



_____*Montana*_____

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP
AWARD PROGRAM

Montana Environmental Stewardship Award Application

Each year, the Montana Stockgrowers Association (MSGA) honors a Montana ranch that exemplifies environmental stewardship and demonstrates a commitment toward improved sustainability within the beef industry. This award recognizes Montana ranchers who are at the forefront in conservation and stewardship and are willing to serve as examples for other ranchers. Applications are due to the MSGA office by July 31. Please see the back of this form for more information and rules for the award.

Name of Ranch _____

Owner/Manager _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____ County _____

Phone _____

Email Address _____

Website _____

Facebook Page _____

*Montana Environmental Stewardship program partially funded by
Montana Beef Producers and Checkoff Dollars.*



Rules and Process

- Applications for the Montana Environmental Stewardship Award are due on July 31, 2019 by mail to MSGA, 420 N. California St., Helena, MT 59601; email to jay@mtbeef.org. Applications may be submitted at an earlier date for review/critique by MSGA staff.
- Ranches may be nominated by anyone, including themselves. The ranch must be a member of the Montana Stockgrowers Association.
- Applicants will agree to a ranch visit by Montana Stockgrowers staff for photography, video interviews, and other digital material as a part of the application process. Material may be used as promotional material for Montana ESAP and Montana Stockgrowers Association.
- The applications will be evaluated by a committee, which will include, but is not limited to MSGA Board Members; past Montana, Regional and National Environmental Stewardship Award winners; Montana Beef Council; Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation.
- The evaluation committee will rank the applications on a pre-determined scale. The committee will then approach nominees, starting with the highest ranking nomination and moving down, to make sure the top choice is interested in receiving the award and moving on to the next level in the process.
- Once a winner is determined, the winner will be announced at the MSGA Annual Convention in December.
- MSGA staff will then work with the winner to prepare their application for the Regional and National Award competition, which is typically due in late February/early March of the following year.

Application Technical Guidelines

Electronic applications are preferred and complete PDF document is suggested with all the pieces put together in a single document. Please do not send the nominations in notebooks or binders. Packets cannot be returned. A sample of a winning application from previous years can be found at EnvironmentalStewardship.org.

If you prefer submitting via mail, please send one copy of the complete application.

Completed application must be postmarked by July 31, 2019 and sent to:

Montana Stockgrowers Association
420 N. California
Helena, MT 59601
Email: kori@mtbeef.org
Fax: (406)449-5105



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Application will be judged on the following criteria:

Environmental stewardship practices, accomplishments and goals

Local, regional and national leadership activities that improve conservation, stewardship and perception of the cattle industry

Endorsements from cattle groups, conservation organizations and/or government agencies

Economic viability, sustainability and size of the operation

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 would 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, climate 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 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, systemic way – the form that “sustainability” takes in the operation's unique ecological, economic, social and regulatory settings. What are the applicants trying to achieve and why? How successful have they been? To what extent do they owe their success? The suggested outline that follows is intended to help the nominator organize his/her presentation of the relevant information in a way that embodies the candidate's 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 the operations 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 the 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 the candidate's 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 the candidate do to pursue the goals outlined in the previous section? Did the candidate enter into any substantial partnerships or land-management arrangements? Did the candidate enter into any cost-share or incentive programs with agencies or foundations? Consider partnerships with organizations like DNRC, FWP, NRCS, USFWS, USFS, or BLM. What educational and/or technical assistance resources did the candidate draw upon for help? What specific practices, structure, and/or management changes did the candidate put in place (e.g. grazing practices, erosion controls, pest management, fish and wildlife habitat enhancement, riparian restoration, etc.) that helped to achieve the operation's sustainability goals?

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

To the greatest extent possible, document the success the operation has had in achieving its sustainability goals. Are there any measurable results? For example, has water or air quality improved? 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 sustainable objectives.

