



Montana Department of Agriculture Spotlights Butte Value-Added Ag Business

Director Clark and representatives from the Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) continued the Value-Added Ag Tour yesterday where they spotlighted Butte's own, Headframe Spirits, and their commendable efforts in adding value to Montana's agricultural ecosystem and largest industry.

Headframe Spirits was started in 2012 by founder John McKee and has become known around the state and beyond for their popular made in Montana spirits. In 2014 and 2015, John and his wife Courtney were named Entrepreneurs and Ambassadors of the Year by Governor Bullock. Since then, Headframe Spirits has continued to push the envelope when it comes to distilling high-quality spirits.



Along with being a certified B-Corp, Headframe boasts spirits that are made from 100% Montana grain. John and his team have made a point to focus on giving back to their community all while maintaining 33 employees. Whether it's giving back grain biproduct to local ranchers for cattle feed, or donating over \$334,000 back to the public, Headframe is conscientious of their footprint and their community.

Part of their success thus far has been thanks to the diversification of the business. Along with making renowned spirits, Headframe has a manufacturing arm of their business that builds continuous flow custom distilling equipment. Everything from equipment to consulting to customization and training is provided by Headframe Spirits Manufacturing. John mentioned that being a company centered around agriculture, it has been vital to be located close to some of the best ingredients (barley) in the world. *“It’s great to be able to work with our farmers that just happen to grow some of the best grain in the world, but we need to tell the grain story. Let’s get the story out about the quality of grain that our farmers grow and produce here in Montana,”* said John.



“Headframe is a Montana value added success story. They have expanded their offerings, created unique products and now share their knowledge by offering distilling equipment to others who want to make a go in the distilling world,” said Director Clark. *“We appreciate their pride in sourcing all the ingredients they can from Montana and making sure that’s noted on all their labels as well.”*

Montana continues to be one of the nation’s leaders in grain production. This year, Montana is seeing the largest barley crop that we have seen this century with 49.7 million bushels.

