

## **MONTANA WHEAT AND BARLEY COMMITTEE**

### **Spring Board Meeting**

In-Person & Virtual Meeting

Bozeman, Montana

March 24, 2026



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**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

### **STAFF**

Kent Kupfner, Executive Director

Lori Wickett, Director of Engagement

Sabrina Lahaderne, Office Manager

### **GUESTS**

Dr. Sreekala Bajwa, Vice President, Dean & Director, Montana State University – Bozeman

Zach Coccoli, Deputy Director, Montana Department of Agriculture

Madeleine Doak, Montana State University – Bozeman

Dale Flikkema, Vice President, Montana Grain Growers Association

Dr. Mike Giroux, Montana State University – Bozeman

Dr. Alison Harmon, Montana State University – Bozeman

BranDee Johnston, Montana State University – Bozeman

Dr. Daniel Juliano, Montana State University – Bozeman

Anna Kecskes, Chief Attorney, Montana Department of Agriculture

Joe Lackman, Student Recruiter, Montana State University – College of Agriculture

Jake McFarlin, Industry Trade Representative

Dr. Brock Tessman, President, Montana State University – Bozeman

Dr. Ryan Thum, Montana State University – Bozeman

Dave Tweet, Barley Consultant

Heather Unverzagt, Montana Seed Growers Association

Alison Vergeront, Executive Vice President, Montana Grain Growers Association

**Tuesday, March 24, 2026**

Chairman Angvick called the meeting to order at approximately 8:00 am. Roll call was conducted and a quorum was established.

Introductions of guests were made, including Sabrina Lahaderne, newly appointed Office Manager, who was welcomed by the Board. Staff and attendees introduced themselves. No online participants were present at the start of the meeting.

### **Approval of Meeting Agenda**

Chairman Angvick called for any additions or corrections to the agenda.

Director Anderson moved to approve the agenda as presented; Director Dahlman seconded; motion passed unanimously.

### **Call for Public Comment**

Chairman Angvick called for public comment.

No public comment was made.

### **Approval of December 1, 2025 Meeting Minutes**

The minutes from the December 1, 2025 meeting were presented for review.

Director Herzog moved to approve the minutes as presented; Director Bjelland seconded; motion passed unanimously.

### **Department of Agriculture Update**

#### **Zach Coccoli, Deputy Director**

Zach Coccoli provided an update on behalf of the Montana Department of Agriculture, noting that Director Jillien Streit was unavailable due to participation in a ranch visit with Governor Gianforte in recognition of National Agriculture Week. He highlighted recent agricultural engagement activities, including Montana Ag Day events, participation in statewide agricultural roundtables, and his trip to Indonesia where he met with representatives from Bogasari Mills. Department of Agriculture has new Human Resources Manager, Lindsey Pitsch-Trenary. Human Resources, Information Technology, and Procurement are now moving to the Department of Administration.

Zach informed the Board of a directive from the Governor's Office to simplify and improve access to checkoff refunds. Key changes included removal of the notary requirement and making refund forms

publicly available online. This directive is intended to reduce barriers and improve accessibility. Board members discussed potential impacts and concerns of this change including: concern that simplifying the process may increase refund rates and reduce revenue, comparisons with other states that have higher refund rates due to easier processes, and recognition that refunds are a legal right of producers. Additional discussion included fraud prevention, alternative verification, and implementation of elevator verification processes to validate claims.

## **Montana Grain Growers Association (MGGA) Update**

### **Dale Flikkema & Alison Vergeront (Remote)**

Dale Flikkema gave a January update on their DC visit and the positive outcome of joint meetings with NAWG, US Wheat, and Grain Foods Foundation. Dale also updated on MGGA meetings in Billings and attendance at the Plentywood farm show. Dale commented on 2026 convention planning and focusing on how to improve wheat marketing efforts with the theme of “planting seeds, growing food, finding balance.”

