



Montana Farm to School Showcase: Farm to Tray Tour

Video Transcript

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GINGER BUCHANAN: Okay looks like um we can go ahead and get started. I just want to say hello and welcome to the second of four showcases that we'll be presenting. My name is ginger Buchanan I'm the food service director for Huntley Project Schools in Warden, Montana. I'm also one of two farm to school coaches for Montana Team Nutrition, the other one being faithful Oakland from the northeastern part of Montana. The purpose of this showcase is to give you all a snapshot of some of the local producers in the state to inspire you to do more scratch cooking and get you excited to search out some producers that are in your areas. I also want to encourage you to check into grants and get excited about that too. There are lots available right now and we need to be taking advantage of that. I have recently been blessed with roughly eighty three thousand dollars in grant money here at Huntley project school for the kitchen and I'm applying for more as we as we go we're upgrading in our kitchen and have plans to make it better especially with covid and the obstacles that it has created for our school kitchen this showcase is jam-packed full of information wonderful presenters and each presenter will take questions after their video. This event has been supported in part by the by the food and nutrition service US department of agriculture and Montana farm bureau foundation's promotion and education committee. USDA is an equal opportunity provider employer and lender. These are all the presenters um it'll be me, Tiff and Stacy Ogren from the Ogren Ranch, Shane Flowers from Project Meats, Celeste and Jake Miller from Miller Ranch Beef, Pam Fruh from Montana Office of Public Instruction, Barry Hansen and Lynn Ducharme from Native Fish Keepers and of course Aubree, she's the Montana Farm to School Coordinator.

AUBREE ROTH: Let's dive into some farm to school information, so farm to school is an umbrella term or a movement to connect children to their food to improve their health, support farmers ranchers and food businesses, and strengthen communities through the three core elements that are shown here: procurement, education, and school gardens. Farm to school programs generally work best as you can imagine when each of the three core elements is represented. There are many ways to implement farm to school and farm to school is not a program you sign up to do, you really implement it in your community in school with the resources that you have. So let's take a look at each of these three core elements. First: procurement, and this includes buying and serving local foods in school meals schools are sourcing local foods from all five food groups from apples to beef and beyond. This includes food purchased from local farmers ranchers and processors as well as food that's been grown and

raised at schools growing and raising food with students is a great way to engage them in the process and get them excited about unfamiliar foods. School gardens and farms vary in size type and purpose they can be educational they can be in-ground gardens raised beds greenhouses or indoor gardens and they could even be as unconventional as bob the greenhouse bus which is a program from gallatin valley farm to school that provides mobile greenhouse. Education: it's definitely the broadest of the core elements. The education piece spans food nutrition and agriculture based education. Farm to school education can take place anywhere here gallatin valley farm to school which is a non-profit in Bozeman provides in-classroom lessons at Bozeman elementary school. Getting kids engaged in cooking is another important piece of farm to school and farm to school is here in montana and it's growing in 2018-19 school year 54.8 percent of schools were implementing farm to school in some capacity and that has now grown to 57.1 percent and of course there are many benefits to farm to school programs as you'll see through this showcase and while i'm not going to go over all of these here i encourage you to check out the national farm to school network's benefits fact sheet which i have linked at the bottom of the slide the montana farm to school leadership team works through partnerships across the state to build farm to school. Initiatives we welcome participation in our five working groups which are listed here so contact me if you're interested in getting more involved. I know that's a very quick overview of what farm to school is but don't worry, we'll talk more about resources at the end and you'll get more sense of farm to school throughout the presentations so now that you have a foundation we want to give you the opportunity to connect with each other so we're going to break into those breakout groups just like I mentioned so once you're in your groups, introduce yourself with of course your name, your title or affiliation, your organization, business or school, your town, favorite local food and what interests you about today's events. We have about five minutes for this um so i'm going to break you into smaller groups so just give me a second while i get that set up here.

GINGER: One thing I want to touch base on is this event is hosted by montana team nutrition program at montana state university. Montana team nutrition works in close collaboration with montana office of public instruction to provide training and guidance to montana schools on nutrition education, school wellness, and school nutrition programs. Montana office of public instruction school nutrition program, montana food corps and partners this event is funded in part by a usda farm to school grant, montana farm bureau foundation's promotion and education committee. Now i want to go ahead and jump right into this and um introduce our first video and it's from the ogren ranch owners tiffany and stacy ogren of hysham montana.

VIDEO: I'm riley ogren. My brother and i are the fourth generation on our family ranch. We are located in eastern montana on the banks of the yellowstone river. Here on the ranch we're on a cow path and drilling operation where we rotationally graze native grass as well as cover crops. We run the hanging operations we direct market range to table beef to the purple and we train compete on and sell performance sources we're really passionate about sustainability here. We really believe that in order for us to be successful the land, the grass, the animals, the air, and the water all have to be thriving in order for us to be successful. We're really passionate about having small uh family run farms and ranches successful and that's critical to the health of our communities and our rural way of lifestyle. Riley what's your favorite subject? Well I have multiple. My favorite subjects are music, reading, and lunch!

Oh yeah for sure lunch. You've heard it said our food is fuel and we are what we eat and it's so true.

That's why lunch at school is such a great opportunity for kids to refuel their bodies and interact with peers, it kind of incorporates the saying that we're mind body and spirit and it allows these kids to prepare themselves for the last half of the day get ready for sports practices and all the other activities that school provides. When i was a freshman in college living at the dorms i happened to be walking by the cafeteria one day and they had just gotten an order of food in and on one of the boxes it said beef class d - fit for human consumption at which point i went directly to the salad bar and the yogurt stand choosing not to partake in a meal where they had to clarify whether or not the meat was suitable to be consumed by human beings and that is one of the big reasons that we're excited about the farm to school program so that these kids can enjoy meals where there isn't the need to clarify whether their meat is fit for human consumption. There are a number of reasons why we are so excited about the farm to school program. first of all it gives us the opportunity to provide high quality beef to students and faculty that is tasty and nutritious, secondly as parents we take great comfort in knowing that the beef that our kids are consuming at school, we know where it's coming from and we know where it's being processed. Third, as suppliers

of beef to farm to table folks in our area one of the big things that resonates with them is them knowing where their meat comes from the process that it gets to their home and the people and the faces that are behind the product we recognize that our kids are our future. We know that our next generation of doctors and business owners and teachers first responders are all sitting at your cafeteria table right now and we want to be a part of helping them thrive sometimes there's kids that the only meal they get is at lunch through the school lunch program and we want to help make that meal count part of our jobs as ranchers is to feed the world we're excited to have the opportunity to provide a high quality product to these kids that are going to go on to change our communities, our state, our country, and the world. We're excited to see what happens.

Lastly it is fulfilling to know that we have a hand in providing the most high quality protein source for the students in the great state of montana.

