



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Farm Service Agency

Natural Resources  
Conservation Service

April 2006



# Celebrate Agriculture. Celebrate Earth.



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We are fortunate to live on the Earth. As far as scientists know, Earth is the only planet that can support life. In fact, there are billions of plants and animals on Earth, including 6 billion people. Think about the astronauts that have gone to the moon where nothing was living but them!

The Earth's plants and animals provide the things that we need to survive. Growing and harvesting natural resources from the Earth is called agriculture. Growing the food we eat and the clothes we wear is an important part of agriculture, and so is taking care of the Earth. Farmers and ranchers are the people that grow and harvest crops, livestock, trees, and wildlife. They also play an important part in keeping our soils healthy, waters clean, and plants productive.

To help keep Montana lands healthy, farmers and ranchers practice conservation.

Conservation means natural resources like plants, soil, and water are used in a way that the resources are improved instead of destroyed or made unhealthy.

So let's celebrate agriculture and take a trip on Earth to a state called Montana where agriculture is very important. Montana ranks second in the nation in the amount of land that is used for agriculture. That means the safe, abundant food grown right here in Montana by our farmers and ranchers not only feeds the people in Montana, it also feeds people all over the Earth.

## Word Jumble

In 2005, Montana farmers and ranchers used conservation that helped to save more than 598,800 tons of soil from eroding into the state's streams, rivers, and lakes. That is more than 39,000 dump truck loads of soil! Unscramble the words below and match them with some common agricultural terms.

serfamr

torcrat

lios

yabler

owc

erhso

etraw

crsharen

ahwte

hvolse

bittaha

peseh

dealds

habitat

water

saddle

horse

sheep

soil

farmers

tractor

barley

ranchers

cow

shovel

wheat

## Find the Livestock

Ranchers raise cows, sheep, horses, and other types of livestock to provide us with food as well as clothing, toothpaste, and even Jello! The type of land that livestock live on is called rangeland. Different kinds of livestock graze (eat) different kinds of plants, so all types of grasses, shrubs, and trees grow on Montana's healthy rangelands. These plants are important because they hold soil together to protect it from wind and water erosion. Ranchers manage their livestock herds in ways that improve the health of vegetation (plants) and soil on rangeland. In 2005, Montana ranchers used conservation to make more than 1.2 million acres of rangeland healthier and more productive.

Can you find these eleven different kinds of livestock that are raised in Montana in the word find below?

cow, sheep, horse, calf, emu, ostrich, pig, milk cow, llamas, rheas, chickens

V	T	O	U	I	O	N	W	E	T	Y	H	N	P	M
A	S	M	G	M	B	H	O	R	S	E	W	A	T	F
S	E	I	K	I	T	T	C	J	R	D	S	W	F	L
B	S	H	E	E	P	N	M	L	L	A	M	A	S	A
X	U	O	B	C	H	I	C	K	E	N	S	W	O	C
M	I	L	K	C	O	W	Z	H	C	I	R	T	S	O
L	G	Y	P	R	R	E	R	A	U	I	F	L	O	W

## Find the Rangeland

Did you know that Montana ranchers manage more than 38 million acres of range and pasture? Lots of different kinds of animals use this rangeland. You already found some of the livestock in the word find, but wild animals depend on rangeland too. These might be deer, birds, rabbits, elk, bees, butterflies, and even snakes. Find and color the letters in the word, RANGELAND.



## Shortgrass Prairie

Montana's rangeland lies within the shortgrass prairie of the Great Plains region. Most of the rangeland receives between 10 and 15 inches of rainfall each year. The climate is very dry with low humidity, high evaporation rates, and periods of severe drought. Surviving in the shortgrass prairie requires lots of planning on the ranchers' part.

If you were a rancher and you had to manage plants in the dry shortgrass prairie climate, circle the three plants that you would grow on your rangeland. Draw the plants you've chosen on the prairie provided on the next page.



**Buffalograss** is native to the Great Plains and it tolerates prolonged droughts.



**Blue grama** is a native grass that is hardy and resistant to drought.



**Kentucky bluegrass** is found in meadows, open woodlands, and prairies. Because it is not a native species, it could compete with native prairie species for vital water, sunlight, and nutrients.



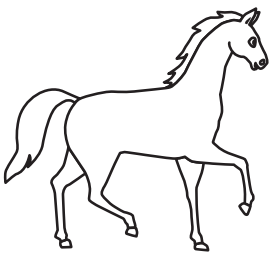
**Prairie dropseed** grows in the tallgrass prairie.



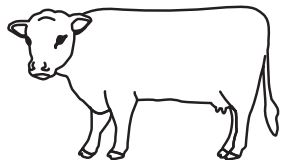
**Little bluestem** grows on short, tall, and mixed-grass prairies.