Dale provided updates on policy and advocacy efforts, outcomes and engagement from MGGA Convention, and legislative and regulatory priorities. Dale thanked MWBC for helping with agenda and suggesting speakers. Alison Vergeront joined remotely sharing the involvement of MGGA members in different foundations and committees. They emphasized continued collaboration with MWBC and alignment on industry priorities. Golf Calcutta and Tournament is June 4-5 in Great Falls.

## **Industry Reports**

### **Dave Tweet – Barley Markets & MGEA Convention & Jake McFarlin – Wheat Markets & MGEA Convention**

Dave Tweet reported on current barley market conditions and changes in the industry. Dave shared pricing trends and demand factors. MWBC poster boards were well received at various schools including the larger metro area schools. He closed with insights from the MGEA Convention.

Jake McFarlin provided updates on wheat market trends and global influences. He discussed export dynamics and competition. Jake also provided industry insights from the MGEA Convention.

## **Director District Reports**

Board members reported on recent activities and observations: Chairman Angvick, MGGA Convention and Northern Crops Institute. Director Anderson, MGGA Convention and WMC Workshop. Director Bjelland, MGGA Convention. Director Dahlman, extensive participation including MGGA Convention, Anheuser-Busch event, AMBA/NBIC, U.S. Wheat North Asia mission, and Governor visit to Dahlman Farms. Director McKamey, MGGA Convention and U.S. Wheat meeting; Director Herzog, Mexico trade mission; Director

Dailey, U.S. Wheat meeting. Discussion emphasized the importance of engagement and market development.

### **Montana State University – Bozeman (MSU) Updates & Panel**

Presenters included Dr. Sreekala Bajwa, Dr. Ryan Thum, Dr. Mike Giroux, Dr. Daniel Juliano, Madeleine Doak, and BranDee Johnston. Key topics discussed included: HB4 trait introgression, research and building funding, Cereal Quality Lab operations and importance, technology transfer to producers, Foundation Seed program, MAES and ongoing research initiatives. MWBC funding was highlighted as critical for securing matching federal grants. Joe Lackman was introduced as the new Student Recruiter for the College of Agriculture.

### **Research & Economic Development**

Dr. Alison Harmon introduced her role and discussed expanding research partnerships and supporting innovation and workforce development. Research funding is increasing with College of Agriculture still the largest recipient.

### **Financial Report**

#### **Sabrina Lahaderne & Kent Kupfner**

Sabrina and Kent updated the committee regarding 2025-2026 budget status and allocations, refund trends and potential impacts. Sabrina presented updated travel expense reporting procedures.

### **Director of Engagement Report & Working Lunch**

#### **Lori Wickett**

Lori reviewed the 2026 March Madness event, national wheat organizations restructuring, wheat quality meeting insights, Wheat Marketing Center producer workshops, communication strategy improvements, video and crop reporting plans, website enhancements, and a potential magazine to be published quarterly.

### **Travel, Events, & Approvals**

The Board reviewed upcoming events and travel opportunities throughout 2026. Discussion included participation, budgeting, and strategic value.

Director McKamey moved to approve the travel and event calendar as presented; Director Bjelland seconded; motion passed unanimously.

## **New Business**

The next board meeting will be in combination with the Fargo, ND June 22-26 US Wheat meetings and NCI workshop.

## **Montana Bio Agriculture Inc. Funding**

Discussion on funding considerations and alignment with committee priorities.

Director Dahlman moved to approve funding for Montana Bio Agriculture for the 2026 budget year in the amount of \$96,350; Director Anderson seconded; motion passed unanimously.

## **Welcome – MSU President Brock Tessman**

President Brock Tessman addressed the Board, emphasizing the importance of partnerships with the agricultural community. Brock discussed MSU's commitment to research, outreach and continued collaboration with MWBC.

## **Call for Public Comment**

No public comment was made.

## **Adjournment**

With no further business, Chairman Angvick adjourned the meeting at approximately 3:35 pm.