

With A "Steak" In Montana's Future

P.O. Box 536
Vaughn, MT 59487

Web: www.montanacattlemen.org
Email: mca@montanacattlemen.org
Phone: 406-467-2251

NOTE FROM MONTANA CATTLEMEN'S PRESIDENT

MCA has been busy this past year representing the interests of Montana's cattle producers. Our membership has increased considerably as a result. In 2019 we were disappointed when we could not convince the Legislature to pass a Montana Country of Origin Labeling law but we have not given up. In coalition with Montana Farmers Union and Northern Plains Resource Council, we will reintroduce a COOL bill. We are also resolved to advocate for national Mandatory COOL.

This past spring, MCA helped put on candidate debates that focused on agricultural issues, a subject that always gets too little attention. The debates were for the gubernatorial and congressional candidates. We were disappointed in that both eventual winners, Greg Gianforte and Matt Rosendale, refused to participate.

The market disruptions caused by the Corona virus infecting thousands of packing plant workers should be a wakeup call to all cattlemen and women. Our industry is too centrally controlled and vulnerable to the dictates and practices of a beef packing monopoly. MCA has and will continue to advocate for market reform. The disruptions in the cattle markets this past year put emphasis on the need to be able to slaughter and market locally. We applaud our Montana meat packing plants who have done everything possible to accommodate the needs of Montana beef consumers, ranchers, and businesses. However, it is clear that there is not enough slaughter capacity in Montana.

MCA received a grant from the CARE Act to supply beef to the Montana Food Banks. We had the devil of a time getting donated cattle killed and processed. It has always been a MCA priority to promote locally raised and processed beef and we shall continue to advocate for a stronger infrastructure to market Montana raised beef.

MCA has been concerned about a bill submitted by Senator Daines to settle the water rights claims of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. This bill was slipped into the year-end funding bill with no debate allowed. MCA had a number of questions but Senator Daines refused to respond to our inquiries. Our concerns include a provision granting the tribes standing over water quality in all of the rivers of Montana, questions about the rights of lease holders on State and Federal lands being transferred to the tribes, and the apparent "takings" of infrastructure owned by local government and irrigators. Senator Tester has proposed a similar bill to settle water rights issues on the Fort Belknap Reservation. This bill also has many unanswered questions but at least it is not yet law. We will continue to request answers to our questions.

In 2020, USDA again attempted to require RFID tags in cattle in interstate commerce. MCA sent comments opposing that proposition. Most cattle producers across the nation opposed requiring RFID tags. This issue has come too many times and USDA should just get used to the idea that the majority of cattle producers in Montana feel that brands work just fine and do not think mandatory electronic tagging is necessary.

This year we have started to look into the movement to introduce a herd of wild bison along the Missouri River. Currently, bison are either legally classified as wildlife or as livestock. Outside of Yellowstone Park and the National Bison Range there are no publicly owned wild bison. There are, however, thousands of bison being raised for commercial purposes and under no circumstances would MCA wish to interfere in those producer's businesses. Wild bison, however, would cause problems for adjoining landowners in Eastern Montana. We look forward to membership participation in establishing a policy on bison management.

MCA held its Cattlemen's Day annual meeting virtually. This was an unfortunate necessity, but we were gratified that it worked better than expected. We all missed the opportunity to meet with old friends and make new ones, but the virtual meeting was the best option under the circumstances. All of our panels were recorded and can be accessed on the MCA website. Panels included: Country of Origin Labeling, discussion with Senator Jon Tester, issues surrounding shortage of cattle slaughter capacity in Montana, concerns about the Daines' water rights settlement with the Confederated Salish Kootenai Tribes, and how to prevent the introduction of wild bison in Montana.

Montana Cattlemen's Association exists to represent real cattle producers. It is an organization that aims to be responsive to your needs. We are open to considering any issue any member may wish to have addressed. There are a few unfilled board positions and we need nominations to fill those seats. Please vote for board members and remember to ask your neighbors to join. We will continue to actively support the cattlemen of Montana.



Gilles Stockton, President
Montana Cattlemen's Association

2020 CATTLEMEN'S DAY RECAP

The year 2020 was a particularly challenging year, as everyone can attest. So due to Covid-19 concerns, Montana Cattlemen's Association decided to hold our 19th Annual Cattlemen's Day via Zoom. The all day event hosted several seminars affecting Montana cattle producers. The following is a recap of those seminars:

MONTANA COOL: Board member Newell Roche was moderator. The participants included MCA board member Ken Morris; Northern Plains Resource Council Chair and rancher Jeanie Alderson; Montana Farmers Union president Brian Schweitzer; and past Montana State Senator and Representative Brad Hamlett.

