

MOOVING FORWARD TOGETHER: BEEF TO SCHOOL STRATEGIES



Farm to Cafeteria Conference 2016 | Madison, Wisconsin | June 2016

ABSTRACT

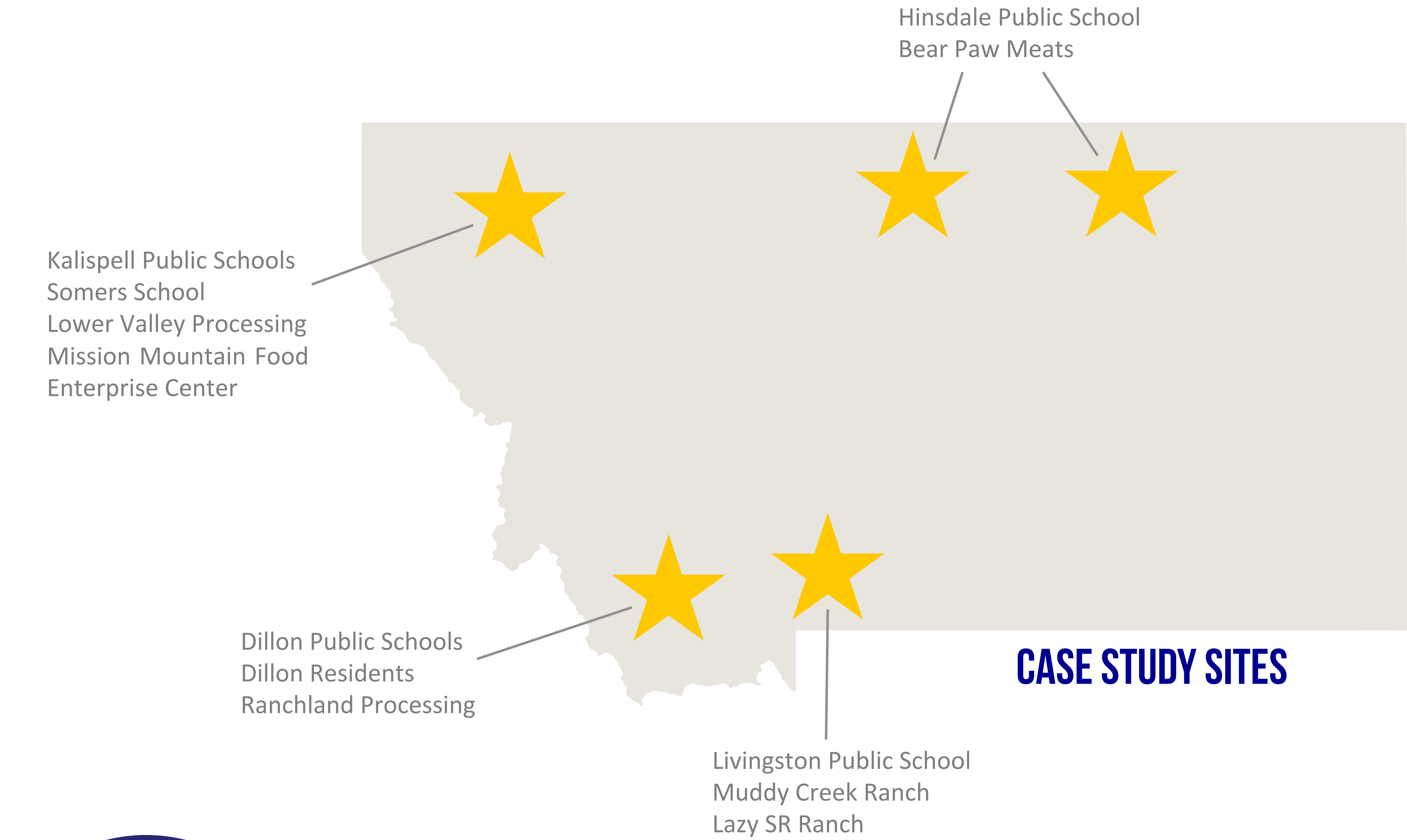
Discover the creative ways schools in Montana are procuring local beef and how you can bring the lessons learned to your community. Learn how the Montana Beef to School Research Project is gathering stories and best practices through case studies, surveys, and interviews to strengthen resources and information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Montana, and across the country, producers and consumers are beginning to see benefits (e.g., social, environmental, and economic) from local procurement efforts that link ranchers and local beef processors with schools in their community and region. These “beef to school” (B2S) efforts involve support of local beef from a variety of actors, including producers, processors, food service professionals, and students at K-12 schools. The long-term goal of this project is improving Montana beef producers’ and meat processors’ viability and sustainability, while increasing the availability and consumption of local beef in Montana’s schools and communities.

