

# Missoula Food Policy Advisory Board Newsletter

Building Connections



## **FPAB FINDS A HOME IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY AND EXTENSION** **BY ERIKA BERGLUND**

Over the past year, the Missoula Food Policy Advisory Board has established a home within the Missoula County Department of Ecology and Extension, marking an exciting step in the board's growth. This partnership strengthens the board's capacity by providing additional resources, administrative support, and deeper connections to local food, agriculture, and sustainability initiatives.

We are deeply grateful for this collaboration, which enhances our ability to advocate for a more resilient and equitable food system in Missoula County. Being housed within a department dedicated to community education and ecological stewardship allows us to better serve our mission and expand our impact.

Learn more about the Department of Ecology and Extension at [MissoulaEduPlace.org](https://MissoulaEduPlace.org).

# EXPLORING MISSOULA'S EVOLVING FOOD SYSTEM SYSTEM

BY ERIKA BERGLUND

On December 4th, 2024, University of Montana students from Professor Margiana Petersen-Rockney's undergraduate and graduate food systems courses showcased their semester-long research at the Missoula County Ecology and Extension Center. The event highlighted significant changes in Missoula's agrifood system over the past 20 years, focusing on three key themes: climate change, farmland access and affordability, and food sovereignty and access.



Through posters, photo essays, and story maps, students presented their findings on how these issues have shaped the local food landscape since Missoula's 2004 community food assessment, findings from which helped to form what is now Farm Connect Montana. The students' work aimed to support the Food Policy Advisory Board's ongoing efforts to develop a new assessment and action plan for the county's food system.

The evening featured a panel discussion with local food system leaders, including representatives from the Western Montana Growers Cooperative, Farm Connect Montana, and Garden City Harvest. Panelists provided insight into how shifts in policy, economics, and climate have impacted local food production and access over the last twenty years.

Attendees had the opportunity to engage directly with students, ask questions, and network while enjoying refreshments. The event underscored the importance of



understanding and addressing the challenges facing Missoula's food system and fostered meaningful dialogue between students, policymakers, and community members.



# Real Food, Real Impact: Inside the Missoula County Detention Facility Kitchen

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BY JAMIE BREIDENBACH

During a recent visit to the Missoula County Detention Facility, members of the Food Policy Advisory Board gained valuable insights into the operations of the facility's kitchen. This was my first time visiting the Detention Facility, and despite having lived in Missoula my entire life, I had little prior knowledge of the Facility's operations.

One key takeaway from the visit was that, within the context of detention facilities, Missoula's Detention Facility serves as a model for the state. Both staff and inmates express a preference for being placed at this facility, which is a testament to its effective operations. While I only learned about the kitchen's operations, it was clear that a variety of factors contribute to the Facility's reputation as a leader in its field.

A particularly noteworthy aspect of the Detention Facility's operation is the value placed on the food served. The staff

recognizes that good food not only improves the well-being of detainees but also reduces conflict within the facility. The connection between food quality and mood is undeniable: when we are hungry or consume poor-quality food, we often experience irritability and discomfort. This, in turn, can lead to tension. By prioritizing quality meals, the Detention Facility fosters a more harmonious environment for both inmates and staff.

The Detention Facility's kitchen is primarily scratch made, with inmates actively involved in meal preparation. This not only provides detainees with valuable skills but also helps to serve approximately 400 individuals daily. Despite the challenge of keeping meal costs under \$2.00 per person and meeting a variety of diets, the facility ensures that meals are nutritious, featuring fresh fruits and vegetables each day.

The Missoula Detention Facility stands out as an exemplary model within the state, particularly in its approach to food service. The combination of skill-building for inmates and the prioritization of nutritious meals plays a crucial role in maintaining a positive and productive environment within the facility.



Who We Are

## FOOD POLICY ADVISORY BOARD



### FPAB HAS A NEW ONLINE HOME, TOO!

Our work relies on community engagement. We want to make it as easy as possible for you to find us, follow our efforts, and help us strengthen our community's food system.

For this reason, we are excited to unveil our new online home: <https://missoulaeduplace.org/who-we-are/food-policy-advisory-board.html>

We invite you to check it out! In it you'll find past newsletters, information on our meetings & agendas, and more.

This new webpage is housed within Missoula County Department of Ecology & Extension's (MCDEE) website. It corresponds with the relocation of our monthly meetings to the G. W. Marks Exploration Facility where MCDEE's offices are located.

### INTERESTED IN JOINING MFPAB?

We are now accepting applications for board vacancies! If you're passionate about strengthening our local food system and advocating for policies that improve food access, sustainability, and resilience, we encourage you to apply. Send us an email if you're interested in applying ([foodpolicyadvisoryboard.msla@gmail.com](mailto:foodpolicyadvisoryboard.msla@gmail.com))

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- Listen to [this TED Radiohour talk](#) about food waste and ideas for curbing it!
- Read [this Civil Eats op-ed](#) about the benefits of raising backyard chickens

GET IN TOUCH WITH FPAB:  
[FOODPOLICYADVISORYBOARD.MSLA@GMAIL.COM](mailto:FOODPOLICYADVISORYBOARD.MSLA@GMAIL.COM)