Ken Morris reported that since the repeal of COOL, the label "Product of the USA" has been misused. Beef that is labeled "Product of the USA" can be any beef, domestic and foreign, that passes through a USA processing plant. Even foreign beef simply being repackaged can be labeled as "Product of the USA".

Jeanie Alderson noted we haven't seen fair market prices since COOL was repealed. It is imperative we pass COOL on the State level in order to pave the way for mandatory Federal COOL. Once COOL is implemented nationwide, producers should see an increase in prices due to demand for USA product over foreign imports.

Brad Hamlett feels COOL helps to promote the quality of Montana beef over foreign imports. Consumers would then know that the beef they purchase is born, raised and processed in the USA. Montana Stockgrowers members are raising calves and sending them to Canada to finish and send back to the USA. They don't want COOL because it hurts their bottom line. He stressed the importance of fighting to implement COOL legislatively and that businesses and producers need to testify during legislative sessions.

Walt Schweitzer reviewed the need for truth in labeling. Consumers have the absolute right to know where their beef originates. In the 1950's CEO's from several corporations devised a plan called "cheap food policy" which was actually about corporate control. Our food supply chain is broken because of this policy. The producer income dollar has gone down, but the price of meat in the market increases. A placarding bill needs to be passed in the next legislature so consumers and retailers can be educated to differentiate the origins of beef product.

SENATOR JON TESTER: Montana Cattlemen's Association would like to thank Senator Tester for taking the time to participate in Cattlemen's Day. Senator Tester noted that COOL has been around since he has been in the legislature. He currently has a resolution pending on COOL and hopes to get bipartisan support for nationwide mandatory COOL. The last two administrations have done nothing for COOL. People are saying they don't want government intervention; but there is a need for intervention on this topic. The Packers and Stockyard act proves that. Food security is critically important. We are going to lose all of our medium and small packers if we don't do something. The legislature is getting mixed messages about this.

RAFFLE DRAWING: During the lunch break, a drawing was held for the Heiser saddle. Bruce Lee from Choteau won the saddle. Congratulations, Bruce!

MONTANA MEAT PROCESSING: MCA board member, Jan McDonald was moderator. The participants included Brian Engle, owner of Pioneer Meats in Big Timber; and Walter Schweitzer, president of Montana Farmers Union.

Montana Cattlemen's Association Foundation was fortunate to have been awarded a \$50,000 grant to be used during the 2020 calendar year to process beef for the benefit of Montana's food banks. Unfortunately, USDA approved processors are booked well into 2021 so only a portion of the grant money was able to be utilized.

Brian Engle remarked that the demand for meat processing has escalated exponentially. His business is booked through January 2022. There is a shortage of skilled labor and as a result there are only half of the plants currently operating now compared to eight years ago. He said he could process 35 head per week if he had the skilled labor. More plants are needed in Montana. Whitehall is building a facility that will be capable of processing 50 head a day. There is also a plant planned for Great Falls. The burden will be finding and importing trained labor.

Walt Schweitzer recounted that Montana processed 70% of its own food in the 1980's; now it is only 10%. The four main corporations process about 84% of our beef and pork. This is what caused meat shortages earlier this year in our stores. Another issue is that custom butchers can no longer process beef for food banks since it violates the Federal Meat Inspection Act. The state inspected plants can only sell beef within the state boundaries. These regulations need to be modified. MSU Northern is considering a one-year program to train butchers.

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SETTLEMENT/COMPACT BILLS: The County Commissioners from Lake County explained the implications of the Water Compact Settlement Bill proposed by Senator Steve Daines. This bill was proposed to finalize the Water Compact previously passed by the Montana Legislature to settle the outstanding water rights claims of the Confederated Salish Kootenai Tribes (CSKT). The problem is that this bill goes way beyond the Compact and includes provisions that are seriously detrimental to the rights and property of the owners of the irrigation systems on the reservation, the citizens of Lake and Flathead Counties, and all Montanans.

In return for \$1.9 billion dollars, the CSKT renounces the water rights claims but retains their right to intervene on matters of water quality on all Montana waters. This is a potential problem for all water rights holders in the state. In addition, 36,800 acres of State lands and the 18,500 acre National Bison Range will be transferred to the jurisdiction of the CSKT. The plan is for the Federal Government to compensate the State for the lost lands by transferring Federal lands to the State. There are no provisions in the bill that upholds the rights of current lease holders of the State or Federal lands.

The Daines Bill (S 3019) is highly problematic on a number of fronts. However, the Daines Bill was added to the year-end massive Appropriations Bill, with no hearings or other discussions. There is a similar bill advanced by Senator Tester (S 3113) to finalize water rights issues with the Fort Belknap Reservation. This bill also includes many of the problematic provisions mentioned above on the CSKT Settlement Act. There is time to address outstanding issues with this bill and MCA is in conversations with Senator Tester's staff.

