



# Newsletter

**OCTOBER 2022**

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With A "Steak" In Montana's Future

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

*Montana Cattlemen's 21st Annual Cattlemen's Day will be held on  
Saturday, December 3rd, at the Holiday Inn, Great Falls*

### AGENDA

#### 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Cattlemen's Day

**December 3, 2022 ~ Holiday Inn, Great Falls**

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC ~ NO REGISTRATION FEE

ZOOM LOGIN: <https://tinyurl.com/CattlemensDay2022>

- 9:00 a.m. **Welcome:** Gilles Stockton, MCA President  
**Cattle Health; New Bozeman Diagnostic Laboratory**  
*Johne's disease, longhorned tick, tuberculosis, animal vaccine bank, brucellosis update*  
Marty Zaluski, Montana Dept. of Livestock State Veterinarian  
**Department of Livestock Update**  
Mike Honeycutt, Executive Officer
- 10:00 a.m. **Madison Food Park**  
*New premix blending facility; future developments*  
Cathy Lockard, PhD; Dixon Scott
- 11:00 a.m. **Montana Premium Processing Co-op**  
*Co-op plant opening; Co-op model in meat processing*  
Matt Rains
- 12:00 noon **Lunch**—Hot roast beef sandwich, garlic mashed potato with gravy, vegie ~ Cost \$20
- 1:00 p.m. **Competition and Fairness in Cattle & Beef Markets (via Zoom)**  
*How captive supply can be limited; how market competition can be restored*  
C. Robert Taylor, Alpha Professor Emeritus, College of Ag, Auburn University (see page 5)
- 2:00 p.m. **Senator Jon Tester** (invited)
- 3:00 p.m. **Governor Greg Gianforte** (invited)  
Montana Legislators (invited)
- 4:00 p.m. **MCA Annual Business Meeting** ~ Open to all members  
Resolutions, board nominations, issues for 2023

## *Why should I be a part of MCA?*

MCA was formed in the 1950's to represent Montana cattle producers on issues vital to the future of our industry. MCA is a producer-driven, grassroots, all volunteer organization committed to ensuring profitability for you and your family as well as for future generations.

At times in the past MCA has slowed down a bit because of a lack of volunteers to voice various producer concerns about Montana's cattle industry. Our goal is to effectively address the concerns of Montana cattle producers, both statewide and nationally, and we need your input to continue to do so.

MCA's board consists of a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. We have two directors for each of the three districts of the State of Montana (Western, Central, and Eastern), plus four directors at large, one tribal representative and one business representative. This year is an election year and we hope you will consider being a part of our board. Montana needs representation for our cattle industry to survive and MCA needs your help to do so.

We have board meetings once per month via telephone conference. The meetings last between one to two hours. As a director, your input on this monthly call enables MCA to keep up to date with issues concerning our industry. Would you please consider becoming a director or officer for MCA for just an hour or two of your time?

Please contact one of our existing board of directors (contact information is available on our website) or email [mca@montanacattlemens.org](mailto:mca@montanacattlemens.org) to become a representative for the Montana cattle industry.

## **CONSUMERS OVERWHELMINGLY WANT COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LABELING**

*By Gilles Stockton, Montana Cattlemen's Assn. President*

A new poll conducted on behalf of the Coalition for a Prosperous America (CPA) finds that 86% of Americans favor reinstatement of Country-of-Origin Labeling (COOL) for beef and pork. In 2015 Congress rescinded the requirement that imported beef and pork be labeled. However, it was only for beef and pork. All other foods, including lamb and seafood, continue to be labeled. Immediately following this action by Congress cattle markets crashed by nearly half, resulting in billions of dollars lost to ranchers in rural states such as Montana.

"The American Beef Labeling Act" ([S.2716](#)), will reinstate COOL. It is a bipartisan bill introduced in the U.S. Senate by Sens. John Thune (R-SD), Jon Tester (D-MT), Mike Rounds (R-SD), and Cory Booker (D-NJ). Additional bipartisan cosponsors include – Sens. John Hoeven (R-ND), Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM), Cynthia Lummis (R-WY), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), John Barrasso (R-WY), and Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY). In March 2022 a bipartisan companion bill was introduced in the U.S. House ([H.R.7291](#)) by Reps. Lance Gooden (R-TX), Ro Khanna (D-CA), and Rep. H. Morgan Griffith (R-VA). Both bills languish without action.

