



THE DATE DIGEST



THE NEWSLETTER OF AGRICULTURAL & TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

NO. 4

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VIRTUAL



Focus on Key Topics

- Welcome Message
- Congratulations Graduates!
- Student Spotlight
- Celebrate Ag Week
- Engagement Initiatives
- Teaching & Research Insights

A Message from Dr. Perry

As the semester continues to move quickly, this issue highlights the people, projects, and moments that make DATE such a rewarding place to work and learn. We're excited to celebrate our graduates, recognize student initiative through Native American Heritage Month, and reflect on Celebrate Ag Week highlights, including the Barnyard Showdown and the continued momentum of our Agritourism program.

You'll also find updates on engagement initiatives, teaching and research insights, and a well-deserved congratulations to Faith on receiving the Teaching Excellence Award. Thanks for taking a few minutes to catch up on what's happening across DATE, and thank you for the work you do each day to support our students and community.

~ Dr. Perry, Department Head



CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!

CELEBRATING YOUR HARD WORK
& BRIGHT FUTURE

We are proud to announce the following graduates...



Pictured left to

right:

Jack Bazemore

Lainey Kitzmann

Faith Droszcz

Breanna Blain

Maya Verdugo



RECIPIENT OF TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARD

Congratulations to Faith Droszcz for earning the graduate school's Teaching Excellence Award!

This award honors students who make a meaningful impact on undergraduates by helping them grow in knowledge, skill, and confidence. We are incredibly proud of the dedication, mentorship, and care she brings to her teaching. Congratulations Faith!



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

We are proud to recognize students who are making a meaningful impact both within our department and beyond. For this semester's student spotlight, we are excited to highlight Macey Aoki-Chance, a graduate student in the Agricultural Education Master's Program.

Macey is very involved on campus, working as a graduate student assistant in the College of Ag and the Space Public Outreach Manager for NASA, and serving as the Collegiate FFA advisor. During Celebrate Ag week, she did a phenomenal job coordinating the Ag & American Indian Heritage Horse Painting Exhibition. Macey will be defending her thesis this spring! We are so proud of Macey and her dedication to the department and College of Ag.



MEET MACEY AOKI-CHANCE



Macey's Favorite Memory

One of my favorite memories from the department is when I traveled to Texas for the Western Region Conference with my fellow graduate students, who I am honored to call close friends! That conference was such an enriching and wonderful experience and I am very honored to have been a part of it! Through this department, I have been able to make amazing lifelong friendships and truly found a home away from home! The department is filled with constant support and encouragement that I am deeply grateful for! Being a part of this department has been a gift that has shaped both my professional and personal journey and I am proud to be a Bobcat!" - Macey



CELEBRATE AG WEEK

Celebrate Ag Week is an annual event put on by Montana State University's College of Agriculture, celebrating the state's agricultural heritage, industry, and community. Our department was excited to collaborate and participate in this celebration on November 2-8, 2025.

Highlights from this week included a floral design "Celebrate Ag Kickoff" hosted by the department, the annual Barnyard Showdown, hosted and planned by the AGED 101 class (**see page 5 to read more**), a Research Happy Hour where both undergraduate and graduate D.A.T.E. students presented their work, and the Ag Appreciation Football Game!



ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES

2025 Barnyard Showdown!

In November, it was all hands on deck for the Barnyard Showdown event for Celebrate Ag Week! This event was put on by undergraduate students enrolled in AGED 101 - *Agricultural and Technology Education Explorations*-

Our undergraduate students worked in teams to put together activities that highlight each of the departments!

We'd like to thank the many students and volunteers who put together this event! We could not do it without you and your dedication. Thank you!



They Trained for This (Probably Not, But Still)



The teams and activities our students put on this year were:

- Animal Science ID
- Hay Toss
- Economics Trivia
- Microbiology Puzzle
- Hobby Horses and Drones Relay Race
- Bee & Pollen Race
- Awards Team

TEACHING & RESEARCH INSIGHTS

Expanding Montana's Agritourism Industry

Expanding Montana's Agritourism Industry from the Ground Up is an MSU-led project supporting specialty crop producers through the development of the producer-led Montana Agritourism Association. The project funds a part-time Agritourism Specialist to provide business development, education, and networking opportunities that help growers expand agritourism activities and diversify income, particularly for beginning farmers and ranchers.



Agritourism Impact Story



Building on this work, our very own Dr. Shannon Arnold continues to play a central role in advancing agritourism across Montana through leadership, education, and long-term industry development. Dr. Arnold has led multiple grant-funded initiatives as a principal investigator to support producer learning, leadership development, and sustainable agritourism practices statewide. She also helped establish the Montana Agritourism Association and serves as its Treasurer, fostering collaboration and a unified voice for producers. In addition, Dr. Arnold has co-hosted statewide agritourism conferences, developed an undergraduate agritourism course at MSU, and delivers research-based educational programming that equips producers and students alike with the tools to grow agritourism ventures with confidence. Through these efforts, she continues to strengthen connections between education, producers, and rural communities while helping position agritourism as a viable and resilient pathway for Montana agriculture!



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Thank You For Reading!



College of AGRICULTURE
MONTANA AGRICULTURAL
EXPERIMENT STATION

**Dept. of Ag.
& Tech. Ed.**



SOCIAL MEDIA



SCHOLARSHIPS



We Want to Hear From You!

If you have any news, achievements, or stories you'd like to share in the next edition, please reach out to us!

We are excited to include fresh content to highlight our amazing department.

Contact: DATE@montana.edu