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# *WHAT IS USDA-ARS?*





## *USDA VISION*

A healthy and productive Nation in harmony with the land.

## *USDA MISSION*

Enhance the quality of life for the American people by supporting production of agriculture and:

- < ensuring a safe, affordable, nutritious, and accessible food supply
- < caring for agricultural, forest, and range lands
- < supporting sound development of rural communities
- < providing economic opportunities for farm and rural residents
- < expanding global markets for agricultural and forest products and services, and
- < working to reduce hunger in America and throughout the world.

## *Research, Education, and Economics*

### *Vision*

The **Research, Education, and Economics** mission area is the catalyst and premier provider of knowledge to promote the well-being of U.S. consumers, agricultural producers, and rural residents.

### *Mission*

The **Research, Education, and Economics** mission area of USDA is dedicated to the creation of a safe, sustainable, competitive U.S. food and fiber system and strong, healthy communities, families, and youth through integrated research, analysis, and education.



## *ARS Vision*

Leading America towards a better future through agricultural research and information.

## *ARS Mission*

ARS conducts research to develop and transfer solutions to agricultural problems of high national priority and provides information access and dissemination to:

- < ensure high-quality, safe food, and other agricultural products
- < assess the nutritional needs of Americans
- < sustain a competitive agricultural economy
- < enhance the natural resource base and the environment, and
- < provide economic opportunities for rural citizens, communities, and society as a whole.

[www.usda.gov/services.html](http://www.usda.gov/services.html)



## ARS VALUES

<i>Accountability</i>	<i>We are responsible to the public</i>
<i>Appreciation</i>	<i>We respect one another and value everyone's contribution</i>
<i>Cooperation</i>	<i>We work with others to most effectively use available knowledge, resources, and technologies</i>
<i>Creativity</i>	<i>We nurture and reward creativity</i>
<i>Diversity</i>	<i>We encourage workforce diversity</i>
<i>Global Perspective</i>	<i>We encourage and promote and international perspective and global collaboration on agricultural issues</i>
<i>Integrity</i>	<i>We are committed to the highest standards of honesty and ethical conduct</i>
<i>Leadership</i>	<i>We promote leadership in information and agricultural science</i>
<i>Objectivity</i>	<i>We are proud of our scientific objectivity and will continue to provide unbiased information</i>
<i>Partnerships</i>	<i>We encourage partnerships with other organization and individuals</i>
<i>Quality</i>	<i>We are dedicated to the highest standards of quality in agricultural research and information dissemination</i>
<i>Relevance</i>	<i>We respond to the needs of the agricultural community and all of society</i>
<i>Service</i>	<i>We listen to our customers, both internal and external, and provide them with high-quality scientific research, technologies, and information</i>
<i>Sharing</i>	<i>We are committed to share information broadly and in a timely fashion</i>
<i>Strategy</i>	<i>We shape the future by strategically positioning our resources and capabilities</i>
<i>Teamwork</i>	<i>We support teams that approach problems holistically by looking at the total implications of their work</i>