Did you choose buffalo grass, blue grama, and little bluestem? Well done.

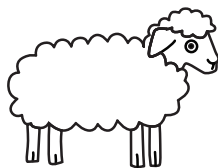
Circle the four types of livestock that ranchers raise on Montana's shortgrass prairie and add them to the prairie you are creating on the next page.



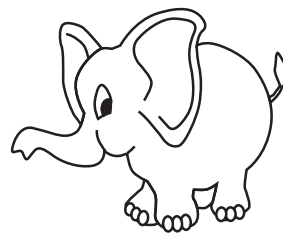
**Horses** are used by ranchers to move their cattle from pasture to pasture.



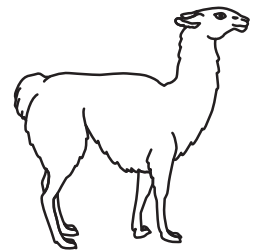
**Beef cows** are raised by ranchers to provide meat for us to eat as well as leather for our shoes.



**Sheep** are raised to provide wool for sweaters and meat for food.



**Elephants** live in tropical rainforests and savannas.



**Llamas** are raised for wool and are also used by ranchers to protect sheep from predators.

Can you imagine an elephant grazing Montana rangelands? It looks pretty silly doesn't it?

## Draw a Prairie



## Dandelion Salad

When was the last time you ate a plant? You may not realize it, but you eat plants all the time. For example, bread is made from flour, which comes from wheat. Fruits and vegetables all come from plants, too. These are all plants that are grown and harvested by farmers, but there are also plants you can eat that don't come from a farm. Dandelions are abundant on the prairies of Montana. They have yellow flowers that bloom brightly in the spring and early summer. The following recipe for dandelion salad is fun to make and it tastes good.

### Dandelion Salad Recipe

When gathering dandelion leaves for salad, be sure to pick the smallest, youngest leaves, as they are the tenderest. Also, only pick leaves off of plants whose yellow flowers have not yet developed. The leaves turn bitter after the plant flowers.

#### Ingredients:

dandelion leaves  
1 clove of garlic  
1 tablespoon of oil  
salt and pepper to taste

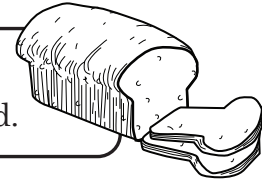
1. Wash all dandelion leaves thoroughly.
2. Cut the leaves in half.
3. Crush the garlic using a garlic press.
4. Heat the oil and garlic in a sauce pan to simmer.
5. Add the leaves, salt, and pepper.
6. Cook about 12 minutes or until tender. Add water if it gets too dry.
7. Cool slightly and serve.



# Crops and Cropland

Montana farmers grow the food we eat and also the food that animals eat. The plants farmers grow in their fields are called crops, and the land used to grow them is called cropland. There are many different crops grown in Montana. Some of them are wheat, corn, potatoes, sugar beets, dry beans, peas, mint, cherries, sunflowers, hay, and safflower. The farmer has a very busy schedule. He must start very early in the spring planning and planting crops. All summer and fall he must water, harvest, or gather them from the cropland. After the crops are harvested, they are made into bread, cereal, sugar, chewing gum, or other types of food, and then sent to grocery stores and restaurants where people can buy them.

**Did You Know?**  
One bushel of wheat = about 70 one-pound loaves of bread.



Unscramble the crops that are grown in Montana in the center of the circle, and match them to the words around the outside.

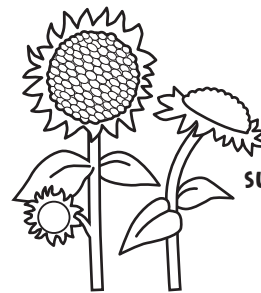
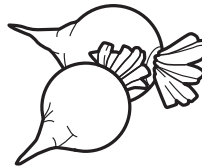
alfalfa