You will notice that with the exception of Senator Tester, who has always been a leader in supporting COOL, neither Senator Daines nor Representative Rosendale are sponsors of the American Beef Labeling Act. Why? Agriculture remains, by far, the most important industry in Montana with the livestock portion the largest of all. So why is it that only Senator Tester sponsors COOL? Isn't Montana's most important industry worthy of support from all of our elected officials? Especially considering that because of the lack of COOL our state's economy is suffering.

When we look at the five candidates currently running to represent us in Congress we find a mixed bag. As mentioned above, Representative Rosendale could be sponsoring the American Beef Labeling Act, but isn't. Ryan Zinke was in Congress in 2015 and actually voted to remove beef and pork from the labeling requirements. He has not repudiated that vote.

As for the other three candidates, both Penny Ronning and Monica Tranel lists reinstatement of COOL as a priority on their websites. I suspect that Gary Buchanan would, when asked, express support for COOL; but why is COOL not important enough to list as one of his policy priorities?

Reinstatement of COOL would provide immediate economic relief to rural Montana. Isn't that important? Particularly considering that Montana's ranchers are suffering from serious drought and are forced to sell cattle in a depressed market caused by imports from Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Australia, and Nicaragua.

Eighty-six percent of Americans would like to know the origin of their beef purchases. They have a right to that information. Montana's ranchers have a right to a fair and transparent market. The American Beef Labelling Act would restore COOL, and all the candidates who would like to represent us in Congress need to make beef labelling a campaign priority.

## *From the MCA President's Desk . . .*

Montana Cattlemen's Association has had a busy year representing Montana's cattle industry. Restoring Country of Origin Labeling continues as a priority. Senator Tester along with Senators Thune, Rounds, and Booker introduced the American Beef Labeling Act that would restore COOL. This bill now has six additional co-sponsors but seems to have stalled in the Senate Ag Committee. The House companion bill has only three cosponsors.

This is disappointing. Montana cattle producers are suffering from the drought and forced to sell cattle into a depressed market. This disastrous market is for a large part caused by beef imports from Mexico, Canada, Australia, Brazil, and Nicaragua. Passing COOL would have a positive impact on cattle markets. The talk in Washington is that COOL will become part of the Farm Bill. We hope so and will be engaged in the fight to have COOL restored.

The other big MCA priority is to restore competition in the fed cattle market by regulating captive supplies. At the 2021 annual Cattlemen's Day meeting one of our presentations was by Andy Green, the Secretary of Agriculture's Special Advisor on Competition. Mr. Green promised that USDA was working on rules that would clarify and better define the Packers and Stockyards Act prohibition on packers giving undue preference to certain feedlots and discriminating against others. He promised that stopping the practice of Alternative Marketing Agreements (Captive Supply) will be part of that rule making.

We are following up on this conversation and have invited Dr. Robert Taylor to address the coming annual Cattlemen's Day meeting. Dr. Taylor recently published a report, "Harvested Cattle, Slaughtered Markets", which demonstrates the harm of captive supplies in the fed cattle market, and presents four different ways in which the beef packing cartel can be controlled. (*See page 5 of this newsletter.*) This will be an important discussion and you are encouraged to participate. If you cannot attend the annual meeting in person, please join via ZOOM.

In April, I was invited to testify before the House Agricultural Committee. This was a rather daunting experience. My message to the Ag Committee was that our rural communities are suffering and young beginning farmers and ranchers are facing an impossible financial situation, with the current drought making things that much worse. Restoring COOL and competition to the fed cattle market by enforcing the Packers and Stockyards Act is critical. This is a link if you would like to view the hearing: <https://youtu.be/3TCOnoGHDJ0?t=1907>

MCA submitted comments opposing the American Prairie Reserve's (APR) petition to graze bison on BLM allotments in Phillips County. Our main concerns were that BLM was not considering the negative effects on neighboring ranches and the danger to the public who will be using public lands. BLM is not requiring that APR build bison proof perimeter fences, so removing stray bison will obviously be difficult and dangerous for the adjoining ranchers. A number of parties have challenged BLM's decision in Administrative Court and MCA will continue to monitor the situation.

Ken Morris, MCA director from Fairfield, represents us on the Montana Beef Council. He is doing all that he can to limit checkoff funds being wasted on the National Cattlemen's Beef Association. This is an uphill battle since the NCBA has a legal stranglehold on the Checkoff Program.

Wally Congdon, MCA Vice President, attended the Governor's Council on Agriculture meetings. This is an opportunity to have direct conversations with Governor Gianforte and the heads of the state's other agricultural organizations.

Newell Roche, Director from Lewistown, will be representing MCA on the Ag Coalition but no meeting has been convened so far this year.