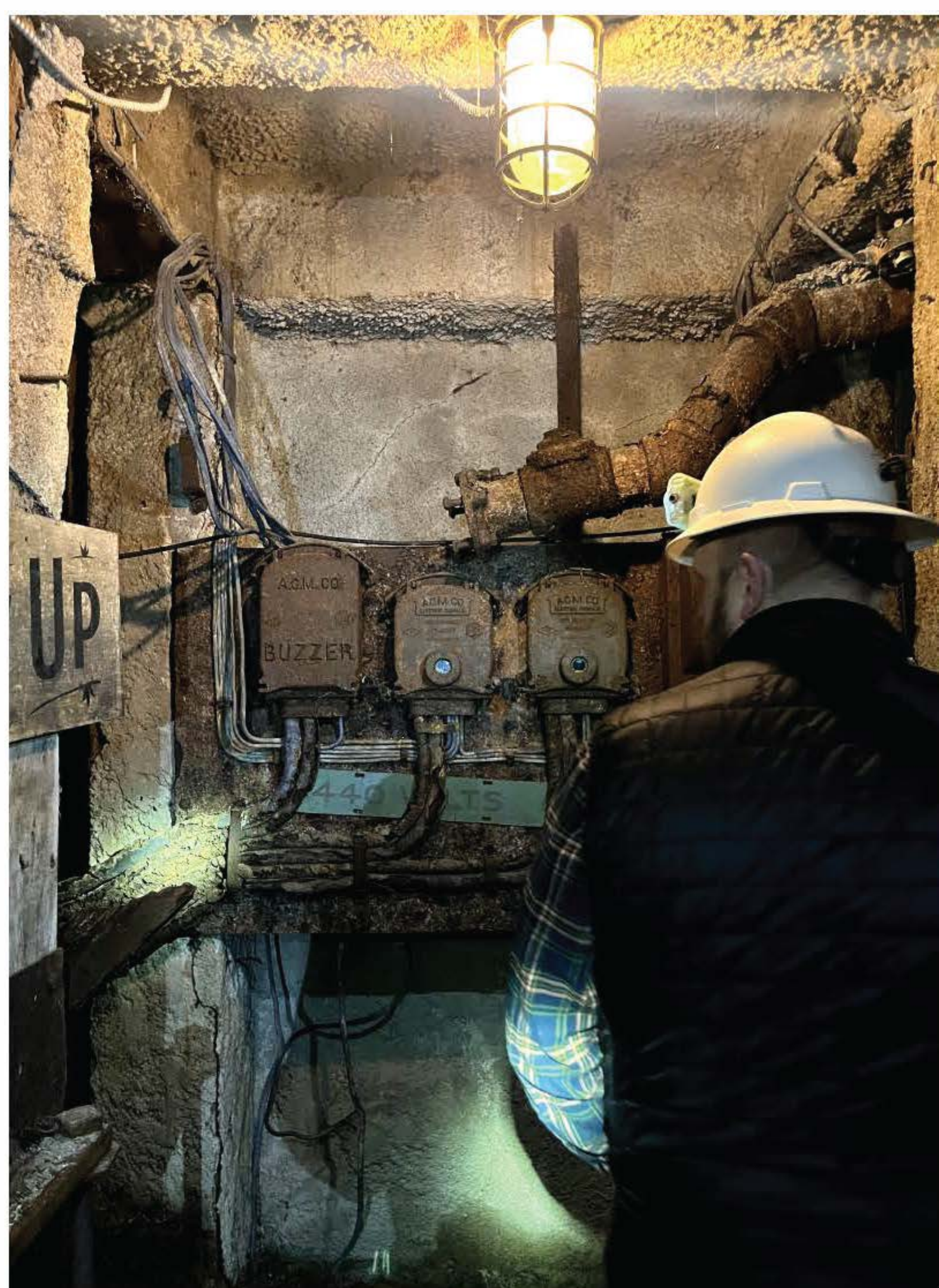




While in Butte, Director Clark and members of the MDA Leadership team attended an underground mine tour at the World Museum of Mining.

The World Museum of Mining was founded in 1963 when the close of Butte's mining heyday was less than two decades away. In the end, Butte experienced a century of hard-rock mining and earned the reputation of being home to one of the world's most productive copper mines of all time. The Museum exists to preserve the enduring history of Butte and the legacy of its rich mining and cultural heritage.

The World Museum of Mining is one of the few museums in the world located on an actual mine yard, the Orphan Girl Mine. The MDA Leadership team had the opportunity to travel 100 feet underground into the Orphan Girl Mine. The trip later came full circle as they visited Headframe looking upon hundreds of gallons of "Orphan Girl" (a popular bourbon cream liquor distilled by Headframe Spirits).





Montana Wheat & Barley Update: 2023 Small Grains Summary

The USDA released their 2023 Small Grains Summary today with the news about Montana's high barley production raising eyebrows. Highlights from USDA, focused on Montana, are here:

MONTANA HIGHLIGHTS

All wheat production in Montana, estimated at 186.71 million bushels, is up 34 percent from 2022, according to the September 1 Agricultural Survey conducted by the Mountain Regional Field Office of the National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA. All wheat yield was 37.2 bushels per acre, up 8.9 bushels from a year ago.

WINTER WHEAT producers seeded 1.85 million acres in the fall of 2022 for harvest in 2023, down from the 2.05 million acres seeded for the previous year's crop. Area harvested for grain decreased 120,000 acres from last year to 1.68 million acres in 2023. Winter wheat production is estimated at 85.68 million bushels, up 44 percent from the 59.40 million-bushel crop produced last year. Winter wheat yield, at 51.0 bushels per acre, is up 18.0 bushels from last year. This equals the record high yield established in 2020.

