

## **Ranching Systems Degree Application Instructions**

### **2028 Graduation Cohort**

**2025 Application Period: September 2<sup>nd</sup> through September 19<sup>th</sup> 2025**

*The **Ranching Systems Degree at Montana State University** is a **limited enrollment program** with the goal of providing the high-quality, individually tailored educational opportunities to prepare students with the diverse array of skills in livestock production, rangeland ecology, business management and human resources needed by today's ranch managers.*

*This application is open to sophomore students who have a minimum of 36 credits (including currently enrolled classes) in courses required by the Ranching Systems degree plan and have a cumulative GPA of 2.75 or better. If you have questions about your eligibility to apply, please contact Rachel Frost, [frost@montana.edu](mailto:frost@montana.edu).*

*The application process is a time for examining and expressing one's commitment to the program, expectations of the experience, and career objectives. Remember, the application process is focused on potential, rather than immediate qualifications. Do not try to exaggerate previous experience or skills. **The truth is the absolute best currency in the application process.***

#### *Tips:*

- Read the application requirements carefully and follow directions completely!
- The [Allen Yarnell Center for Student Success](#) can help with resume preparation and cover letters as well as interview preparation. The MSU [Writing Center](#) can help with concise wording on essay questions. I encourage you to take advantage of these resources throughout the application process.

*Combine all files into a single pdf file with the materials embedded in the order below and submit applications via email to the program lead before midnight of the final due date. Send completed applications to Rachel Frost, [frost@montana.edu](mailto:frost@montana.edu)*

#### **Application materials:**

1. **Cover Letter** – introduce yourself and describe your background (both on and off-ranch). Tell us why you chose to apply for the Dan Scott Ranch Management Program. What are your career goals and how will a B.S in Ranching Systems prepare you to achieve those goals?
2. **Résumé** – limit to two pages; use the Allen Yarnell Center for Student Success for feedback and proofing
3. **Application form** –four general questions, three essay questions, and a skills assessment (pages 3-4 of this document)
4. **Two letters of recommendation** from non-relatives; at least one letter should be from a previous employer / supervisor
5. **Current transcripts** – include all post-secondary schools attended (these can be unofficial)
6. **Release of transcripts form** – Permission to share your unofficial transcripts with the interview committee, (page 5 of this document).

#### **Timelines for application process**

- **September 2, 2025** - Applications open for admittance to Ranching Systems Program (2028 Cohort)
- **September 19, 2025** – Applications due for Ranching Systems Program by 11:59 PM.
- **October 1, 2025** - Applicants screened as qualified or not-qualified based on their application portfolio, and GPA. Applicants reviewed by the DSRMP Selection Committee and dates set for interviews.

- **October 2025** - qualified applicants have in-person interview with Program Lead and Interview Committee
- **Prior to November 1, 2025** - applicants receive notification of acceptance
- **November 2025 – March 2026** – Host ranches review applications, phone interview students, and student visits the ranch. Students receive preliminary training in basic agriculture safety practices, leadership, and personal communication. Mentor orientation conducted virtually.
- **April 2026** – Students and ranches agree to site specific learning objectives and sign internship MOU.
- **May 2026** – Students attend the Montana Ranch Bootcamp (week after finals).
- **May 2026** (Third week of the month) – Students begin internship.

### **How are students placed at host ranches?**

- Student and host ranch are introduced through the DSRMP Program Lead.
- Host ranches have the option to interview students for selection as an intern.
- Students must accept or decline an offer from a potential host ranch individually. Students will not interview at multiple ranches simultaneously.
- We aspire to place students in locations where they will be stretched in their knowledge and experiences. When possible, students will be placed on host ranches that have different goals, management strategies, and resources than operations where they have worked previously. We presume students would prefer to be placed on a working ranch that offers maximum potential for expanding their experience and knowledge, rather than limit their learning opportunity in favor of a specific geographic preference.