Doug Cambell, Director from Harlotown, attended Range Days at Shelby on behalf of MCA.

We continue to monitor the repercussions of the settlement of water rights with the Confederated Salish Kootani tribes. Although the purpose of this settlement agreement was to clarify water rights on most of Montana's watersheds, to date no water rights have been released by the tribes.

MCA publicly opposed Constitutional Initiative 121 which would have frozen residential property taxes. Our concern was this would cause increased taxes on agricultural lands. CI-121 failed to collect sufficient signatures to qualify for this coming election.

Finally, the MCA foundation, Beef on Every Plate, continues to supply beef to hungry Montanans. Beef on Every Plate does this by paying for the slaughter and distribution costs for beef that generous ranchers donate. Town Pump has again, very generously, donated funds for this program. You can thank Town Pump for these important contributions by filling up at one of their service stations next time you need gas.

Be sure to plan to attend our annual Cattlemen's Day meeting in Great Falls on December 3<sup>rd</sup>. Besides getting a chance to talk to your friends and make new friends, there will be very important issues to discuss.



Gilles Stockton

*Learn more about the threat of the longhorned tick at Cattlemen's Day when Marty Zaluski, Montana State Veterinarian, will speak on this and other animal health topics*

## Asian Longhorned Ticks Spreading; Calves are Especially Vulnerable

By Victoria Myers, Progressive Farmer Senior Editor

It was only first officially identified in 2017, but the Asian longhorned tick has since been confirmed in 17 states across the U.S., according to the latest report from the CDC. This is of special concern to cattle producers because the tick carries a disease commonly called "Ikeda" that can be fatal. The ticks have been found on pets, livestock, wildlife and people.

Elanco Animal Health veterinarian and senior technical consultant Thach Winslow wrote in a recent report that Ikeda (*Theileria orientalis*) is a protozoal disease that attacks red blood cells. To date, he noted, there is no approved treatment for the disease in cattle; nor is there an effective vaccine. Producers in Australia and New Zealand have been fighting Ikeda for at least two decades. Winslow explained that Ikeda is primarily transmitted through the saliva of feeding ticks, but blood transferred through shared needles or other devices can also spread the disease. Incubation period is one to three weeks, with 80% of a herd infected within just 30 days. Death loss, however, is below 5%, reported the consultant.

Winslow noted that Asian longhorned ticks are small, like a deer tick, which makes them hard to spot on cattle. They tend to be found on the head, ears, under the tail, axilla and flanks. The tick can survive off the animal for up to six months. It is tolerant to cold, but does not survive well in hot, dry climates. Cattle are the predominant host species, and once infected, are lifelong carriers of Ikeda.

### MANAGE AND MITIGATE

Winslow wrote that once found, it is nearly impossible to eradicate Ikeda. He said producers need to focus on biosecurity and tick control measures, adding there is a blood test for *Theileria orientalis*. "A tick control program consists of two target control points, the environment and the animal," Winslow said. "Environmental control is challenging and consists of brush and vegetation management through limiting access and controlled burning. Producers should consider cutting down pastures, trimming brush and fencing off heavily wooded areas. In some cases, spot spraying can be implemented.

"On-animal treatment is often the most practical and effective," he added. "Total wet down with high-pressure spraying, spray boxes or dipping vats are preferred but require facilities and equipment specific for implementation. Back rubbers and oilers are more convenient and are most effective with forced daily usage by setting them up across access points to water or mineral. Insecticide ear tags will help control ticks in the ears and around the head but will have minimal impact on the rest of the body compared to other methods." Lastly, Winslow noted that if injectable or pour-on macrocyclic lactone dewormers are used to treat cattle for internal parasites, there can be the added benefit of some tick control. But he cautioned against their overuse and said they should not be used solely for tick control.



This tick is about the size of a sesame seed.

The Asian Longhorned Tick (ALHT) is light brown in color. The adult female grows to the size of a pea when full of blood. Male ticks are rare.

Other stages of the tick are very small, about the size of a sesame seed or even smaller.

A single female can create a large population of ticks as it produces 1,000 to 2,000 eggs at one time.

ALHT is mainly a pest of concern in livestock. This tick often forms large infestations on one animal, causing great stress and reducing growth and production. A severe infestation can even kill the animal due to blood loss.



