



MDA Highlights Argentine Cattle Trade Delegation and Local Distillery in Big Fork, MT

Continuing the focus on expanding value-added agriculture opportunities and highlighting the diversity in Montana's agricultural ecosystem, Director Clark and representatives from the Montana Department of Agriculture took to Big Fork, Montana where they visited Whistling Andy Distillery and the Montana Ranch to highlight their impact on Montana agriculture as well as welcome a trade team delegation of cattle producers from Argentina.

"With 99% of Montana businesses being small businesses, I am honored to highlight Whistling Andy Distillery. Due to the innovation, entrepreneurial spirit, local impact, and passion for creating a fine product, Whistling Andy has been able to set themselves apart, achieve international recognition, and add value to the agricultural ecosystem here in Montana," Director Clark said.





Whistling Andy Distillery, located just off HWY 35 in Big Fork, opened its doors on New Year's Day in 2010, marking the opening of Montana's oldest operational distillery. Whistling Andy boasts some of Montana's finest handcrafted spirits using select local grains, local cherries, and true first cut cane sugar. Their spirits start only a couple miles down the road where they source their grains from family farms to get the process running. Along with priding themselves on their "Grain to Glass" capabilities, Whistling Andy also uses age old recipes and unique new blends derived from what's in season to create innovative spirits that set them apart from the rest.

Whistling Andy
DISTILLERY

<https://whistlingandy.com/>



Argentine Cattle Trade Delegation visit the Montana Ranch in Big Fork, MT

While in Big Fork, Director Clark welcomed cattle producers from Argentina to Big Fork's Montana Ranch, who have been touring the state as part of a Montana Department of Agriculture Cattle Genetics Trade Mission.

“Livestock producers from Argentina are very progressive. They find that the high-quality Montana beef cattle genetics they can find throughout Montana fit well into their operations. Montana Ranch’s passion for genetic advancement and existing program was an excellent exhibition of the quality that comes out of Montana,” Director Clark said.





The Montana Ranch is located at the base of the Swan Mountains in the Flathead Valley just northeast of Flathead Lake in Northwest Montana. The breeding program at Montana Ranch is directed and driven by hard data stemming directly from real world ranches, feedlots and packing houses. “Proven Maternal Function; Proven Reproductive Efficiency; Proven Structural Soundness; Proven Convenience Traits; Proven Calving Ease; Proven Optimum Growth; and Proven End Product Merit, are all trademarks of the foundation cow families in the Montana Ranch genetic program.”

Thank you to both the Montana Ranch and Whistling Andy Distillery for having us and giving us a view of agricultural businesses here in Montana that add value to the ag ecosystem that drives the state’s number one industry.



<https://www.montanaranchangus.com/>



Montana Wheat & Barley Update: A Busy Summer of Market Development

For the last few years, virtual trade team events increased significantly. The Montana Wheat and Barley Committee (MWBC) staff found adapting to the virtual setting a critical direction for market development. Our reach over the 2020-2023 time saw dramatic increases in participation. MWBC developed virtual crop update events, new website, virtual experiences, videos, transparent crop update newsletters, weekly news articles and crop quality dashboards. This expanded reach has grown interactions and shown a desire for our customers to come see our beautiful state with high-quality crops.

Has Covid-19 finally cooled down on the international scale? All signs are pointing to yes for the MWBC as international buyers eagerly schedule visits for the 2023 season. We have had several visitors already with our summer schedule filling up quickly. I am projecting this summer to exceed pre-covid visitors' volumes.

The increased virtual presence has a lot to do with this increased interest in trade team visits. Our team is focused on reaching buyers on both levels. Our top buyers have been consistently looking for Montana to feed their population for several decades. Their decisions are based on two things: quality, and relationships. Providing transparent crop quality information throughout the year in a virtual setting with relationship building visits during the growing season has been the key target for market development.

As the market development director, I am overly excited to see the fruits of our labor. Adapting to the changing international environment has been a key target. Those efforts are seeing huge success, and it is clear to the committee that looking ahead is critically important to our mission.



We still have some availability this summer, please [contact us](#), sign up for our [newsletter](#), and visit our site frequently . It's all hands-on deck this growing season, the staff and board members will be particularly busy this summer. We are very excited to slingshot this gained interest to increased purchases of wheat and barley.

