

## **MSGA Historical Events Timeline**

### **1884 to 1909**

- July 29, 1884 the Montana Stockgrowers Association was organized in Helena. Governor Benjamin F. Potts nominated Granville Stuart president. Stuart was famous for leading several cattlemen-turned-vigilantes, called “Stuart’s Stranglers,” in combating some of the lawlessness in the Montana Territory by tracking down and hanging horse thieves and cattle rustlers.
- April 11, 1885 the Montana Stockgrowers Association joined forces with the Eastern Montana Stockgrowers Association which had been formed in Miles City in October of 1883. Colonel T.J. Bryan, president and organizer of the Eastern Montana Stockgrowers Association, was named president of the consolidated group. Russell. B Harrison of Helena, son of the soon-to-be-president of the U.S. Benjamin Harrison, was named secretary. Stuart had recently been appointed chairman of the Territorial Board of Stock Commissioners.
- Texas fever became a problem in the west in the summer of 1886 and quarantine was placed on Texas cattle. Governor Samuel T. Hauser met with MSGA and explained why he lifted the quarantine on some cattle coming into the state and believed he was right doing so. MSGA passed a resolution deploring the actions of members who had tried to evade the Governor’s proclamation by bringing in diseased livestock.
- In 1887 the industry experienced a severe winter. Secretary Harrison said in his report, “A drouth without parallel; a market without bottom; and a winter, the severest ever known in Montana, formed a combination testing the usefulness of our Association and proving its solidity.
- Membership dwindled and meeting attendance fell after the rough year of 1887, but interest in the organization picked up again in 1892, 1893, and 1894 as cattlemen struggled with cattle thieves, wolves, bounties and the possibility of a new legislative code.
- At the 1900 convention, the big issue was the federal land leasing bill. Although it called for a local option, the Stockgrowers passed a resolution opposing the proposal for fear that if stockmen were forced to pay rent for the public lands they were using; it would drive the small operators out of business.
- In 1906, the federal land leasing proposal was approved by the association by a vote of 42-31.

### **1910-1934**

- The 1911 MSGA convention adopted a resolution endorsing government control of grazing lands through a local grazing board.
- In 1916, Vice President Wallis Huidekoper spoke to the convention at length on the problem of wolves. He was followed by Dr. A. K. Fisher, head of the U.S. Biological Survey, who predicted that wolves would be practically exterminated and the coyote numbers brought down to tolerable numbers.

- In 1918, in the midst of World War I, Professor Alfred Adkinson, head of the wartime Food Administration in Montana, outlined for the convention the program's impacts on the livestock industry and discussed means for increasing livestock production to feed the nation.
- In 1920, MSGA President Wallis Huidekoper announced to the convention that the state had only 40 percent of the cattle it had two years previously because of unprecedented drought.
- The disposal of public lands was of greatest interest in 1920 and Rolla Heren reported that the meeting in Salt Lake City the "United Stockmen's Association for federal control of public grazing lands" was organized.
- At the 1922 convention, E.A. Piper of the U.S. Biological Survey, reported on his agency's efforts to control the gray wolf. He estimated 250 wolves probably remained in Montana.
- The 1924 convention heard a well-reasoned talk by F.J. Hagenbarth of Idaho and Montana, president of the National Wool Growers Association, on grazing privileges on Forest lands and a plea for a better organization. He advocated a bill that Senator W.T. Borah of Idaho was to introduce that would set grazing fees at 100 percent of the cost of administration.
- In 1926, cattle theft was still a problem as evidenced by a resolution seeking the repeal of the parole law.
- In 1928, MSGA disapproved the enactment of the Packers and Stockyards Act; asked the political parties to provide and enforce a law prohibiting the importation of meat and meat food products from countries in which foot and mouth disease existed; and endorsed the Smoot Grazing Act of 1928.
- Also at the 1928 convention, MSGA called upon the Montana Game Commission to use its power to control the size of elk herds on the Sun River Game Preserve and limit the extension of the present Preserve boundaries through withdrawals of forest or other public lands.
- The first issue of *The Montana Stockgrower* was published in September, 1929 and mailed out to about 900 dues paying members.
- In October, 1929 the country was plunged into the worst economic depression in history. Although it was not immediately apparent, Montana's cattle industry eventually staggered along with all other segments of the economy under the weight of its impact.
- In 1929, MSGA filed protests with the Interstate Commerce Commission in Washington to oppose a threatened 15 percent raise in railroad freight rates for cattle loaded in Montana for interstate shipment, which would cost the industry a quarter million dollars a year.
- In 1931, the Interstate Commerce Commission denied the horizontal rate increase asked for by the railroads.
- In 1932, despite the Great Depression, low beef prices and prolonged drought, MSGA membership had grown to 1,500.
- In 1934, MSGA held its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary meeting in Miles City.

