureaus on officer training.

**Zach Coccoli - Helena, Lewis & Clark County Farm Bureau** Project: Develop an

immersive day-trip to a farm and ranch for employees of the Department of Agriculture.

**Morgan Kuntz - Dillon, Southwest Counties Farm Bureau** -Project: Develop a live animal scholarship in Beaverhead County.

**Lindsay Orem - Wolf Creek, Lewis & Clark County Farm Bureau** - Project: Develop ag education committees in schools to surface what communities need for ag education.

**Canyon Rehbein - Lambert, Richland County Farm Bureau** -Project: Develop a Discussion Meet within FFA and schools to teach students how to have productive and meaningful conversations.

**Josh Senecal - Ronan, Northwest Counties Farm Bureau** -Project: Create a Family Ag Day in the spring to introduce families to agriculture, farmers and ranchers.

**Becky Stuart - Dillon, Southwest Counties Farm Bureau** -Project: Community Connections to introduce agriculture and rural lifestyles to new residents in southwestern Montana.

### ➤ 2023 ACE Program

Congratulations to these members who have been selected for the 2023 ACE program.

**Ben Meyer, Stevensville**

**Beth Blevins, Ronan**

**Bronya Willmore, Roy**

**Greg Gabel, Huntley**

**Janell Plummer, Kalispell**

**Joe Lackman, Bozeman**

**Margaret Hebel, Dillon**

**Nick Courville, Charlo**

**Tommy Flanagan, Absarokee**

**Tyson Reese, Missoula**



The 2022 ACE class: Coordinator Liv Holt, Morgan Kuntz, Becky Stuart, Zach Coccoli, Josh Senecal, Lindsay Orem, Canyon Rehbein, Andee Baker and Coordinator Sue Ann Streufert.

# COUNTY NEWS

**Dawson-Wibaux County** attended 4-H Achievement Day in Wibaux to present awards and a sponsored buckle to the Junior Horse Showman at the Wibaux County Fair. They held their Christmas party at the Yellowstone River Inn in Glendive complete with a prime rib dinner and ugly sweater contest.

**Wheatland-Golden Valley County** held a board meeting December 14.

**Front Range County** is a sponsor of Montana's Next Generation Conference Saturday, January 28, 2023 in Shelby. The day will

feature speakers from across Montana on topics that relate to producers of all ages and experience levels.

**Cascade County** had their Christmas dinner December 19. They met earlier this month for a budget meeting and program of work which will include a booth at the MAGIE in January. **Northwest Counties** met December 20 for a program of work meeting and Christmas dinner at Ninepipes Inn in Charlo. **Southwest Counties** is hosting a "winter warm up" event January 23 at the 4-H building, Beaverhead County Fairgrounds in Dillon. They will have lunch and host Dr. Katie Rein's calving difficulties seminar.



**Fergus County** Farm Bureau held their annual Christmas Party December 12 at the county Farm Bureau office in Lewistown. Attendees picked winners for the Ag in Color entries. Two schools entered this year with three grade levels represented.

Doreen McClure hands a little holiday cheer to Jim Pierson.

## Foundation mini-grants available for promoting ag

**W**hat do a low-stress cattle handling seminar, local festivals, a farm safety day, an ag mechanics award and a farm fair have in common? They all have received a Montana Farm Bureau Foundation Mini-Grant.

The Montana Farm Bureau Foundation has established a program to provide grants up to \$1,000.00 for use in educational forums or activities promoting agriculture.

Proposals are judged on the project's ability to enhance participants' knowledge of agriculture and/or its contributions as an industry, analyze current agriculture issues or problems, strengthen critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and scope of audience reached.

Priority is given to projects that can be funded in whole by the mini grant or with the addition of matching funds by the applicant. Funding will not be awarded for services performed.

Mini-grants provide an excellent opportunity to promote agriculture in your community. For more information and to apply for a mini-grant, visit <https://mfbf.org/Foundation/Foundation-Grants>.



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# MFBF elections

The Montana Farm Bureau Federation delegates elected officers during the organization's 2022 Annual Convention in Missoula.

**Cyndi Johnson**, a Conrad small grains farmer, has been re-elected as president and **Gary Heibertshausen**, an Alzada sheep rancher, has been re-elected as vice president.

**J.M. Peck**, a cattle rancher from Melrose, has been elected as the new District 2 Director. Peck has served as the MFBF Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee Chair for the past three years. Re-elected to the board were **Casey Mott**, District 4, a cattle rancher from Custer; **Don Steinbeisser, Jr.**, District 6, a diversified farmer from Sidney; **Ed Bandel**, District 8, a wheat farmer from Floweree, and **Jim Willis**, District 10, a cattle producer from Wilsall.