### ***Dr. Taylor will be one of the speakers at Cattlemen's Day—be sure to attend!***

Dr. C. Robert Taylor is the Alfa Eminent Scholar (Distinguished University Professor) in Agricultural Economics and Public Policy in the College of Agriculture at Auburn University. Prior to joining the Auburn faculty in 1988, he held faculty positions at the University of Illinois, Texas A&M University, and Montana State University. He has conducted applied research on a wide variety of topics, including market concentration, conservation, buyer power, bioenergy, and sustainable agriculture. He has authored or coauthored 5 books and over 200 articles and reports. He has testified to Congress on concentration and consolidation of the food system and, in 2010, was invited by the U.S. Department of Justice and USDA to testify at two of their Joint Workshops on Competition Issues in Agriculture.

Dr. Taylor recently authored a seminal paper titled “Harvested Cattle, Slaughtered Markets” where he discusses the effects of Alternative Marketing Agreements (Captive Supplies) on the cattle industry. The report concludes with an analysis of four possible pathways for change, including: modest reforms, breaking up the giant corporations; developing and protecting a parallel system; and exchange trading. He will be discussing the pros and cons of each of these pathways in restoring competition to the fed cattle market at **Cattlemen's Day**.

## **AAI Advisor Robert Taylor Issues New Analysis on the Market Power Problem in Beef Lays Out New Policy Framework for Ensuring Competition and Fairness in Cattle and Beef Markets**

April 27 ~ Today, AAI Advisor and agricultural economist, **C. Robert Taylor** (Alfa Eminent Scholar of Agricultural Policy and Professor Emeritus in the College of Agriculture, Auburn University) issued the new report **Harvested Cattle, Slaughtered Markets?**

In this seminal report, Professor Taylor explains that cattle and beef production is increasingly horizontally concentrated and vertically integrated, from cattle feedlots to packers/processors to beef retailers. Although size and integration may lead to economic efficiencies, narrowly defined, they may also be a deadly combination that lead to abuses of market power and many undesirable market and externality consequences, including an illusion of choice for consumers, unfairness and harm to the competitive process. He highlights the current challenge of developing appropriate policy to neutralize the potential for market power exploitation, to internalize externalities, to insure or even increase efficiency by adoption of technology, and to insure competition and fairness in the future.

In the report, Professor Taylor analyzes the market power of the four largest beef packers and its relationship to certain contractual and trading markets practices. In particular, the report explores certain current market practices that may undermine fair and competitive markets, and harm competition as an active, dynamic process. These practices include, among others: (1) overreliance on Alternative Marketing Arrangements (AMA) base prices tied to the residual cash market; (2) the opacity of and variability around what “live cattle” is being priced in the markets; (3) limited depth and competitiveness in certain cash negotiated markets; (4) the risks of market manipulation arising from captive supply flexibility by dominant packers and/or large captive feeders; (5) preferential deals; and (6) partial vertical integration by dominant firms.

The report explains that since the advent of AMAs, tens of millions of taxpayer dollars have been spent by academic and government economists studying cattle markets. All reflect an “ideology,” over-simplified economic models, largely untested but critical assumptions, standards of statistical significance that may not be appropriate for policy prescription, and limited as well as sometimes inaccurate data. Professor Taylor emphasizes that restoring competition and fairness to cattle and beef markets requires moving policy beyond a number of prevailing assumptions and conventions. These include narrow economic ideology and hidden value judgments inherent in oft-cited academic studies of cattle and beef markets. Moving policy beyond textbook models of monopsony and monopoly is also vital, due to the dominance of complex giant transnational corporations with vast webs of corporate legal entities and financing and risk sharing arrangements offered only to a few aligned businesses.

The report concludes with analysis of several pathways for change, including: modest reforms, breaking up the giant corporations; developing and protecting a parallel system; and exchange trading.

Please join us at the 21st Annual Cattlemen's Day in Great Falls. Dr. Taylor will address the conference at 1:00 pm via Zoom. A lunch will be served prior to his presentation consisting of a hot roast beef sandwich, garlic mashed potato with gravy, and veggie.

**Please reserve your meal today by calling Jan at 406-467-2251. The cost is \$20.**



*More information will be available at Cattlemen's Day!*

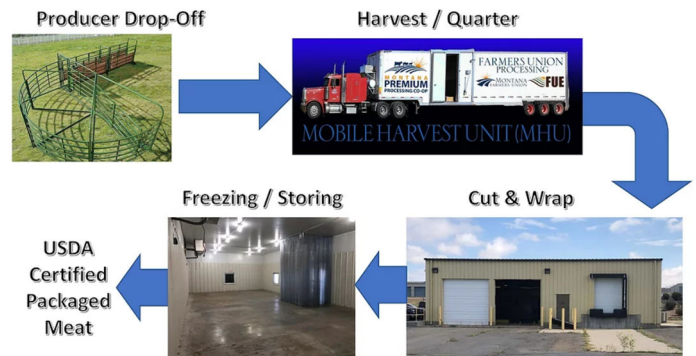
Montana Farmer's Union is an advocate for increasing Montana's meat processing capacity. MPPC was created out of MFU's work to develop a service-fee style processing plant tailored to the needs of Montana producers.