It Was A Montana Barley Kinda Year

Barley Area Planted and Harvested, Yield, and Production – States and United States: 2021-2023

State	Area planted ¹			Area harvested		
	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023
	(1,000 acres)	(1,000 acres)	(1,000 acres)	(1,000 acres)	(1,000 acres)	(1,000 acres)
Alaska	6	6	7	5	5	6
Arizona	18	17	17	16	16	15
California	40	40	40	13	19	19
Colorado	52	61	54	47	40	51
Delaware	21	21	21	14	16	12
Idaho	530	560	570	500	540	540
Kansas	14	15	16	4	5	5
Maine	12	11	11	10	10	9
Maryland	33	28	31	18	16	13
Michigan	10	9	7	8	8	6
Minnesota	55	65	60	34	55	54
Montana	970	1,040	1,190	650	850	1,015
New York	9	9	9	5	5	5
North Carolina	13	16	16	7	11	10
North Dakota	580	740	690	430	660	570
Oregon	40	36	41	21	19	24
Pennsylvania	45	41	47	28	20	28
South Dakota	30	30	38	14	7	9
Utah	18	20	16	10	15	14
Virginia	30	30	30	7	7	6
Washington	83	72	95	70	60	84
Wisconsin	15	14	12	7	3	2
Wyoming	84	78	83	72	59	58
United States	2,708	2,959	3,101	1,990	2,446	2,555

See footnote(s) at end of table.

—continued

SPRING WHEAT seedings, at 2.70 million acres, are unchanged from last year. Area harvested totaled 2.67 million acres, up from 2.44 million acres harvested last year. Spring wheat production is estimated at 80.10 million bushels, up 31 percent from the 61.00-million-bushel crop produced last year. Spring wheat yield, at 30.0 bushels per acre, is up 5.0 bushels from last year.

DURUM WHEAT seedings, at 705,000 acres, are down 5,000 acres from last year. Harvested area totaled 675,000 acres, unchanged from the acreage harvested last year. Durum wheat production is estimated at 20.93 million bushels, up 11 percent from the 18.90-million-bushel crop produced last year. Durum wheat yield, at 31.0 bushels per acre, is up 3.0 bushels from last year. Oat seedings in Montana totaled 65,000 acres, down 20,000 acres from last year. Producers harvested 22,000 acres for grain or seed, down 2,000 acres from 2022. Oat production totaled 814,000 bushels in 2023, down 11 percent from last year. Oat yield, at 37.0 bushels per acre, is down 1.0 bushel from the previous year.

MONTANA BARLEY producers seeded 1.19 million acres in 2023, up 150,000 acres or 14 percent from last year. This represents the largest barley seeded area in Montana since 2000. Harvested area, at 1.02 million acres, is up 165,000 acres from 2022. This represents the largest harvested area in Montana since 1998. Barley yield, at 49.0 bushels per acre, is up 8.0 bushels from last year. Barley production is estimated at 49.74 million bushels, up 43 percent from the 34.85 million bushel crop produced in 2022.

More info available at: [**https://montanawbc.com/**](https://montanawbc.com/)



“Meeting Taiwan’s Expectations” by MWBC Executive Director Kent Kupfner

As Board Member Terry Angvick and Executive Vice President Kent Kupfner prepare to travel to Taiwan in a few weeks, understanding Taiwan’s specific quality needs is a critical component to the visit. Kent shares a brief summary of Taiwan’s imports, wheat uses and consumption trends.

Taiwan – A Loyal US Wheat Customer, by Kent Kupfner, Executive Vice President, Montana Wheat & Barley Committee

This summer, the Montana Wheat and Barley Committee (MWBC) was fortunate to host a trade team from the Taiwan Flour Miller’s Association (TFMA). The team (which included representatives from five of the largest flour mills in the country) was in Montana to get a firsthand look at current crop conditions, receive market updates and meet with representatives of the grain industry. The agenda was jam-packed with tours of commercial grain elevators, farm visits and a stop at the State Grain Lab. While the TFMA team was visiting Big Sky Country, the Association purchased 56,000 metric tons (2.1 million bushels) which shipped in August!