**Nick Courville**, a Charlo rancher, is the newly elected Young Farmer & Rancher Chair. **Carla Lawrence** from Boyd was re-elected as the organization's Women's Leadership Committee Chair.



## Women's Leadership Committee

- District 1: Beth Blevins - Ronan / Myla Yahraus - Stevensville
- District 3: Mary Hill - Raynesford / Leslie Cavill - Ryegate
- District 5: Laureen Lackman - Hysham / Cathy McDowell - Powderville
- District 7: Joy DePuydt - Saco / Nancy Bowman - Hinsdale
- District 9: Loretta Burnham - Helena / Pam Converse - Conrad

## Young Farmer & Rancher Committee

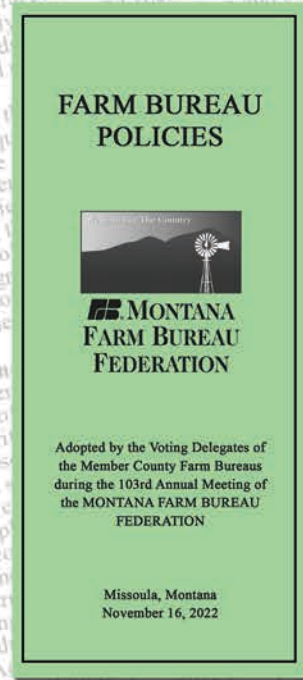
- District 1: Houston Blevins - Ronan / Vern Cheff - Missoula
- District 3: Vic Lewis - Ryegate / Bronya Willmore - Denton
- District 5: Lea Aye - Broadus / Fiona Mott - Miles City
- District 7: Gwynn Simeniuk - Glasgow / John Walker - Nashua
- District 9: Katharine Taylor - Helena / Klayton Lohr - Shelby
- District 8: Karissa Floerchinger - Cascade



## NOTE! PAY 2023 DUES

This is the last Montana Farm Bureau Spokesman you will receive if your 2023 dues are not paid. Don't know for sure? Call 406-587-3153 or log in to your MFBF account at <https://mfbf.org/user/login> to check your membership status. If you haven't previously logged into your account, click on the upper right "Login" button and follow instructions. From there you can easily renew your dues if not current.

# MFBF Policy Book Online!



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

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

# Ranchers from Alder, Choteau capture awards at Young Farmers & Ranchers competitions

**M**ark Boyd, a young cattle rancher from Alder, topped three other competitors to win the Montana Farm Bureau Young Farmer and Rancher Discussion Meet. He received the keys to a Polaris Ranger® and will be eligible to compete in the national competition which will be held during the American Farm Bureau Convention in January in Puerto Rico. The three other contestants were Morgan Kuntz from Dillon, Gwynn Simeniuk from Glasgow and Nick Courville from Charlo. The Final Four competition of the Discussion Meet was held November 15 during the 103rd Montana Farm Bureau Annual Convention.

The Discussion Meet, which is open to Farm Bureau members age 18-35, is meant to simulate a committee meeting with ideas discussed and solutions developed. The question for the final round: How can Farm Bureau effectively support and equip young farmers and ranchers to successfully manage economic and infrastructure challenges to ensure healthy and sustainable farms and ranches across the country?

The Southwest Counties Farm Bureau member said he was drawn to the Discussion Meet because post-college, there are not as many opportunities to compete. "Being in the Discussion Meet compels you to research, practice and participate in a friendly competition," Boyd said.

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

Choteau ranchers Ben and Karli Johnson, who own Sevens Livestock, won the MFBF YF&R Achievement Award. Achievement Award contestants are evaluated on a combination of their farming operation growth and financial progress of operation, Farm Bureau leadership, as well as leadership outside of Farm Bureau.

Johnson said she and her husband decided to participate in the award because they enjoy having high-level, strategic business discussions; the Achievement Award provided the format to do that at the national level.

"The judges look at how your strategic business plan has



Mark Boyd from Alder with his new Polaris Ranger.

affected your business growth and how you pair that with leadership in your county Farm Bureau and your community," Johnson said. She and Ben will be traveling to Puerto Rico to be compete in the national Achievement Award against other state Farm Bureau winners nationwide.

"Competing in-person on the national level provides an excellent opportunity to network and meet other young producers with similar challenges," the Front Range County Farm Bureau member said.