RESEARCH DESIGN

- Conduct **comprehensive case study research** to identify the benefits, challenges, best practices, and gaps that exist for beef to school (B2S) procurement models.
- Identify **beef supply chain issues** (e.g., timing, storage, and use of cuts) that impact the spectrum of involved stakeholders, and collaboratively plan solutions.
- Obtain **student acceptance data** about B2S in comparison with commercial beef supplies.
- Create **stakeholder-specific educational guides and promotional materials** about the beef supply chain, curriculum for students, and peer-reviewed publications
- Conduct **trainings** to assist producers and their processing partners interested in selling to schools, and to foodservice directors interested in using local beef in school meals.



CASE STUDY THEMES

COMMON SCHOOL OPPORTUNITIES

1. “Feels Good” to support local
2. Quality of product
3. Builds relationships within community
4. Opportunity for education
5. Marketing options through FoodCorps, Harvest of the Month, and in-school promotion

COMMON SCHOOL BARRIERS

1. Pricing
2. Lack of support (no additional funding)
3. Lack of infrastructure
4. Untrained workers
5. Lack of understanding of how to purchase local beef

COMMON PRODUCER/PROCESSOR OPPORTUNITIES

1. Quality of product
2. “Feels Good” to support local
3. Increased demand = increased production
4. Opportunity for education
5. Community buy-in, brand recognition, and pride

COMMON PRODUCER/PROCESSOR BARRIERS

1. Pricing
2. Lack of infrastructure
3. Lack of labor and/or untrained workers
4. State Inspected facilities required to process
5. Lack of understanding of how to sell local beef

PURCHASING MODELS



Cattle raised, finished, processed by vertically integrated business, company sells to school (ground and surplus roasts)



Ranch raises and finishes cattle, contract process for fee, ranch takes beef back, and sells (or donates) to schools (ground)



Processor buys local cull cattle, processes and sells and delivers (just-in-time/on-demand) never frozen ground to schools, also some sausage (beef and pork)