GINGER: That was awesome. Does anybody have any questions for tiff and stacy? Remember you can post your questions in the chat box

ATTENDEE: stacy and tiff have you had any resistance from schools who opt for less expensive meat sources and are you selling to some montana schools now?

STACY: Yeah so we are pretty new to providing beef to schools actually ginger had approached us about being a part of this and she actually bought beef from us and um we we did donate a beef to our local school in haysham so you know with the limited amount of experience that we've had with it, i can't say that we've had a price issues or resistance just because of the limited experience we've had um but you know all the schools are under budget restraints um and so i'm sure there probably is uh a different budget for different schools and we get that like you kind of have to make it at pencil as well so you know one thing i want to say um it is hard for us to compete with um you know some of the suppliers in cost um but i do also have to say that you know on average uh statistics show that there's anywhere from 100 different cows to like a thousand different cows in in a one particular burger that you get you know um from the grocery store let's say or the suppliers so um when you do buy beef from us you know you are getting the primals and everything ground into that um into that patty or into that pound of meat or whatever um and you know where it's coming from um you know you know it's been locally processed there's just lots of new nutritive benefits uh as well as just um food security benefits to it i do want to take this opportunity to say too if you would like to get us get to know us better we do have a facebook business page it's just ogren ranch and we do some giveaways and different things on there and kind of uh we're a little bit sporadic about posting but um yeah kind of see more about our operation and um what we're all about and our location and um yeah just day-to-day kind of ins and outs of the business.

ATTENDEE: you mentioned that um you'd had donated to um schools correct um and so there's a question that says I have local ranchers donate beef is that tax deductible for them so was that tax deductible for you?

STACY: you know i'm sure it could be we we didn't worry about that or for ourselves personally um uh i guess probably an accountant would probably be better suited to answer that than than i would but i mean it's i'm sure it's there's a there's a paper trail that follows everything you know from from when it leaves our place to when it gets to the school so i'm sure that that would be uh that would fall under that category but i probably shouldn't make any accountant guarantees

AUBREE: And it looks like a follow-up to that is from cathy campbell and she says our meet and processing are totally donated and it just jumped on me and we do a tax id number to all donors so that accountants can decide if it's deductible. Awesome. It looks like we have a comment from anna and anyone is welcome to unmute yourselves or continue using the chat box if you prefer for us to read them um anna from gardner school district says to help cover the increase in cost for their local beef we use our garden by that i mean we are able to grow vegetables that we would usually buy and with that saved money we put it towards local beef so that's an excellent strategy.

ATTENDEE: I was gonna ask Ginger, too, what made her reach out to you guys?

GINGER: to start well what made me reach out was i'm friends with them on facebook and I noticed that they were advertising their beef and so i thought they would probably be some a very good source for our showcase if they were interested in providing beef to schools so I reached out to tiff and here we are.

TIFF: I might make one quick comment um you know we ride horses and give lessons and that kind of thing um do some competition and that kind of thing and are used to teaching in that avenue and we're definitely open and feel like it's really important that kids know you know the background of where their food comes from and tie it back to the agricultural industry for some of these kids that you know um i think our our society and our culture is moving away from being connected to the land and if anyone would like help with educating their their children we would definitely be open to that and think it's very important you know this we're really big on um ecological sustainability and and um soil health and um you know clean water and clean air and all that kind of all ties together and um just to yeah just to promote ag. in kind of an organic manner i guess and in a manner that that is healthier just for everybody

GINGER: I appreciate that tiff. Remember you can post any questions or anything for tiffany and stacy in the chat box. Now i think we're going to move on to the miller ranch they're our second presenter um owners jake and celeste miller of absorkee, montana.

VIDEO: Miller ranch beef's excited to try to get into the school systems uh one because it's been a passion of mine and my wife's for a long time like i said to provide high quality nutritious beef to the local community at a good price the best part about miller ranch beef is it being locally sourced and you knowing exactly where your food is coming from and what you're putting into your body you can buy that burger for two dollars in walmart but you're gonna have soy protein ground into it they're gonna grind ice into it and knowing where your food is coming from and actually being able to see the cows. We don't mess with the beef we don't do anything to it for the first year of their life they're on grass we do have grass-fed cattle they are put on roughage and grain to gain some weight and put some more nutrition into the animal but when you're buying our beef you know we're feeding the animal superior quality feed and then after that they are taken to the processing plant if they're handled low stress all the way to the packing plant there's not going to be any lactic acid buildup in the muscles and the meat's going to taste superior what is included in miller ranch beef is beef and nothing else we have lined out basically a plan where you know the food is grown in absorkee then we're getting it processed in cody and that's a guarantee process then we get it storing it in absorkee where we're hands-on with that delivery we will be delivering our product with a ford t300 van with a freezer on the back custom built for us we will be storing it at our home in a 10 by 15 walk-in freezer on the property so easy access to that beef whenever we need and then the freezer van we will take that load it with whatever the school needs if the school needs 10 pound chubs of burger we'll make 10 pound chubs of burger if they want one pound patties made we'll make one pound patties or half pound patties quarter pound patties basically whatever the school system needs it can be custom tailored and bring it into the schools the quality and the nutrition of the beef that's going to be delivered to those schools is going to be superior to anybody else's beef we'll talk directly to either myself or my wife celeste we are the owners of miller ranch beef we have our cell phones on us 24/7, 365. we're available through texts and phone calls so if we have to deliver beef on a sunday or have to deliver beef any time of the night day we will make it happen [MUSIC] our ranch is committed and dedicated to making sure we're delivering the highest quality protein and making sure when we sign a contract or when we say we're going to deliver we will deliver that beef to you guys our ranch runs a thousand cattle um we will be able to do 1200 pounds of burger a week what makes us cost competitive is uh cutting out the middleman or i should say the five middlemen that are in between the cow leaving my ranch and the meat getting on your plate the reason i wanted to do this was because there was no beef here who knows where your beef comes from you could go down to the iga in absorkie and it's they say it's certified hereford beef but where in the heck where's it from whose ranch was it raised down what was it fed if you're buying miller ranch beef you're going to know it was raised on this hill it was fed locally raised grain and locally raised corn and locally raised hay every step of the way exactly where that animal was what it was fed how it was treated and it comes back and it gets on your plate and i think that the quality of the product will show my big thing too is it keeps the local dollars in the local community every dollar that gets spent is helping our ranch is helping the feed lots is helping the local packing plants is helping local agriculture is helping local restaurants so it just keeps the montana economy going and strong what makes miller ranch beef reliable is the ranch has the uh critical mass of cattle that we need to keep constantly supplying beef we've partnered with great feed lots we have partnered with a really

great packing plant and we're committed to delivering a superior quality product at a fair price miller inch beef as long as i'm alive will be the fairest priced high quality product out there.