U.S. Dominates Taiwan Wheat Imports — and Montana Dominates Hard Wheat
Taiwan has a population of 23.5 million and is a loyal and consistent buyer of U.S. wheat. Given the country’s limited domestic production, annual purchase volumes are approximately 1.3 million metric tons (47.8 million bushels). Year-over-year, 80-90 percent of this wheat volume originates in bulk vessels of U.S. origin, with the balance primarily shipping in containers from Canada and Australia.

TFMA was founded in 1952 and currently includes 15 active members with flour mills located throughout the country. The TFMA procurement group is responsible for over 98 percent of all U.S. wheat imports which includes three classes: Hard Red Spring, Hard Red Winter and Soft White Winter. Hard Red Spring represents the largest portion (56 percent), followed by Hard Red Winter (33 percent) and Soft White Winter (11 percent). Most of the hard wheat bushels are produced by Montana’s wheat farmers.

Taiwan is one of the most quality driven buyers in the world, with some of the most challenging specifications for exporters to meet. TFMA purchases guaranteed 14.5 percent protein Dark Northern Spring (DNS), which must be a minimum 75 percent DHV. The HRW must be minimum 12.5 percent protein.

Uses of Imported Wheat

Taiwan uses the imported wheat to make flour products, representing 56 percent of usage. They produce products such as raw, cooked, dried and instant noodles. Steamed bread, steamed buns and dumplings are also on the product list. Bakery products such as breads, sweet rolls, French breads, biscuits, cakes and pastries comprise another 32 percent. The balance of the wheat supplies are used to make other gluten-based foods and aquaculture feeds.

The flour marketplace is comprised of many players such as small bakeries, large scale baking plants, chain store and mall bakeries, frozen dough manufacturers and biscuit plants. Small, traditional bakeries comprise 77 percent of flour demand, with 23 percent going to larger, chain store bakeries. There are over 8,000 small bakeries in Taiwan!

Consumption Trends

Even though the Taiwan government encourages rice consumption, the per capita consumption of wheat has been steadily growing since the early 1970s, while per capita rice consumption has fallen dramatically during the same time period. Wheat consumption began to exceed rice consumption starting in 2008.

Much like many Asian countries such as Japan, Korea and China, the population of Taiwan is aging rapidly and the working age population is declining. This suggests that the growth in wheat consumption is leveling out and driving changes in consumer preferences. The Taiwanese consumer is very quality conscious. Health and nutrition considerations and “clean labels” with fewer additives are important. The consumer is willing to pay a premium for quality and freshness. Urbanization and a busier lifestyle are driving demand for fast and convenient food choices.

Taiwan represents a very reliable and consistent market for high quality wheat such as that grown in Montana and we are thankful. Montana’s wheat growers and the grain industry remain committed to meeting this demand on a reliable and consistent basis.



Merrill Joins USLGE Cattle Genetics Trade Mission to Mexico

From October 11th – 17th, Montana Department of Agriculture Marketing Officer, Weston Merrill, traveled with Jim Sitz of Sitz Angus, Dillon MT, Carl Loyning of L-W Herefords, Absarokee MT, and Bob Redland of Redland Red Angus, Hysham, MT to attend the Expo Ganadera in Chihuahua Mexico.

“The prevalent breeds in Chihuahua include Hereford, Red Angus, and Black Angus. The Mexican state boasts more than 1 million head of cattle. The Montana delegation participated in the cattle show and conducted several ranch visits.”

One of the most notable aspects about the trip was the tough environmental conditions that Mexican producers face. Chihuahua is in a severe drought but despite the difficult conditions most of the cattle were in moderate to good body condition. The Mexican Angus and Hereford Associations were pivotal in setting up ranch visits and making breeder contacts. As Mexican producers strive to be more efficient in the face of their severe drought, Montana genetics have the opportunity to make a meaningful impact.”

-- Weston Merrill, Montana Department of Agriculture





COSDA 2023 Annual Convention - Freeport, ME

Montana Department of Agriculture Communications Officer, Logan Kruse, had the opportunity to head to Freeport, Maine for the Annual Communication Officers of State Departments of Agriculture Conference in early October.