-- Sam Anderson, Market Development Director, MWBC



Montana Organic Association Announces 2023 Summer Farm Tours

Montana Organic Association announces 2023 summer farm tours, as participants are invited to visit the Montana Legacy Ranch in Ekalaka, and Tiber Ridge Organics in East Ledger.



MOA Summer '23 Farm Tour Schedule

June 13th, 2023 at 1pm - Montana Legacy Ranch / OCC Legacy Cuts

June 14th at 9am - O'Connor Crops & Cattle

June 28th at 1pm - Tiber Ridge Organics

The O'Connors own and operate Montana Legacy Ranch, as well as OCC- O'Connor Crops & Cattle, and OCC Legacy Cuts processing facility. Ty and Sarina strive to provide a family lifestyle on the ranch. The O'Connor's operate on a 53,000-acre farm and ranch in southeastern Montana, that has 13,000 acres of dry land organic crops, along with organic livestock. Using the livestock in their cropping rotation for grazing cover crops and different soil-building crops, they are able to grow organic crops and fatten cattle for the processing plant that goes direct to consumer and retail stores.

For more information, please visit:

<https://landtrust.com/!montana-legacy-ranch-curry-place>



Tiber Ridge Organics Farm Tour

Mr. John Wicks has solely operated his family's farm, Tiber Ridge Organics, since he was 21 years old. After transitioning to an organic operation in 2016, John has been implementing new and progressive practices, and is on the cutting edge with equipment, technology, and how it all collaborates with other farmers, businesses, and agencies, who are also using or advocating for similar practices. Tiber Ridge Organics will be showcasing these innovative practices on this dry land operation near Tiber Dam, including a compost extract system, diverse cereals, legumes, and cover crops.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/>



2023 Ag Research Center Field Days

Through a network of seven Research Centers plus facilities and scientists at the MSU central campus in Bozeman, the Montana Agricultural Experiment Station (MAES) conducts basic and applied research problems that address Montana's agricultural and natural resource economies. MAES research spans the depth and breadth of animal health, animal science, agronomy, horticulture, range sciences, agricultural economics, plant sciences, and natural resource and pest management.

Date	Time	Research Center	Location
Wednesday, June 14, 2023	11:30 a.m.	Southern Agriculture Research Center	Huntley
Wednesday, June 28, 2023	8:15 a.m.	Central Agricultural Research Center	Moccasin
Thursday, June 29, 2023	3:00 p.m.	Northern Agricultural Research Center	Havre
Thursday, July 6, 2023	10:00 a.m.	Western Triangle Agricultural Research Center	Conrad
Tuesday, July 11, 2023	8:00 a.m.	Eastern Agricultural Research Center	Sidney
Thursday, July 13, 2023	11:00 a.m.	Northwestern Agricultural Research Center	Creston
Wednesday, July 19, 2023	8:00 a.m.	Post Farm	Bozeman
Thursday, July 27, 2023	4:30 p.m.	Western Agricultural Research Center	Corvallis

More information at: <https://agresearch.montana.edu/fielddays.html>



MDA Visits Stevensville High School Promoting Montana Ag

In partnership with the Montana World Affairs Council, Montana Department of Agriculture Deputy Director, Zach Coccoli, visited Stevensville High School on Thursday to speak with students about Montana agriculture and career opportunities in the agricultural industry.

“It is critical that the future minds of Montana understand the impact and opportunities associated with Montana agriculture and the variety of high-quality products our farmers and ranchers supply to the world,” said Coccoli. *“It was a pleasure to meet and speak with the students at Stevensville High School. There are so many exciting career paths and technological advances on the horizon that will shape the future of food production in our country and the state’s future depends on the work these kids will do one day.”*



While in the Bitterroot Valley, Coccoli also spoke at the Montana World Affairs Council Luncheon at the Stock Farm Club covering the state of Montana agriculture, recent political developments, and Montana's contribution to international trade.

“The Montana World Affairs Council was honored to host Deputy Director Zach Coccoli in the Bitterroot last week engaging with community members and students about Montana’s agricultural industry and international relationships,” said Nicole Geiszler, Programs Director at the Montana World Affairs Council.