GINGER: All right what a great video um does anybody have any questions for jake and celeste of miller ranch beef you can post your questions in the chat box as well like we have one question um in the chat box for the millers.

ATTENDEE: How far is your distribution area?

JAKE MILLER: The whole point of this was to service the local community but with our freezer truck i guess our plan at the moment is to service basically within about a hundred mile radius of absorker montana which would basically include i mean we could go to bozeman if we needed to but billings livingston all the way around kind of that general area and then south into wyoming if need be

ATTENDEE: I've got a question um i don't have a lot of knowledge in this area but in your video you said um eliminating the five middlemen could you um briefly explain what that means to somebody that doesn't know?

JAKE: It's kind of funny because my dad actually made a living doing this for pretty much his entire life but basically when uh the cow calf operations like mine um what happens is we have a however big they are um we'll have a group of steer calves to sell in the fall and so then what we'll do is we'll arrange to have a buyer for those steer caps but they usually weigh about 600-650 pounds and they'll leave our ranch um and the I traced my calves where they went last year but what happened was they got on a truck and they got driven to wheat fields in Oklahoma now that guy um he ran him on wheat fields in Oklahoma um after they'd already been combined and was going to try to put some cheap gain on those cattle and then he'll turn around and he'll sell him to a feedlot so he went from my ranch and of zerky montana they got trucked to Oklahoma then they got sold out of oklahoma and trucked to a feedlot in greeley Colorado and then from greeley colorado uh they got probably sold from a i kind of lost trace of them after that but usually how it goes is it went from a feedlot in greelee colorado to a packing plant probably somewhere pretty close to greeley and then from the packing plant it probably went to a Distributor and then finally from the distributor it either came back could it very well some of it could have very well came back to montana probably know but that's kind of the flow of uh modern agriculture right now as far as how our steer caps go so kind of disappointing i guess that they had to go to truck get trucked all the way to oklahoma to potentially come back to montana.

AUBREE: I see another um question here so what about lead times how far ahead would a school need to order?

JAKE: so we're doing 20 a month at the moment it just really depends on if the school is doing anything special we already have 10 pound bags of burger ready to go right now um but if it's something to where they need to get a bunch of hamburger patties made i would say probably a month to two weeks in advance because we have cattle going in every two weeks so um if it's two weeks in advance we can get burger patties made or whatever and once we get a system figured out as to what the school needs we'll just have it allotted out of a certain amount of cattle that we're doing with 20 a month i'm figuring we can we're going to be having to sell 1200 pounds of burger a week so we could definitely custom tailor whatever needs to be made if they need like i said anything from quarter pound patties all the way up to 10 pound bags of burger.

AUBREE: and there's um the question from molly, do you provide pre-pattied burger in addition to the chubs?

JAKE: absolutely whatever uh whatever the school or consumer wants we can get made in pretty much whatever quantities to now it does cost a little more to make patties versus making 10 pound bags so those patties do cost a little more but other than that it's pretty much cut and dried as far we can make anything that the schools need there's another question here which is what is your phone number so if you want to connect with tura you can put that in the chat box if you'd like we can we'll put our phone numbers in the chat box there

GINGER: Okay if there's no more questions um we can move on. I would like to introduce our third presenter, native fish keepers with biologist barry hansen and manager lynn Ducharme of polson, montana.

VIDEO: i'm barry hansen fisheries biologist for the salish and kootenai tribes and we're at flathead lake we're going to describe the process we have here to restore native fish and the problem we're dealing with is that lake trout introduced over 100 years ago and combined with misos shrimp introduced about 50 years ago, together resulted in an excessive abundance of lake trout it's a top predator and severely preyed upon native cutthroat and bull trout with the decline in those fish we saw the need to address the problem bring about a recovery of those native fish and to do that we have to reduce lake trout abundance we do that by two methods one is using the public in angling contests for example mac days fishing contests and the other is through gill netting and what we'll see today is our gill netting effort behind me is our gill netting boat a 38-foot boat designed specifically for this work we're here on a september day after having fished throughout the summer and the surface water flathead lake is still fairly warm in the 60s but we're fishing at the bottom of the lake where it's closer to 39 degrees and we're today fishing a small mesh net which catches the smaller lake trout and they're coming up out of 39 degree water and we put them directly on ice and then take them into the fish processing facility we have a goal to harvest 143,000 per year which our research indicates will bring about a nearly complete recovery of the native fish that's our overall challenge that is i think very supportive and exciting about this particular fishery is that these fish were harvesting are causing a problem therefore removing them is beneficial to the ecology of the lake but it also is important to consumers that eat these fish because in comparison to other fisheries especially the ocean fisheries where there's so much demand for healthy fish that there's enormous pressure and exploitation and typically then those fisheries are driven down and down in this case, we're striving to drive this particular fishery down to benefit the native fish and therefore from a consumer perspective consuming these fish can be done without contributing to ecological problems but in fact supporting the ecology and can be done then with a clear conscience and with the best ethics.

Hello my name is cindy benson i am the fishery specialist for the confederated salish and kootenai tribes. This is our fillet machine that we use to process the lake trout that we bring in out of flathead lake the process is that you start on the far end heads are taken off of the fish they're fed into the machine and two fillets will come out this end there's a belly blade that will cut the belly open there's a blade that will bring the guts out they'll fall into the tray and come out into this bin and we have the two processed fillets right there there you can see how they come out of the machine it takes the rib blades off rib bones off sometimes we do have to cut a few rib bones off and then we also pin bone by hand and at the end we have a boneless fish fillet lake trout from flathead lake this process and the machine is all done under native fish keepers incorporated which is a corporation formed under the confederated salish and kootenai tribal council and it is ran as a non-profit organization. Barry's going to show how we trim up the filets take the pin bones off and get them ready to be packaged for market he's trimming the belly off of the fish we square up the tail and then we um carefully take the pin bones out on the smaller fish i don't take the pin bones out but on these larger ones you want to take pin bones out then let's weigh this fillet and see what that fillet weighs that fillet comes in at 4.7 the flesh of these fish has changed over the years it used to be white but since they've been eating the misos shrimp they accumulate that pigment and it transfers into their flesh and so they look more like a salmon makes them more appetizing these are completed lake trout fillets they have the orange color largely from their diet of misos shrimp they have been trimmed all around and pin bones removed so it's a boneless fillet these average about four and a half ounces they're from the low end of the size structure of lake trout they are in the say 14 to 18 inch fish and generally restaurants and other markets are looking for larger fillets and the eight ounce are greater so these are about half the size of the more commonly marketed filets these then should be ideal for a school program and important to mention to be aware mercury is everywhere in the environment and it's taken up through the aquatic food web lake trout of course then also take it up all fish have mercury and lake trout especially the larger ones have quite a lot of mercury the value of these smaller fish is that they're on a mysis diet they're young so they haven't accumulated that much mercury it's important for all consumers to be aware of the fish they consume and the frequency that they consume them but these are a relatively safe product that brings all the healthy aspects of fish the omega-3s the valuable fatty acids that are so important for heart and other development in addition to the important conservation value that comes from harvesting these fish and people consuming them to help sustain the program of harvest we also think it's important to know that these are as fresh a fish as you can get every day we're pulling our nets the fish go directly on ice on the boat and then they're shuttled from the boat to this facility and they're filleted then trimmed as you see here then they go to the vacuum packer and then into the flash freezer where they're held at -10 so from the water to the freezer is typically less than four hours.