MPPC will provide USDA certified live-to-package processing for cattle, hog, sheep, bison. Producer-controlled animal value chain. Year round harvesting to simplify retail demand.

Montana Premium Processing Co-op is meeting the needs of Montana producers and bolstering food security by supporting a hoof-to-plate business model for local ranchers.

A member-owned cooperative which means members have voting rights toward the Board of Directors. As members themselves, the elected Board of Directors provide oversight on the business and fee structures. Finally, ranchers determining costs to process their own livestock and not being dictated by conglomerates.

Our goal is to provide Montana Producers an option to harvest and process their quality livestock in state with USDA certification for retail. Our service fee based facility will offer the means, reliability, and quality to fulfill their customer's orders



## ***"BEEF ON EVERY PLATE"***

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 322,000 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:

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***Your Support Is Appreciated!***

## SURFACE PRESSURE: U.S. LOSING FARMLAND AT ALARMING RATE



FARM JOURNAL: From 2001 to 2016, the U.S. lost or compromised 2,000 acres of farmland and ranchland every day. That adds up to 11 million acres of farmland that has been paved over, fragmented or developed, according to research by American Farmland Trust.

If that trend continues, and another 18.4 million acres is converted between 2016 and 2040 — an area nearly the size of South Carolina — of that total:

- 6.2 million acres will be converted to urban and highly developed land uses such as commercial buildings, industrial sites and moderate-to-high-density residential development.
- 12.2 million acres will be converted to low-density residential areas, which range from large-lot subdivisions to rural areas with a proliferation of scattered houses.

“Nearly half of the conversion will occur on the nation’s most productive, versatile and resilient farmland,” says John Piotti, president of American Farmland Trust. If this trend could accelerate further, due to high housing prices in metro areas and new opportunities for remote work. If the pace increases, 24.4 million acres of farmland and ranchland could be converted by 2040. That’s almost 1 million acres of agricultural land every year.

Another factor contributing to the loss of farmland is estate settlements of farmland owners. Around 40% of the nation’s farmland is owned by people over 65, so up to 370 million acres of farmland could change hands in the next 20 years. That increases the possibility the land will be sold for development, according to the research.

To reverse this trend, American Farmland Trust says several economic and policy changes should happen, such as:

1. Embrace smart-growth principles to improve land-use planning.
2. Permanently protect agricultural land to secure a supply of land in perpetuity.
3. Advance smart solar to boost both renewable energy and farm viability.
4. Support farmland access to create opportunities for a new generation of farmers, particularly historically marginalized producers.



## *Biden-Harris Administration Announces Major Actions to Spur Competition, Protect Producers and Reduce Costs*

WASHINGTON, Sept. 26, 2022 – Today, at a meeting of the White House Competition Council, President Biden will announce two new efforts by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to support fair and competitive meat and poultry markets, as part of the Department's role in the President's Competition Council. These efforts include (1) publishing the proposed Inclusive Competition and Market Integrity Rules Under the Packers and Stockyards Act to protect farmers and ranchers from abuse, and (2) a new \$15 million Agricultural Competition Challenge to ramp up collaboration with the State Attorneys General (AG) on enforcement of the competition laws, such as the laws against price-fixing.

"Highly concentrated local markets in livestock and poultry have increasingly left farmers, ranchers, growers and producers vulnerable to a range of practices that unjustly exclude them from economic opportunities and undermine a transparent, competitive, and open market—which harms producers' ability to deliver the quality, affordable food working families depend upon," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, who is a member of the White House Competition Council. "USDA is focused on building new, fairer, and more resilient markets, protecting producers, and reducing food costs, and we are proving again today that we will use all tools at our disposal to do so."