BISON--LIVESTOCK OR WILDLIFE: An issue that is causing ranchers in eastern Montana growing concern is the movement to establish wild bison in the Missouri Breaks. This effort is being led by the American Prairie Reserve (APR) and supported by organizations such as the Montana Wilderness Society. The MCA panel brought together five persons who have knowledge about the impacts to wild bison in order to share their perspectives.

Representative Ken Holmlund sponsored a bill in the 2019 Legislative session that added to the legal definition of what is a wild bison. His bill in essence says that any bison that has been captured and on which the "per capita" fee would have been required, cannot then be reclassified as wild. His bill passed the Legislature but was vetoed by Governor Bullock. Rep. Holmlund will be re-introducing this bill in the 2021 Legislature.

Laura Boyce and Deanne Robbins are both ranchers in Fergus County and founders of the Save the Cowboy organization. They explained the implications of a report, "Repurposing of Federally Reserved Taylor Grazing Districts for Wildlife Rewilding." This report prepared by the Montana Natural Resource Coalition concludes that the Taylor Grazing Act does not recognize bison as a species authorized to utilize BLM allotments.

Chris King grew up and ranches in Petroleum County and for a number of years served as a County Commissioner for Petroleum County. Chris was appointed to be a member of The Bison Discussion Group which assisted the Montana Fish, Wildlife, Parks in establishing a policy for the potential management of bison as wildlife. FWP published their report in January of this year. Although FWP favors establishing wild bison in the Missouri Breaks, they acknowledge that Montana Law gives the Montana Department of Livestock jurisdiction over the issue.

Bill West has recently retired from a 44-year career in public land management, including Manager of The National Bison Range. His advice is that we should establish relationships with the managers of public lands, including the Charlie Russell Wildlife Refuge, to ensure that our concerns are being adequately considered.



All livestock owners must report the number of each type of livestock they own as of February 1 every year. Even if you only own one horse or a few chickens, you must report your livestock.

Livestock reports are due March 1. Per capita fees are due on May 31.

Livestock owners can report their livestock online or by completing the Livestock Reporting Form found at mtrevenue.gov. For more information call (406) 444-6900.

Secretarial Position Available:

Montana Cattlemen's Association has needed a secretary for several years. I realize the position sounds intimidating, but I thought I would try to explain what we are looking for. The position would require about three hours per week on average. The responsibilities would require more time during our annual meeting, and sometimes in the early part of the year, as we receive more memberships during the first two months of the year.

MEMBERSHIPS: All money and membership applications are processed by the treasurer. The treasurer then forwards the memberships to the secretary, who sends out membership cards and welcome letters to the members.

MINUTES: The board of directors generally has a conference board meeting one evening per month. The secretary is required to be on the call and take minutes, then type up the minutes from the meeting and email them to the board members in a timely fashion.

NEWSLETTERS: MCA tries to produce a newsletter four times per year. The board members are required to provide articles to the secretary to be included in the newsletter. The secretary is then responsible to format the newsletter and send it to the printer.

PRESS RELEASES: Periodically there is important information that needs to be disseminated, not only to our membership but released to publications statewide as well. The secretary is responsible to forward this information to the proper recipients.

WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK PAGES: The MCA website and Facebook pages need to be kept up-to-date so it would be helpful if the secretary has some knowledge of posting information on these media formats.

The secretary works very closely with the treasurer on the above tasks. It is necessary that the secretary be familiar with computer programs such as Word, Excel and WordPress. Other software works if it is easier for the secretary. It would be very helpful if MCA could encourage volunteers to take on part or all of the secretarial work. Unfortunately, if that does not occur we will be forced to hire someone to oversee and help with these duties.

Please give me a call if you'd like to discuss and volunteer! Jan McDonald, Treasurer, 406-467-2251

It's Time To Renew Your Brand!!

MONTANA LIVESTOCK BRAND RE-RECORD PERIOD

JANUARY 1, 2021 to DECEMBER 31, 2021

**** All Montana brands will be re-recorded in 2021***

**** The cost to re-record a brand will be \$175 per brand***

**** You can renew by mail or online***

**** For more information: www.liv.mt.gov***

NOTE: If you do not re-record your brand by midnight on December 31, 2021, your brand will become inactive. Once a brand is inactive, there is no guarantee that the brand will be reissued.