GINGER: Another great video, so does anybody have any questions for barry and lynn from native fish keepers? We're going to start serving these fish here at huntley project and i'm really excited about it, I believe what we're going to do is we're just going to put on sheet pan stick them in the oven with some seasoning and um very quickly they'll be ready and they'll be very easy to serve. I love serving local fish.

AUBREE: We have a bunch of questions just kind of back to back here they all came in at the same time so: do you deliver or ship and one another question that's related to that is your product shipped frozen?

BARRY: I'm gonna have lynn answer that question.

LYNN: Okay um we do uh we work with three distributors um that are all out of montana uh they distribute throughout the state as well as wyoming and a little bit into Idaho so we don't specifically deliver ourselves we're not set up for that but we do work with distributors that have a pretty broad route as far as yes right now all of our fish is delivered frozen. We do have some folks right here in polson that take some of our fish fresh but that's on a pretty limited basis.

AUBREE: there's a follow-up question to that which is who are those distributors that you're working with now?

LYNN: We work with quality foods distributing out of bozeman we work with flathead fish out of columbia falls and we work with ocean beauty out of Helena.

AUBREE: I think that kind of answers the question katie asks which is how do we get the fish if we don't live in the area molly asks do you have any easy fish recipes which schools could use to prepare the fillets?

BARRY: I'll take a shot at that in because we have on our website both the macdays.com website and the native fishkeepers website there are recipes but as to the specifics of how a school would prepare them i'm not really prepared to answer that um yeah those are details i'm not familiar with

AUBREE: okay and it looks like there's also the alaska farm to school tool kit has some school recipes for fish so if any of you are looking for fish recipes you can check that out just as a note we will gather these resources the ones that are included in the chat box or other resources and include those in a follow-up email okay i'm just going through these questions here what experiences have you had with selling to younger kids who may not be used to fish in typical lunches

BARRY: That's hard to answer you know we're the harvesters we're not really dealing directly with the consumers. One thing we do though in this fishing to have at the end of each one we have a public fish fry that is very popular it's primarily for the people that participate in the contest but it's popular enough that we get a lot of others that want to come out and consume the fish now those are deep fried typically we also have a stew but it all goes over very well and there are a lot of small kids at those events that's about the extent of my experience and that way.

GINGER: I might can help with that too. As a food service director and those of you who are we get fish from usda fish sticks i've also bought fish through um cisco and u.s foods um the problem with that fish and there's a lot of problem with the fish that i get from cisco and you and US foods and i hate to kind of say anything bad about it but i don't know where that fish comes from they can tell me it says it on the box but i'd much rather get fish from polson in flathead lake than out of a box where i don't know where it comes from and um especially if the prices are comparable and think of the lesson that we have to teach our kids when it comes to this local fish um our fish our kids here at the school I serve fish pretty often and they eat it no problem with them eating it um it's usually breaded it's always breaded stick it in the oven it's done in a few minutes um the positive side to this trout is it's local trout you cannot get any better fish than that so um and montana kids know trout so i don't think we're gonna have any problems as food service directors serving trout to our kids.

AUBREE: I hope that helped you with your question Wesley, with the younger kids and fish and it sounds like Tura also does fish Fridays did you want to share how what kinds of things you're serving are you doing fish sticks or um fish tacos?

TURA: We do fish sticks kids don't like it because they're used to the fresh fish I do a lot of tilapia i do um fish soup fish too whatever you want to call it and um we do a fish and winter vegetable bake if you bake your tilapia with garlic and butter and pepper and squeeze lemon juice over the top of it throw your lemon rinds right in there with it let it bake pull the lemons off and serve it the kids love it.

AUBREE: i think most people would love that sounds absolutely delightful they like it does sound really good i just see a couple comments in the chat box and i'll read those um so a great ecological piece to incorporate with lake trout 2 and that's echoed with katie's comment I feel like also connecting the sustainability and benefit to the environment is a great way to incorporate a lesson into the classroom.

GINGER: We've got a couple more videos to go through still um next one i want to introduce is shane flowers with project meats. He's out of shepherd montana so if we want to roll that tape.

VIDEO: hi i'm shane flowers with project meats, we are a local meat processor doing business with places like huntley project schools. We have a lot to offer as far as that goes for what the new uh beef to school initiative is going on right now in our particular situation we're a federally inspected facility as far as the fresh meat goes and uh soon to be federally inspected as far as cooked meats goes um you can find a lot of establishments like us all over the state here in the central the eastern side of the state we have a lot of opportunity we have a facility in miles city where we do the fresh production and we do all the cook production right here in billings montana using some guys like us gives you kind of some flexibility in your school program and and how you want to do things just because we're small and we can maneuver fairly easily as far as that goes to fit your needs and what might be best for your school and your situation so as we go along i kind of want to try to explain a few of the different things that we've done um that might be beneficial to different schools across our area as well as you might find them in other processors that are more in your area so as we go forward just see what we have to do and check it out we also provide a wide variety of value-added products for facilities that might be looking for a pre-cooked sausage that's easy to get out there to the kids or different things like that we make breakfast patties that come into a 10-pound box you just pull them out get them cooked up for the kids as well as bacon is a big big deal for us we sell a lot of bacon through here and we sell it at a wholesale level so gives us a lot of opportunity to keep the price right but it's a very very high quality bacon that uh getting fairly well known in our area as well um we're currently trying to get where we'll have i should say in the next couple months a machine here little single pack snack sticks too so if you have a whether it's a concession stand or something that you sell out of your cafeteria or whatever that might be that you know especially with everything that's going on in the world they're going to be single pack nobody's touching them anything like that so you just sell it to the individual they grab it out there's no cross-contamination worries or anything like that so there's a lot of opportunity for value-added production or value-added sales that go into the schools that could really benefit them and make their jobs easily easier in the long run hopefully because the more we can get done for you and the less work you have to do the better off you're going to be we also provide obviously a wide range of fresh meat products you know whether you're looking for roasts that you can cook up for your kids or just burger i mean burger's obviously a huge staple as far as giving these kids something that doesn't cost a lot of money giving them high quality protein that doesn't cost a lot of money so we provide that in a five pound package boxed up how many ever pounds you want we box that up and they're in there in five pound packages makes it really easy for you to pull them out open them up get them cooked up and we really pride ourselves i guess on the local side it doesn't matter where we're at in this process we do everything we can to provide local and the one thing like it's important with the ground beef side of things is you can find cheaper ground beef i won't deny that but the difference is what you're getting is what they're calling the finely textured lean ground beef and it's just not the quality that you would hope for especially feeding it to kids in the schools and stuff like that everything we do is just straight up the off the carcass and fresh meat and it's usually done as fast as we go through things it's usually done within say that week you know all of our fresh meat we're going through trim so fast that you're getting meat that was freshly taken that week so it helps considerably we also offer delivery services so we have refrigerated vehicles in our area whether we're in central montana or eastern montana i've got delivery vehicles for all those kinds of scenarios and that way we can get them to you under the regulations that's