### **Proposed Rule on Inclusive Competition and Market Integrity**

USDA is proposing these modernized regulations under the Packers and Stockyards (P&S) Act's provisions prohibiting undue prejudice, unjust discrimination, and deception to provide for clearer, more effective standards to govern the modern marketplace. The Inclusive Competition and Market Integrity proposed rule would revise regulations under the P&S Act by prohibiting certain prejudices and disadvantages against covered producers in the livestock, meat, and poultry markets. The regulations would prohibit retaliatory practices that interfere with lawful communications, assertion of rights, and participation in associations, among other protected activities—such as retaliating against a farmer or rancher for blowing the whistle on price-fixing. The regulations would also identify unlawfully deceptive practices that violate the P&S Act with respect to contract formation, contract performance, contract termination and contract refusal.

The purpose of the rule is to promote inclusive competition and market integrity in the livestock, meat, and poultry markets.

- First, the proposed rule prohibits certain prejudices and disadvantages against covered producers. Specifically, the proposed rule seeks to protect "market vulnerable individuals" who are those at heightened risk of adverse, exclusionary treatment in the marketplace, which may include on the basis of their race, gender, sexual orientation, and religious affiliation.

- Second, the proposed rule prohibits retaliatory practices that interfere with lawful communications, assertion of rights, and associational participation, among other protected activities.

- Third, the proposed rule identifies unlawfully deceptive practices that violate the P&S Act with respect to contract formation, contract performance, contract termination and contract refusal.

- Finally, the rule proposes recordkeeping requirements to support evaluation of regulated entity compliance, including the ability to inspect relevant records, such as policies and procedures, staff training

and producer information materials, data and testing, board of directors' oversight materials, and other relevant materials.

The second of three priority regulatory Packers and Stockyards Act initiatives USDA announced it would pursue, this rule, will soon be published in the Federal Register and made available for public comment. A preview of the rule is available on the Agricultural Marketing Service website. Once published, stakeholders and other interested parties will have 60 days from the date of publication to submit comments via the Regulations.gov web portal. All comments submitted will be considered as USDA develops a final rule.

### **Agricultural Competition Challenge to the State Attorneys General**

Building on the Biden-Harris Executive Order's "Whole-of-Government" approach, USDA is also taking action to ramp up enforcement of the competition laws by challenging the state attorneys general (AG) to partner with USDA on competition issues in the food and agriculture space, using up to \$15 million in funds from the Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA).

Through a combination of renewable cooperative agreements and memorandums of understanding, these new partnerships will assist state AGs in tackling anticompetitive practices in the agricultural sector and related industries that are contributing to heightened inflationary pressures, lack of choices for consumers and producers, and conflicts of interest and anticompetitive barriers across the food and agriculture supply chains.

Specifically, this initiative will improve state AG capacity to conduct on-the-ground investigations of competition issues, enhance coordination between Federal and state agriculture and competition enforcement authorities, create new and more independent research programs, and ultimately result in more rigorous enforcement of the competition laws.

USDA is working directly with state AG offices to solicit applications and requests for funding under this initiative and looks forward to these partnerships as we work together to secure America's food systems.

Earlier this year USDA and DOJ announced their commitment to work more closely together to effectively enforce federal competition laws that protect farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural producers and growers from unfair and anticompetitive practices, including by launching the [www.FarmerFairness.gov](http://www.FarmerFairness.gov) complaint portal for reporting suspected violations of federal competition law. Today's challenge seeks to expand that collaborative effort to state AGs, who often have additional state authorities they can leverage to help achieve that goal.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit [usda.gov](http://usda.gov).



# American Prairie Reserve allowed to graze bison on 63,000 acres of BLM-administered land in Phillips County.

*A response by MCA President Gilles Stockton:*

## WHY ARE WE TREATED DIFFERENTLY?

The Montana Cattlemen's Association is disappointed in the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) decision to authorize the American Prairie Reserve to use 63,065 acres of public lands in Phillips County for bison. In reaching this decision, a number of important issues have been overlooked or completely ignored. This unprofessional failure on the part of BLM to consider all the implications of allowing bison to graze public lands is disturbing.

Among the issues ignored are public safety, where BLM contends that bison "...will not measurably contribute to public health and safety due to the limited potential for close, direct bison encounters with people." The entire purpose of the BLM policy of "multiple use" is to allow access to everyone who wishes to hike and hunt. If bison are on BLM lands, members of the public will inevitably attempt to view them up close, and potentially be in danger.

In addition, no consideration has been given to the neighboring ranchers, who will need to deal with stray bison. Most certainly these ranchers will be put into dangerous situations because BLM only requires that APR maintain fences that meet the minimum state standard designed for cattle. Clearly, these fences will not interrupt the bison if they are tempted by greener grass or intend to visit cows in heat across the fence. Then too, who will have to fix the fences the bison breach?

