



## Rotunda Roundup from Montana Farmers Union

April 14-18

Week 15

*The following is a weekly update of Montana Farmers Union priority bills of the 2025 Montana Legislative Session. MFU is the state's largest and oldest grassroots family farm advocacy organization representing family farms, ranches, and rural communities for more than 100 years.*

### **Action Alert Updates:**

**SJ 25** – **Joint Resolution urging Congress to support MCOOL, sponsored by Sen. Willis Curdy.** MFU supports SJ 25. This is a policy priority of our membership. Ranchers deserve credit for the high-quality products they raise and that consumers deserve accurate and honest labels so they can make the decisions that are best for their family and their food dollars. Pork and beef are the only products that are not subject to mandatory Country of Origin Labeling. In 2015, Congress repealed MCOOL only for beef and pork following lobbying from the multinational meat packing monopoly. These multinational packing companies stand to profit more without mandatory COOL because they can import foreign, cheaper, lower quality products, mix or repackage it here in the USA, and enjoy the USDA label which often is confusing to consumers who think it's a label of origin. This resolution will once again push the issue at the federal level, where meaningful action is possible thanks to the reintroduction of Sen. John Thune's American Beef Labeling Act. This resolution will send a message to Montana's Congressional Delegation, Governor Gianforte, Secretary Rollins of USDA, and the United States Trade Representative – the Montana Legislature, Montana ranchers, and consumers want this issue fixed. **Status & Next Steps:** The resolution will be heard on the House Floor for a 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading vote soon! [Send a note of support to your representative today using this action alert!](#)

**SJ 11** – **Interim study on farmer's markets and food systems, sponsored by Sen. Butch Gillespie.** MFU supports SJ 11. This study will look at clarifying the regulatory framework around farmers markets in Montana and provides the opportunity for stakeholders to come to the table and figure out what may or may not be working. There have been a lot of changes around cottage food laws and homemade local foods in the last couple of legislative sessions which has created confusion for both those selling at markets and those working on food safety and liability. **Status & Next Steps:** The bill has passed the full House.

**HB 860** – **Provide for veterinary training loan program, sponsored by Rep. Randyn Gregg.** Montana Farmers Union supports HB 860. The bill sets up a loan program for vet students who commit to practicing in underserved areas in Montana, as well as a preference for applicants who are Montana residents. Veterinarians play a key role in ranching and animal health. The job comes with high levels of stress and expense, and doing what we can as a state to support and help bring veterinarians to our rural communities is a priority. MFU supports funding for education, training, apprenticeships, and startup funding for large animal vets and vet technicians. **Status and Next Steps:** The bill has passed 2<sup>nd</sup> reading in the Senate.

**SR 79** – **Confirmation of the Montana Department of Director of Agriculture, sponsored by Sen. Butch Gillespie.** MFU supports Jillien Streit in her confirmation as the Director of the Department of Agriculture in Montana. MFU applauds and recognizes her extensive experience in agriculture. Director Streit has demonstrated a commitment to public service and we know that, in her role at the department, she can put her skills to use to enhance the well-being of farmers and ranchers throughout the state with innovative thinking and an outlook to support and build upon family farms in the state to ensure it's a way of life for the next generation. Director Streit's experience in international markets and production of a



wide variety of crops will suit her well as she takes over the helm at the Department of Agriculture. As a family farmer herself, Director Streit understands the daily needs and pressures of family farmers. The Department of agriculture has a strong staff that implements effective programs that serve Montana Farmers well. MFU looks forward to working with her on expanding opportunities for Montana Agriculture. **Status and Next Steps:** Director Streit has been confirmed by the Montana Senate and the resolution has been adopted.

**We will continue to track bills that impact family farms and ranches and rural communities and keep you informed.**

**Questions or feedback on a bill? Contact Rachel Prevost at [rprevost@montanafarmersunion.com](mailto:rprevost@montanafarmersunion.com) or Jasmine Krotkov at [jkrotkov@montanafarmersunion.com](mailto:jkrotkov@montanafarmersunion.com) or Erik Somerfeld [riksomer@3rivers.net](mailto:riksomer@3rivers.net)**