required of your school and uh make sure to get you taken care of as well as far as that goes the one thing I didn't touch on real quick that i wanted to point out as well to do hamburger patties so if you're a school that likes to do hamburger patties for your kids we can make hamburger patties they come in a 10 pound box you can just pop them out and cook them up and get them ready for those kids

GINGER: All right that was good information, anybody have any questions for shane?

AUBREE: We do have a question um it's more of a general question but i think shane could probably answer this one - if you have a 1300 pound beef and it is processed all ground beef how many meals kids can you serve from that so it's a math question.

SHANE: 1300 pound beef if we're gonna grind that whole animal uh really really depends on the age of the animal because the older they are um the less we actually get back out of them um but say a 1300 pound animal we're looking at 60 dress you know that's going to put you somewhere in that 800 pound range um once you bone that out completely if it's uh not a lot of fat trim off that or anything you'll get another 60 out of that so you're probably talking 480 somewhere that 400 to 480 pound mark for ground product

AUBREE: awesome and then a response to samantha's question was anna's which is we do quarter pound burger so if you're taking that into you know quarter pound patties you can calculate that out or whatever you're doing with it um there was another question here - are the snack sticks shelf stable?

SHANE: I have a couple different styles I have one that is shelf stable snack sticks that we sell quite considerably through wholesale going into convenience stores and things like that that are just going to sit on the shelf and then we also have a refrigerated snack sticks which generally have cheese in them and that's why they're not considered shelf stable because the cheese would break down on under a shelf-stable condition so rather than going to an oil-based cheese we just leave it the way it is and call it refrigerated i would like to say real quick I apologize you know all these other guys had this awesome scenery to look at you know water and grassy fields i just had a manufacturing place.

[Laughter]

GINGER: It was great shane it shows what really happens behind the scenes and something else i want to point out on shane's video it's not just beef he has there he has pork too so from the breakfast patties to the bacon to a lot of different things with the pork um i order um the thin pork chops from shane and we do a meal where um we cook the pork chops in our uh big tilt skillet and season them and then we add cream of mushroom soup and some other things and we serve that over mashed potatoes or rice so it's like a smothered pork chop and they're little four ounce pork chops and they are absolutely out of this world they're amazing. There's one more question from Tura, Shane do you process sheep?

SHANE: yeah we do, it's not a high demand item we don't see very many sheep compared to the cattle and hogs that we do in the state it's just not a huge deal but if there's somebody looking for sheep we can definitely probably figure out a source for that and bring it in and process that.

AUBREE: I do want to bounce back to a question since we have time right now that was asked by jake to stacy and tiffany - were you able to find a local processor in montana

STACY: yeah so we um primarily have been using cowboy meat company out of forsyth and it formerly um had been CK Meats but um they just do such a great job as far as customer service quality of what they what they produce for us um and so yeah that mostly we use uh cowboy meat company in forsyth we have used uh a place in jordan and also in big timber and um have got some bookings in terry montana um so everything that we do is uh local to montana um some of the processing facilities like shane had um alluded to are usda inspected uh forsythe is his only state inspected currently and so um sometimes that that'll depend on who we go to as far as where the demand for the meat is and a state inspected in facility in the state of montana is legitimate for going into any of these schools so cowboy meets processes for ogren and they're more than more than capable of taking that

product to those schools so just for clarification for anybody that's not aware all right so we can move on um so now you are all going to watch a video that we put together here at huntley project school in warden montana

GINGER: Hey my name is ginger buchanan i'm the food service director for huntley project schools in warden montana. I'm also a farm to school coach for montana team nutrition today we're going to be doing a kitchen tour and i'm going to show you some of the equipment that we have that helps us do made from scratch or semi-made from scratch meals that's very important to us here at huntley project because we want our kids to know where their food comes from we try really hard to source everything we can locally right now we're able to do our beef some lettuce and we're also a part of dod fresh fresh which is really really a good source for fresh fruits and vegetables through usda i also want to talk to you a little bit today about grants we've been really blessed this year we were able to win several grants that helped us to get a lot of much needed new equipment and i'm really excited to show you that equipment. So we're in the prep area of the kitchen right here is our prep table this is where we um put everything on sheet pans this is one of our ovens it's our combi oven it'll steam hold it'll roast we can do just about anything in this oven these two ovens this is an electric convection oven and a gas convection oven um this is our baker's table it's where we uh make all the homemade uh biscuits and um hot rolls, cinnamon rolls, um our big mixer which we're getting ready to add to this mixer one of the grants that we won we were able to include a brand new mixer so it will also go beside this mixer dish room area where we this is where pre-covered kids would come in through the door put their trays on this table they would get rinsed run through the machine and then our drying racks this is the back of the kitchen um this is where most of our made from scratch meals get prepared this is our large tilt skillet our small tilt skillet right here is a space that we've reserved for a two burner cooktop that is not here hadn't been installed yet our large steam kettle where we make all of our soups we have another warming cabinet that we are using right now for covid so all the meals that come out of the oliver go into this warming cabinet i believe it'll hold uh nine it'll hold nine oliver trays per sheet pan and i believe there's 11 spaces in this holding cabinet but it's pushed down to the elementary this was also won through a grant more prep area so we make our bags here for um any of our sac lunches that go out we have taping machines to tape those bags with this is where we wash all of our fresh fruits and vegetables in this area our number 10 can electric can opener so recently we had the opportunity of getting a patty making machine that we love by getting this patty making machine work we've cut out the middleman which means we've cut our cost in half we buy all our beef um ground 80 20 from project meats all this beef is raised here locally right here in the yellowstone valley so we're able to put money back into the producers pockets and our kids know where their beef comes from so we're going to demonstrate here real quickly how we make these patties we pre-season it so that when we pack it into this machine it comes out seasoned and they're quarter pound patties they fit perfect on a bun and the kids love them. okay so i've got my pan just about full one other thing i want to talk about is when we make these patties we put them into the cooler the next morning they go into the ovens they're done in 15 minutes very easy to make very easy to process we can have over 500 patties made in about an hour and 20 minutes if my head cook and i can stay at it and we just knock it out it's super easy super simple there's not a lot of work involved and it's been a big success for us so i'm going to show you our oliver system that we got for huntley project school this was all bought through a grant um this is a really cool machine so today we're doing spaghetti so the first process is we load the paper trays with the garlic toast then we put corn in the tray and then we put the spaghetti in it goes to this table where Janice picks up the trays and loads the machine so we're going to show you the other end of this because we have kind of a cramped space so the machine processes the food through the stamping where it stamps the film onto the tray to seal it and it pushes them out this end where missy picks the trays up puts them on a sheet pan where we get nine to a pan and we'll wait till this pan feels then it goes into our portable warmer but it'll go into this portable warmer and that is what we push down to the elementary school and feed the elementary kids this time we're going to demonstrate our dough express pizza press machine it parbakes our crust this was also won through a grant so um i get this dough from costco it costs us twenty dollars a case we get 21 to a case all we have to do is thaw it overnight, proof it the next day for a couple hours, just until it gets to room temperature. Buying a case of that compared to a case of parbaked crust from cisco we save way more than half so a case from cisco is somewhere around \$60 you only get twelve so like i said through costco we get twenty one for twenty dollars. So, we take the dough round it put it in the center this is hot so we gotta be careful with that, pull it down, this needs to bake between 30 and 45 seconds and so we'll be right back and i'll show you how that works. It's been about 45 seconds so i'm going to lift the handle. It flattened it out really nice so what we do now is i'm gonna bring it to Heather, she's gonna dock it with this docking tool and what that does is it puts holes in the crust so that it doesn't bubble up in the center you have to dock these now we'll just round the edges and that'll help keep all the good

