

# Montana beef experts heading to Russia

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A delegation from Montana will be heading to Russia Sunday to rustle up trade interest in the state's beef cattle livestock and genetics know-how.

Ron de Yong, director of the Montana Department of Agriculture, and the rest of the delegation will meet with Russian government officials, livestock breeders and importers of beef genetics at the nation's Golden Autumn Trade Show.

"A large portion of Russia's beef industry is still based on dairy breeds. We hope to provide our hosts with information about Montana's world-class seed stock, performance testing and feeding philosophies, and discuss with Russian breeders how they might make use of U.S. genetics to accomplish their project goals," de Yong said in a news release Wednesday.

He said Montana's hardy beef animals, bred to withstand harsh winter conditions, are likely to be of interest to Russian ranchers.

In 2006 and 2007, Montana breeders exported 235,000 units of bull semen worth more than \$5 million to cattle breeders in more than 15 countries.

Russian producers are using imported livestock genetics to reverse a decline in the country's livestock numbers and production following the breakup of the former Soviet Union. More than 2,000 agricultural cooperatives have been created, and Russians are looking at U.S.

genetics technology to improve further.

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