



Proposed Legislation for the 67th (2021) Regular Session of the Montana Legislature

1. Expand the NWSFFP to include Certified Noxious Weed Free Material (Including but not limited to gravel)

An act expanding the Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage Program (NWSFFP) to certify noxious weed seed free material for various state and federal projects that may require them. Amending section 80-7-901 et al, MCA.

Reason: The department has received requests to certify materials such as gravel operations as being free from noxious weeds. State and county staff can perform the work of certifying additional noxious weed seed free materials to further protect Montana's environment from the spread of noxious weeds and invasive species.

2. Clarify the Cap on Pulse Committee

An act clarifying the administrative expenses cap for funds used by the department for administering the pulse crop research and marketing program. This cap applies only to the department, and not to the Montana Pulse Crop Committee itself. Amending section 80-11-1003, MCA.

Reason: Funds used by the department to administer the pulse program cannot exceed 8% of the total amount of grants and contracts awarded from the pulse crop research and marketing account from the previous fiscal year. This cap applies to the department staff only. Language should be revised to clarify that the committee itself is not subject to this cap on administrative expenses.

3. Adult Only Use of Restricted Use Pesticides by Commercial Applicators

An act to prohibit the purchase of restricted use pesticides by persons under the age of 18. Amending section, 80-8-203, MCA.

Reason: Limiting the commercial application and purchases of restricted use pesticides to those over the age of 18 is consistent with federal EPA Worker Protection Standards. This does not apply to private (farm) applicators.

4. Montana Farmer Loan Repayment Assistance Program Changes

An act to revise the “educational loan” definition for the Montana Farmer Loan Repayment Assistance Program to include private and consolidated loans. Amending section 90-9-103(6), 90-9-501 et al, MCA

Reason: In the first year of administering the student loan program, the department and Agriculture Development Council realized private and consolidated loans were unintentionally excluded from program eligibility requirements. Rep. Zach Brown, sponsor of House Bill 431 which created the program, confirmed it was not the intent of the program to allow federal loan programs only. Revising the “educational loan” definition will expand the financial assistance opportunity to more young and beginning farmers and ranchers in Montana.

5. Placeholder: Hemp Law Changes

The hemp industry continues to evolve and may be subject to changes in federal or state law. Potential changes may be necessary due to the amendments to the USDA Interim Final Rule (IFR), the DEA IFR on hemp derived materials such as CBD, and/or a marijuana initiative passing the ballot. This placeholder ensures the department can facilitate these legislative discussions if need be.