stuff inside the pizza plus it looks really nice after it bakes up. Then Heather will put it on a perforated sheet pan and then she'll put it on our baker's rack to cool once those are cooled once those are cooled we will put them in stacks of tin with paper between each crust put them in the freezer and they're par baked ready to use crust for the day we want to make pizza this is our dry storage area we have a lot of um our pans and amber pans back here a lot of roasting pans we store our number 10 cans here so anything food is pretty much going to be in this area we have another dry number 10 can storage rack in this corner we also store all of our prepping cups for our portion cups for any fruits that we do or slaws or salads all that stays back here so we also have a freezer space it's not a very big freezer where we also want grant money to buy another external freezer but up until this point this is the freezer we use it's about 10 by 16. we've got another 10 by 16 on its way. Right now we're having to use bottled water because the nitrates in our city water are too high so anything that we cook with that we add to soups or any recipes has to be done with bottled water this is our walk-in cooler this is a little bigger than our freezer but this is where all of our fresh food goes it just has to be stored in a cooler we have two serving lines we have kids that will line up on this side they'll come through grab their trays from the server and walk down the pathway to the point of sale we also have a server line on the other side we'll do the same thing and they'll walk out to what we call our commons area our tables are put away right now but pre-COVID we're able to seat about 400 kids at a time right now we're about half that.

GINGER: Okay y'all got to see me for a little bit in action i'm sure that was a lot of fun to watch anyway, anybody got any questions for me I answered a few in the chat box.

AUBREE: could we maybe read those out so that um folks that aren't paying attention to the chat box so i'll just um ask them so anna asks ginger how many kids do you feed a day?

GINGER: We feed just under 600 kids a day

AUBREE: Cathy is in love with the paddy machine. Where did you get yours and how much do they cost?

GINGER: We were blessed with that machine, it's on loan right now from Livingston. They they didn't like it a whole lot but we love it so um we're actually gonna buy it from Livingston, they just hadn't given us a price yet but you can get exactly that padding machine through bargreens for around six thousand dollars.

AUBREE: Cathy also wants that pizza dough roller um where did you get that and what's the cost?

GINGER: You mean the pizza press, okay so that pizza press also came from bargreens um i have learned that speaking on this if you can when it comes to a district to a business that sells equipment i've learned in my experience if you can kind of stay with one person they don't want to lose your business so they're going to fight to keep it so you can really work on price so um so with my sales person with bargreens I can find a cheaper price, he doesn't lose my business so he's going to match that price or get as close to it as he can that pizza dough press cost about twenty seven hundred dollars and we really really like it and um the dough is phenomenal. We haven't made our own dough yet just because of time's sake and we've been short-handed in this kitchen ever since we came back to school so I haven't had time to tackle that one.

AUBREE: Another question is what grants um did you use to buy this equipment so if you want to list um the different grants that you have received?

GINGER: Yeah um well let me think, we won a grant through the state um we've won some grants through no kid hungry and i believe we have i'm looking to see if she's on here i think the the the lady that helps me with all my grants i believe she's on here i'm not sure i thought i saw her name linda is on it is linda here okay, linda has been amazing and she's been wonderful to work with. These grants really are easy to fill out, you don't have to feel you know do all this dialogue it is really simple so those of you that want to tackle a grant now's the time to do it now if there's things you need get find these grants do them now um especially with COVID going on i know your needs because i know what mine were and i know what mine are so now's a good time to jump on there and uh get things that are gonna make things easier for COVID especially.

LINDA: I will add that i'm not sure if there's any funding left in that state we might have another grant opportunity coming up early next year so um yeah ginger can give me i can give you my contact info or if you put in the chat if you're interested in getting grant info i can write your contact info and then keep you in mind when we do have another cycle opening

AUBREE: Awesome and thanks for joining Linda. So Katie has a question: is one oliver machine enough to feed your number of kids at your school?

GINGER: Yes it is um there are several different levels of the oliver um ours is about the mid-level, there is a small one that fits on the countertop but you know i don't i really don't recommend that oliver machine unless you have a small school where you're feeding you know a hundred or less kids. This oliver machine that we have, it'll make you feel like you're on that lucille ball show where they're doing the chocolate and you just can't keep up, we can't go as fast as it goes you could probably run 500 meals through that thing if you put it on the number 10 setting if you're that fast and superhuman in an hour i mean it's amazing so we can't keep up with it we have to turn it down to like four and it'll go to 10. So we're able we could we could feed an army with that oliver machine we have right now and just the machine that's not including trays but just the machines about sixteen thousand but if it hadn't been for that grant we would not have that oliver system here or anything that goes with it

AUBREE: You might have mentioned this already Ginger wasn't there also a smaller oliver machine?

GINGER: There is a smaller one um and like I said I think it would handle now i've not messed with one of those i don't have one but just from the videos i've seen I think it could probably handle definitely a hundred kids or so you know 100 meals but um you know if you're getting into the numbers where we're at or higher, you definitely need a bigger machine.

