

## **Food and Ag Development Centers**

### **Ravalli County Beginner Farmer Tractor Course Success Story**

Missoula and Ravalli County have dozens of ambitious beginning farmers, many of them becoming the first generation in their family to work in agriculture. Because many of these beginning farmers may not have been raised farming and ranching, they need to learn technical field skills on their own. After hearing several women farmers tell RCEDA's FADC that there were very few places to learn these skills, RCEDA decided to help offer courses clients could benefit from.

In collaboration with Montana Farmers Union, RCEDA's FADC put on a Beginner Tractor Maintenance course. Designed with beginning farmers, and particularly beginning women farmers in mind, RCEDA found two incredible instructors to put on this course. Cindy Arnot and Kristie Roth, agriculture instructors from Big Sky High School in Missoula taught 14 farmers tractor engine, system, and parts, regular upkeep, safe operation, diagnosing issues, and home maintenance. The tractor used was generously lent to the class by the Western Ag Research Center.

The four-hour course was so well received, that RCEDA and Montana Farmers Union anticipate hosting this course annually to continue to assist beginning farmers learn the technical skills they need to be successful.