



Montana ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AWARD PROGRAM



Application for the 2012 Montana Environmental Stewardship Award

The Montana Environmental Stewardship Award is designed to recognize Montana ranching families whose natural resource stewardship practices contribute to the environment and enhance productivity and profitability of their ranching operations. Applications will be judged on the following criteria: environmental stewardship practices, accomplishments, and goals; leadership activities that improve conservation, stewardship and the perception of the cattle industry in Montana, endorsements from conservation organizations and/or government agencies; Economic viability and sustainability of the operation. The Montana Environmental Stewardship Award is sponsored by the Montana Stockgrowers Association's Research, Education and Endowment Foundation and is brought to you by Montana Beef Producers and Checkoff Dollars.

Rules for application:

- **Deadline: June 1, 2011.** June 1 is the initial deadline. If you have other pictures or additional work you would like to continue over the summer, you may submit the FINAL version of this application by September 1, 2010.
- Open to all Montana cattle producers who are members of the Montana Stockgrowers Association.
- Using the guide on the following pages, applications, including any documentation, may not exceed 12 pages. A variety of good color photographs is strongly encouraged. Please provide descriptive captions with the photographs.
- Applications must be typed (12-point font size) and submitted on loose-leaf typing paper or via email.
- Please submit three (3) letters of recommendation stressing the nominee's leadership in conservation. Each letter should be no longer than 2 pages. (*Letters of recommendation are not included in the 12-page limit.*) A letter of recommendation from an agency or environmental group is encouraged (i.e. Natural Resources Conservation Service, Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, The Nature Conservancy, etc.). Letters may be included with the application, or mailed individually.
- MSGA will nominate the state winner to compete for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association Region V Award. MSGA staff will assist the Montana winner in preparing their application for this competition, which may require some edits, alterations, and improvements, based on judges' recommendations.

Send applications by June 1, 2011, to:
MSGA, 420 N. California, Helena, MT, 59601
Questions? Contact Ariel at (406) 442-3420 or ariel@mtbeef.org

Application Guide

This form is simply a guide; please do not include it as part of the final application.

Section I – History and Description of Business and Ecological Context

Please identify the name of the business, the individual(s) to be recognized, address, primary contact, phone/fax/email and a map indicating where the operation is located within the state.

This section should provide a brief description of the operation's history, business model, and ecological setting.

- What sector(s) of the cattle industry are primary (cow/calf, stocker, etc.)?
- What other enterprises are associated with the cattle operation?
- What are the primary ecological features of the landscape (e. g., notable watersheds, geology, topography, climatic zones, water bodies, dominant wildlife species, urban/suburban interfaces, and the like)?
- What natural resources (e. g., mining, hunting/fishing, oil/gas, timber) contribute significantly to the operation's revenue streams?
- How big are the parcels of land?
- How much land is owned, leased (federal or otherwise)?
- How many beef animal units are raised on the operation?
- What is the operation's history of ownership and business structure?

Section II – Tell the Story: Sustainability on the Ground

This is the most important section of the application. It should present—in a logical, systematic way—the form that “sustainability” takes in your operation's unique ecological, economic, social, and regulatory settings. What are you trying to achieve, and why? How successful have you been? To what do you owe your success?

The suggested outline that follows is intended to help you organize your presentation of the relevant information in a way that embodies your thoughtful, coherent, practical strategy for achieving long-term sustainability.

Regulatory Context/Setting - Federal, State, and/or Municipal Requirements

Are there specific regulatory requirements that apply to your operation as a whole, or any of its significant components? Examples would include NPDES or state water permits, endangered-species limitations, State-designated water quality stream segments, TMDLs (Total Maximum Daily Loads), air-pollution nonattainment status, and the like. Identify them, and explain how they affect the operation's strategic objectives.

Special Challenges and/or Opportunities

What are the specific challenges and opportunities that the landscape poses for your beef operation and its viability? Examples of resource challenges and opportunities might include groundwater or surface water supply and quality; riparian restoration;

native plants, fish, and wildlife; invasive species; erodible soils; use of recycled materials; innovations created to protect or enhance natural resources; encroaching land development; reclamation needs; etc. How do these conditions affect the range of tactics, strategies, and financial resources that are available to the candidate? What is required to protect or enhance the ranch's environmental conditions and natural resources?