AUBREE: and then Ginger do you own the huntley projects one or are you renting the oliver system?

GINGER: we own that machine, and the grants paid for the machine, paid for all our trays it paid for every attachment that we need. So every oliver you have to have a tray carrier to fit the type of trays you want to use so we have a three compartment tray so you would put the main course and a roll they're divided into three compartments you'd have a two compartment you have a one compartment and um a like a fruit cup those are the four that we purchased because we like to do a variety of different meals so uh the tray carriers yet we've only used the two compartment in the three compartment but it has been a lifesaver and i'll tell you um up until we got the oliver we were like everybody else and throwing food in a bag pre-packaged everything and our numbers went down you know we got complaints kids they just got tired of it and so thanks to the grants we were able to get this oliver machine and we are back to to you know moving and shaking like we were pre-covered and making all our meals from scratch and they're eating good home-cooked meals now because of that grant because of the oliver.

ANNA HALLOWAY: Concerning grants i'm down in gardiner and i work at a school that has dwindling population and so dwindling money it's in quite a big crunch but yet our free and reduced numbers are too low for the majority of all grants so we've been able to get a little bit of money from an education foundation that we have started in school a couple years ago but if anybody has any sort of information or advice on other grants that don't aren't based on your free and reduced that would help us because that's where we run into a ridiculous amount of problems with getting any funding from anything

LINDA: I'll say with this new set of grants because usually ours were focused on school meals but um our national partners since the school closures has expanded those grant opportunities and it isn't specifically based on numbers of free and reduced participants so um when we do have another cycle that comes up i can reach out to you. The process usually is that we reach out individually to schools to find out what their situation is they apply the national um assigns us those applications and then we talk amongst ourselves as a team and then we have to advocate to national on the need um they're be open to listening to what we advocate for just because we're able to have that open dialogue with people like Ginger and make the case so um i'll definitely keep you in the loop and um also think about other grant opportunities that i come across and I can send them to you anna and i also want

to let you know i did look in the chat box i've been writing down emails of people that said they want grant information in the future.

GINGER: Okay so I think now we're going to jump to Pam Fruh, she is from opi school nutrition program. Pam's our food distribution manager and oversees DoD fresh

PAM FRUH: Hi thanks you guys um first of all thanks for doing this what a great way to spend an afternoon, so much great information. How does USDA foods fit into this picture? The reason is that schools when they participate in the national school lunch program receive usda foods as a part as a benefit for participating in our program so that's where we come in general usda foods are about 20 of the ingredients that a school would use to create their menus so usda foods in schools is has a dual mission a dual purpose at the time that was founded to support domestic agriculture and then also to provide healthy meals for schools so it really fits in exactly with what we are talking about here but to bring it down to the scale that we're talking about i just wanted to give you one example of how we were able to take this national program and localize it into our state and that was through one piece of the usda foods puzzle which is the USDA DoD fresh program. So dod fresh what is that it stands for department of defense and um seems like a kind of strange combination there but basically the department of defense spends a lot of money on fresh produce and by teaming up with school nutrition programs it's a way to leverage their buying power basically so schools participate in national school lunch program they um receive uh entitlement assistance dollars and then they decide individually as a school how to spend it so um our dod fresh local example um on the next slide we'll see a picture there of this is something that um we were just a this is just happening right now so um we have our vendor for our dod fresh program is grasmic produce and they're based in boise idaho they're a family-owned company and they provide as part of the contract with the department of defense um this uh the fresh produce to any montana school that chooses to participate in the program so our vendor grasmic produce was able to connect with swanson's orchards in corvallis montana and there's a little dot there you can see on the map where Corvallis is now sidebar you know we have a gigantic challenge here to distribute anything in our state as anybody knows who the folks here who are talking about you know how are you going to move your product from your family farm in absorkee to you know corvallis i mean it's a challenge only three states have a bigger physical challenge than we do so um that's where corvallis is and then in the next picture this was just texted to me yesterday there's our um pickup of our apples at swanson's orchard so those are picked up yesterday they will go back to the grasmic produce facility and they'll ship it out this weekend to their crosstalk facilities and then next week schools can start ordering those apples on november 2nd and we will start to see those apples in schools on the week of november 9th until they're gone so um this is the second time we've had a local purchase transaction and i can tell you that it gets easier as you go so for anybody who is just starting into this whether you're a school or whether you're a vendor um don't get discouraged because uh and it can be hard not to because you're really doing something that hasn't really been done before i mean everybody knows how to pick up the phone or go to the internet and order from your broadliner you know you can do that that's pretty straightforward but this is harder so it takes everybody working together and being patient um and i think on the next oh i know I want to show you like what does it take so one challenge for us when um anyone when you're trying to supply to schools is what scale are you going to operate at how far are you going to go in our case our vendor is contractually required to supply product to anybody any school in montana that orders so again you can imagine you know if you're in hysham and you're thinking about well can I go to columbia falls you know um these are really challenges um and then you have to have enough volume of product so for apples there's not a lot of apple suppliers in montana start with and then there's really not a lot that can ship out um 700 cases of apples on a monday so um takes a lot to get that done and then just finally to um sum it up um i made a little list on the next slide of you know what what some challenges are but also where you get your success so um finding a supplier that can provide the quantities you need and then um figuring out you know how are you gonna arrange for product pickup can they get the apples picked will the beef be ready you know are the fish farther down than where they normally would be you know whatever these kind of things are um you know you kind of have to have a plan b if plan a doesn't work out um price structure can be a challenge because um if you are just depending on how you're selling you have those one-on-one conversations with each other about what makes sense you know a school food service accounts are all non-profit by um it's required so the way all that works too gets kind of complicated um and i talked about this before the size of our state i mean we have a lot of challenges to um just to be able to supply things anyway but that's someplace else where we can all kind of work together and figure out um you know maybe how we can help each other and that's been i think the most interesting part of this and what an afternoon like today um really

encourages is people working together sharing ideas and um it's really all for the best it's all good stuff to come from this so thank you so much i'm happy to talk your ear off about usda foods but i just had a little slice of time so let me know if you have any questions, you can reach me um through my opi contact information. Thanks!