### **Dismissal from the Program**

Students may be dismissed from the DSRMP prior to graduation for the following reasons:

- Failure to maintain a GPA of 2.75 for two consecutive semesters (*With the exception of personal or family tragedy*)
- Academic misconduct as defined by MSU Student Conduct Code
- Engaging in any illegal activities while a DSRMP student
- Failing an internship course (RS 398 or RS 498)

#### **Montana State University Diversity Statement**

Montana State University is committed to creating a culture of intellectual and personal growth. Because learning is enhanced when topics are examined from diverse perspectives and because individuals possess unique outlooks which reflect the world around us, Montana State University is dedicated to creating an inclusive community that embraces a rich mix in the composition of its student body, staff and faculty. The distinction in viewpoints that comes from differences in race, gender, age, language, socioeconomic status, religion, political affiliation and geographical background are appreciated and valued at MSU as important aspects of the campus community at every level and in every sector of the campus.

To this end, MSU welcomes international students and faculty and enthusiastically seeks engagement with peers from around the globe to expand our depth of understanding and share in the discovery of knowledge. MSU has an especially strong commitment to Native Peoples and actively engages in the development of social and educational initiatives to preserve the cultural integrity of all American Indian students, faculty and staff. MSU strives to advance the ideals of human worth and dignity for all by facilitating open discussion, supporting rational resolution of conflict and encouraging on-going examination of values.

#### **Montana State University Discrimination Policy Statement**

Montana State University's campuses are committed to providing an environment that emphasizes the dignity and worth of every member of its community and that is free from harassment and discrimination based upon race, color, religion, national origin, creed, service in the uniformed services (as defined in state and federal law), veteran's status, sex, age, political ideas, marital or family status, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, genetic information, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation. Such an environment is necessary to a healthy learning, working, and living atmosphere because discrimination and harassment undermine human dignity and the positive connection among all people at our University. Acts of discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, and retaliation will be addressed consistent with this policy.

# DAN SCOTT RANCH MANAGEMENT PROGRAM APPLICATION FORM

Please **answer the following questions to the best of your ability.**

## GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Do you have a dog that you will need to take with you this summer? Yes                      No
2. Have you been convicted of DUI or another offense that would limit your ability to be insured to drive a host-ranch vehicle? Yes      No
3. Most host ranches are very accommodating for family-related leave, weddings, and other commitments of short duration. Do you have any lengthy commitments that would prevent you from serving a full 12 weeks in your internship? Yes      No  
If answered "Yes", please explain \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is the monthly salary, in addition to housing, that you expect to receive when working as a intern? \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## ESSAY QUESTIONS

PLEASE ANSWER EACH QUESTION ON A SEPARATE PAGE. LIMIT RESPONSES TO ONE DOUBLE-SPACED PAGE IN 12-POINT FONT. INCLUDE THE QUESTION AT THE TOP OF EACH PAGE.

- A. ESSAY QUESTION: What do you believe are two essential professional skills that a ranch manager should possess? What are your strengths and weaknesses relative to these skills and how will this degree program grow your strengths and help you address and overcome your weaknesses?
- B. ESSAY QUESTION: In your opinion, what are the two most important short-term (e.g. 2 years) and the two most pressing long-term (e.g. 10-20 years) issues / challenges facing the ranching industry in the US?
- C. ESSAY QUESTION: Acceptance into the DSRMP includes two summer sessions as an intern on a working ranch. Describe your ideal host ranch. What are your goals for the 12-week internship (what would you like to learn, what experience do you wish to gain, what skills would you like to build or acquire)? What is your plan for achieving these goals during the internship?