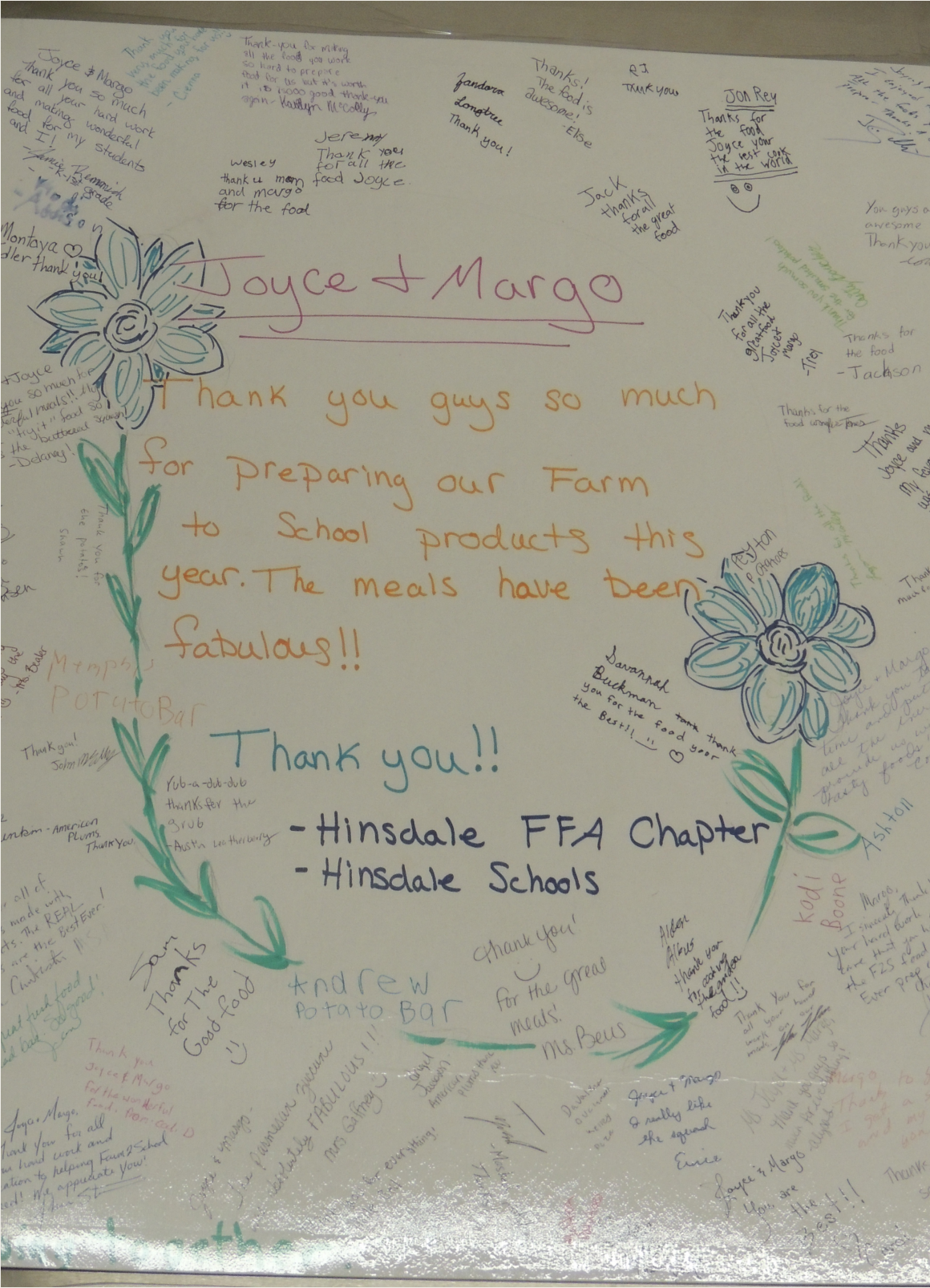
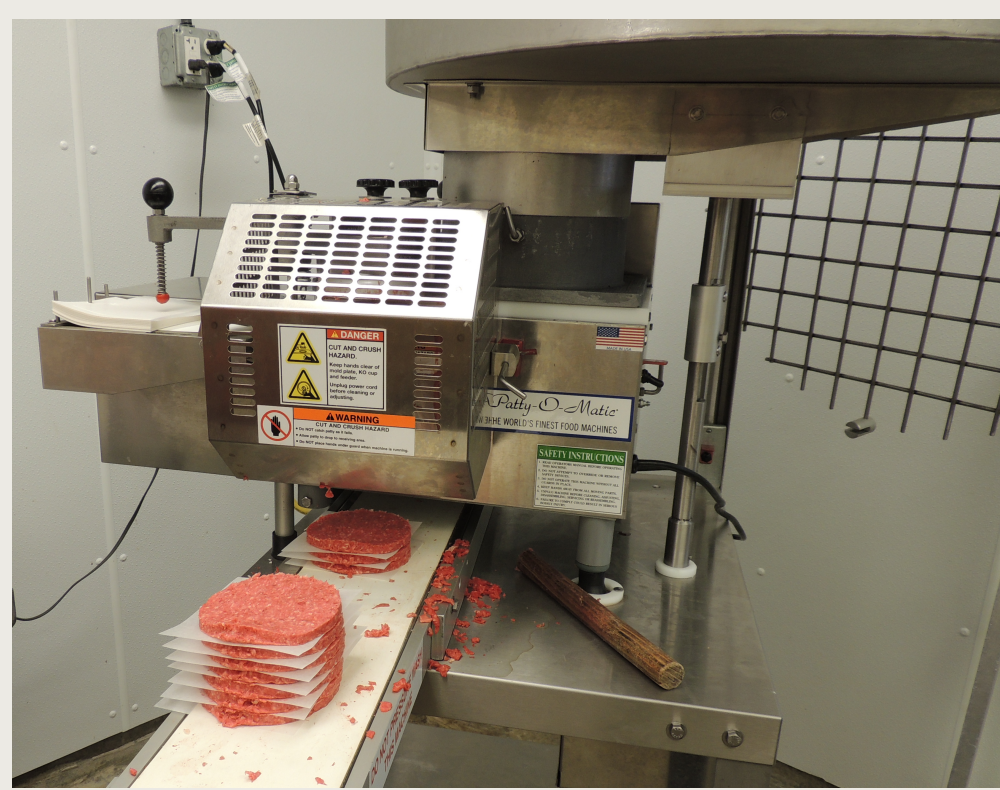


Community members purchase 4-H cattle, donates to school, school or community member contracts with processor



NEXT STEPS

- Assess the slaughter and processing capacity of state-inspected facilities throughout the year.
- Estimate the cattle available for B2S programs under various social and economic conditions and environmental regimes.
- Approximate storage capacity needs for B2S stakeholders.
- Use evaluation results and the expertise of the MT B2S Coalition to create solutions to identified barriers.



BEEF +

Our team is working with other partners to find strategies to make serving local beef in schools more feasible. One such strategy is to combine local beef with less expensive, nutritious, and taste-enhancing foods such as **mushrooms** or **lentils**. Recipes and information from these projects are coming soon!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the Montana Beef to School Coalition for project contributions. Research reported in this publication was supported by USDA Western SARE. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the USDA or Western SARE. Map of Montana by FreeVectorMaps.com



MONTANA BEEF TO SCHOOL COALITION
FACEBOOK — TWITTER — WEB
BEEF2SCHOOL@GMAIL.COM

AUTHORS

Aubree Roth, MS | Montana Team Nutrition Program
Carmen Byker Shanks, PhD | Montana State University
Janet Gamble, MTeach RD | Montana State University
Katie Halloran | National Center for Appropriate Technology
Thomas Bass | Montana State University Extension
Joel Schumacher | Montana State University Extension