AUBREE: Thank you Pam. I'm going to wrap up with sharing a few resources and upcoming opportunities um to get more involved and one of those opportunities as pam said is if you're school food service directors and you're i'm using dod fresh you can get montana apples through dod fresh and that's a huge win and i just thank pam for hanging in there and making it happen um for the second time so that's awesome so i'm going to move through these slides really quickly and really what I want you to get is that there's just a ton of resources out there and where to start looking for them. You also get on the pdf of these slides so you'll be able to see those um those links and those resources so don't feel stressed out about how fast i'm going to go through here so start with the montana farm to school website. One of the pages you'll find on there is beef to school and since today's tours were largely beef to school i encourage you to check out our montana beef to school page which has FAQs, our case study report, procurement templates, a pitch and promotion kit, and many other resources. The montana farm to cafeteria guide is a great place to get the regulations to understand what needs to happen from the farm to the school as well as best practices for serving local foods and schools or other institutions if you're looking for local food you can use local food directories like ncat's farm to cafeteria producer database or abundant montana's directory also talking with colleagues farmers market managers other schools restaurants etc and for producers making sure that you're on these directories so that people can find you um one program that can be really helpful in promoting um and and integrating that education piece is the montana harvest of the month program this brings together the farm to school core elements in an easy to use framework the goal of harvest of the month is to support healthy montana children and adults and support montana's farmers, ranchers, processors, and food businesses it is open to k-12 schools, after school programs, early care and education, health care, grocery stores and even food pantries. It's free to register and you can do so at any time whenever you want to start participating sites do get access to posters, handouts, guides, and many other resources if you can see my video you can see that i have one of the posters behind me so you can check out what that looks like. One of the resources that we developed are the farm to plate videos so a video for each of the foods unlike the other harvest of the month resources that you need to register for, these are publicly available on our youtube playlist, no registration required so you can use those in classrooms on your facebook pages to promote local foods to families and communities. They're really there to help you however is needed. Foodcorps is another great resource and we have a lot of Foodcorps members on today so that's exciting. Bringing in additional staff to help with farm to school implementation can be really helpful, Foodcorps service members are hosted by schools to implement farm to school and they're provided training and resources through the Foodcorps program, you can also consider a VISTA, intern, paid staff, volunteers, or partnerships with non-profits and other organizations. There are many opportunities to learn about farm to school in montana. This is certainly not the last, we are offering two more showcases in the spring, information to be determined so stay tuned and then information about all our upcoming events including our past events which are all recorded and archived are found on our training and events page which is the link is shown here this includes our webinars that we've had about food safety if that's your interest and our past farm to school successes webinar series. Due to COVID we did postpone the montana farm to school summit until august 2021 and so we hope you'll join us then and just as of this week we have reopened the workshop proposals, they will be due december 31st so if you have a farm to school story experience or resources to share we hope that you submit a workshop proposal. And of course, we're wrapping up national farm to school month this October and it's a great time to celebrate or launch your farm to school program and of course we also just passed montana crunch time which is one way you can celebrate local food initiatives as well as national farm to school month on october 22nd when we all crunched into locally originally grown apples and if you did participate in crunch time i hope you registered because if you register you help montana win the mountain plains regional crunch off you have to register by october 31st so please do that help us win the crunch off trophy i'm also really excited to announce that montana team nutrition, through office of public instruction, was awarded a usda team nutrition grant and our project will be starting soon. One of the elements of that will be collecting harvest of the month recipes from schools throughout the state so if you have some good harvest of the month recipes we will be looking for those so start watching our announcements because we want to hear from those and we're also looking for test schools that are willing to test the recipes with their students and their school nutrition staff so contact us if you're interested the next round of usda farm to school grants are now open until january 8th so when they are due there are multiple tracks and each track has different eligibility requirements so they're even open

some of the tracks are open to even producers as well as school state agencies all kinds of different entities and organizations so get more information at the usda farm to school website and contact the usda farm to school grant staff if you have questions watch the webinars read the RFA, do all that good stuff and those grants could really be of good help anna i think you would be a good candidate to apply for these grants so definitely check those out and if you're looking for grant opportunities that are farm to school related do check out our facebook page we try to post as many as we find on our facebook page so that's a really good um spot to check um so i encourage you all to remember to share your story. We can't have events like this if we don't know what's happening in your area so use social media use your news media and share those stories about what's going on in your area if you do post to social media use our hashtags #mtharvestofthefarm or #mtfarmtoschool depending on what you're posting and always email one of us if you have a story to share and just lastly again we encourage you to reach out to us ginger and faith are montana farm to school coaches and their entire job is to be here to help you all make goals for farm to school, work through your challenges, build your farm to school program or grow it so if you would like to work with a farm to school coach please contact them directly and so that we have ginger and faith again so um i think that's it and i will uh turn it back to you ginger for questions and i can take a moment and look through the chatbox.

GINGER: Okay does anybody have any questions over anything you've seen today or specifically Pam?

AUBREE: Here's a question from jake it says will usda help with the distribution of local products? So I think that would be a good Pam question.

PAM: Let's see, I was looking at that you know the usda probably won't but opi school nutrition program um the way we're set up is that we contract our distribution separately so the usda procures the products um from vendors those arrive at our warehouse and then we have a trucking firm that that goes to the schools so i think it'd be worth talking about because um i really can't say yes or no but it can't hurt to explore it, we were loading and weighing out trucks today and you know you've got room for another you know um thousand pounds or whatever on a truck it'd be nice to have some you know have someone to talk to about that so we should talk we should definitely talk Jake, I'll send you my number here

AUBREE: There was a question about sourcing bison and from Tura and Samantha, there's a bison ranch in Lolo that would be an excellent thing to look on those um local foods directories such as abundant montana might have some as well as the farm to cafeteria um networks database and map if anyone i think there's also one there's north ridge north bridger bison something like that and that's um near Wilsaw, and i don't know if Shane might have an answer to that or not with project meats.

SHANE: There's several places that are processing buffalo, we're not currently, I know stillwater pack brings them through as well as brian engel over pioneer meats in big timber. There's also elk processed up in Kalispell at lower valley processing and i'm thinking they might do buffalo there as well but i know there's elk for sure, so there are quite a few different opportunities there for some different proteins from some of these other processors in different areas, those are the three that jump out at me. If i think of something else i'll pass it along but i know those three for sure have some opportunity there.

GINGER: In closing, we just want to thank all of the presenters and participants. I think we had an amazing lineup today. I'm really proud of all the videos and all the time and effort that everybody put into to this and a big thanks to Sarah for all her amazing talent and video editing so thank you Sarah. I hope this showcase was informative and helped inspire you and answer some of your questions. Please know that we're here to help you, we want to encourage you to reach out to us. There's me, Faith Oakland and Aubree Roth, our contact information will be provided to you in an email and again thank you to all the presenters, you put your heart and soul into making these wonderful videos and we appreciate you.



The Montana Harvest of the Month program showcases Montana grown foods in Montana communities. This program is a collaboration between Montana Farm to School, Office of Public Instruction, Montana Team Nutrition Program, National Center for Appropriate Technology, Montana State University Extension, Gallatin Valley Farm to School, FoodCorps Montana, and Montana Department of Agriculture. More information and resources are available at: www.montana.edu/mtharvestofthefarm.

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