AG SECRETARY VILSACK SAYS HE'S OPEN TO COOL

By Greg Henderson, Drovers

During Senate confirmation hearings on Tuesday, Tom Vilsack, the former Ag Secretary who is President Biden's nominee to return as Ag Secretary, said he is willing to consider reimplementing country-of-origin labeling (COOL) regulations for meat products.

Addressing a question from Nebraska Senator Deb Fischer about whether he believes the current labeling policy adequately informed consumers, Vilsack said, "If it's the same policy as it was four years ago when I left, the answer is no."

As Ag Secretary under President Obama, Vilsack said, "We made every concerted effort to try to create better transparency and better information for consumers, because we understand that consumers want to know where their food comes from."

Vilsack said the Obama Administration attempted on three occasions to strengthen COOL but was unsuccessful because of Canadian challenges to the law through the World Trade Organization (WTO). In December 2015, Congress repealed the COOL law for beef and pork because of a series of WTO rulings that prohibited labels based on country of origin on some products.

The Canadian government argued that COOL worked to the detriment of the meat industry on both sides of the border by increasing costs, lowering processing efficiency and otherwise distorting trade across the Canada-U.S. border. Mexico made similar claims.

In May 2015 the WTO ruled that U.S. COOL requirements discriminated against Canadian and Mexican livestock, and subsequently authorized Canada and Mexico to impose \$1 billion in retaliatory tariffs against U.S. imports.

"I am absolutely willing to listen to anybody who has an idea" about how the U.S. can implement COOL where the WTO doesn't "slap it down," Vilsack said.

South Dakota Senator John Thune asked Vilsack about volatility in the cattle markets and "what actions (Vilsack) would take to strengthen the integrity of the cattle market."

Vilsack responded he would use every "capacity we have with USDA to make sure that we have open, fair and transparent markets." He said he would seek price discovery data and economic analysis to "determine whether or not there's a problem," and if so, "using the tools we have to provide greater competition, greater openness, greater transparency, greater fairness."

Vilsack also expressed interest in expanding processing opportunities "so that we're not overly reliant on a small number of processors." He also said he would work with the Department of Justice to "determine whether or not they see reasons for additional action on their behalf."

Montana Cattlemen's "Beef on Every Plate" Grant Provided 8500# of Hamburger to Food Banks

An offshoot of Montana Cattlemen's Association is the Montana Cattlemen's Foundation for Research, Education and Endowment. It is a 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization that formed the "Beef on Every Plate" program about ten years ago to help feed Montanans in need. Producers donate cattle to the program, MCA pays the processing, and the one-pound hamburger packages are delivered to food banks and other non-profit organizations throughout Montana.

In July of 2020, the MCA Foundation was awarded a \$50,000.00 grant from the Covid Food Pantry Assistance Program. Shortly after receiving the grant money, the government informed MCA that only federally or state inspected plants could be utilized to process the meat. There are only fifteen inspected plants in the entire state of Montana! Five of those processors are on the west side of Montana. MCA contacted all fifteen processors and was informed that they were backlogged from six to eighteen months. This was very problematic since if the grant funds were not expended by December 31st, 2020 the balance had to be returned to the government.

Fortunately, during the month of December we were able to work with several processors who adjusted their very full schedules to accommodate processing several animals for "Beef On Every Plate". The hamburger is being distributed by the Montana Food Bank Network throughout the State. Their route covers the State about every six weeks, and the product can be stored in Missoula until transported.

Because of the lack of processing availability we were not able to use all of the grant funding. However, we were able to distribute about 8500# of hamburger to food-insecure Montanans. A huge "Thank You" to everyone who helped make this project a success in spite of the roadblocks!

We will continue the "Beef on Every Plate" program, but there are some new rules we must follow. We can no longer use local processors that are commonly used by most of us as they are classified as "custom exempt" (which means they do not have an inspector on the premises to inspect the kill of the animal) and food banks cannot currently accept meat that is processed at these facilities. Several processors are working to become inspected processors, but until that happens we will not be able to donate to food banks unless the meat is processed by inspected processors.

MCA is hopeful we can receive another grant in 2021 to continue to provide hamburger to our Montana food banks. We'll keep you updated!

Letter from Director Ken Morris . . .

TO: John Goggins, Western Ag Reporter ~ December 18, 2020

Thank you for your views expressed in the December 10, 2020, issue of the Western Ag Reporter. In your comments you mentioned the cattle industry and the packing industry. You are correct in mentioning the widening gap between these two segments, cattle up to slaughter ... beef after.

You mentioned that you are worried that the DOJ investigation might not accomplish anything if the cattle markets get a lot better. One other thing you forgot to mention: I think the CFAP subsidies received by the cattle segment are going to affect the chances for real changes to narrow the profit gap between the two segments. Years of subsidies in agriculture after awhile only benefit the processors and not the producers in the end. Let's face it, when the NCBA pushes for CFAP they are really helping the beef segment in the long run, allowing them to continue to buy our live cattle cheaper through manipulation and then profiting by charging the American tax payer the difference.

