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State of Montana Brian Schweitzer, Governor

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COMMENTS FROM
OUR GOVERNOR



Montana is a large and diverse state, one in which climate and markets affect the decisions farmers and ranchers make each year, often in the fall. Our state consistently ranks second or third nationally in wheat production and seventh in beef herd size, with cattle and hay grown in every county.

Montana's regions are important in determining the predominance of its agricultural products. For example, the north-central region produced 70 percent of the state's total canola crop in 2006. Northeastern Montana leads in several categories, including lentils and dry peas. Gallatin County and southwestern Montana lead in potato production. The Northwest is known for its cherries, and the central region leads in cattle and calves and the production of alfalfa hay.

This yearbook provides a valuable record of Montana's production history. It is used internationally by customers who buy Montana's world famous wheat and durum, and by others, myself included, to pinpoint the production history and concentrations of our crop and livestock products.

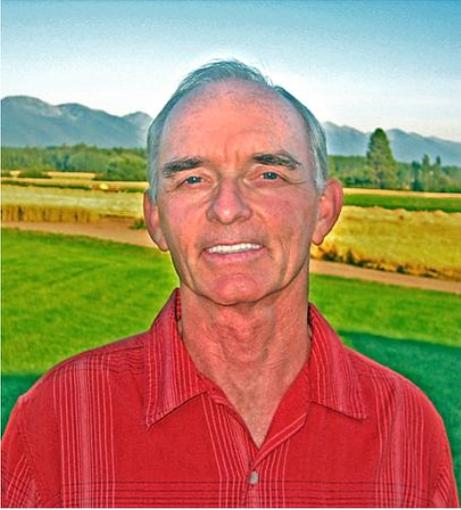
New crops like camelina are entering Montana's crop picture. Oil seeds hold potential for food, bio-fuels, bio-lubricants, industrial chemicals, and protein-rich meal for livestock feed. Ventures that combine energy and food processing with livestock feeding or dairy production are being considered in several rural communities. New uses for commodities, and new processing and marketing opportunities, will enhance our rural communities and add value for producers in Montana's number one industry.

If you have ideas about agricultural business opportunities for Montana, use the comment form on our website, www.governor.mt.gov or give my office a call at (406) 444-3111.

Sincerely,

Brian Schweitzer, Governor

MESSAGE FROM
THE DIRECTOR



Measured in cash receipts, Montana's agricultural economy has done well the past three years. Higher prices for beef, and more recently for wheat and barley, have raised farm and ranch incomes, although higher production costs have cut into profits. Weather patterns have not treated all counties of the state equally, and climate experts say the future may hold continued challenges.

The variability of crop production is one reason the Montana Department of Agriculture contributes to the annual collection and printing of county agricultural statistics. Data contained in this book and published online are essential for informing Congress and federal agencies about the effectiveness of farm programs and the need for producer assistance. When farmers and ranchers decide how to change practices, it is also useful to look at historical trends in production, prices and other regional factors.

Numbers in this report are generated from detailed surveys of producers statewide. Updates are provided electronically and through news releases, available from the website: <http://www.nass.usda.gov/mt>. My thanks to producers who take time from their busy schedules to answer the survey questions upon which these reports rely.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ron de Yong".

Ron de Yong, Director, Montana Department of Agriculture

NOTES FROM THE
DIRECTOR



The USDA, NASS, Montana Field Office is pleased to publish the 44th edition of Montana Agricultural Statistics. 2007 will prove to be a good year for Montana's agricultural sector, with wheat prices hitting record highs and new opportunities to expand markets by producing bio-based fuels. Agriculture continues to be a vital industry for the state's economy.

At the end of 2007, we will be conducting the Census of Agriculture! Not only does the Census give the farmers and ranchers of Montana the chance to be heard, but it gives them the valuable opportunity to influence key decisions that will shape the direction of American agriculture in general, and our community in particular, for years to come. When the Census form hits your mailbox, do your part for Montana's agricultural sector and fill it out and return it.

The USDA, NASS, Montana Field Office works in cooperation with the Montana Department of Agriculture, the Montana Wheat and Barley Committee, the Montana Alfalfa Seed Committee, Montana State University, and many other producers' organizations to provide valuable agricultural statistics. Thank you to Montana's farmers, ranchers, and agribusinesses that made this publication possible through their willingness to supply basic agricultural information.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peggy Stringer".

Peggy Stringer, Director, USDA, NASS, Montana Field Office