Thanks to these Polaris dealers for supporting the MFBF Young Farmers and Ranchers: Gallatin Recreation, Bozeman; Helena Cycle Center, Helena; Yellowstone Polaris, Billings; Beaverhead Motorsports, Dillon; Riverside Marine & Cycle, Miles City; Redline Sports, Inc, Butte; Lewistown Honda & Polaris, Lewistown; Sports City Cyclery, Great Falls, Russell Motorsports, Missoula, Kurt's Polaris, Seeley Lake and Bliss Cycle, Conrad. Stop by these dealerships to say thank you for supporting the Montana Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers.

Calling all young producers, agribusiness professionals, students and farming or ranching fans. Registration for the MFBF Young Farmers & Ranchers Leadership Conference is officially open and can be completed on our website, [mfbf.org/events](http://mfbf.org/events). MFBF's Young Farmer and Rancher Committee is proud to continue the tradition of this event, formerly known as the Young Ag Leadership Conference. It is our intention that the integrity of the content presented, the format of the agenda and the intended audience will remain the same as we make this exciting transition.

The agenda is top-notch, packed with brilliant keynote speakers, breakout sessions, ag industry tours and more! You won't want to miss this one-of-a-kind opportunity to network with likeminded peers from across the state.

Be sure to follow the official MFBF YF&R Leadership Conference Facebook page for updates leading up to the event.



# YF&R raises \$9000 to combat hunger in Montana

The Montana Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmers and Ranchers (YF&R) Committee presented a check for \$9,000 to the Montana Food Bank Network (MFBN) during the 103rd MFBF Annual Convention November 14-17 in Missoula.

The donation came from proceeds raised during the YF&R Hoofin' it for Hunger Race September 17 in Dillon, thanks to generous local sponsors, participants and county Farm Bureaus. Although this marked the 12th year for the race, in 2020 and 2021 it was held virtually. This year, participants competed in a 5K or 10K. Virtual runners who opted not to run made up a portion of the proceeds to the Montana Food Bank Network.

YF&R Committee Chair J.M. Peck said, "The YF&R Committee is proud to continue our Hoofin' it for Hunger Race and Fundraiser and were able to move it across the state to engage with another community. As young people who work every day to raise the food we eat, we



Montana Food Bank Network Chief Development Officer Bill Mathews accepts a \$9,000 check from J.M. Peck, chair of the Montana Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee.

have a special appreciation for the work it takes and recognize the importance of a harvest for all. Young farmers and ranchers around the state are working to promote vibrant rural communities and we want to be able to help those in need or folks who need a little extra to get through a tough time. That is why raising money for the Montana Food Bank Network continues to be a top priority for our YF&R Committee members around the state."

MFBN Chief Development Officer Bill Mathews noted, "The Hoofin' it for Hunger event has created awareness for hunger relief in Montana over time, and has raised nearly \$80,000 cumulative, including this year's donation. That amount has provided at least 400,000 meals to those in need."

# Montana Livestock

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## Washington Fly-In provides great opportunity for active MFBF members

The Montana Farm Bureau Federation believes grassroots advocacy is the most effective way to make real policy changes. MFBF seeks to provide opportunities for members to increase their advocacy skills and participation levels. Voting members are encouraged to get involved and make a difference in the agriculture industry by commenting on local, state and national level agency rule proposals, testifying on bills, contacting legislators, and so on.

The MFBF Fly-In will reward voting century club members for participation in the policy development process with an opportunity to sharpen skills and take their advocacy to the next level on a lobbying trip to Washington, D.C.

Members selected will attend a 2023 Montana Farm Bureau D.C. Fly-In June 12-14, in conjunction with AFBF's Advocacy Fly-In. Attendees will meet with Montana's Congressional Delegation, agency officials, and participate in other meetings as applicable. All meetings, activities and tours will be organized and guided by Nicole Rolf, MFBF Senior Director of Governmental Affairs. Applications are due April 10, 2023.

Members must complete an application and provide documentation of the activities. They must also meet a minimum threshold to be eligible. Applications will be scored and the top three applicants will be selected.

For guidelines and the application, visit <https://mfbf.org/Article/MFBF-DC-FlyIn-What-What-Where-When>. Questions? Contact Nicole Rolf at 406-951-2429, [nicoler@mfbf.org](mailto:nicoler@mfbf.org).



There will be great speakers, breakout sessions and evening events to bring together volunteer leaders from the Promotion & Education, Women's Leadership and Young Farmers & Ranchers programs. You'll leave the conference with new friends, new ideas and new energy for your farm and Farm Bureau.

# Time for the 2023 Legislative Session

It's time for the 2023 Legislative Session. On January 3, 2023, the newly elected legislators will begin their work to create and pass good legislation to benefit all Montanans. Your MFBF lobbyists are paying close attention to the discussions happening and preparing to lobby for this session.

