



Harvest of the Month: Grains

Video Transcript

Video Available At:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=inkS7MXNzR8>

This month's Montana Harvest of the Month are seeds we can eat — grains! Montana fields grow many different grains like wheat, barley, spelt, oats, and others. All these crops are very important for our economy. Montana is the third largest producer of wheat in the United States! Barley has played an important role in many cultures throughout history. In ancient Egypt, barley was used in religious ceremonies, while in Rome, gladiators believed barley gave them extra strength.

Despite oats' many health benefits and popularity as a breakfast food, only about 5% of oats grown are used for human consumption. The rest are used in products and animal feeds. Wheat is classified by the season in which it is grown, its hardness, color, and growing season. Winter wheat is planted in the fall and harvested in the summer. Spring wheat is planted in spring and also harvested in late summer. Spring wheat is the most common variety in Montana, accounting for over half of our wheat production. When grains, like wheat, begin to dry and harden in the field, it's harvest time! Using a combine, the plants are cut, the grain kernels are separated from the other plant parts and placed into a hopper. When the hopper is full, the grain is unloaded into a truck, which is then driven to a storage bin or a grain elevator.

The grains are then sorted and packaged or processed, such as milling to make flour. Grains are often measured by the bushel. A US bushel is approximately 8 gallons of dry crops. One bushel of wheat weighs about 60 pounds — that's about the same weight as two sand bags.

USDA MyPlate guidelines recommend making half your grains whole grains! Whole grains mean the grain kernel is intact. Whole grains are rich in fiber, minerals, B vitamins, and folic acid. When grains are processed or refined so that only part of the grain is used, like in white flour, most of the fiber, vitamins, and minerals are lost. Many processed grains have some nutrients like vitamin B or iron added back in, so they are called enriched grains. While all grains are rich in carbohydrates which provide your body energy, whole grains are a great source of fiber, which helps maintain a healthy digestive system. Whole grain sources include whole wheat bread, oatmeal, whole corn, and hulled barley. Grains are a wonderful addition to any meal in entrees, salads, baked goods, and many other delicious recipes. Make sure to choose whole grains for a healthy option!

Dig Deeper

Get more information, register, or download resources:

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mtharvestofthemonth.org

Let's make a tasty grain recipe — Sweet Wheat Berry Salad! Whole grains give us energy that last all day. Enjoy Montana grains all month long! The Montana Harvest of the Month program showcases a different Montana grown food each month in Montana communities. We hope you will join us in tasting Montana this month!



The Montana Harvest of the Month program showcases Montana grown foods in Montana communities. This program is a collaboration between Montana Farm to School, Office of Public Instruction, Montana Team Nutrition Program, National Center for Appropriate Technology, Montana State University Extension, Gallatin Valley Farm to School, FoodCorps Montana, and Montana Department of Agriculture. More information and resources are available at: mtharvestofthemonth.org.

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