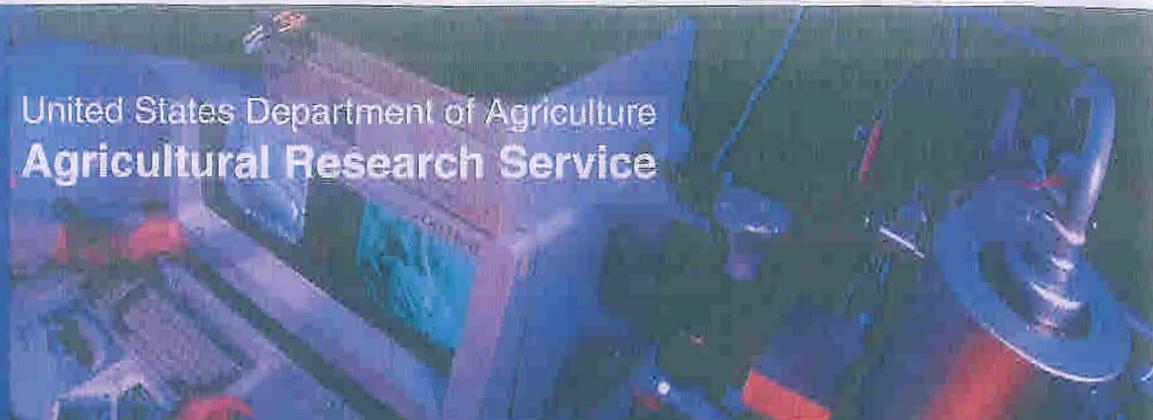


## *ARS GUIDING PRINCIPLES*

- < Provide leadership for the national agricultural research agenda
- < Carry out and support excellent, relevant science
- < Support long-term research to provide a foundation for problem-solving
- < Apply the science base for informed policymaking
- < Strengthen relationships with ARS partners
- < Educate and relate to consumers and other constituents
- < Respond to societal, consumer, and environmental concerns
- < Promote interdisciplinary team and systems approaches
- < Develop and strengthen institutional and human resources
- < Develop and transfer information systems and technology



United States Department of Agriculture  
Agricultural Research Service



# Research Advances in Montana

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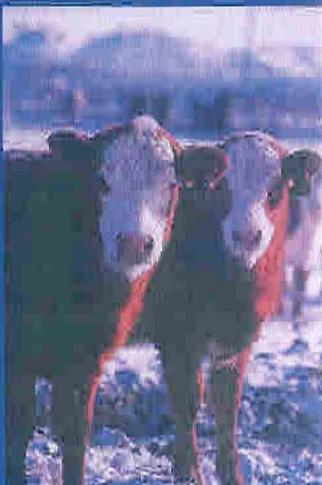
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## Alaska's Feral Cattle Could Improve Mainland Herds

A team of scientists from the ARS Fort Keogh Livestock and Range Research Laboratory in Miles City compared DNA of feral cattle on Alaska's Chirikof Island to that of commercial breeds and Siberian Yakut cattle. They found unique genes that may be related to characteristics such as cold-hardiness or adaptability to specific forages, explaining the cattle's ability to survive the remote island's harsh climate. These genes could improve herds in other parts of the United States. Scientists found that Chirikof cattle are most similar genetically to the nearly extinct Yakut cattle of Siberia.

## Breeding Saturated Fat Out of Beef Cattle

Scientists at the ARS Fort Keogh Livestock and Range Research Laboratory in Miles City sequenced the bovine genome as part of an international consortium. ARS scientists throughout the country are using this information to improve beef cattle production. This includes the Miles City scientists, who have identified genetically significant areas related to beef quality and composition. Teaming with ARS colleagues in Clay Center, Neb., the scientists found a region on one chromosome that influences the concentration of monounsaturated fat—believed to be healthier than saturated fat—in beef. That could lead to identification of the gene or genes responsible and allow for selection in other cattle breeds to alter beef's fatty acid content.

## Computer Chooses Best Bulls

ABS Global Inc., based in DeForest, Wis., has profitably leased top-rated bulls from the Angus Sire Alliance in Missouri. To calculate these ratings, the Angus Sire Alliance uses bioeconomic modeling software developed at the ARS Fort Keogh Livestock and Range Research Laboratory in Miles City, in collaboration with the livestock industry. The software estimates the relative economic value of multiple cattle traits such as marbling and fat content. This helps ranchers with the difficult task of choosing which traits to select for in breeding programs.

## TEAM Eats Away at Leafy Spurge Scourge

To stop leafy spurge's march across the Great Plains, the TEAM (The Ecological Areawide Management) Leafy Spurge program has developed affordable ways to control leafy spurge. The program, based at the ARS Northern Plains Agricultural Research Laboratory in Sidney, uses biocontrol and various grazing techniques. They've proved that biocontrol can decimate spurge. Members have distributed about 45 million flea beetles to eat the weed, and have educated ranchers and land managers throughout North America about how to deal with leafy spurge infestations. This effort is expected to reduce herbicide use by at least 768,000 pounds in a four-state study area by 2008.

# Research Advances in Montana



## Mormon Crickets on the March

Scientists at the ARS Northern Plains Agricultural Research Laboratory in Sidney attached tiny radio transmitters to Mormon crickets as part of a joint U.S.-Canadian study of the movements of Mormon crickets in and around Dinosaur National Monument in Colorado. Under outbreak conditions, bands of as many as 100,000 or more of the flightless crickets roam across the land, devouring crops, grasses and ornamental plants as they go. The idea is to find environmental cues that influence the pests' migrations so predictive models can be developed to help fine-tune pesticide applications and reduce exposure of beneficial insects.



