

# For Immediate Release



**EAT RIGHT MONTANA**

*A coalition promoting healthy eating and active lifestyles*

[www.eatrightmontana.org](http://www.eatrightmontana.org)

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## Made Healthy in Montana: Tasty Food Gifts from Big Sky Country

Montana-grown foods make perfect holiday gifts - giving joy on multiple levels to individuals, families, and communities. When you give healthful local foods, you feel good about sharing wholesome and nourishing products. Gift recipients reap the health benefits of grown-in-Montana items and enjoy the direct connection to our special landscape. Montana's ranchers and farmers benefit directly from sales of their products and the increased value of agricultural land. Towns and cities across Big Sky country benefit as purchasing power stays closer to home and is reinvested in other local businesses.

"Agriculture has always been an integral part of Montana's economy and culture," says Lonie Stimac, Marketing Officer for Made in Montana at the Department of Commerce. "Food and beverage producers are one of the largest categories in our online **Made in Montana** directory ([www.madeinmontanausa.com/ProDir.asp](http://www.madeinmontanausa.com/ProDir.asp)). **Grown in Montana** products now range from the more traditional beef, lamb, barley, and lentils to organic Shiitake mushrooms and Siberian garlic."

The movement to support local use of Montana's agricultural treasures has itself experienced rapid growth recently. The statewide **Grow Montana** coalition ([www.growmontana.ncat.org/](http://www.growmontana.ncat.org/)) focuses on locally-owned food production, processing, and distribution. **AERO** (Alternative Energy Resources Organization) in Helena promotes sustainably grown food through its Abundant Montana directory ([www.aeromt.org/abundant/](http://www.aeromt.org/abundant/)). **Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center** in Ronan 'incubates' new food businesses and offers a selection of holiday baskets at [www.mmfec.com/catalog/](http://www.mmfec.com/catalog/).

According to Stimac, there are lots of easy ways to find delicious made in Montana products for everyone on your holiday list. Here are three strategies guaranteed to support local agriculture and to please the palates of your friends and family:

- **Buy directly from home grown producers:** Watch local newspapers for special promotions by local farmers and ranchers. Visit holiday festivals and craft shows in your community where local foods are likely to be featured for sale.
- **Look for locally grown in Montana stores:** Check the shelves of your local store for products with the **Made in Montana** label. Community groceries and several chains are working hard to carry as many local food items as possible.
- **Shop online for grown healthy in Montana:** "Dozens of Montana products are available with a click of a mouse," notes Stimac. "Many can be accessed through the online **Made in Montana** directory." Here are four sites where you can find the flavorful whole grains recommended by nutrition experts - all from the golden fields of Big Sky country:

**Amazing Grains** ([www.amazinggrains.com/](http://www.amazinggrains.com/)) - Home of Montana™ flour, this Pablo-based business specializes in gluten-free whole grains and flours for those with gluten intolerance and wheat allergies.

**Cream of the West** ([www.creamofthewest.com/](http://www.creamofthewest.com/)) - Located in Harlowton and owned by eight family farms and ranches, this company sells gourmet whole grain cereals, cowboy gift crates, and other gift merchandise.

**Western Trails Food** ([www.westerntrailsfood.com/](http://www.westerntrailsfood.com/)) - From the banks of Yellowstone in Glendive, this small business offers Montana-grown barley products, customized baskets and boxes, and holiday gift certificates.

**Wheat Montana Farms** ([www.wheatmontana.com/](http://www.wheatmontana.com/)) - Montana's largest home-grown bakery, based in Three Forks, offers baked goods, grains, and gift items through its delis and online store, as well as in supermarkets.