COSDA members from more than 30 states attended this years conference in Maine to discuss crisis communications, HPAI reports and efforts, PFAS concerns, and more.

“COSDA is a unique conference because it is a relatively small group that play the same roll across the country in agriculture communications. Things change from state to state as does agriculture, but our duties and purpose within state departments of agriculture are congruent,” said Kruse.

“As communications directors or officers of state departments of agriculture, we lead a unique position that one can only understand when they are in it (in my opinion). As COSDA President Jim Britt said, ‘Those of us entrusted to communicate with and on behalf of farmers follow their example. The communications officers at state departments of agriculture serve at the intersection of challenging decision-making, compassion, and culture. We play a pivotal role in bridging the gap between the agricultural world and the rest of society. We translate the immense complexities of agriculture and agricultural policy into accessible information for our stakeholders and the public. Farmers and communities deserve this support, especially from their state agencies,’”

“As Montanans, I think many of us first think of agriculture as endless fields of wheat, hundreds of cattle grazing large plots of land, etc. For Maine, it was eye-opening to see agriculture take different forms than I am used to being acquainted with. From hydroponic greenhouses fertilized by farm-raised tilapia fish to four story greenhouses on a bustling city block, it was inspiring to see alternative methods to feeding the world.”

-- Logan Kruse, Montana Department of Agriculture

“Lastly, I thought everyone would get a kick out of the most Maine McDonald’s imaginable (pictured below).”





Avian Influenza Confirmed in Glacier, Flathead, and Stillwater Counties

On Tuesday, October 10th, 2023, the Montana Department of Livestock (MDOL) confirmed Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in a Glacier County poultry flock. This is Montana's 18th affected flock linked to the ongoing national HPAI outbreak which began in early 2022. The Department is also awaiting confirmation of a backyard flock in Flathead County. The last confirmed HPAI infection in Montana was April 2023.

This HPAI variant is spread from migratory waterfowl and infections in domestic poultry follow the spring and fall migrations. This pattern is consistent with detections in South Dakota, Idaho, and New Jersey, as well as Canada and several other countries, in the last 30 days as the fall migration is underway. In early September, in anticipation of an increased risk of exposure associated with the fall migration, MDOL reinstated guidance for poultry owners to house birds indoors to the extent possible and to avoid exposure to wild birds. Domestic poultry become infected through direct contact with infected wild birds, or through contact with contaminated objects, equipment, or the environment. This directive will remain in place until May 2024 pending the HPAI situation at that time.

Avian influenza is an infectious viral disease of birds that can cause high mortality rates in domestic flocks. Sick birds can exhibit numerous signs such as swollen eyes, discolored comb and legs, or a significant drop in egg production or water and feed consumption. However, the most consistent presentation has been sudden death of multiple birds within a flock. Samples from flocks with increased mortalities or unusual symptoms are submitted to the Montana Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (MVDL) and tested for the presence of avian influenza.

The Montana Department of Livestock encourages all poultry producers to maintain strong biosecurity and immediately report sudden onset of illness or high death loss in domestic poultry to their veterinarian or the Department at (406-444-2976). If you find sick or dead wild birds that have died from unknown causes, please contact your local FWP Warden, Biologist or Regional office, or call the FWP wildlife veterinarian (406-577-7880).