In order to support their decision, BLM makes unsupported claims about the beneficial impact of bison on the rangelands as in contrast to grazing by cattle. BLM presents no scientific evidence for this contention. The observation by many is that bison and cattle have nearly identical habits and needs in both grazing patterns and use of water sources. Bison's alleged ability to improve rangeland conditions fits more in the realm of "urban myth" than as an established scientific fact.

Nor does BLM present evidence that there is a need for remedial grazing by bison on the allotments in question. In fact, in the original environmental assessment BLM admits that there are no outstanding range issues that require improvement and that all wildlife goals are being met. This is after decades of use by cattle. For BLM to then conclude that magically bison will make it better puts BLM's professionalism in question.

BLM further contends that the removal and modification of fences will improve big game and sage grouse habitat. But as already mentioned, in the earlier Environmental Assessment BLM stated that there are no issues with any of the wildlife. Therefore, the existing fences must be adequate for wildlife movements. The fences that BLM authorizes to be removed or replaced with electric fencing are public property. How can BLM simply decide to sanction the destruction of public property, costing in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, with no due process, and on just the notion that it will benefit wildlife?

Finally, and perhaps most damaging of all, BLM in acquiescing to changes in grazing periods for hundreds of head of bison by allowing turnout on the first of April, and in some allotments allowing year-round grazing, is putting decades of range management efforts at risk. And they do so without one word as to the potential adverse impact on the rangeland vegetation. BLM's entire purpose is to manage rangelands in a scientific manner to protect and maintain those public resources in the best condition possible for all users of public lands. Shouldn't a dramatic change in policy to allow grazing before grasses are able to establish in the spring merit some sort of mention as to the potential impact?

As stated above, the Montana Cattlemen's Association is very disappointed in this decision by BLM. For the most part, BLM has been a trustworthy partner in managing public lands for the benefit of recreationalists, hunters, and ranchers. This unprofessional decision can only erode the trust that has been earned by the Bureau of Land Management. Bison are not cattle and cannot be controlled by fences designed to be adequate for cattle. BLM must make it clear that the APR will be held to a higher standard in the management of their bison herd.



*The American Prairie Reserve anticipates being able to expand its conservation bison herd from 800 animals to 1,000 following the Bureau of Land Management's decision to approve APR's application for six grazing leases on BLM-administered land in Phillips County. Credit: Dennis Lingohr / American Prairie Reserve*

## MADISON FOOD PARK

### *Learn more at Cattlemen's Day!*

Madison Food Park, LLC ( MFP) was established specifically to develop a "Food Park" in the County of Cascade, Montana. For more than a dozen years, considerations have been made by various industry companies and professionals, regarding the eventuality and possibility of Montana Ag producers being able to sustain and support food processing facilities.

After careful consideration and evaluating this concept, Madison Food Park, LLC has determined that now is a good time to begin the "Food Park" development. To support & enable Montana Ag producers to realize higher profits and more opportunities to expand their own operations by significantly reducing their freight costs, lower shrinkage; reduce carbon emissions and establishing a "Proud Montana Brand".

The "Food Park" will be dedicated to the production of Certified Organic, Non-GMO, Hormone Free, Antibiotic Free and Animal By-Product Free foods raised in the State of Montana.

Montana Ag producers will have an opportunity to increase production and to maximize their profits, directly because of the Value-Added Processing Facilities anticipated to be built by Madison Food Park, LLC.

The "**Pride of Montana**" brand produced and processed real quality foods is the ultimate goal. Madison Food Park will be using natural and organic ingredients to provide foods that reflect the "traditional" way of making good food. Consumers increasingly reject the use of harmful preservatives, artificial coloring and flavoring & excessive packaging and that's why Madison Food Park seeks to become a leader in natural foods.

Using the most modern and computerized equipment to process foods, Madison Food Park will certainly optimize the yield and reduce the possibility of bacteria transmission to virtually zero. Laser and waterjet cutting equipment will enable Madison Food Park to be accurate in measurements and utilize Ag products efficiently.

Madison Food Park is dedicated to being a responsible developer and preserving Montana's Agriculture Heritage. Madison Food Park believes that safe and sustainable development will create jobs and opportunities for all Montanans.

