



News Release

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Producer Partnership Donates 20,000 Pounds of Hamburger to Help End Hunger in Montana!

Park County, Montana – Thanks to a generous gift from a collection of producers across the state, 19,8000 pounds of hamburger were delivered to the Montana Food Bank Network (MFBN) on January 11th. The Producer Partnership, a statewide non-profit organization, facilitated this donation through its mission of farmers and ranchers working together to end hunger in Montana.

Established in Spring 2020 by Matt Pierson, a 6th generation Park County rancher, the Producer Partnership reached out to Brent Weisgram, VP and COO of MFBN to form a connection between the two organizations and find a place to facilitate donations.

“If the Producer Partnership was going to succeed, it needed an experienced distribution partner familiar with the food business to supply the donated hamburger to all 56 counties in the state. My vision was simply to connect the dots and form a partnership to benefit Montanans in need,” added Pierson.

MFBN has been providing food to individuals and families facing food insecurity in Montana for nearly 40 years. MFBN’s trucks and hired carriers make statewide deliveries to a distribution network of over 310 neighborhood food banks, community pantries, social organizations, homeless, abuse and children’s shelters, senior centers and school organizations committed to ending hunger in Montana. MFBN programs distributed over 18 million pounds of food statewide in 2021.

According to Weisgram, prior to the COVID19 pandemic, MFBN spent less than \$2 per pound for hamburger. This was purchased from out-of-state vendors due to the lack of USDA federally inspected beef processors in the state with the capacity to meet the quantity demands needed.

Pierson saw this hurdle and wanted to leap it, “one of our first goals is to provide the Food Bank Network with as much protein as they need, so they never have to buy it again.” An ambitious goal, but doable for the Producer Partnership. In just two years, the organization has collected and donated 95,967 pounds of hamburger to MFBN.

“That’s just from picking up cattle, finding a place to get them harvested, paying for the processing and dropping the donations off — with our latest project of funding our own processing unit, we will turn out way more beef,” added Pierson.

The Producer Partnership purchased its very own modular processing unit in 2021. This unit can harvest up to 15 cows per day and is set to open in 2022. “With the unit, we’ll reach our goal of meeting the Food Bank’s protein needs,” said Pierson.

“It is simply amazing how significant of an impact the Producer Partnership has made for the Montana Food Bank Network in such a short amount of time since we formed this partnership. We are so thankful for the support and generosity we are seeing from everyone’s contributions working together to achieve such great results. This is so much more than just a single donation; the Producer Partnership’s concept has provided the platform for everyone to get involved to help provide a much needed resource to Montana families facing food insecurity. Special thanks to all of the generous ranchers donating their livestock, the donors contributing financially to help cover the processing fees and contributing to make the processing facility a reality,” said Weisgram.

Donations to support the program can be made on the Producer Partnership website at www.producerpartnership.com . Ranchers interested in donating an animal may contact Matt directly at (406) 220.7223 or Producer Partnership Program Administrator Mayzie Cremer at (903) 905.6029.

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