## Beating Back the Enemy

Scientists in the ARS Northern Plains Agricultural Research Laboratory in Sidney are searching for soil fungi that could be used as an environmentally friendly alternative to pesticides to protect sugar beets from the sugar beet root maggot. This maggot infests almost half of U.S. sugar beet fields, and is the most important pest on the 1.4 million acres of beets grown in the western United States. Strains of the fungus *Metarhizium anisopliae* look promising as biocontrol agents. Beneficial fungi could be bound to beet seeds, then colonize the seedling roots and ward off maggots.

## WiFi Watering

Scientists at the ARS Northern Plains Agricultural Research Laboratory in Sidney are using soil moisture and temperature sensors and a weather station to communicate wirelessly to alert irrigation equipment to turn on and off in different parts of a field, based on a soils map. The network boosts irrigation efficiency by watering plants only when they need it, and only those plants whose condition and soil type warrant irrigation. The system can do what most farmers and ranchers usually don't do—consider multiple factors including soil types when making irrigation decisions. Knowing where dwindling water resources are going is important to identify opportunities for saving water and energy.

## Hop the Web for Grasshoppers

Scientists at the ARS Northern Plains Agricultural Research Laboratory in Sidney coordinated the production of a grasshopper control web site ([www.sidney.ars.usda.gov/grasshopper/index.htm](http://www.sidney.ars.usda.gov/grasshopper/index.htm)) and CD. Grasshoppers can number in the hundreds of millions in Western states and eat hundreds of millions of dollars of grass and other forage plants. Decision-making software helps land managers decide if and when pesticide spraying makes economic and environmental sense. The website and CD are comprehensive sources for the most recent research in grasshopper management, identification, biology, ecology and control tactics for federal, state and local land managers, weed and pest districts, Extension agents and ranchers.

**NORTHERN PLAINS AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH LAB**

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## WHAT IS eOPF?

Electronic Official Personnel Folder (eOPF) is a system developed as a management solution to handle official personnel files and to simplify your access to your own Official Personnel Folder (OPF). The OPF contains human resource (HR) records and documents related to Federal civilian employees. An OPF is created when an employee begins Federal service, and is maintained throughout the employee's career in accordance with the United States Office of Personnel Management (OPM) regulations.

The eOPF solution provides electronic, web-enabled access for all employees and HR staff to view eOPF documents. All employees will be able to view their own OPF through this eOPF solution.

## WHAT IS STORED IN MY eOPF?

- ❖ Human Resource documents
- ❖ Beneficiary Forms
- ❖ Email Address
- ❖ Emergency Contacts

## WHEN CAN I VIEW MY eOPF?

The eOPF is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can access your eOPF from any computer with internet access. We strongly advise against using a publicly shared computer.

eOPF website: <https://eopf.nbc.gov/landing/>

## FIRST TIME eOPF USER?

You will need to have your USDA e-Authentication user ID and password before you can login to the eOPF system.

Your eOPF-ID is your USDA e-Authentication User ID.

1. If you have forgotten your user ID, use the following link: [Forgot your User ID?](#)
2. If you have forgotten your Password use the following link: [Forgot your password?](#)
3. Follow the instructions:

The first time you log in to the eOPF system, you will be required to complete a one time registration form using your own personal information.

- Date of Birth
- Last Name
- Social Security #
- Home Zip Code
- PO ID
- Org Code

## ILLUSTRATED INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE REGISTRATION

<http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/applications/e-opf.htm>

## VIEW THE ONLINE eOPF TUTORIAL

<http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/applications/tutorials.htm>

You will need Internet Explorer version 6 or higher and Adobe Acrobat Reader version 6 or higher to use eOPF.