# The Dan Scott Ranch Management Program

## Skills Assessment



SKILLS ASSESSMENT – PLEASE CHECK THE BOX THAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR EXPERIENCE IN EACH OF THE FOLLOWING SKILLS / ACTIVITIES:

**“COMPETENT”** = CAN PERFORM WITHOUT SUPERVISION / HELP

**“HAVE DONE”** = DONE IN THE PAST, BUT WOULD NEED HELP OR ADDITIONAL TRAINING

**“NEW TO THIS”** = NO EXPERIENCE WITH THIS TASK OR SKILL

| Livestock Husbandry   | Competent | Have Done | New to this |
|---|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| Horseback riding  |           |           |             |
| Horseshoeing and / or hoof trimming   |           |           |             |
| Pasture roping / doctoring of livestock   |           |           |             |
| Pen roping  |           |           |             |
| Low-stress livestock handling   |           |           |             |
| Administering vaccinations and other routine health protocols   |           |           |             |
| Basic wound care  |           |           |             |
| Calving / lambing   |           |           |             |
| Tagging and processing  |           |           |             |
| Disease recognition and treatment   |           |           |             |
| Heat detection or breeding AI   |           |           |             |
| Gathering livestock in large pastures   |           |           |             |
| Intensive grazing management  |           |           |             |
| General Skills  | Competent | Have Done | New to this |
| Plant identification  |           |           |             |
| Rangeland monitoring  |           |           |             |
| Leather working / repair  |           |           |             |
| GPS/GIS mapping   |           |           |             |
| Marketing and design  |           |           |             |
| Second language   |           |           |             |
| Computer skills (Excel, etc.)   |           |           |             |
| Precision ag technology (virtual fence, livestock health monitoring, RFID, EID, etc.) Please list below |           |           |             |
|   |           |           |             |
| Additional skills not listed:   |           |           |             |
|   |           |           |             |

| Infrastructure   | Competent | Have Done | New to this |
|--|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| Electric fence – set up and troubleshoot                   |           |           |             |
| Barbed wire and net wire fencing & repair                  |           |           |             |
| Flood irrigation – ditch and dam maintenance               |           |           |             |
| Pivot irrigation   |           |           |             |
| Wheel line irrigation                                      |           |           |             |
| Hand line irrigation                                       |           |           |             |
| Basic plumbing   |           |           |             |
| Basic electrical   |           |           |             |
| Welding  |           |           |             |
| Carpentry  |           |           |             |
| Power hand tools (skillsaw, drill, impact, etc.)           |           |           |             |
| Pipeline installation / troubleshooting                    |           |           |             |
| Water tank maintenance and repair                          |           |           |             |
| Equipment operation & maintenance                          | Competent | Have Done | New to this |
| Tractor  |           |           |             |
| Hay equipment (swather, baler, rake)                       |           |           |             |
| Skidsteer operation  |           |           |             |
| ATV and UTV operation                                      |           |           |             |
| Trailer driving / backing                                  |           |           |             |
| Trailer wiring   |           |           |             |
| Drive a stick shift transmission                           |           |           |             |
| Backhoe operation  |           |           |             |
| Drive a dump or semi-truck truck                           |           |           |             |
| Change a flat tire   |           |           |             |
| Small engine repair  |           |           |             |
| Equipment maintenance – grease/oil, clean air filter, etc. |           |           |             |



## AUTHORIZATION TO RELEASE INFORMATION

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 is designed to protect the privacy of a student's educational records. Protected records include: financial aid, scholarship, and billing information, transcripts, departmental student files and data, any and all records maintained by this institution related directly to a student.

By signing this form, the student authorizes University personnel to release confidential information to designated persons (please print):

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student GID number (last 4 digits): \_\_\_\_\_

I authorize the academic program personnel specified below to discuss confidential student records/information for the purposes of understanding and meeting University-related obligations, regulations, and procedures.

Name of academic department/program (please print):

Dan Scott Ranch Management Program – Program Lead

Specific purpose for the release of confidential student records (please print):

Transcripts for the purpose of program admissions

I understand that the person(s) specified below may have access via telephone or in person, through U.S. or electronic mail services, to information that may include the following: academic and scholarship records (including academic and eligibility status), student advising records and statements, and administrative records directly related to my student accounts.

Name(s) of people to release information to:

Members of the Dan Scott Ranch Management Program Selection Committee:

Greg Collins

Morgan Densbarger

Scott Hibbard

Billy Whitehurst

This authorization will remain in effect for one month, unless withdrawn in writing by the student sooner, and solely relates to the specified purpose/department and personnel listed above.

Student signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Dan Scott Ranch Management Program

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