### **1935-1959**

- Things were generally looking up in the industry in 1935, although there was great concern about the proposed treaty with Argentina which would allow importation of live cattle from the country. The danger of disease as well as the real possibility of depressed beef prices, which had just begun to raise enough to permit rancher profits, were of concern.
- Things definitely seemed to be looking up in the cattle business in the summer of 1937, Jim Poole of Chicago reporting that buyers were attracted to “anything covered with hide.” As 1938 began, the beef market, according to Jim Poole, was in a topsy-turvy condition.
- In 1937-1940, more and more references appeared in *The Montana Stockgrower* about the war in Europe, supposition about what would happen if Germany should win, and increasing admonitions about the need to exhibit patriotism.
- On December 7, 1941, the U.S. was thrust into World War II with the attack on Pearl Harbor.
- The January 1942 front page of *The Stockgrower* was entitled “Looking Ahead.” After noting the fact that 1941 had been a good year for Montana and the livestock industry, the statement said: “Now that we have had war forced upon us, and the blood of Americans has been spilled, each one of us has a plain and undeniable duty to perform. Our young men are freely offering themselves to carry on the battle, and to endure the hardships and dangers. Surely the rest of us must and will, just as freely, furnish the necessary supplies and equipment needed to enable them to force this war to a successful, and as early as possible, conclusion.”
- In February 1945 it was announced that for the first time since 1885, MSGA would not hold an annual meeting due to the war.
- The serious outbreak of foot and mouth disease in Mexico was of growing concern to stockmen throughout the country in 1947. In his column published in the March issue of *The Montana Stockgrower*, Congressman D’Ewart reported favorable Congressional action to provide American assistance to the Mexican government in eradicating foot and mouth disease.
- In 1947 & 1948, MSGA and the American National Livestock Association responded to a number of articles disparaging the Western livestock industry, especially in regards to public lands grazing, with a public relations campaign. The articles portrayed ranchers as “greedy livestock interests” who have overgrazed their own lands and are seeking to do the same on public lands.
- In 1950, Congressman D’Ewart wrote in his *Montana Stockgrower* columns about the threat of Communism, the McCarthy hearings and the festering trouble in Korea.
- After the unusually bad winter of 1951-1952, Montana stockmen faced hay shortages. In ’52 there was also an outbreak of foot and mouth disease in Canada, much closer to our border than the Mexico outbreak had been.
- In 1952 the Montana CowBelles were formally organized. That year, Congress was preoccupied by a sharp decline in cattle prices. Legislation was proposed to have the government purchase cattle at 90% parity and send millions of dollars worth of beef as a gift to South Korea. MSGA and other stockgrower organizations across the nation wanted no part of support prices or subsidies for cattle. Relief came in mid-1953.

- 1954-1956 was a time of prosperity and comparative serenity during the administration of President Eisenhower, both for the country and the cattle industry.
- In 1959, the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary “Diamond Jubilee” celebration was held in Miles City. Over 1,700 stockmen and their wives registered for the memorable occasion

### **1960-1984**

- In 1961, MSGA President Wayne Bratten made a personal reference to the continuing drought in his part of Montana. It was the driest year since 1936. He made a deal with Hirschy Ranches, Inc in the Big Hole Basin to summer and winter his cows with calves and bulls.
- In 1963, Ralph Miracle wrote an article devoted some space in his column to the assassination of President Kennedy. “Our national tragedy ends 1963 on a sad and serious note. People of prominence have been shot on the crowded streets of a Texas city in broad daylight. It can’t happen here-but it did!...The loss of a vigorous, youthful and dedicated leader leaves a nation numb with shock.”
- The 1964 convention focused on the Congressional battle over quota legislation on imports. If they should pass, President Johnson has said, he would veto them. MSGA President Barthelme had devoted much of his time regarding the matter, including trips to Washington D.C. to consult Montana’s delegation.
- In 1964, MSGA President Bob Barthelme reported in *The Stockgrower* that the meat-import bill was passed, although not as strong as many would have preferred, that established quotas for a major domestic industry.
- MSGA Secretary Ralph Miracle summed up 1965, the year that troops were being committed in increasing numbers to Vietnam: “It has been a year of extremes,” he wrote in *The Stockgrower*, “a too-cold winter, a wet-cold spring, a too wet summer and a too-early fall. Too many highway fatalities and tough assignments for our armed services.”
- In 1970, Secretary Mons Teigen predicted that the 1970s and beyond would see great changes on the face of the West because of concerns about the environment. “We now have people from all walks of life and from all backgrounds, showing a sincere concern over our environment,” he wrote in *The Stockgrower*, “This environment is something which livestock people have taken largely for granted because it is probably one of the reasons they are ranchers... Now with all of the interest being developed in this area, we find agriculture placed on the defensive, rightly or wrongly.
- In May of 1970, Teigen reported on the 42<sup>nd</sup> Legislative Assembly. “This session, as never before in my recollection was faced with more strictly ‘rural versus urban’ problems than have been experienced previously.”
- In 1971, Secretary Teigen made note of Governor Anderson’s plan for reorganization of state government, including the creation of the Division of Livestock which would now encompass both the Livestock Commission and the Livestock Sanitary Board. He also made reference to the

election of representatives to the Constitutional Convention, pointing out that rural Montana would be a minority factor in the make-up of the body.