You also mentioned that while visiting with cattlemen at production sales you have the chance to ask what needs to be done to help the cattle segment. Whenever I ask that, the main response I hear is *'bring back Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling'*; and now in the last year I have been hearing *'increase fat cattle cash purchasing to lower the captive supply and formula contract influence so the independent feeders actually have a better idea what their animals are worth to increase their bargaining power'*. The only way this can be implemented is through regulation or enforcement of the original Packers and Stockyards Act. While we're on that subject, Ag Secretary Sonny Perdue talked about reforming the voluntary usage of the Product of USA label, which is used to label beef now in a completely bogus way, by *"threading the needle"* (as Mr. Perdue worded it) to make beef that is slaughtered and processed in the USA the only beef eligible for that label instead of just processed. It appears that the beef processing cartel must have stolen his bifocals because that needle, to my knowledge, has never been threaded.

A longtime friend in South Dakota who is a cattle feeder, order buyer and who also manages a brokerage firm, stated to me that the market collapse, after the August 2019 Holcomb fire, proved that the markets are completely manipulated by the big four multinational beef processing companies. The fire caused a supposedly 6% reduction in beef processing capacity overall nationwide, yet the weekly slaughter average for the three weeks post fire was 5000 head greater than the week before the fire. He also stated at the time, it is much easier for the cow/calf segment to try to raise hell to get some changes made than it is for the feeding segment to lead the charge because of the constant threat of reprisals on them by the beef segment. This was something you also mentioned in that article.

The cow/calf producers in the country saw the timing of that fire and the exaggerated consequences first hand. A lot of calves are contracted from August to December and that is when the prices we received were instantly \$15 to \$20 a hundred lower for our feeder calves.

Those same calves which were fed by the feeders were then sold to the packers at huge discounts due to manipulation again. COVID-19 this time was blamed for the widening gap between the losses experienced by the cattle feeders and the extreme profits made by the beef industry processors.

Common sense says that increased time means increased risk. A Montana cow/calf producer has twelve months of time in each calf because the brood cows have the continual expense of eating and management year-round. In my case the 700# calves are then sent to feeders in mid-October who then have an additional 6 to 7 months of risk, labor, and expense. The finished cattle are then sold to the beef industry who have basically no time risk.

Since the repeal of COOL and the increase in cattle numbers in 2015, the beef industry has increased its profits while the cattle industry profits have gone down. The beef price at retail stayed at high levels much longer than should have normally been the case with normal supply and demand forces. When you factor in the increased imports of cheaper beef after COOL was repealed, beef industry profits were that much greater yet the cattle price the producer and feeder saw were that much lower because supply and demand do still appear to affect our segment.

In closing, another very important question you may want to ask at production sales in your future travels is how ordinary bull purchasers feel about the NCBA. Ordinary cow/calf producers and independent cattle feeders have the most voices and are the largest segment of the whole industry. When I ask that question in my area there is almost always a derogatory remark for an answer. You stated *'if we can all stay united, we can push for change'*. We cannot stay united if we are not united to begin with.

The NCBA always appears to be pushing in the opposite direction and aiding the beef segment by:

1. Having great influence in repealing Mandatory national COOL.
2. After the repeal, allowing the bogus use of the voluntary product of USA to pass off imported beef to unsuspecting consumers who were in the habit of seeing the mandatory COOL labels on beef packages. This still continues to this day with the blessing of the USDA.
3. Voluntary verses the mandatory fat cattle price reporting reform which would lead to greater price discovery for fat cattle sellers.
4. Continued support of mandatory RFID tags for disease traceability when the majority of cattle producers are against it including the Montana Board of Livestock. In my own experience, and many others, tag retention is terrible; thus providing a very unreliable solution.

Thank you for your time, Ken Morris

Take the bull by the horns, legislature: Pass Country of Origin Labeling in Montana

Consumers have the right to know the origin of their beef purchases, and ranchers have the right to a fair and competitive market. This is a reasonable expectation. However, since 2015 Congress specifically exempted beef and pork from labeling laws. Consumers do not know where their beef comes from, and ranchers do not have fair prices.

If you are a consumer learning of this for the first time, you might be incredulous. The last time you purchased beef from the supermarket, the labels clearly stated “USDA Graded” and “Product of the USA.” Sadly, those labels are meaningless. The USDA label does not mean that the meat actually came from this country. Beef or pork imported from any other country can legally have a label stating “Product of the USA” simply if it is re-packaged for retail within our borders.

