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### Governor to announce new law to help schools, colleges, and prisons serve Montana-produced food

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 17, 2007

### **Governor to Announce New Law to Help Schools, Colleges, and Prisons Serve Montana-produced Food.**

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#### **The Event**

Press conference, signing ceremony for *Montana Food to Institutions*.  
Informal reception of Montana-medallion burgers, huckleberry shakes, Dixon melon sherbet to follow.

#### **When**

Friday, May 18, 11-11:30 a.m.

#### **Where**

The University of Montana's University Center Food Court (2<sup>nd</sup> floor) - UC Commons. Look for the displays of Montana foods!

#### **Who**

Panel of speakers will include Gov. Brian Schweitzer; Pam Clevenger, Home Acres Orchard; Nancy Matheson, Grow Montana Director; and Mark LoParco, Director of UM's Dining Services.

#### **Why**

The new law, *Montana Food to Institutions*, will help K-12 schools, colleges, and prisons buy from Montana farmers, ranchers, and processors. Grow Montana, a broad-based coalition promoting a Montana-based food system, initiated the legislation because it can help reconnect Montana's urban and rural communities. "The urban parts of our state, such as Missoula and Bozeman, have the markets," says Nancy Matheson, Grow Montana Director. "The rural parts have the agriculture. *Montana Food to Institutions* connects the two, and benefits both—better food for urban Montanans, better markets for our farmers." Spending \$33 million on food annually, Montana's public institutions are a virtually untapped market for Montana food producers.

The University of Montana leads the state in purchasing food from Montanans. Since 2003, UM has returned nearly \$1.5 million to Montana farmers, ranchers and processors through the Farm to College program. Missoula County Public Schools, Salish Kootenai College, UM Western, and Montana State University have all since launched similar initiatives.

UM will showcase displays and samples of the Montana foods they purchase during the press conference.

### **How**

*Montana Food to Institutions* exempts Montana-produced food from the state's procurement laws altogether. This provides the flexibility institutions need to buy local food. "This law will enable more Montana-produced food to reach Montanans' tables. It's a win-win for customers and for farmers, ranchers, and food processors," says Matheson,

*For information about a Montana-based food system, visit [www.growmontana.ncat.org](http://www.growmontana.ncat.org).*

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