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# MONTANA PULSE CROPS

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A LEADER IN PRODUCTION, QUALITY AND INNOVATION

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## BUCKING THE SUN

### "WORKING AGAINST THE GLARE OF SUNRISE OR SUNSET"

In **Bucking the Sun**, Ivan Doig skillfully portrays the rugged beauty and challenges of Northeastern Montana's farm country. Through vivid description and impeccable dialogue, Doig brings the landscape and the characters to life. A novel that is based on the actual construction of the Fort Peck Dam, is a work of fiction, made real with historical events. As Doig describes the landscape, he gives life to Montana's far-reaching Northeast corner.

Riley Slivka, with Agristudios and I made our way to this corner of the world on a perfect bluebird spring day, **Bucking the Sun**, you might say, to video the **glare of sunrise and sunset**, from farmyards, farm fields, and rural Montana towns. We chatted with producers about the challenges that pulse producers face, the fears that they have for future generations and the valuable lessons that growing up in rural America has taught them.

I embarked from Great Falls at 5:30 AM and journeyed towards McCone Country. As I drove north, **the endless expanse of sky, the rolling prairies, and the sweeping horizons** Doig's landscape depiction began to take shape. Upon reaching Circle MT I met up with Riley and together we proceeded to the fourth-generation farm of Ryan & Lee Pawlowski's (father and son) where they cultivate over twelve different crops, including a rotation of six different crop varieties this year, ranging from dryland corn to lentils and durum.

We then spent a windless, warm evening videoing Kyle Vine's father seeding a large pea field. Kyle, along with his wife, and two kids, manage the Vine Family Farm in Vida MT. They not only oversee the farm but also maintain external employment to secure a financially sustainable future for the growing farm and family. Departing from Vida, we continued north to Glasgow as Doig's description of sunsets was beginning to linger on the horizon. **Sunrises are breathtaking, casting hues of gold, orange, and pink across the land.**

Riley and I left the hotel at 7 AM, and met up with Dale Tarum, at his farm outside of Glasgow Montana. Dale known for his involvement in local and regional committees and organizations discussed the significance of grower education, neighbor communications, community culture, and his aspiration to mentor others at this stage in his life. Despite sharing challenges and setbacks, Dale's stories mirrored Doig's depiction of spring in NE Montana. **Spring bursts forth with green shoots, promising renewal.** Our journey continued to Daniels County to meet up with producer Curtis Cromwell. Curtis directed us with a Pindrop to a field he was seeding just outside of Flaxville Montana. I stepped out of my car, and onto the lightly disrupted soil. **The scent, so familiar to those who work the land, evokes a sense of connection to the earth itself.** Just as Doig eloquently describes the essence of soil, Curtis's return to his family's farming legacy after two decades in an alternate career, shows his deep-rooted connection to the land.

Our final visit led us to former MPCC President Kim Murray at his generational farm in Froid Montana. Kim recounted his involvement in the beginning stages of the Montana Pulse Crop Committee, reminiscing about the early challenges that the industry faced, and the many 800-mile round trips he had taken to Great Falls for Ag related meetings. When I asked him about meeting the nutritional needs of a growing population his response reminded me of how Doig describes the community of NE Montana. **The spirit of resilience runs deep—the generations who weathered the Dust Bowl now face modern challenges with unwavering determination.** Kim Murray stated, "You should never underestimate the capabilities of the American Farmer"

As I departed from Froid and drove West, **against the glare of the sunset**, I could not help but think how the term "**Bucking the Sun**" not only describes the landscapes of Montana but embodies the dedication of the men and women in agriculture and natural resource production who labor from dawn to dusk to provide the most basic but most necessary needs to a growing population.

-LIZ EDMUNDSON