This is why the Montana Cattlemen’s Association, the Montana Farmers Union, and the Northern Plains Resource Council are allied to ask that the Montana Legislature pass a Montana Country of Origin Labeling law. It is true, that to be fully effective, COOL needs re-instatement on the national level, but you have to start somewhere. If Montana, whose largest industry is cattle, cannot stand up for consumers and ranchers, who will?

A skeptical reader might say: “Wait a minute here, there must be more to the story. Why did Congress exempt beef and pork from the labeling law?” The proximate reason was that the World Trade Organization directed the United States government to. The actual reasons were that the criminally convicted family who owns Brazil-based JBS (the largest beef packing corporation in the world) along with the Chinese owners of Smithfield, (the US’s largest pork packing corporation), profit from the lack of COOL. JBS imports beef from Brazil, while Smithfield wants to export pork from China into the US. These foreign interests make money by slapping a “Product of USA” label on lesser quality imported meats. More money, in fact, than beef produced by hard-working Montana ranchers.

Many consumers may be fine buying imported beef, and that should be their right. However, what is not right is buying Brazilian beef while being led to believe it was born, raised, and processed in the USA. You might think that it would be a no-brainer to pass a MT COOL bill in the Legislature of the State of Montana, where cattle is the most important industry, but it is not. The 2019 Legislature refused to consider COOL.

It is hard to explain why individual legislators don’t want consumers to know the origin of their beef, but that is in fact what happened. Clearly COOL is not in the interests of multinational corporations who prop up this rigged system that cheats family ranchers and everyday consumers with “legally fraudulent” labels.

Representative Frank Smith is sponsoring the Montana Country of Origin Placarding Act at the 2021 Montana Legislature. The bill, if it isn’t killed by foreign meatpacking interests, will ask retailers to make a reasonable effort to display a sign at the meat case with country-of-origin information for beef and pork.

Why wait on the federal government to get its act together? It’s time for the Montana legislature to take the bull by the horns. Consumers have the right to know where their meat comes from, and ranchers have the right to a free and fair market. It is just that simple. Contact your legislators today and tell them to support the Montana Country of Origin Placarding Act.

Signed,

Gilles Stockton, President, Montana Cattlemen’s Association
Walter Schweitzer, President, Montana Farmers Union
Jeanie Alderson, Chair, Northern Plains Resource Council

Montana Department of Livestock Conducts Activities in Preparation for a Foreign Animal Disease Introduction

January 21, 2021

Helena, Mont.— The Montana Department of Livestock (DOL) continues to prepare for a foreign animal disease (FAD) introduction into the state. The Animal Health Bureau (AHB) and the Montana Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (MVDL) were recently awarded funding by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to increase practical livestock biosecurity measures and address needs related to receiving, testing, and reporting diagnostic test results, respectively.

The AHB was awarded over \$29,000 to conduct outreach to Montana cattle producers about biosecurity measures that will be required for permitting movements of agricultural products during an outbreak. In the coming months, the AHB will hold 10 biosecurity tabletop courses around the state, focusing on biosecurity recommendations from the Secure Beef Supply program. The tabletop exercises will serve as a 3D interactive model to help illustrate biosecurity principles and why they are fundamental to decrease the risk of disease introduction. The tabletop activities will be supplemented by on-farm biosecurity assessments for interested participants.

"On-farm biosecurity is a critical management tool for producers to protect livestock from foreign or domestic diseases," said Dr. Anna Forseth, veterinarian with the Department of Livestock.

Additionally, the MVDL has been awarded \$94,500 to progress efficiencies of data entry, and analysis of diagnostic test results. "

Readily available data will be critically important to veterinarians and producers during the event of a foreign animal disease outbreak," said laboratory Director, Gregory Juda, PhD. "Veterinary diagnostic laboratories play a key role in disease surveillance and livestock business continuity, and these activities will be best served by a laboratory information system that can provide State Animal Health Officials with accurate and timely information."

The MVDL partnered with veterinary diagnostic laboratories at South Dakota State University and the University of Illinois as part of a multi-laboratory joint grant submission.

Biosecurity and diagnostic efficiency will be key factors in the success of a FAD response. The DOL is excited about the opportunity to advance its preparedness for a FAD and will look to producers in the coming months to take advantage of these opportunities.