Environmental, Economic, and Resource-Management Goals

In view of the beef operation's ecological and regulatory settings, unique environmental or natural resource challenges, and special environmental opportunities, what are your primary goals? Environmental and resource conservation goals must be included here, but economic goals that play a vital role in making the environmental goals a practical possibility should also be described.

Partnerships, Strategies, Tactics, and Practices

What did you do to pursue the goals outlined in the previous section? Did you enter into any substantive partnerships or land-management arrangements? Did you enter into any cost-share or incentive programs with agencies or foundations? What educational and/or technical assistance resources did you draw upon for help? What specific practices, structures, and/or management changes did you put in place (e. g., grazing practices, erosion controls, pest management, fish and wildlife habitat enhancement, riparian restoration, etc.) that helped to achieve your operation's sustainability goals?

Outcomes & Accomplishments - benchmarks, data, before/after images, documenting success

To the greatest extent possible, document the success your operation has had in achieving its sustainability goals. Are there any measurable results? For example, has water or air quality improved? Has the carrying capacity of the pastures increased? Have endangered-species populations rebounded? Has wildlife harvest, quality, or diversity improved? Does the operation use less [energy, water, imported nutrients] per unit of marketed beef? Are profit margins improving? If appropriate and credible, include any monitoring data, research data, survey data, or photographic evidence that clearly illustrates the operation's progress toward achieving its sustainability objectives.

Section III - What would a consumer find interesting or compelling about your operation? (200 words maximum)

This is an opportunity to put environmental sustainability in terms that the consuming public will understand and appreciate.

- What is unique about your operation's strategies, tactics, or successes that will appeal to the average consumer's understanding of sustainable beef production?
- Why should anyone care what you are doing to protect and enhance the environment and natural resources in the surrounding landscape?

Section IV - Leadership in Conservation within the Community and the Industry

Montana, regional and national winners will become spokespeople for the beef industry, carrying forth the message that cattle producers are committed to good stewardship of the land and to the principles of long-term sustainability.

- How have you demonstrated the drive and the ability to communicate that message to a skeptical, sometimes hostile public?
- What leadership have you demonstrated that illustrates an ability to persuade fellow cattle producers to pursue environmental sustainability as a primary business objective?
- How well would you serve as a spokesperson for the beef industry?

Past Montana Environmental Stewardship Award Recipients

- 2011 – Keystone Ranches, Inc., Ismay
- 2010 – Ranchers Stewardship Alliance, Malta
- 2008 – Veseth Cattle Company, Malta
- 2007 – IX Ranch Company, Big Sandy
- 2006 – Mule Tracks Cattle Company, Malta
- 2005 – Rein Anchor Ranch, Melville
- 2004 – Barthelmess Ranch Corporation, Malta
- 2002 – Sieben Livestock, Cascade
- 2001 – Milesnick Ranch, Belgrade
- 2000 – Warm Springs Grazing Association, Alder
- 1999 – Christensen Ranch, Big Timber
- 1998 – Matador Cattle Co., Dillon
- 1997 – Tee Six Ranch, Choteau
- 1996 – Robert E. Lee Ranch, Judith Gap
- 1995 – Sitz Angus Ranch, Harrison
- 1994 – Ruffato Land and Cattle Company, Hamilton
- 1993 – Ray Banister Ranch, Wibaux
- 1992 – Smith 6-S Ranch, Glen

Past Regional Environmental Stewardship Award Recipients

- 2008 – Veseth Cattle Company, Malta
- 2004 – Barthelmess Ranch Corporation, Malta
- 2002 – Sieben Livestock, Cascade
- 2001 – Milesnick Ranch, Belgrade
- 1998 – Matador Cattle Co., Dillon
- 1996 – Robert E. Lee Ranch, Judith Gap
- 1995 – Sitz Angus Ranch, Harrison
- 1992 – Smith 6-S Ranch, Glen

Past National Environmental Stewardship Award Recipients

- 1998 – Matador Cattle Co., Dillon
- 1996 – Robert E. Lee Ranch, Judith Gap