Moooving Forward Together
Montana Beef to School Basics

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On behalf of the Montana Beef to School Project
Montana Farm to School Summit – September 2016
The Montana Beef to School Project

• Together we find strategies to encourage the use of local beef in every Montana school.

Montana Producers + Processors

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Why Beef to School?

- Montana’s population is just over 1 million people and 145,000 students
- 2.5 million cattle are raised in Montana annually
- Livestock production is two-thirds of Montana’s agriculture industry
- 38% of Montana schools participate in farm to school activities, 40% of these schools source meat
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The Beef to School Equation

Beef Producer + Beef Processor + School Foodservice
Beef Production

**Cow-Calf**
Cows are bred and calves are born and raised every year on cow-calf farms and ranches, spending time grazing on grass pastures within sight of their mothers.

**Weaning**
Beef calves are weaned away from their mothers between 6-8 months of age.

**Livestock Auction Markets**
Many calves leave the farm or ranch where they were born and are sold at livestock auction markets to stockers and backgrounders between 6-12 months of age.

**Feedyard**
Cattle spend 4-6 months at a feedyard being fed a scientifically-balanced diet and receiving daily care. Some spend the rest of their lives on a pasture being grass finished.

**Stockers and Backgrounders**
Between 6-12 months of age cattle spend time at stocker and backgrounder farms and ranches where they graze on a variety of pastures. Here they gain weight and convert forage and grass into lean protein.

Graphic by Beef Checkoff
School Foodservice

The National School Lunch Program requires schools to offer:

• at least 2 ounces of meat or meat alternates per day for grades 9 through 12
• at least 1 ounce of meat or meat alternates per day for grades kindergarten through 8
• at least 8 to 9 ounces per week for grades K through 5
• at least 8 to 10 ounces per week for grades 6 through 8
• at least 10 to 12 ounces per week for grades 9 through 12
Somers + Lakeside
Beef to School Stories

Beef Producer + Beef Processor + School Foodservice
How to Start a Beef to School Program

1. Get school foodservice, administration, parents, and students on board with beef to school!
2. Contact a local beef producer or processor.

- Connect with producers and processors by asking parents and staff, visiting NCATs producer database (http://farmtocafeteria.ncat.org/producers/), or contacting the Beef to School Project (beef2school@gmail.com)
- The processor must be state or federally inspected to work with a school foodservice (http://liv.mt.gov/mi/default.mcpx)
How to Start a Beef to School Program

3. Start small! Try one recipe at a time!

- hamburger
- meatballs
- casseroles
- pasties
- meatloaf
- tacos
- spaghetti
- sloppy joes
- roasts
- chili (paired with whole grain cinnamon rolls)
- stroganoff
- enchilada
- stew
- others
4. Work with the processor or producer to choose cuts of meat and quantity.
   - Cost typically decreases with larger orders
   - Larger packages of local beef are easier to use in recipes
   - Encourage the processor or producer to use cull cattle.
5. **Balance the budget.**
   - Budget school meals over a semester or year, rather than by meal in order to balance the cost of more and less expensive food products
   - Balance the tray with USDA Foods
   - Add mushrooms or lentils to beef recipes
   - Advertise program and ask for community donations
How to Start a Beef to School Program

6. **Put systems in place to handle beef.**
   - Ensure that staff is trained on how to use the local beef product and follows ServSafe practices.
   - Think about what equipment is necessary to store, cook, and serve local beef.
How to Start a Beef to School Program

7. Encourage promotion and education about local beef.

• Use available resources
  • Harvest of the Month – beef
  • FoodCorps
  • Word of mouth
  • Menu labeling
  • Signage
  • Field trips
  • Partner with folks like the Mushroom Council!
Have YOU considered starting a beef to school program in Montana?
Let’s Add Montana Beef to Every Montana School Menu!

Contact Us at beef2school@gmail.com

Follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/beef2school @Beef to School Project

Follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/mtbeeftoschool @MTBeeftoSchool
Resources

- Montana State University Extension. Extension beef cattle program. [http://animalrangeextension.montana.edu/beef/resources.html](http://animalrangeextension.montana.edu/beef/resources.html).