The mission of the Montana Department of Livestock is to control and eradicate animal diseases, prevent the transmission of animal diseases to humans, and to protect the livestock industry from theft and predatory animals. For more information on the Montana Department of Livestock, visit www.liv.mt.gov

CONTACT:

Gregory Juda, PhD, Laboratory Director, (406) 994-4885, gregory.juda@mt.gov

Dr. Anna Forseth, Program Veterinarian, (406) 444-2939, anna.forseth@mt.gov

LOSS ASSOCIATED WITH A POTENTIAL OUTBREAK OF FMD COULD BE ENORMOUS

(JAN. 5, 2021) – On Monday, the United States Cattlemen's Association submitted comments on the *Petition to Manufacture Foot-and-Mouth Disease Vaccine in the United States*. On July 14, 2020, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) published in the Federal Register a notice and request for information on a petition submitted by Zoetis, Inc., a U.S. vaccine manufacturer, seeking approval to manufacture within the continental United States a vaccine produced using a leaderless strain of the foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) virus. A leaderless virus lacks part of the genetic code (the leader) critical for determining virulence in a host.

Stakeholders noted that the notice and petition did not provide enough data to support a determination that the leaderless virus is not a live virus and that it poses no risk of causing FMD infection in animals. To address those concerns, USDA APHIS issued a Risk Assessment Summary of the FMD-LL3B3D A24 Cruzeiro Vaccine, supporting the safety of the leaderless FMD virus and its use in manufacturing FMD vaccine and reopened the comment period.

USCA Animal Health and ID Chairman Dwight Keller issued the following statement: "If our nation's leaders are going to continue to ignore the risks associated with maintaining trade relationships with countries at known risk of FMD – such as Namibia and Argentina – then, it is imperative that we provide a pathway for the advancement of U.S. vaccine technologies. USCA recognizes the enormity of this decision and the devastating, lasting effects a FMD outbreak would have on the livestock industry within the mainland U.S. and around the globe. "However, we cannot be reliant on foreign entities for the development and manufacture of a safe, abundant vaccine supply. Instead, we support providing the opportunity for American ingenuity in producing and maintaining a vaccine supply capable of protecting the health of the domestic cattle herd in the event of a FMD outbreak."

MCA ANNUAL OFFICIAL BALLOT

For MCA Voting Members Only

RESOLUTION: The Montana Cattlemen's Association supports a resolution in the 2021 Montana Legislative Session to designate the hours of 12 o'clock either "Noon" or "Midnight" as official time in Montana to avoid the confusion of AM or PM.

Approve resolution

Disapprove resolution

***EXPLANATION OF MCA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS TERMS:**

Officers: President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer serve two-year terms.

Directors: Two directors are elected from each district; four at large directors elected from any part of Montana; one business director; one Native American director, for a total of 12 directors. Directors are nominated and elected by the majority vote of the membership within each district and serve three-year terms.



Refer to this district map when voting for directors

The following Officers were nominated for a two-year term. All members who own cattle may vote for Officers.

Approve Y or N

President: **Gilles Stockton** or Write in _____

Secretary: Vacant (see page 4) Write in _____

* * * * *

The following Directors were nominated for a three-year term.

Western, Central and Eastern directors may only be voted on by MCA members in those districts (see map above) who own cattle.

Any tribal member may vote for the tribal district director and do not need to own cattle. Any business member may vote for the business district director and do not need to own cattle.

Approve Y or N

Western District: **Ken Morris** _____ or Write in _____

Central District: **Richard Liebert** _____ or Write in _____

Brad Hamlett or Write in _____

Eastern District: **Vacant** Write in _____

Vacant	Write in
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Tribal District: **Vacant** Write in

Business District: **May Simmons** or Write in _____

Yes, I own cattle and am a voting member of MCA

Please return completed ballot no later than March 10, 2021 to:

MCA ~ PO Box 536 ~ Vaughn, MT 59487

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ARE DUE JANUARY 1, 2021. IF YOU HAVE NOT YET RENEWED YOUR DUES, PLEASE COMPLETE THE FORM BELOW OR RENEW ONLINE AT:
mca@montanacattlemen.org/Membership



Name: _____

Spouse Name (if joining): _____

Ranch Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ County: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

Own cattle: ____ Yes ____ No

Tribal member: ____ Yes ____ No

Membership Dues:

Cattle Producer ~ \$50 _____

Associate Member ~ \$50 _____

College Student ~ \$25 _____

Junior Member ~ \$25 _____
(Age 18 & younger)

OR ~ Optional Premier Memberships:

Gene Autry level ~ \$100 per year _____

Roy Rogers level ~ \$150 per year _____

John Wayne level ~ \$200 per year _____

Additional Optional Contribution _____

TOTAL AMOUNT SUBMITTED: \$ _____

*Only members owning cattle have voting rights ~ One member—one vote
 Associate members do not own cattle but are supportive of MCA goals*

