

MONTANA WHEAT AND BARLEY COMMITTEE

**Fall Board Meeting
In-Person and Virtual Meeting
Great Falls, Montana
December 1, 2025**

The following were present for either a portion of or the entire meeting.

DIRECTORS

Terry Angvick, Chairman, District 1
Logan Anderson, Director, District 2
Jim Bjelland, Director, District 3
Lee Dahlman, Director, District 4
Cindy McKamey, Director, District 5
Courtney Herzog, Director, District 6
Brett Dailey, Director, District 7
Jake McFarland, Industry Trade Representative

EX-OFFICIO DIRECTORS

Dr. Sreekala Bajwa, Montana State University

STAFF

Kent Kupfner, Executive Director
Lori Wickett, Research & Communications Director
Kolleen Spurgin, Budget & Grants Coordinator
Nick Scott, Project Coordinator

GUESTS

Barry Jacobsen, Consultant
Dave Tweet, Barley Consultant
Darrin Boss, Montana State University
Klayton Lohr, Montana Grain Growers Association
Jillien Streit, Montana Department of Agriculture
Anna Kecskes, Attorney, Montana Department of Agriculture
Casey Peterson, Northern Crops Institute
David Boehm, Northern Crops Institute
Megan O'Neil, National Agricultural Genotyping Center
Kennedy Nohre, National Agricultural Genotyping Center
Lochiel Edwards

Monday, Dec. 1, 2025:

Chairman Angvick called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Introductions. No public comment.

Approval of Meeting Agenda:

Director Dailey moved; Director Bjelland seconded; motion passed unanimously.

Review of Oct. 28-29, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Chairman Angvick presented the minutes of the summer board meeting for approval. Director Herzog moved to approve the minutes as written; Director Dahlman seconded; motion passed unanimously.

Department of Agriculture Update

Montana Department of Ag Director Streit presented a recap on trade missions including Panama, Peru and Colombia through HOLA Montana; the Governor's trade mission to Japan and South Korea; and the Taiwan trade team/Memorandum of Understanding.

Personnel departures at the Department included moves to Fish, Wildlife & Parks; those positions are being filled for human resources, finance and the executive assistant to the director.

The State Grain Lab is addressing issues of timely grading and is seeking a number of new graders, including highly qualified personnel with FGIS experience. Sickness plus the death of an employee have also been tough for staff; HR is working with employees to keep spirits up. The plan is to have eight FTE graders between Great Falls and Plentywood (2).

MSU Updates

Dr. Bajwa provided her update including the success of Celebrate Ag in Bozeman. More machinery was on display on campus and the tailgate area improved.

MSU's College of Ag is enjoying a robust enrollment, now the second largest college at MSU. They are focusing on recruiting Montana students.

The College continues to be number-one in research expenditures, coming in at \$54.1 million during 2025. Hires include 13 new faculty members with three at MAES, 10 on campus and the new Winifred Asbjornson Plant Sciences Chair, Blake Wiedenheft.

Planning has begun for the 2027 Montana legislative session with a similar agenda to 2025: value added ag programs and long range investment into buildings such as precision agriculture. In the future, MSU will build in A.I. and related innovation along with ag systems and bioscience programs (particularly food processing).

Dr. Boss reported that MWBC checkoff dollars are critical to the MAES program. Matching dollars for federally-funded programming is key to successful grant awards and MWBC is a large part of that advantage MSU has in the application process.

Capital investment into the MAES network is at \$22 million. Many buildings are in desperate need of reconditioning.

Montana Grain Growers Association

Klayton Lohr was happy to report that the upcoming MGGA Convention is set up and complete. A new trade show floor plan will direct traffic to vendor booths. Policy will be discussed at length including opposition to the UP/Norfolk Southern proposed merger. BNSF is requiring a letter of credit due to concerns about safety and uncontrolled railroad crossings. Many sidings need lengthened.

Klayton said he is the new president of US Durum Growers Association. He thanked MWBC for supporting the convention.

Northern Crops Institute

Casey Peterson and David Boehm, Fargo, ND, joined the meeting for an NCI update. Finances and staff are now stable even with large increases in overhead; morale is high, especially with a new director and technical manager.

They are focusing on new uses for crops grown in Montana, Minnesota and the Dakotas. The Peltier Complex and Feed Mill have been updated.