MDA On the Road & Where to Catch Us

- MT Farmers Union Annual Convention Great Falls, MT | Oct. 27 – 28
- USDA Agribusiness Trade Mission - Singapore/Malaysia | October 30 – Nov. 4
- MSU Ag Appreciation – Bozeman, MT | Nov. 3 – 5
- Craft Beer & Spirits Trade Mission - Taiwan | Nov. 6 - 10
- U.S. Wheat Board Meeting - Cincinnati, OH | Nov. 7 - 10
- MT Potato Improvement Ass. Annual Convention - Missoula, MT | Nov. 7 - 9
- NASDA Consortium for Produce Safety - St. Louis, MO | Nov. 7 - 9
- Montana Farm Bureau Annual Convention – Billings, MT | Nov. 8 – 11
- AALA – Charlotte, NC | Nov. 8 – 11
- Montana Seed Potato Seminar – Missoula, MT | Nov. 8 – 9
- MT Ass. of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting - Billings, MT | Nov. 15 - 16
- Montana Grain Growers Annual Convention – Great Falls, MT | Nov. 28 – 30
- USDA Agribusiness Trade Mission – Luanda, Angola | Nov. 28 – Dec. 1
- EPA Region 7 & 8 Dept. of Ag Meeting - Denver, CO | Nov. 29 - 30
- MWGA Annual Convention – Billings, MT | Nov. 30 – Dec. 2



2023 Montana Food & Beverage Show

The 2023 Montana Food & Beverage Show kicked off on October 16th at the Hilton Garden Inn in Missoula, MT. With much better weather than in 2022, we saw more than 50 vendors showcasing and providing samples of their products to buyers, distributors, restaurants, hotels, bars, and retail stores.