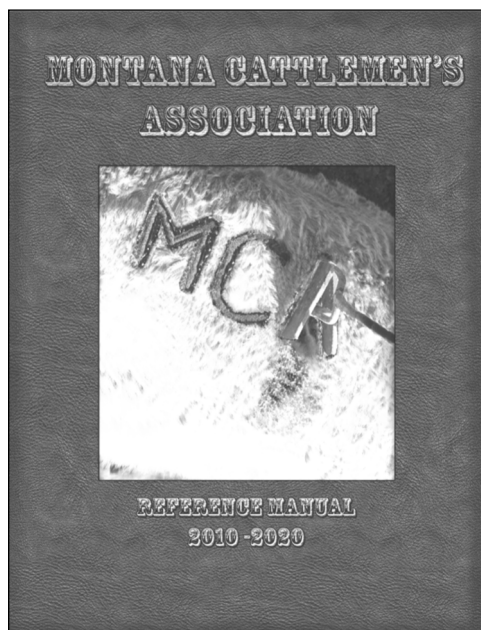
Join online at www.montanacattlemen.org ~ OR ~ mail this completed form along with your check to:

MONTANA CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 536 ~ Vaughn, MT 59487

Please make copies of this membership form for multiple memberships or to share with your friends and neighbors.

Your continued support of Montana Cattlemen's Association is very much appreciated!

25% OFF SALE !!



The Montana Cattlemen's Association Brand Book and Reference Manual is a deluxe hard cover three-volume series which catalogs Montana's recorded livestock brands. It also includes some special "extras": ranch histories, western poetry, traditional cowboy recipes, and photos. **GREAT GIFT!**

The three volumes of the brand book have been divided into the following counties:

WESTERN: Lincoln, Flathead, Lake, Sanders, Missoula, Ravalli, Granite, Powell, Glacier, Pondera, Teton, Lewis & Clark, Deer Lodge, Jefferson, Silverbow, Madison, Beaverhead, Gallatin, Broadwater, and Mineral.

CENTRAL: Toole, Liberty, Hill, Choteau, Judith Basin, Blaine, Fergus, Petroleum, Meagher, Wheatland, Sweet Grass, Park, Golden Valley, Musselshell, Yellowstone, Stillwater, Cascade and Carbon.

EASTERN: Phillips, Valley, Daniels, Roosevelt, Sheridan, Garfield, Rosebud, Treasure, Big Horn, McCone, Richland, Dawson, Prairie, Wibaux, Custer, Fallon, Powder River, and Carter.

✂

MONTANA CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION PO Box 536 ~ VAUGHN, MT 59487

Brand Book Order Form

Books can also be ordered online at www.montanacattlemen.org

SHIP TO:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ ST _____ Zip _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Eastern Volume (516 pages): \$65 now **\$48.75** _____
(Quantity)

Central Volume (634 pages): \$75 now **\$56.25** _____
(Quantity)

Western Volume (512 pages): \$65 now **\$48.75** _____
(Quantity)

Three-volume set: ~~\$185~~ now **\$138.75** _____
(Quantity)

TOTAL AMOUNT SUBMITTED: \$ _____

Montana Cattlemen's Assn.
P.O. Box 536
Vaughn, MT 59487

"BEEF ON EVERY PLATE"

Proudly sponsored by MCA and its members!

One in seven Montanans struggle with hunger; one in five children in Montana live in households that struggle with hunger. USDA reports 11.5% of Montana households are "food insecure" and often skip meals or go to bed hungry, including the elderly and young children. Many on fixed incomes, single mothers, and the working poor simply cannot afford to purchase quality meat to feed their families. Montana Cattlemen's Foundation has organized the **"BEEF ON EVERY PLATE"** program to enable cattle producers to donate beef to help feed our neighbors. To date we have provided beef for over 300,000 meals!!

As cattle producers, we always have beef in the freezer. Unfortunately, this is a luxury that too many Montanans do not share. The need is overwhelming! If you wish to donate a cow, bull, or steer, please call the Montana Cattlemen's Foundation 406-467-2251 to make arrangements. For those who do not own cattle, cash donations are also needed to help pay for costs associated with processing the beef. Montana Cattlemen's Foundation is working with the Montana Food Bank Network and others to distribute the hamburger throughout the state. With your help we can provide assistance to Montanans in need!

Montana Cattlemen's Foundation for Research, Education and Endowment is a non-profit tax-exempt charitable foundation organized under IRS tax code Section 501(c)(3). All of your contributions are fully deductible.

There are no administration costs, so 100% of your donation goes to this program!

For more information please contact:

MONTANA CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION
PO Box 536 ~ Vaughn, MT 59487
(406) 467-2251

Email: mca@montanacattlemen.org
Web: www.montanacattlemen.org

Your Support Is Appreciated!