NCI had eight in-person programs and three on-demand courses in 2025. 2025 brought 69 technical projects (30 were wheat- or barley-focused). Seventeen were traditional pasta production projects. They have rescheduled a feed barley course for 2026.

Most importantly, survey results showed that 61 percent of course participants purchased more US grains after attending.

Casey presented a summary of their grant proposal, noting that there has not been an increase in their ask for a long time. Inflation, health insurance and the increase to \$412,000 rent for their facilities has forced them to increase their requested amount to \$100,000. They have asked a similar support increase of all states.

Director Reports & Crop Conditions:

- Chairman Angvick – Plentywood’s State Grain Lab is catching up with samples; the area saw a lot of weather-damaged crops including pulses and durum; very proud of MWBC support of Celebrate Ag, especially the new combine we helped purchase and was on display; participated in the MAES Advisory Board meeting
- Director Anderson – Have received 11” of snow, followed by cold and wind this fall; seeing \$5 flash bids for cash HRW; discussed strengthening HRS basis levels
- Director Bjelland – HRW seeding unchanged in the area; HRW looks okay; local elevator had quality issues with their ground pile; limited deliveries off-farm, pretty quiet lately
- Director Dahlman – Also proud of the combine purchase and our representation at Celebrate Ag; attended US Wheat meetings in Austin, TX (fertilizer presentation was eye opening and we are heavily dependent on foreign supply; also concern about Saudi/Russia collusion; attended UP/Norfolk Southern merger discussions where USW and NAWG agreed to oppose); a summer meeting in June in Fargo would be good for the board, could see the North Dakota State Mill and tour CASE IH factory while visiting NCI
- Director McKamey – We need moisture; HRW acres unchanged and crop looks okay; traveled with US Wheat Crop Quality Seminars in SE Asia, around 125 people at each seminar and visited with buyers, millers and quality control folks, great opportunity to share her farm presentation with attendees; US Wheat staff overseas is very impressive
- Director Herzog – Limited wheat moving in area; fertilizer sales are slow; HRW seeding similar to last year
- Director Dailey – Good fall moisture; lots of HRW planted

Industry Updates

Jake McFarlin, MWBC trade representative, gave an industry update. His trip to Vietnam, sponsored by US Wheat Assoc., was fascinating. Vietnam is growing its population by 1.5 percent annually. It has a booming economy along with absorbing manufacturing from China and Japan; their mills and labs are very sophisticated. They import wheat and export flour; 90 percent of domestic is same-day use like street-corner bakeries. They really like the US wheat quality but are still price sensitive.

On the markets: Export demand is very good especially for HRW which hasn’t translated to higher prices (exports are up 22 percent). There is still a lot of wheat in the world supply, so prices are not bullish. The Chinese demand for wheat is limited but they have purchase three cargos, which is hopeful. Secondary freight charges are escalating from \$900/car to \$1700/car due to poor railroad velocity.

Dave Tweet, MWBC barley representative, reported that Malteurop is without barley traders, a big impact to Montana barley producers. Coors is going through personnel changes with some employees taking early retirement. Other changes in asset ownership might be coming.

The Ag Tech Summit during Celebrate Ag was well attended by industry stakeholders. MSU’s new president is very interested in learning about agriculture. The MSU Innovation Center has three new quantum computers (only five in the entire US). There are contracts with Homeland Security on projects of \$60-\$80 million. Drones and Precision Ag were also a focus of the day – overall very impressed with everything MSU has going.

Financial Update

Kolleen Spurgin and Kent Kupfner reviewed the CY25 financials. Remaining balances were discussed and refunds on wheat were 1.2 percent and barley 1.0 percent. Six new refund constituents were

noted from July – November. Through 10 months, revenues were at 92 percent of budget and expenses were at 73 percent of budget. Cash balance is \$5.5 million.

Research & Communication Director Report

Nick Scott shared a teaser of the upcoming barley series video; the sample featured Jeremiah Johnson Brewing.

Lori Wickett opened conversation on domestic marketing ideas. Market development included exploring a brand-conscious mission and opportunity to workshop ideas to market Montana-branded products. Messaging strategies are under review including the existing MWBC newsletter and possibly a new publication focused largely on research.

Lori discussed a review of public relations efforts with the success of the recent story boards. The prospect of extending education efforts of ongoing market initiatives could be folded into a main-street effort in Montana.