## WHO DO I CONTACT?:

If a document won't open or you get a message that the document is corrupt, contact : eOPF Helpdesk: 1-866-275-8518  
[eopf\\_hd@telesishq.com](mailto:eopf_hd@telesishq.com)

If you feel that documents are missing, or have questions about the documents in your folder, contact your HR Specialist or Assistant.  
<http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/operations/keycontacts.htm>

## HOW DO I LOGIN TO eOPF?

- ❖ Launch Internet Explorer.
- ❖ Type in the address for the eOPF.  
(you may get several warning screens – click OK each time.)
- ❖ Enter your USDA e-Authentication user ID and password.
- ❖ Click on the arrow to the left of “US Department of Agriculture”  
 US Department of Agriculture
- ❖ Click the “ACCEPT” button, after reading the user agreement.
- ❖ From the “Welcome Page”, click on “My eOPF” in the blue menu selection area on the left side.
- ❖ To view a document, single click on the orange action icon and select “View”.
- ❖ Select “Open” from the Adobe message screen. Your document is returned in a .pdf format.
- ❖ Close the Adobe document by selecting “File” and “Exit”, to return to the eOPF system.
- ❖ To logout of the eOPF, select the “Logout” button in the blue menu selection area on the left side.



Northern Plains Sidney, Montana

[ARS Home](#) | [About ARS](#) | [Help](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [En Español](#)
 Printable Version
  E-mail this page

Search

You are here: Home / Employee Resources

Enter Keywords

This site only 

Go

Advanced Search

Home

## Browse By Subject

Home

- Agricultural Systems Research Unit
- Pest Management Research Unit
- PlainFacts Newsletter
- Photo Gallery
- Movie Gallery
- Grasshopper Website
- TEAM Leafy Spurge
- Hoary Cress Consortium
- Irrigation Info.
- Conference Archive
- Just for Kids!
- Safety Information
- Employee Resources
- Weather Stations
- Community Info.
- Related Links

- [About Us](#)
- [Research](#)
- [Products & Services](#)
- [People & Places](#)
- [News & Events](#)
- [Partnership](#)
- [Careers](#)

## Employee Resources

## General Employee Information:

• [Directories](#) • [Emergency](#) • [Benefits](#) • [FAQ's](#) • [Foreign Visitors](#) • [Government Property](#) • [Health & Safety](#) • [Pay](#) • [Training](#) • [Travel](#) • [Relocation](#) • [Remote Email/SharePoint](#) •

## Miscellaneous Information:

• [Mailing & Shipping](#) • [Manuscripts](#) • [Projects](#) • [Purchasing](#) •

## Other:

• [Calendars](#) • [Policies](#) • [Images](#) • [Libraries](#) •

Standard Operating Procedures for administrative procedures can be found at P:\Admin\SOPs

## General Employee Information:

## • Directories

- Directories and other contact information throughout ARS can be found [here](#).
- [NPARL Office Extensions](#)

## • Emergency

- [Federal Emergency Management Agency \(FEMA\)](#)
- [Reporting Employee Absences](#)
- [NPARL Pandemic Plan](#)
- [NPARL Office Dismissal or Closure Procedures](#)

## • Employee Benefits: Insurance and Retirement Programs

- [Federal Employees Health Benefit Program](#)
- [Insurance Comparison](#)
- [Insurance Form SF 2809 \(See REE-FORMS\)](#)
- [Federal Employees Group Life Insurance \(FEGLI\)](#)
- [FEGLI Forms](#)
- [Office of Personnel Management \(OPM\)](#)
- [Retirement and Insurance Forms](#)
- [Retirement Information and Services](#)
- [Retirement Calculator](#)
- [WAEPA \(a life insurance option for government employees and their families\)](#)
- [Thrift Savings Plan \(TSP\)](#)
- [Employee Personal Page](#)

## • Employee Health and Safety

- [Employee Assistance Program](#)
- [Federal Occupational Health](#)
- [NPARL Safety Information](#)
- [Requests for repairs or maintenance](#)
- [USDA Employee Wellness](#)

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## • Frequently Asked Questions for New Employees

- **What are the office hours?**  
Core office hours are 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM, although employees are allowed a flexible schedule with supervisor permission.
- **How many people are employed here?**  
There are 47 permanent full time employees. During the summer season, employment can increase up to 70 people.
- **How often do I get paid?**  
Paychecks are issued bi-weekly and you will receive your first pay check 3 weeks after you begin duty.