For more information on the Montana World Affairs Council, please visit montanaworldaffairs.org.



MDA Highlights Chilean Cattle Trade Delegation in Townsend

Continuing the focus on expanding Montana's agricultural contribution to international trade and highlighting the diversity in Montana's agricultural ecosystem, Director Clark and representatives from the Montana Department of Agriculture visited [Ehlke Herefords](#) in Townsend, Montana to welcome a delegation of cattle producers from Chile as part of a Montana Department of Agriculture Cattle Genetics Trade Mission.





Mark and Della Ehlke are first generation Hereford seedstock producers. Before getting their registered Hereford operation started, they had a handful of commercial cattle in Helena, MT. After serving as a commercial judge at the MHA Winter Fair sale in Bozeman, Mark bought the families' first registered Hereford heifer, marking the official inception of Ehlke Herefords.

Ehlke Herefords has been able to make extensive advances to their genetics and have increased the size of their operation multiple times through the retention of quality replacements, infusion of outside genetics, a focused use of AI and ET, and the addition of owned and leased grass.

“Livestock producers from around the world come to Montana seeking our high-quality beef genetics. This specific group of Chilean cattle producers have been traveling the state for five days thus far, getting a detailed look into Montana Hereford and Angus ranches producing some of the top genetics available. Ehlke Herefords is a great example of the passion and commitment for genetic progression this state has to offer,” Director Clark said.

<https://ehlkeherefords.com/>



MDA Reminds Producers Montana State Hail Insurance is Available for Purchase

In light of recent storms, the Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) is reminding producers that applications for State Hail Insurance Policy are now available through MDA's State Hail Insurance Program.

Producers can insure crops against hail damage at the maximum coverage rate of \$75 per acre for dryland and \$114 per acre for irrigated land. Rates charged are a percentage of the insured amount and vary by county. A detailed list of rates by county and crop can be found online by visiting the MDA website. State policies are available for purchase until August 15, 2023.

Producers who previously purchased state hail insurance will receive applications in the mail. Application forms are also available online or by calling the MDA office. Staff are available to process policies, file claims, and help answer any questions producers may have regarding coverage options. Completed forms can be emailed, mailed, faxed, or used as a reference when contacting the office by phone.

Contact Information:

Montana State Hail Insurance Program

P.O. Box 200201 Helena, MT 59620

Phone: (406) 444-5429

Email: agrhail@mt.gov

Toll Free: 1 (844) 515-1571

Fax: (406) 444-9442

Loss claims are due to the office by October 1, 2023, and must be submitted within two weeks of the hail damage occurrence. Forms are available online or by request.

More information at: <https://agr.mt.gov/I-Want-To/Apply/Hail-Insurance-Applying>



Montana State Grain Lab Update:

Submitted sample volume at the labs slowed a bit more in May as typical of the season with producers busy planting. The official sampling runs stayed steadier which keeps us busy on the road and thankfully no snow or ice to contend with. Most crop areas serviced out of Great Falls are looking better this year but those near Plentywood haven't been able to beat the drought. Photo taken by Tom Troxell of the spring planting earlier in May.



Adam Gutzwiler was kept busy this month with trips to Kansas City and Plentywood. Adam attended annual training held by the USDA FGIS for Official Quality Assurance Specialists across the nation. The refresher training helps maintain grading standards for all Official Agencies. Adam also spent a week in Plentywood reviewing processes and helping with training focused on getting Kailynn Buckalew ready for her federal lentil grading exams. Both Kailynn and Tom Troxell have been working toward obtaining a license for grading lentils.

Implementation of the lab's new computer application Titan made good progress in May. The production application has been installed and much of the data required to be manually loaded into the test database has been completed. Chuck Vopicka and Michaela DeBoo were a great help to keep the project moving. Stephanie Cordeiro was challenged with creating presentations on grading Wheat, Barley, Peas, and Split Peas. It was a large task for a new employee still very much in learning mode. Adam provided some guidance and will be using the presentations in June for a couple of meetings with about 50 regional Columbia Grain employees.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE – AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE
FEDERAL GRAIN INSPECTION SERVICE
AGENCY QUALITY ASSURANCE SPECIALIST SEMINAR
May 10-11, 2023 – National Grain Center – Kansas City, Missouri

Front

Ray Merritt, Grain Inspection Inc.-Appleton, MN; Adam Gutzwiler, Montana State Grain Lab; Clayton Hanson, Board of Appeals and Review; Greg Neill, Board of Appeals and Review; Kevin Johnson, Minot Grain Inspection; Darren D. Vanek, NPGIS-Grand Forks; Jamison Orsetti, Maryland Dept. of Ag.