Grant Application & Budget Review

Lori led the group through the undetermined grant applications, including responses to questions the board had sent to principle investigators (PIs). Consultant Barry Jacobsen discussed with the board and staff these responses.

The operations portion of the budget was reviewed for CY26 totaling \$1,031,000. Director Herzog moved to approve; Director Dahlman seconded; motion passed unanimously.

The board reviewed remaining grants yet to be determined. Final CY26 decisions amounted to:

- **Membership Grants:** \$1,156,914 requested; \$1,141,914 approved (9). Director Bjelland moved to approve; Director Dailey seconded; motion passed unanimously.
- **Education (Standard) Grants:** \$499,455 requested; \$299,455 approved (12). Director Herzog moved to approve; Director Dahlman seconded; motion passed unanimously.
- **Research Grants:** \$2,716,423 requested; \$2,107,800 approved (28). Director Bjelland moved to approve; Director McKamey seconded; motion passed unanimously.

Director Dailey moved to approve the overall CY26 budget; Director Dahlman seconded; motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Staff and Director Travel

Director Herzog moved, and Director McKamey seconded the motion to approve the following travel. The motion passed unanimously.

Upcoming Events

Dec 1	MWBC Board Budget Meeting – Great Falls
Dec 2-3	MGGA Convention – Great Falls
Dec 3	MSGGA Board Meeting – Great Falls
Dec 4	Anheuser Busch Customer Appreciation – Choteau
Dec 4	MGGA Board Meeting – Great Falls
Dec 4	MSU Foundation Seed Meeting – Great Falls
Dec 8-10	KSU Flour Milling Course – Manhattan, KS
Dec 7-9	National FHB Forum – Denver, CO
Dec 10	National Wheat Improvement Committee Meeting – Denver, CO
Dec 9-11	Montana Organic Association Convention – Great Falls
Dec 11	PGI Meeting – Denver, CO
Dec 11	MAFF Meeting – Portland, OR
Dec 16-17	MSTA Winter Meeting – Bozeman

Jan 6-8	AMBA & NBIC – San Diego, CA
Jan 21-23	PNW Wheat Quality Council Meeting – Spokane, WA
Jan 26-29	US Wheat Assoc Winter Board Meeting – Washington DC
Jan 28-30	MABA/MGEA Convention. Great Falls
Feb TBD	Wheat Foods Council, TBD
Feb 3-5	NBGA – Washington, DC
Feb 4	MSU Variety Release Meeting – Bozeman
Feb 11-13	US Grains & Bioproducts Council Marketing Conference –Panama City, Panama
Feb 17-19	Wheat Quality Council – Olathe, KS
March 7-14	US Wheat Assoc. North Asia Board Trip – Korea & Taiwan
March 9-11	National Barley Improvement Committee -- TBD
March 23	MWBC March Madness – Bozeman
March 24	MWBC Board Meeting – Bozeman
March TBD	Wheat Marketing Center Producer Workshops – Portland, OR
April 16-21	US Wheat Assoc. 60 th & 70 th Anniversary Events – Taiwan and Japan

New Business

Kent went through the list of new business activities.

- March Madness Date & Plans (March 23, Bozeman)
- MWBC Board Meeting (March 24, Bozeman)
- Wheat Marketing Center Participants – 1st week: Directors Dailey, Anderson & Herzog; 2nd week: Directors Bjelland and Angvick will check their schedules
- MWBC Vehicle Replacement – plans are to either trade existing vehicle for a replacement or if the value is better by selling through state motor pool, will use that option and buy replacement outright (the board approved \$70,000 toward a replacement vehicle as part of the CY26 budget)
- US Wheat Anniversary Events in Japan and Taiwan
- MWBC Scholarships – reported on two existing scholarship balances
- MGGA Convention

Executive Session

Director Angvick called for executive session to discuss personnel matters and complete executive director review. Director Bjelland made the motion; Director McKamey seconded; motion passed unanimously at 6:02 p.m.

The meeting returned to open session at 6:12 p.m. Director Herzog moved to provide Executive Director Kent Kupfner a 2.5 percent cost of living raise effective with pay period beginning 12/27/25. Director Bjelland seconded; motion passed unanimously.

Director Angvick called for public comment; none received. Motion to adjourn from Director McKamey. Time was 6:15 p.m.

Kent Kupfner, Executive Director

Date