- **Where is my time sheet?**  
The Location Administrative Officer will advise what type of time sheet you have. Electronic sheets are kept on the public drive at P://Timesheets, hard copies are kept near the in/out board in alphabetical order. Partial hours are recorded as .00, .25, .5, .75 for 15 minute increments. See SOP for more information.
- Time will be recorded as different transaction codes; they can be regular hours worked, annual leave (vacation), sick leave, family sick leave, credit, compensatory, travel compensatory and other (administrative leave or holiday).
- **What is the difference between credit and compensatory time?**
  1. Credit time is accrued when you choose to work more than your scheduled hours with supervisor permission and the maximum balance.
  2. Comp time is when your supervisor requires you to work over your regular scheduled hours. (Click here for more information.)
- **How can I access my email while I am away from the office?**  
Go to <https://mail.ars.usda.gov> and sign on as usual. More information is found here.
- **How do I access SharePoint?** (use MS Internet Explorer only)  
Go to <https://arsnet.usda.gov/sites/NPA/default.aspx> and sign on using your email ID and password.
- **Can I use government owned property for personal use?**  
See P&P 253.4 for more information on acceptable/unacceptable practices
- **How do I get repair or maintenance done?**  
Fill out a work order and turn in to the maintenance department.
- **What needs to be done if I am expecting a foreign visitor?**  
Click here for NPARL standard operating procedures.
- **How do I get keys to perform my duties in other buildings?**  
See standard procedures for key dissemination.
- **Where can I look for a permanent federal job?**
  - [ARS Career Page](#)
  - [NPA Career Page](#)
  - [NPARL Career Page](#)
  - [Scientist Postings](#)
  - [USA Jobs](#)
  - [USDA Job Search](#)

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#### • Pay and Leave

- [Request Change of Hours](#)
- [Employee Personal Page](#)
- [Leave Request OPM-71](#) (See REE-FORMS)
- [Leave Transfer Program Request](#) (See REE-FORMS)
- [Leave Transfer Program Donor](#) (OPM630-A, within agency-See REE-FORMS)
- [Leave Transfer Program Donor](#) (OPM630-B, outside of agency-See REE-FORMS)
- Overtime/Comp Time Advance [Memo](#) (Click here for an example)
- What is Comp Travel time?
  - [Basic Question and Answer Sheet](#)
  - [Limits on Comp Travel](#)
  - [Overview Chart of Comp Travel](#)
  - [Visual Chart of Comp Travel](#)
- [Pay and Leave Resources](#)
- [Salary Tables](#) (see REST OF UNITED STATES for Sidney, MT)
- [Time Sheet](#) (PDF Form)

#### • Training

- [AFM Training Resources](#)
- [Ag-Learn](#)
- [Annual Ethics Training](#)
- [Employee Development P&P](#)
- [Employee Development Plan / Training](#)
- [Government Online Learning Center \(GoLearn\)](#)
- [Standard Procedures for Training Request](#)
- [Training Request Form SF-182](#) ([Online Instructions](#) - PDF)  
(Please fill out using AgLearn after completing the online tutorial)
- [USDA e-Authentication](#)

• **Travel**

- What do you need to do for travel?
  - [NPARL Travel Procedures](#)
  - **Travel Step 1:** [Travel Request](#) (Several weeks before travel begins)
  - **Travel Step 2:** [Reimbursement Cover Sheet](#) (Complete within 5 days after returning home)
  - [Travel Tips for NPARL employees](#)
- [Fedrooms](#)
- [Fedtraveler](#)
- [FEMA Certified Hotel Listing](#)
- [GSA Travel Resources](#)
- [Per Diem Rates \(Domestic\)](#)
- [Per Diem Rates \(Foreign\)](#)
- [Personal Owned Vehicle \(POV\) Mileage Rates](#)
- [State Tax Exempt Forms Library](#) (California, Delaware, DC, Florida, Louisiana, Nevada, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia)
- **Travel Card** (The first 3 forms must be completed, signed and returned to the front office)
  - [Application](#)
  - [Travel Card Acknowledgement](#) (2 pages)
  - [Travel Card Training](#) (print certificate after completion)
  - [Travel Card Payment - Easy Pay Online](#)
  - [Employee Self-Registration of Bank of America Online Access](#)
- **Contributed Funds/Foreign Travel**  
(non-federal source, greater than \$250 and authorized by Area Director using these documents)
  - [Through-Letter Travel Request](#) (to Area Director-MS Word document)
  - [Invitation Letter](#)
  - [Conflict of Interest](#) (contributed funds only)
- **Relocation Reimbursement**
  - [Travel Reimbursement Cover Sheet](#)
  - [Expense Record for Temporary Quarters AD-569](#) (See REE-FORMS)
  - [Relocation Guide](#)
- [Travel Safety Information](#)

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**Miscellaneous Information**

- **Mailing and Shipping**
  - What is the best way to send a shipment?  
Postage meter is accessed by the front office only. See Nikki or Jill for more information.