Back

Nick Benson, Grain Inspection Inc.-Jamestown, ND; Nick Stotz, Aberdeen Grain; Lance Ducheneaux, AGI-Mitchell; Ernest Zissa, NDGI-Ohio; Jason Hoffman, Aberdeen Grain; Melvin Risley, Superior, Wisconsin



AGR HB821 Invasive Woody Tree Management 2023 Grant Opportunity

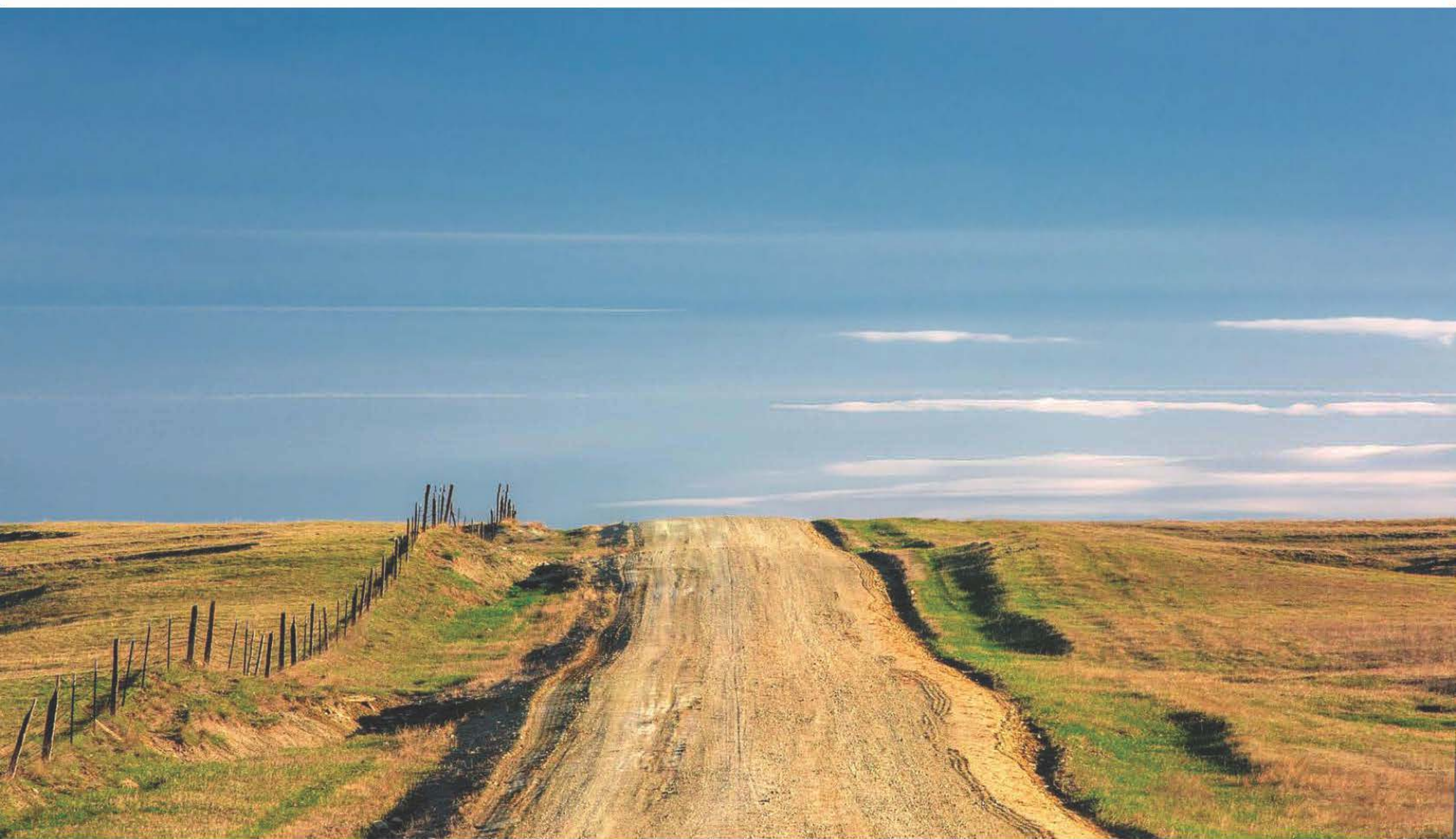
The Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) is currently seeking applications for the AGR HB821 Invasive Woody Tree Management 2023 Grant. Applications are due by Sunday, July 2, 2023.