The Montana Farm Bureau Federation has over a century of experience representing agriculture from the local level to the Capitol in Helena and on the Hill in Washington, DC. Our farmer and rancher members have created a grassroots organization, and we share their voices with you. Montana Farm Bureau is made up of over 20,000 member families from all over the state, in all 56 counties. Key topics for lobbying efforts include private property and water rights; state lands, livestock and crop-specific issues, taxation, and wildlife management. Our lobbyists focus on legislation that impacts agriculture, our members and the rural communities in which they live.

All voting members and Century Club members will receive updates on MFBF legislative efforts throughout the session. The *Legislative Highlights* newsletter is published five times during the session, while the Legislative E-source is distributed weekly. Urge your agricultural friends and neighbors to join MFBF and receive these important communications, and plan to stay involved to hear how Farm Bureau is representing you, and how you can help.

This year MFBF has two staff lobbyists: Nicole Rolf and Rachel Cone.



**Nicole Rolf**  
Email: [nicoler@mfbf.org](mailto:nicoler@mfbf.org)  
Phone: (C) (406) 951-2429

Nicole Rolf is the Senior Director of Governmental Affairs for the Montana Farm Bureau Federation. Nicole has been with MFBF for more than sixteen years and this will be her eighth Session representing our farmer and rancher members in Helena. She handles MFBF's national-level issue advocacy year-round and focuses on state-level issues during the Montana Legislative Session.

Nicole grew up on her family's ranch east of Miles

City, MT where she developed a passion for agriculture at a young age. She graduated from Montana State University in 2007 with a degree in Agriculture Business and a second major in Economics. She and her husband Ryan reside on their ranch east of Miles City, where they raise cattle, hay, and their son and daughter.

**Rachel Cone**  
Email: [rachelc@mfbf.org](mailto:rachelc@mfbf.org)  
Phone: (C) (970) 646-8001



Rachel Cone is the Director of State Governmental Affairs for the Montana Farm Bureau Federation. The 2023 Legislative Session will be Rachel's second session with MFBF. In addition to lobbying on behalf of the Farm Bureau during the session, Rachel coordinates the MFBF PAC, manages our grassroots policy development process, and participates in all interim session activities.

Rachel is a graduate of Colorado State University where she earned degrees in Agricultural Business and Equine Science. She has been a part of the Farm Bureau Family since college and interned with the Colorado Farm Bureau. After college and some time working in agriculture policy in Washington, D.C., she joined MFBF to advocate on behalf of agriculture here in Montana.

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# Women's Leadership Committee at the Glance for 2023

BY CARLA LAWRENCE, MFBF WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR

**H**appy New Year! During the Montana Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) convention in November, elections were held during the Delegate Session. I was honored to be re-elected as chair of the Women's Leadership Committee (WLC). The WLC is managed by Alena Standley who keeps us on track while serving as MFBF's regional manager and event organizer.

In the coming year, the WLC will have several activities which will involve our committee or are specific to the WLC. The American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) Annual Convention was held in Puerto Rico, January 7-10. Beth Blevins, District 1 and Pam Converse, District 9, represented the WLC at this event. I appreciate both ladies stepping up to attend in my absence.

The **Ag in Color Drawing Contest** is an annual event and part of the Montana Youth (MY) Ag Literacy program and is managed by Rikki Swant. The deadline for the Ag in Color Drawing Contest was December 1, with the county Farm Bureau winners being submitted to the State Farm Bureau office. County winners for grades K-6 are judged by WLC members with winners announced March 2023.



**Calling on the Capitol** is scheduled for February 6-7 in Helena. This event, held during the bi-annual legislative session, allows Farm Bureau members an opportunity to visit with congressional leaders and to advocate on issues which affect our farms, ranches and the agricultural industry as a whole. All MFBF members are welcome to attend. Look for more information on the Montana Farm Bureau Facebook page or [mfbf.org](http://mfbf.org).

Prior to Calling on the Capitol, a training session for the

**Women's Leadership Committee** will take place in Helena.

Tentative plans are to arrive in Helena on Sunday, February 5, with training Monday, February 6, prior to an event at the Capitol that evening. Stay tuned for details.

**AFBF FUSION** will be held March 3-6, 2023, Jacksonville, FL. This conference welcomes members across the nation from the WLC, Young Farmers and Ranchers (YF&R) and Promotion and Education (P&E) committee. Contact the MFBF office or Alena Standley for the FUSION scholarship form if you are interested in attending this worthwhile event.



**National Ag Day** is March 21, 2023. Celebrations will take place every day during National Ag Week in Washington D.C., and across Montana, and rural and urban communities across the nation. Look for more information on the MFBF Facebook page and in our publications as the events draw nearer.