- In 1973, Teigen reported to the annual convention that the livestock industry had reached another turning point in its long history: “This is the year we found a certain militancy on the part of the public that we are unaccustomed to facing. After all, hadn’t we always been ‘the good guys?’” That year, former MSGA Secretary Ralph Miracle, wrote a column saying, “It is a sad commentary that the once revered and respected ‘man on horseback’ has become a term to describe wastefulness and desecration. It has taken a strange combination of circumstances to bring this about. A distortion of the pioneer cattleman as a baronial cattle kind who swept all opposition aside, conquering a wilderness, but leaving it despoiled in the process. People have been told that overgrazing caused the Grand Canyon and the deserts of the West, and too many have believed and carried extreme distortions to the point of making them history.”
- 1974 was described by MSGA president Reg Davies as “a period of the highest cattle prices on record, combined with probably the greatest price declines over the shortest period of time in history...” At the end of 1974, the plight of the stockmen had not improved, and despite all efforts to clarify the picture, there was a wide divergence between prices paid to the rancher and the prices paid at the supermarket for beef. There were ever more complicated questions about land use policies and contentions about the environment.
- In 1975, cattle mutilations were a growing problem and MSGA offered a \$1,000 reward for information leading to an arrest and conviction of individuals maiming or mutilating a member’s cattle.
- During the convention of 1979, Stockgrowers were enjoying the highest cattle prices in history, but many speakers challenged ranchers to prepare for a “volatile future.” Engendered by such hazards as interference by government regulators, an unsympathetic Legislature, energy shortages, “menacing challenges to our use of land and water,” and consumers scorning beef in favor of lower priced meat and substitutes.
- In 1981 there were continuing worries about land-use and environmental confrontations, and an increasing interest in the “Sagebrush Rebellion,” the popular name for state’s rights.
- The December 1982 issue of *The Montana Stockgrower* was the last in a 54- year span, with the Association moving to a newsletter format in 1983.

### **1985-2009**

- In 1985, the Western Montana Stockmen’s Association, an affiliate of MSGA, passed a resolution conceptualizing the Country of Origin Labeling that would be implemented in 2009.
- In 1985 the Block Management Program was developed by the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. In 1986 over 700,000 acres were enrolled.
- In 1955, Montana was declared “brucellosis free.”

- In 1988, a Free Trade Agreement was signed by President Reagan and Canadian Prime Minister Mulroney. The agreement was designed to remove tariffs on all shipments of products between the two countries, including beef and live cattle.
- In 1990, the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, The National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service began cooperating in the preparation of a long-range plan for the management of Yellowstone National Park bison that enter Montana.
- In 1991 the National Cattlemen's Association began the Environmental Stewardship Award Program to showcase the stewardship and business practices that exist together on progressive farms and ranches. MSGA followed suit with the Montana Environmental Stewardship Award.
- In April 1992, after a four year battle, recreationists gained access to state lands leased for agriculture.
- In 1995, the first wolves were reintroduced by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service into Yellowstone National Park. In 1996, a second group of wolves was released. MSGA intervened along with the Beartooth Stock Association and Vern Keller, requesting a halt to the release of wolves in Yellowstone National Park and Idaho.
- In 2000, the Interagency Bison Management Plan was implemented to manage bison migrating into Montana from Yellowstone National Park. The plan was signed by the Montana Department of Livestock, the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA Forest Service and the U.S. Department of Interior.
- On December 23, 2003, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced a presumptive diagnosis of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE, or "mad cow" disease) in an adult Holstein cow from Washington State. The discovery prompted the closure or severe restriction of several export markets, including Japan, Korea, Russia and China, costing the U.S. cattle industry billions of dollars.
- In 2008, after the discovery of several positive cows in a Bridger area herd in May of 2007, and the subsequent discovery of a single infected animal in a herd near Pray, in June 2008, USDA downgraded Montana to Class A status for brucellosis.
- In 2008, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued its long-awaited decision to delist the Rocky Mountain gray wolf from the list of endangered and threatened species. Several environmental groups challenged the service's decision in court. MSGA intervened on behalf of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service but the service ended up vacating its delisting decision.
- In May 2008, the Montana Stockgrowers Association with Bill Myers and Bob Sitz, two ranchers who graze cattle near the western border of Yellowstone National Park filed a lawsuit against the Board of Livestock, the Department of Livestock and the State Veterinarian requesting the judge to order the defendants to comply with the Interagency Bison Management Plan to remove bison outside of Yellowstone Park immediately as the May 15 deadline prescribed in the IBMP had been passed.

- On May 4, 2009 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service removed the Rocky Mountain gray wolf from the federal Endangered Species List for the second time.
- On June 10-14, 2009 the Montana Stockgrowers Association returned to Miles City to celebrate its 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.
- In July 2009, the USDA Animal Plant Health Inspection Service reinstated Montana's brucellosis Class Free status after ranchers in the state undertook extensive surveillance and testing efforts.