## Billion Dollar Beef Plant Searches for Home

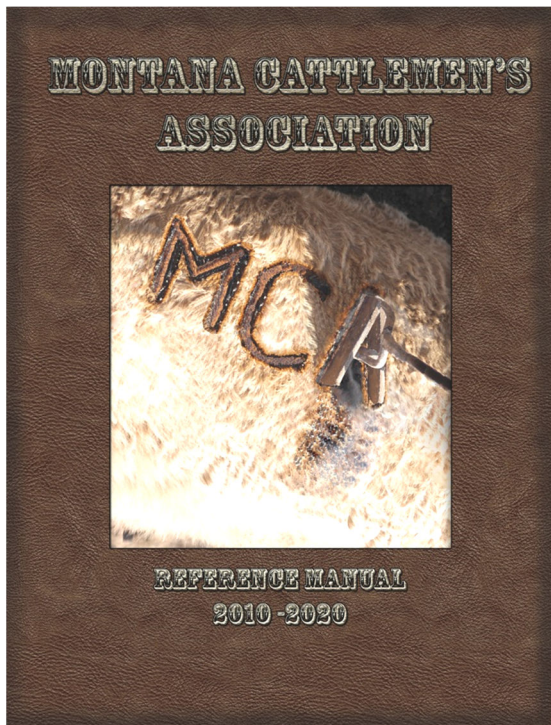


Western Legacy Development Corp. continues to search for a site to build its \$1.1 billion beef processing facility after being rejected by two cities in the northern plains.

Both Rapid City, S.D. and Cheyenne, WY, are no longer considered in the running for the plant. When Western Legacy first announced its intentions to build the 8,000-head per day plant, Rapid City was the proposed site. But the city's industrial center developer said the proposed space was not large enough to accommodate a plant that large. Rumors began that Cheyenne might be the next choice for the plant, but that city's mayor said it could not meet the water demand of a meat plant that size.

Megan R. Kingsbury, president and CEO of Western Development, confirmed "that her company is the unnamed developer looking for a site in conversations with Cheyenne, and said Wyoming is but one of several states that the project has approached. She declined to name other locations under consideration, however."

The plant "still is on track to break ground in 2023," she said, and begin operations by 2026. And that plant is just the first of several, according to Western Legacy's longer-term plans in the meat industry, she said. "There are a lot of considerations, especially from the point of view of a green development," Kingsbury said. "We have to negotiate with municipalities, and they move on their own timeline. In some cases, they are waiting on federal funding to be able to work to scale with us."



## DISBURSAL SALE ~ Xmas Gift Idea ~

Montana Cattlemen will **NOT** be publishing a third edition of the Brand Book covering the new renewals for 2022-2030. Therefore, the previous edition of the Montana Cattlemen's Association Brand Book and Reference Manual is being offered at a special reduced price. This is a deluxe hard cover three-volume series which catalogs Montana's recorded livestock brands through 2021. It also includes some special "extras": ranch histories, western poetry, traditional cowboy recipes, and photos. 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](http://www.montanacattlemen.org) (while supplies last)

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Eastern Volume ( 516 pages): \$65 now **\$32.00** plus \$5 shipping \_\_\_\_\_  
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Central Volume (634 pages): \$75 now **\$35.00** plus \$5 shipping \_\_\_\_\_  
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Western Volume (512 pages): \$65 now **\$32.00** plus \$5 shipping \_\_\_\_\_  
(Quantity)

Three-volume set: \$185 now **\$90.00** plus \$10 shipping \_\_\_\_\_  
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TOTAL AMOUNT SUBMITTED: \$ \_\_\_\_\_



NEWSLETTER

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## MONTANA CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION MISSION STATEMENT

*To address market interests, serve to support Montana's environmental, cultural, and historical heritage, and protect the interests of Montana cattle producers in international markets and trade issues.*

*The Montana Cattlemen's Association shall be true environmentalists in protecting and advancing their environmental position in water rights, mineral rights, and natural resources.*

\* \* \* \* \*

Montana Cattlemen's Association has a long history going back to the 1950's of representing Montana cattle producers on issues vital to the future of our industry. Our goal is to continue that tradition with the help of experienced cattle producers across the state—just like yourself!

Montana Cattlemen's Association is a producer-driven, grassroots organization committed to ensuring profitability for the Montana cattle industry. We are dedicated to increasing profit opportunities for you and your family as well as for future generations.

### WHY JOIN MCA?

- ◆ Producer-driven grassroots policies
- ◆ Credibility and integrity within the cattle industry and in Helena
- ◆ Working only for Montana cattle producers to increase profitability
- ◆ Membership numbers strengthen MCA's effectiveness
- ◆ MCA works with legislators, businesses, communities and other like-minded organizations in the development of rural Montana
- ◆ Opportunities to become involved within the organization
- ◆ Every cattle producer has a voice in decisions that affect his livelihood