mint



sugar beets



sunflowers

tehwa

gursa sbtee

aoacnl

nitm

sattooep

rcon

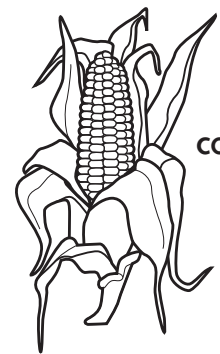
laxf

lyebra

lalaffa

hosgumr

swflonures



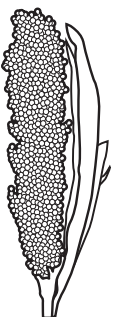
corn

barley

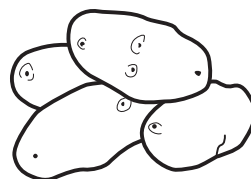


flax

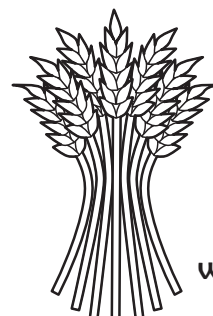
sorghum



canola



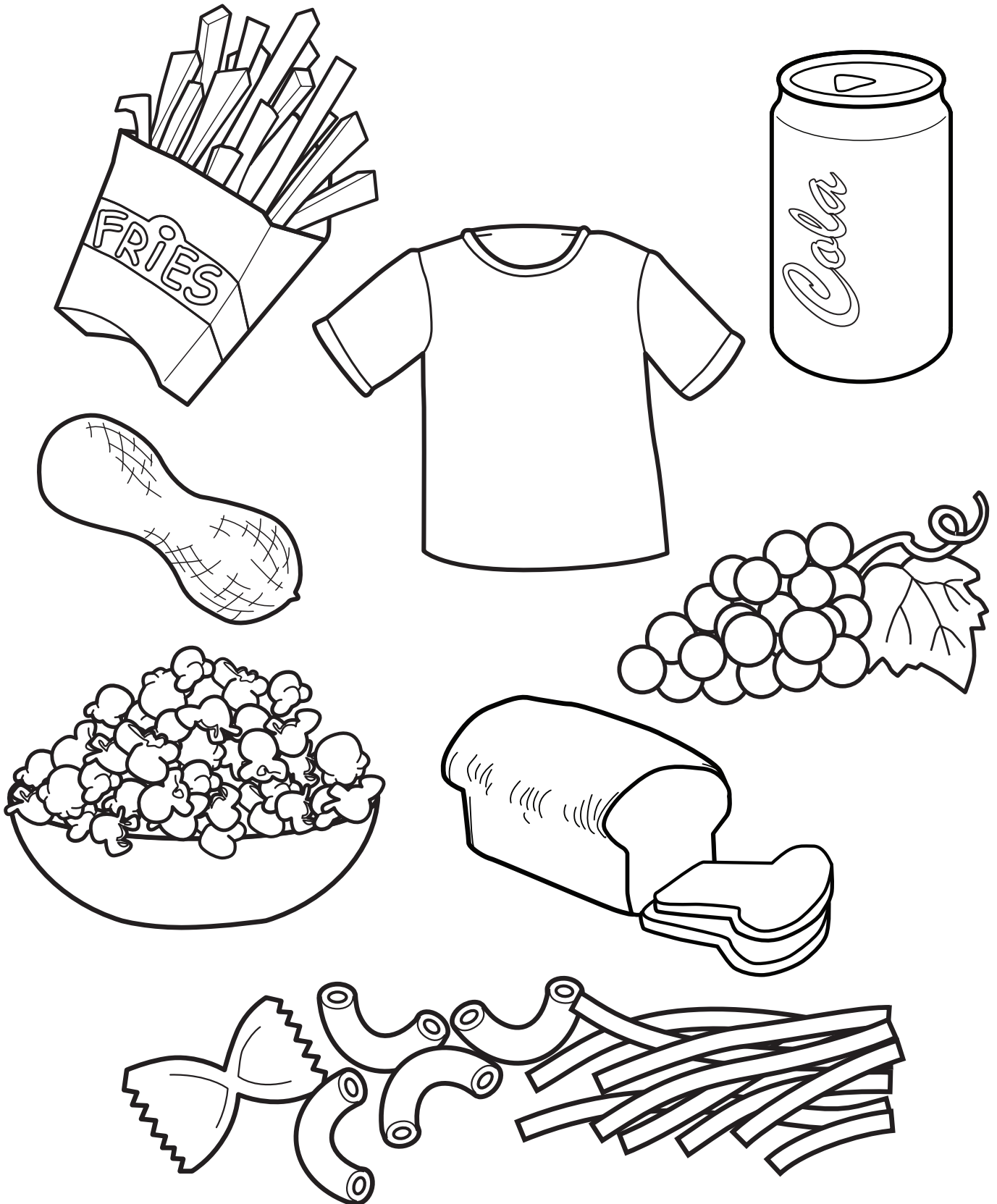
potatoes



wheat

# Play the Game!

Color and draw a circle around the foods that are produced from crops grown in Montana.