During 2023, and on behalf of the WLC, scholarships will be available starting January 1 and will be due April 1. Check out the scholarship tab at [mfbf.org](http://mfbf.org) for more information. Farm Bureau members will be reading Ag Accurate books in schools. These books are free through the foundation on request to the MFBF office or Alena Standley.

The MFBF-WLC parallels the AFB-WLC in supporting the Ronald McDonald Houses (RMH). In Montana, the Ronald McDonald Houses are located in Billings and Missoula. WLC annually supports the RMH through cash donations, beef donations or by providing needed items as specified by the RMH.



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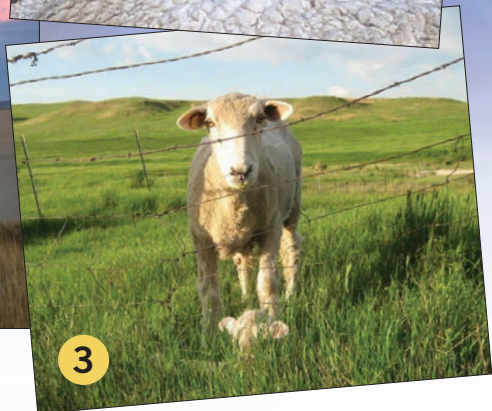
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## Women's Leadership Committee

# WINNERS PHOTO Contest



### 2022 Photo Contest Winners:

1ST: ALISON MASSAR, MCCONE COUNTY FARM BUREAU

2ND: RENETTA PHILLIPPI, POWDER RIVER/CARTER COUNTY FARM BUREAU

3RD: RENETTA PHILLIPPI, POWDER RIVER/CARTER COUNTY FARM BUREAU

*Congratulations to the winners of the Montana Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee Photo Contest.*

Stay tuned to **Facebook** and the **Summer Spokesman** for details on the 2023 Photo Contest.

# I LOVE Strawberries — By Shannon Anderson

The American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture book 'I LOVE Strawberries' was named as a winner in the inaugural 2022 Good Housekeeping's Best Kids' Book Awards. Select winners were also featured in the November 2022 print issue of Good Housekeeping, which hit newsstands October 25.

"The Foundation and our publishing team at Feeding Minds Press are honored by this award," Foundation Executive Director Daniel Meloy said. "We are committed to inspiring learners of all ages to discover where their food comes from—whether that be from a farm across the country, down the road, or in your own backyard."

Written by Shannon Anderson and illustrated by Jaclyn Sinquett, "I LOVE Strawberries," follows Jolie and her faithful rabbit Munchy as together they find

out just how delicious, rewarding, and complicated it can be to grow your own food. Through Jolie's scrapbook-style journal entries, young readers will learn how strawberries grow, what pests to look out for in a garden, why ladybugs are helpful, and much more.

"I LOVE Strawberries," is the fifth printed title from Feeding Minds Press, which published "Right This Very Minute" in January 2019, "Chuck's Ice Cream Wish" in March 2020, "My Family's Soybean Farm" in January 2021, and "Barn at Night" in September 2021. Feeding Minds Press also offers several free printable books that focus on careers in agriculture.

### About Feeding Minds Press:

Feeding Minds Press is a project of the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture. The mission of the Foundation



is to build awareness and understanding of agriculture through education. The goal of Feeding Minds Press is to publish accurate and engaging books about agriculture that connect readers to where their food comes from and to who grows it.



The book is available for purchase directly from [Feeding Minds Press](#), as well as on [Amazon](#).

## Want to Support the Future of Montana Agriculture?



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The Montana Farm Bureau Foundation's license plate funds agricultural research and education programs across Montana, including Mini-Grants, Ag Leadership Scholarships, Accurate Ag Books in Montana schools and the Youth Speech Contest, to name a few.

To learn more go to [www.mfbf.org/foundation](http://www.mfbf.org/foundation).



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# Polaris & Farm Bureau

*...a winning combination!*

Congratulations to Mark Boyd of Alder for earning top honors in the 2022 MFBF YF&R Discussion Meet. Mark is a proud owner of a new Polaris Ranger 500!

A huge thank you to our participating Polaris dealers!

*Brought to you by these participating Polaris dealers.  
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- Gallatin Recreation - Bozeman
- Helena Cycle Center - Helena
- Kurt's Polaris - Seeley Lake
- Lewistown Honda & Polaris - Lewistown
- Redline Sports, Inc - Butte
- Riverside Marine and Cycle - Miles City
- Russell Motorsports - Missoula
- Sports City Cyclery - Great Falls
- Yellowstone Polaris - Billings