<b>Concern</b>	<b>Fed Ex</b>	<b>UPS Ground</b>	<b>USPS</b>
How soon do they need to receive it?	1-4 days	5-7 business days	No time constraints
Do you need to track it?	Yes	Yes	No
Do you need notification of delivery?	Yes online/email	Yes online/email	Yes postcard

• **Manuscript Information**

- **Research Manuscripts**
  - [Helpful Hints](#)
  - [Policy Memorandum-08-001](#)
  - [ARIS Manuscript Entry Form ARS-115](#)
  - [Non-ARS Author Permission Form](#)
  - [Peer Review ARS-533](#) (See REE-FORMS)

• **Other Scientist Info:**

- [Office of Scientific Quality Review - OSQR](#)
- [Research Position Evaluation System - RPES](#)

• **Projects and Funding Information**

- [Agreements Information Management System \(AIMS\) User's Guide](#)
- [Grants & Agreements Decision Tree](#)
- [New Agreements Process](#)

- [National Programs](#)
- [Letter of Intent \(Fillable PDF or Instructions\)](#)

● **Purchasing Information**

- [Acquisition Tool Kit](#)
- **Forms**
  - [Claim for Reimbursement SF-1164](#) (See REE-FORMS)
  - [Purchase Request AD-700](#) (See REE-FORMS)
- [Integrated Acquisition System](#)
- [Micro-Purchase Guide](#)
- [NPA Acquisition Information](#)
- [NPARL P&P](#)
- [Purchase Card Program](#)
- **Vendors (Specified Order)**
  - [Activity Inventory \(On-Hand Stock/Cupboard Stock\)](#)
  - [Excess Personal Property](#)
  - [UNICOR \(Federal Prison Industries\)](#)
  - [AbilityOne \(JWOD, NIB, NISH included\)](#)
  - [GSA Federal Acquisition Service \(GSA Advantage|GSA Global Supply|GSA Excess\)](#)
  - [Mandatory Federal Supply Schedules](#)
  - [Intramall](#)
  - [Optional Federal Supply Schedules](#)
  - [Commercial Sources](#)

● **Other:**

- **Calendars**
  - [NPA Calendar](#)
  - [AgNIC](#)
- **Policies**
  - [Policies, Procedures and Manuals](#)
  - [Bulletins \(Bulletins outline revised policy and procedures\)](#)
  - [NPA Policy Memorandums](#)
- **Images**
  - [NPARL Photo Gallery](#)
  - [NPARL Station Gallery](#)
  - [ARS Image Gallery](#)
- **Libraries**
  - [Digitop](#)
  - [National Agricultural Library](#)

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## *Employee Funds*

### **NPARL Employee Fund**-Voluntary membership

- Treasurer-Mo O'Mara
- Cost: \$3.00 per month, Bi-Annual Contributions \$18 due in October & April, Annual Contributions \$36 due in October
- Used for purchases of break room supplies: plates, utensils, cups, dish soap, etc.
- Used for employee special occasions: Potlucks, births/adoptions, retirement, congratulation cards, weddings, farewells, Christmas Party, Halloween/Harvest Party, etc.
- Used for not so special occasions: sympathy cards, loss of child, sibling, or spouse.
- Pays for subscription to the Billings Gazette
- Pays for maintenance of the water coolers



### **NPARL Coffee Fund**



- If you are a coffee drinker, participation in this fund is strongly suggested. Coffee is not provided by USDA.
- Cost: \$40 per year \$4.00 per month \$1.00 per week or \$.25 per day
- Treasurer's: Mark Gaffri, Steve Niblock
- Donations are collected in the South Building Break Room and the North Building coffee station.
- Used for purchases of coffee, creamers, sugar, coffee pots, etc.