During the 68th Legislative Session, HB821 passed which appropriated \$250,000 from the general fund to the Montana Department of Agriculture for one time only funding for invasive woody tree management in Yellowstone, Musselshell, and Stillwater Counties.

Eligible Applicants:

MDA shall provide grants to the appropriate local entities for the purpose of managing and controlling existing infestations of saltcedar, Russian olive, and common buckthorn within the three counties. Applicants must work with and apply through an organization, such as a weed district, conservation district, extension office, non-profit, or tribal weed district to be eligible.

Please contact Jasmine Chaffee at 406-444-3140 for questions about eligibility.



MDA On the Road & Where to Catch Us

- MGA Golf Tournament - Great Falls, MT | June 2
- MFBF Summer Conference - Bozeman, MT | June 5-7
- Columbia Grain Regional Conference - Great Falls, MT | June 6-7
- Pulse Crop Committee Meeting - Plentywood, MT | June 8
- Hail Adjuster Meeting - Lewistown, MT | June 8
- Ag Development Council Meeting - Lewistown, MT | June 9
- National Barley Growers Association Meeting - St. Louis, MO | June 12-15
- MSGA Mid-Year Meeting - Havre, MT | June 13-15
- Montana Organic Association Farm Tour - Ekalaka, MT | June 13 & 14
- Treasure State Resource Association Meeting - Anaconda, MT | June 14-15
- MSU Field Day - Huntley, MT | June 14
- MWBC Summer Board Meeting - Fort Benton, MT | June 20
- Value Added Tour Visit: Little Belt Cattle Co. - Martinsdale, MT | June 21
- Montana Organic Association Farm Tour - Ledger, MT | June 28
- MSU Field Day - Moccasin, MT | June 28
- MSU Field Day - Havre, MT | June 29



What We Have Been (responsibly) Drinking Lately:

We like to get our “Drink of the Month” into different hands around the department.

Ag Sciences Division Education & Outreach Specialist, Lori Leaf, took the time to share with us her, “summer staple”.

“As the days start warming up and my eyes are set on summer, there is nothing better than a glass of lemonade. Lately I’ve been drinking Huckleberry Lemonade Kombucha from Zesty out of Bozeman, MT. Real ingredients & less sugar than most kombucha’s; it’s my summer staple. Plus it’s local!”



What We've Been Listening To Recently:



Chief Attorney, Cort Jensen's Playlist for your June listening pleasure:

1. In Hell I'll Be in Good Company - The Dead South
2. Hold On - Tom Waits
3. Pointless - Lewis Capaldi
4. Re: Your Brains - Jonathan Coulton
5. Hard Road - Johnny Flynn
6. 16th Avenue - Lacy J. Dalton
7. Promontory - Trevor Jones (The Last of the Mohicans)
8. More of You - Chris Stapleton
9. Everything That Glitters - Dan Seals
10. Harlem River Blues - Justin Townes Earle
11. Billy Gray - Michael Martin Murphy
12. Dragula - Rob Zombie

We'd Love Your Feedback



Agriculture and in specific, Montana Agriculture is all about community. We thought, one does not have to be directly involved with agriculture to be apart of this community. Thus, our external facing monthly newsletter was created. It is meant to inform, inspire, educate, and reach our agricultural community hand out to whomever would like to be a part of the happenings here at the MDA.

Like to see a section that we didn't cover this month? Let us know! We'd love to hear from you.

Until then, happy June Friends!