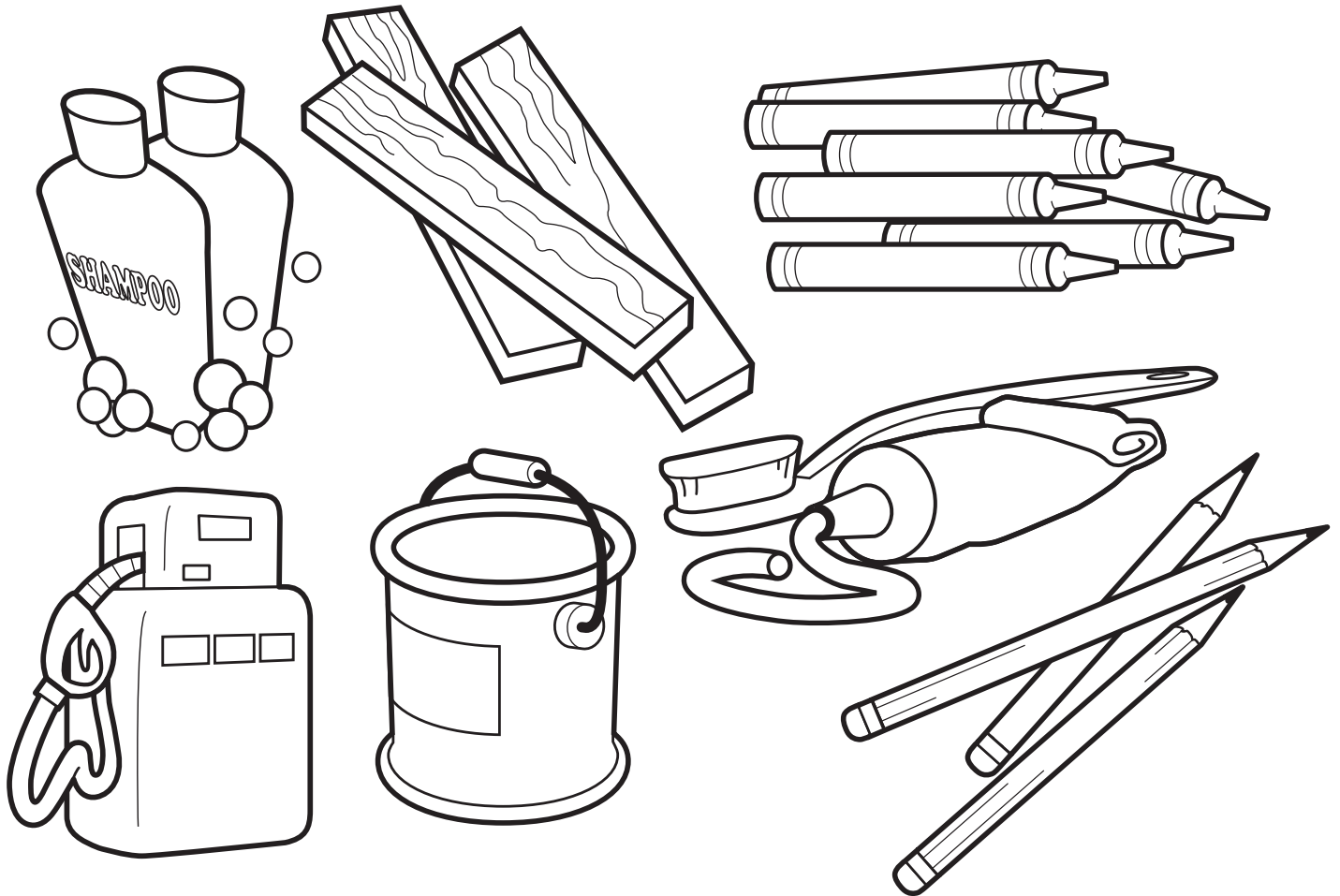


Answers: French fries, pasta, bread, popcorn.

## Celebrate Agriculture. Celebrate Earth.

Many of the products we use every single day come from some part of a plant or animal. Many of these plants and animals are raised by farmers and ranchers in Montana. Farmers and ranchers who work on the land every day to feed and clothe us also help to take good care of the Earth.

Color in the items below. All of them are made from some part of a plant or animal.



The USDA Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service are proud to celebrate agriculture along with you. Agriculture is the backbone of our country. Without it, we would not have food, clothing, or many other items that are made from plants and animals.

These two USDA agencies have been helping America's farmers and ranchers for more than 70 years. They have helped farmers plant crops in ways that prevent erosion, improve water quality, increase production, and save energy. These agencies have also helped ranchers manage their livestock herds in ways that maintain healthy wildlife habitat, improve plant health, and keep our air clean. Without the help of these two agencies, food would be much more expensive to buy in the grocery store and we may not be enjoying the healthy lands of Montana.

Next time you go to the store to buy something, please thank the farmer or rancher that worked hard to grow and harvest the resources that were used to make it. Celebrate Agriculture! Celebrate Earth!