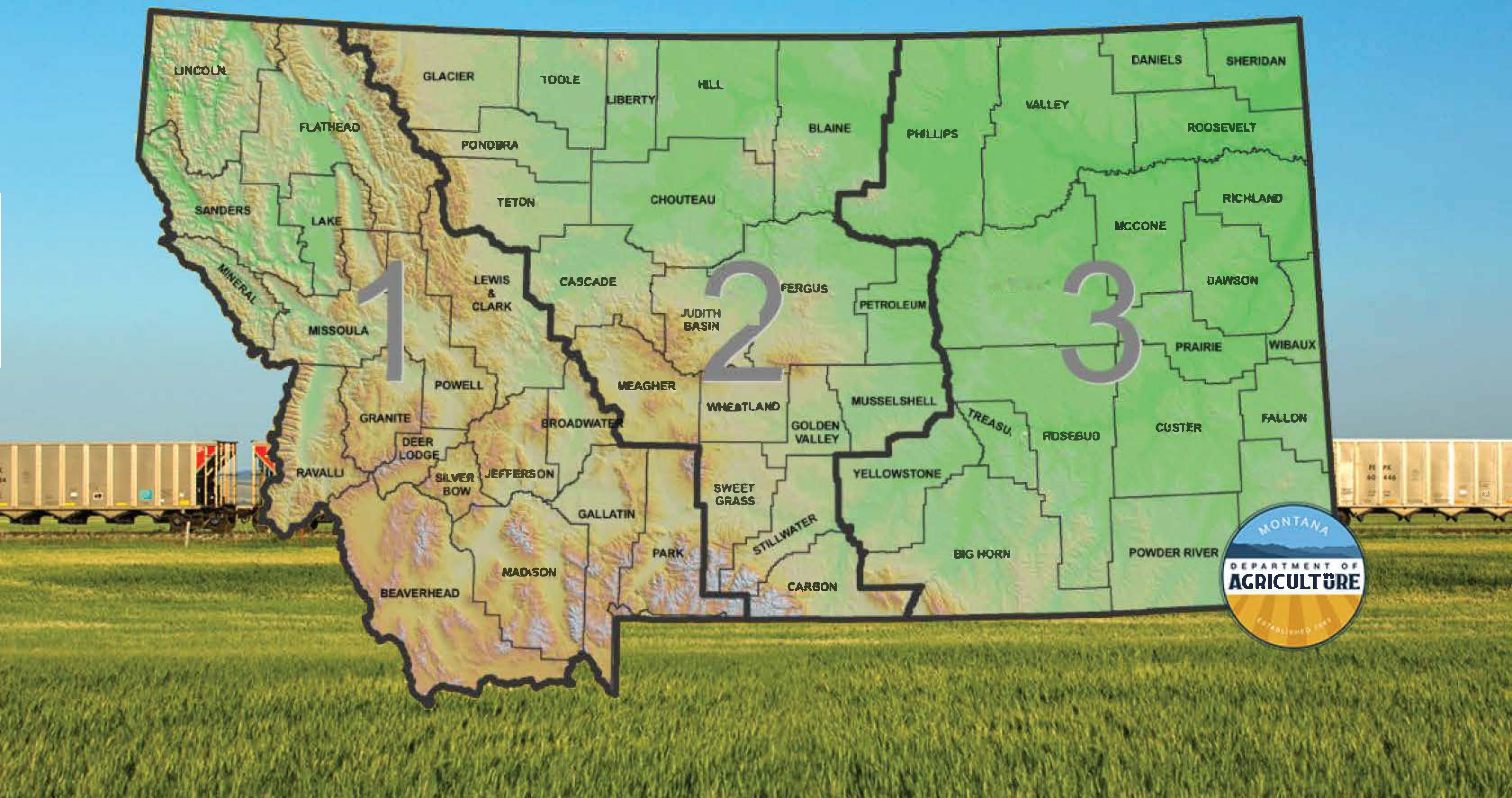


Thank you to all of our vendors that participated this year and we look forward to the 2024 Montana Food & Beverage Show.



More can be found at: <https://agr.mt.gov/Food-and-Beverage-show>

Waste Pesticide Disposal Districts



2023 Pesticide Disposal Event Summary

The MDA program was designed to assist individuals with disposing of any pesticides that are unusable as originally intended, or cannot be used for any other purpose, in an environmentally responsible way. In effect, the pesticide and waste disposal program protects Montana's ecosystems and groundwater, as well as families, pets, livestock and drinking water from potentially hazardous materials.

Disposal events are held in each district in consecutive years; each district thus has a disposal event once every three years. In 2023, waste pesticides were collected in the “Western” district. Ninety-Three (93) individuals participated in the program. More details can be found below:

Date	City	Total Actual Weight
9-19-2023	Kalispell	1,939 lbs.
9-20-2023	Hamilton	2,484 lbs.
9-21-2023	Helena	3,268 lbs.
9-22-2023	Three Forks	11,046 lbs.
	Grand Total	18,737 lbs.

Fees				
Collected	Outstanding (billed)	Total fees (collected + outstanding)	Fee credit returned to (0) participants	Paid to contractor (Clean Harbors, Inc.)
1150.00	\$10,494.00	\$11,644.00	\$0	\$56,960.48

Poundage Distribution by Participant		Participants Paying	
0-200 lbs.	74	\$5 - \$100	8
201-500 lbs.	11	\$101 - \$200	1
501-1000 lbs.	4	\$201 - \$500	4
1001-5000 lbs.	4	\$501 - \$1000	4
5001+ lbs.	0	\$1000 +	2

Historical perspective:

	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024
Pounds of waste pesticides collected	31,631	19,166	37,948	37134	18,737



What We Have Been (responsibly) Drinking Lately:

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

When October comes around, it is finally socially acceptable to dive into some of our favorite “Holiday Treats”. Pumpkin spice lattes, cookies, pie, hot chocolate, etc. to name a few. For Director Clark, October is a favorite month due to her not-so-secret obsession with Pumpkin Beers.

This year Director Clark has chosen Missouri River Brewing Co.’s “Pumpkin Slasher” as her October Drink of the Month.

Whether it is at home around the fire (as Director Clark suggests it), or at Missouri River Brewing Co. with friends, please enjoy this seasonal treat responsibly!

What We've Been Listening To Recently:



Get Your Halloween Spirit On:
Halloween 2023

1. Dig Grave Digger - Corb Lund
2. Monster Mash - Bobby "Boris" Pickett
3. Thriller - Michael Jackson
4. Somebody's Watching Me - Rockwell
5. Ghostbusters - Ray Parker Jr.
6. (Don't Fear) The Reaper - Blue Oyster Cult
7. Monster - The Automatic
8. Monster's Holiday - Buck Owens
9. Black Magic Woman - Santana
10. Creep - Radiohead

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 November Friends!