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Brian Schweitzer, Governor

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**COMMENTS FROM
OUR GOVERNOR**



Agriculture continues to be a driving economic force and a major reason Montana's economy has remained stronger than all but a handful of states. The three major commodities, wheat, cattle and hay, were valued at more than \$3 billion in 2010, the year reflected in this annual publication. Although this year's wet spring and other factors may reduce production, stronger prices point to yet another record year in 2011.

High yields in most wheat categories pushed the value of Montana's 2010 production to \$1.4 billion, a record for the crop and a 56 percent increase from the previous year. Gross income for cattle and calves also was a record at \$1.1 billion, up 18 percent. Not all of those amounts is profit, of course. Energy prices and feed costs have tightened the margins for crop and livestock producers.

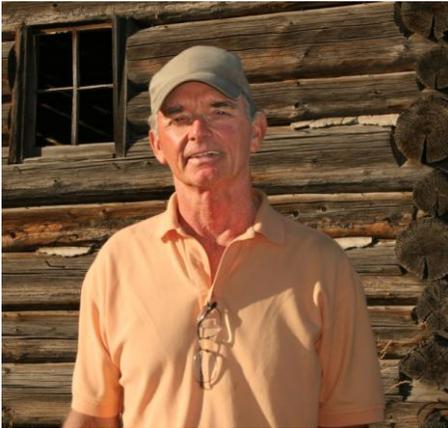
High fertilizer costs and strong demand for nitrogen-fixing legume crops are among reasons Montana has become a major producer of lentils, dry edible peas and chickpeas. The 2010 gross value of lentil production was up 78 percent to \$77.6 million, while the value of dry peas was up 29 percent.

Our producers continue to innovate to add value to their products, expanding Montana's agriculture. If you have ideas about business opportunities for Montana, use the comment form on our website, www.governor.mt.gov or give my office a call at 444-3111.

Sincerely,

Brian Schweitzer, Governor

**MESSAGE FROM
THE DIRECTOR**



2010 was another record year for gross agricultural receipts, with a strong possibility that high prices will also push the 2011 total significantly above the \$3 billion mark. Last year, favorable weather compensated for so-so prices. In 2011, favorable prices offset production setbacks affected by late planting or flooded fields.

Looking forward, producers need to make the case with Congress that a strong farm safety net is needed for years when the combination of prices and yields produce less than stellar results. This will be a challenge in the current budget climate, but is aided by the fact that current projections show increasing demand for food crops, meaning that the cost of a safety net will be lower if it emphasizes programs that provide dollars only in years when income drops significantly.

This annual Montana Agricultural Statistics bulletin is a cooperative effort between the state and the National Agricultural Statistics Service, providing county-by-county data on the previous year's production of crops and livestock. During the year, updates are available electronically at www.nass.usda.gov/mt.

Sincerely,

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

Ron de Yong, Director, Montana Department of Agriculture

**NOTES FROM
THE DIRECTOR**



Since October 1, 1945, a Memorandum of Understanding has existed between The United States and Montana Departments of Agriculture. The original agreement stated the object was to consolidate and coordinate the activities of the two departments for the collection, compilation, analysis, and publication of primary statistical data, for the State of Montana, relating to the production, price, value, movement, stocks, marketing, processing and other utilization of crops, livestock and other agricultural products, and thereby to avoid duplication of effort, eliminate confusion of conflicting reports and promote economy and efficiency of operations, through close cooperation in these activities.

This agreement has been amended through the past 66 years, but the basic premise of Federal and State employees working side-by-side to serve Montana's Agricultural Producers remains unchanged. The National Agricultural Statistics Service provides timely, accurate and useful statistics in service to U.S. agriculture. This would not be possible without the voluntary reporting of farmers, ranchers, and agribusinesses across the State. Thank you to individual survey respondents and organizations, such as the Montana Wheat and Barley Committee who supply funding for several of the data series contained in this publication. Thank you to the employees of the Montana Field Office and The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture who interview producers to compile this wealth of useful information. Finally, thank you to the Montana Department of Agriculture who has partnered with NASS and her predecessors for all this time.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Anderson".

Steve Anderson, Director, USDA, NASS, Montana Field Office