



Inside Ag | February 2024

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A Message from the Dean



Dear Ag Family,

Aside from celebrating Valentine's Day, we also get our official spring enrollment data in February. As of mid-January, our college has a student headcount of 1,803, with 300 graduate students and 1,503 undergraduate students. While our Fall enrollment has been relatively flat, we have made some important gains in student retention, thanks to your hard work. Our Fall to Spring semester retention of all students grew by over one percentage point to 93.6% and Fall to Fall enrollment increased to 86%. As a university, we recorded our highest Spring semester enrollment ever. [You can find the specifics in this news release.](#)

These are important goals, and we are making tangible strides, so thank you for your dedication to this mission! My sincere gratitude to everyone in the college who works with our students and helps them succeed. And while we are making gains, we must also continue our efforts. There is a big gap between the number of college graduates in the country each year and the number of jobs that require a degree in agriculture and related fields. While you are setting goals for the new year, I hope you will continue to prioritize student success among them. Spring break is around the corner and the Spring semester is already speeding by. Wishing you an excellent spring break.

Sreekala Bajwa

News from the College of Ag



[Faculty honored with Founders Day Faculty Awards](#)



[Montana Agritourism Conference to be held May 3](#)



[Bobcat skier Emma Albrecht represents U.S. at World Cup in Canada](#)



[MSU's NWARC building on 75 years of producer-focused discovery](#)

Announcements and Awards

Announcements

Applications for the PREP-MT program are open until Feb. 29. The PREP-MT program is designed to provide a pathway to Ph.D. programs in the life sciences and particularly seeks to enhance research participation from groups that are traditionally underrepresented in research careers. Encourage your students to apply! More information can be [found on the PREP-MT website](#).

Indian Education for All: From Jennifer Lachowiec, Academic Diversity Partner

Did you know that the Montana Constitution states “The state recognizes the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians and is committed in its educational goals to the preservation of their cultural integrity”?

In 1999, the Montana Legislature passed a state law "predicated on the belief that all school personnel should have an understanding and awareness of Indian tribes to help them relate effectively with Indian students and parents, that educational agencies provide means by which school personnel will gain an understanding of and appreciation for the American Indian people.”

At MSU, this means faculty and staff complete Indian Education for All online training. If you started at MSU before 2023, **you can complete the training at your convenience** at <https://msubozeman-mt.vectorlmsedu.com/training/home>. The College of Agriculture is targeting 100% completion by all faculty and staff by May 2024. Help us achieve this goal and spread the word!

Awards



Congratulations to **Jordan Smith**, recipient of a Founder's Day Award for Student Excellence! Jordan is a senior from Deer Lodge majoring in natural resources and rangeland ecology. She chose Dr. Bok Sowell as the impactful mentor to be honored alongside her.



Congratulations to **Dr. Jane Ann Boles of the ARS department**, recipient of the Women's Faculty Caucus Distinguished Mentor Award at MSU's Founder's Day Awards! The award recognizes extraordinary efforts by a faculty member in mentoring women students, staff, research associates and faculty. [Read more about her work here.](#)



Congratulations to **Dr. William Kleindl of the LRES department**, recipient of the Excellence in Open Education Award at MSU's Founder's Day Awards! This award recognizes a faculty member who has made a significant impact in affordable and accessible educational resources for students. [Read more about Dr. Kleindl's work here.](#)



Congratulations to the **MSU Undergraduate Range Management Exam team** on their 4th-place finish at the annual Society for Range Management Conference held in January! The team is coached Meritta Fraker-Marble. (Back row, from left: Sawyer Reagan, Ethan Fuchs, Brett Martineau, Keely Jones. Front row, from left: Ashton LeMoine, Hannah Bostick, Jordan Smith, Jean Blackman, Leah Fisher, Karlee Nielsen, Hannah Hauschildt)



Events in the COA

Upcoming Events

- During MSU's Career Fair week, the College of Agriculture will host an **Agriculture, Environmental & Life Sciences Employer Mingle on Feb. 27 from 4:30-6 p.m.** We'll host dozens of employers from a variety of backgrounds, allowing students to get to know the companies in a relaxed atmosphere so they are prepared to put their best foot forward at the Career Fair.
- **Nobel Prize-winning scientist Dr. Bruce Beutler** will speak as part of the MCB Seminar Series on **March 19 at 2 p.m.** The lecture is free and open to the public.
- Save the date for the **Montana Nutrition Conference and Livestock Forum** "Owning the Outcome: Proactive Management in Challenging Environments," which will be held **April 16-17** at Bozeman's Best Western Plus GranTree Inn.
- The LRES Graduate Student Organization and the departments of Land Resources and Environmental Sciences and Plant Science and Plant Pathology invite you to the **LRES & PSPP Student Research Symposium** to be celebrated on **April 18 from 3-8 p.m. in SUB Ballrooms B & C.** There will be food, a keynote address, and prizes for the best presentations! Students from LRES or PSPP should submit abstracts by March 29. Faculty members interested in judging, should contact the LRES GSO. [More information is available on the event website.](#)



The Bimczok lab represented MSU at the **2024 Conference of Research Workers in Animal Diseases** in Chicago in January with three oral presentations about ruminant *Mycoplasma* infection and diagnostics. Thank you for your outreach!

Publications and Funding Opportunities

- You can find a full list of **recent publications** from [MSU's Library and Office of Sponsored Programs here](#).
- Recent COA/MAES publications include:
 - Meili C, El Dein MT, Jones A, Moon C, Andrews C, Kirk M, Janssen P, **Yeoman CJ, Grace S, Borgogna JC**, Foote A, Nagy Y, Khashef M, Yassin A, Elshahed M, Youssef N. 2024. Diversity and community structure of anaerobic gut fungi in the rumen of wild and domesticated herbivores. Applied & Environmental Microbiology.
 - **Erika Nunlist, Dan Tyers**, Andrew Pils, **Bok Sowell**. 2023. Grizzly bears and humans at alpine moth sites in Wyoming, USA. Human-Wildlife Interactions.
- For current and upcoming **funding opportunities**, check out the [MSU Office of Research and Economic Development database here](#).

Congratulations to the faculty whose projects were recently **funded by the Montana Fertilizer Advisory Council!** Funded projects include:

- Animal and Range Sciences: Dr. Hayes Goosey
- Eastern Ag Research Center: Dr. Chengci Chen
- Land Resources and Environmental Sciences: Dr. Stephanie Ewing, Dr. Perry Miller, Dr. Clain Jones, Dr. Adam Sigler, Dr. Hayes Goosey
- Plant Sciences and Plant Pathology: Dr. Mike Giroux, Dr. Jamie Sherman, Dr. Sue Mondal

Western SARE is calling for proposal submissions for the [2025 Western SARE Sabbatical Research and Education grant program](#) and the [2025 Farmer/Rancher grant program](#).

Submissions deadlines are on November 21 for the Sabbatical program and on October 23 for Farmer/Rancher.