



Leading the Way to a Sustainable Montana  
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## News Release

### AERO to Host Second Round of Growing Food Businesses Workshops

After a successful round of workshops on new opportunities for Montana's food entrepreneurs that resulted from changes in state law passed by the 2015 Montana Legislature, AERO will return with a new series of six workshops in 2018. Nancy Matheson, a key architect in the design of the revised food laws says, "Montana's revised food laws are a boon to our state's economic development. Anyone who has thought they might like to start a food business should attend. This workshop has information for farmers, food entrepreneurs, and the resource people who assist them."

Montana's retail food laws now allow cottage food operators to make low-hazard food products in their home kitchens, and sell them directly to consumers year-round in any direct venue. The laws also clarified and offered additional opportunities for temporary and mobile food service operations, for farmers direct-marketing their raw agricultural products, and more. The 2016 workshop series helped identify and explain these changes; the 2018 series will build on this work, as well as identify common issues and changes in applications of the laws.

These five-hour workshops will be held in six locations: Havre on January 10<sup>th</sup>; Glasgow on January 11<sup>th</sup>; Helena on January 23<sup>rd</sup>; Joliet on February 6<sup>th</sup>; Miles City on February 7<sup>th</sup>, and Hamilton on March 1<sup>st</sup>. The workshops are for retail food businesses and entrepreneurs, direct-market farmers, market managers, state and local health officials and resource people, business and economic development professionals, local food non-profits, and folks with cottage food business ideas. Each workshop will provide participants with the information needed to succeed at starting or expanding a food business, as well as help ensure the law's continued implementation and clarity.

"With support from generous funding provided by Western Extension Risk Management Education Center, AERO is proud to collaborate with regional experts to bring these important workshops to communities across Montana. This knowledge will empower people to produce, eat, and support Montana grown food," according to Jenn Battles, Executive Director of AERO, the workshop organizer.

Presenters will include staff from the Food and Consumer Safety Section of the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, AERO, and the Lake County Community Development Corporation. Registration is \$12 with lunch, or free for participants who choose to bring their own. Register at [aeromt.org/workshops](http://aeromt.org/workshops). Each workshop is limited to 30 people. For more information contact Kaleena Miller of AERO at (406) 443-7272 or [kmiller@aeromt.org](mailto:kmiller@aeromt.org).

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*The mission of AERO is to empower communities to nurture and promote a more sustainable Montana. We envision a future where all Montanans have access to clean energy, healthy food, sustainable agriculture, and a network that provides leadership, resources, and advocacy. To learn more about AERO's programs and projects supporting a sustainable future for Montana, visit [www.aeromt.org](http://www.aeromt.org)*