

# Jon's Fighting for MT Producers



## **Brazilian Beef**

After the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced a policy change allowing Brazil to send raw beef to the United States, Jon urged USDA Secretary Vilsack to rethink his decision. Jon voiced his concerns about Brazil's food safety standards and the Brazilian beef industry's history of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD). Jon pushed the USDA to explain what it had done to improve its emergency response to an animal disease outbreak such as FMD, how it came to this decision and how it would verify these food safety standards in the future.

## **BARN CARD Technology Act**

Earlier this month, Jon's Bringing Auctions & Ranchers New Credit And Reliable Debit (BARN CARD) Technology Act was signed into law. This bill updates the Packers and Stockyards Act of 1921 by explicitly allowing folks to purchase livestock using electronic forms of payment, like debit and credit cards. Old law only permitted two forms of payment: checks and wire transfers. Additionally, Jon's bill ensures that folks who buy livestock through online and video auctions are granted the same legal protections as folks who purchase livestock in person.

## **Wheat Grading**

Jon has spent the last few months fighting hard to halt the unfair Canadian trade practices that are downgrading the value of Montana's wheat. Under current Canadian trade regulations, every bushel of American wheat—no matter the state or the source—is given the lowest quality designation once it crosses the border to be sold in Canada. Jon has urged the U.S. Trade Representative, the Canadian Minister of Agriculture, and the White House to change this bad trade policy and ensure Montana producers get a fair shake.

## **Trade with India**

When India's central government reduced the allowable amount of pulse crops that can be stored in the country before being sold on the market last year, Jon took action. This change threatened Montana pulse producers' ability to export peas, lentils and chickpeas to Indian markets. Jon successfully urged USDA Secretary Vilsack and Commerce Secretary Pritzker to resolve issues surrounding India's recent regulatory changes as quickly as possible.

## **Supporting Agriculture**

As a member of the Agriculture Appropriations Committee, Jon voted to increase investments in agriculture research and critical rural water infrastructure for Montana family farmers and ranchers in an annual funding bill approved unanimously by the Senate Appropriations Committee. Tester included many Montana priorities in the 2017 Agriculture Appropriations bill, which funds farm and ranch, conservation, rural development, and food initiatives across the nation. Tester's funding requests received bipartisan support from members of the Appropriations Committee.

**The 2017 Agriculture Appropriations bill provides:**

- **\$2.5 billion**  
for agriculture research, including increases of \$34 million for the Agriculture Research Service and \$38 million for the National Institute of Food and Agriculture.
- **\$546 million**  
to construct and upgrade water and wastewater infrastructure in rural communities
- Funding to ensure the **Northern Plains Research Lab** in Sidney, Montana will remain fully staffed and operational.
- Support for **military veterans in agriculture**, including funding for NCAT's Armed-to-Farm Program and the FARM-Vets Program.



U.S. SENATOR FOR MONTANA

**JON TESTER**