

# Wyoming Agriculture

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## Legislative Interim Update

BY BRETT MOLINE

The Wyoming Legislative committees have been meeting during the interim. Much of the discussion has revolved around educating the committee members on the role of that committee. Each committee will meet three times over the interim, with committee sponsored bills being finalized at their last meeting.

The Agriculture Committee met June 5-6. One topic was eminent domain.

Part of the concern is those with the power of eminent domain can get easements for projects which will benefit those developing a resource, but not those landowners whose land will be needed for the infrastructure, such as pipelines and electric lines. This topic will be further discussed. One aspect hopefully dealt with will be liability of landowners for the infrastructure placed on private lands. Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation policy would support removing liability to the landowner.

Removing liability is something landowners negotiate for, but it probably comes with reduced payments to the landowners.

The Agriculture Committee also received testimony on problems with overpopulation of elk in a region of SE Wyoming. The herd objective is 1,800 head and the population estimate is 4,500. Some ranchers' forage is being consumed by elk and hugely reducing the livestock carrying capacity. A bill idea was floated to facilitate ranchers being paid for the

forage consumed by the elk. The ranchers in attendance pointed out that measure is not what they are asking for, they are asking for the elk numbers to be reduced. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department has tried several tools, but the elk population remains high.

The problem of overpopulation of game animals is not restricted to SE Wyoming. If anyone has any ideas of additional tools to reduce game populations, contact WyFB or the Game and Fish. ■

## WyFB calls for withdrawal of BLM Conservation Rule

BY KERIN CLARK

This proposed rule could have far-reaching implications for not only our members, but our entire state's environmental and economic health," wrote Kelly Carpenter, Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation (WyFB) National Affairs Associate. Carpenter submitted comments June 28 on behalf of the organization to the United States Department of Interior Bureau of Land Management (BLM) regarding the proposed 2023 rulemaking

"Conservation and Landscape Health." Wyoming is approximately 28% BLM land.

WyFB noted numerous concerns with the Agency's proposed rule and asked for the BLM to withdraw the rule. "We ask for your consideration of withdrawing the rule," Carpenter wrote. "We are willing to be engaged in a new process going forward with robust stakeholder involvement for the benefit of common-sense land management in the future."

Ambiguous definitions and terms for implementation of this rule raise concerns.

"The proposed rule leaves many BLM land permittees and lessees wondering about the security of their livelihoods and the range health of federal lands," Carpenter wrote.

WyFB emphasized the lack of proper stakeholder representation and environmental and economic analysis as well as lack of authority to amend the Federal Land Policy Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) are troublesome. "This proposed rule is a major federal action with environmen-

tal and cultural implications with shifting land use objectives that requires in-depth analysis prior to proceeding with rule implementation," Carpenter said.

Regarding FLPMA, WyFB pointed out the Act requires Congressional authority to make significant changes and designations to multiple uses. Additionally, the proposed rule attempts to add the non-use of conservation. "This strategy also requires Congressional approval," she continued.

CONSERVATION RULE ... Page 5



### Agriculture Issues Roundtable Discussion

Congresswoman Harriet Hageman visited with members and staff of the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation and others in late June during her travels across the state for Town Halls. The roundtable discussion in Goshen County included a multitude of issues facing Wyoming farmers and ranchers at the federal level. Those issues included water, energy, the BLM proposed conservation rule, and the Farm Bill. Shown in this picture with Representative Hageman are Goshen County Farm Bureau Federation Board members: Lane Hageman; Representative Hageman; Joe Campbell; Shawn Dovey; and Kent Hunter. KERIN CLARK PHOTO.

## Ag land valuation estimates released

BY BRETT MOLINE

Agriculture land taxes will probably increase, again. The Wyoming Department of Revenue's Agricultural Land Valuation Study was reviewed at a meeting on July 6th.

Preliminary estimates for taxable values for agricultural lands have been released. Agricultural lands are divided into 3 types: irrigated crop land, dry land crop land, and grazing land. Each type has different production classes, with the more productive land having a higher value.

Irrigated crop land value is partially based off the price of all hay, dry land value is partially

based on the price of wheat, and grazing land value is partially based on the private land grazing fee. The value of land is also partially based on the normal productivity of that land.

The preliminary increases in taxable value for agricultural lands are: irrigated crop land values will increase 12.4%, dry land crop land will increase 21.5% and grazing land will increase 4.6%. These are preliminary figures with the final estimates done this fall.

The price of hay, wheat and private grazing all increased in the last year, leading to the increase in land value. ■

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[www.wyfb.org](http://www.wyfb.org)

CALENDAR  
OF EVENTS

## September

- 9 Wyoming Needs Agriculture Event - Laramie
- 10 Laramie County Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting at 5 p.m. - Farm Bureau Office in Pine Bluffs
- 12 Goshen County Farm Bureau Federation Resolutions Meeting at 6 p.m.
- 13 Carbon County Ranch & Farm Bureau Federation Resolutions Meeting
- 18 Uinta County Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting at 6 p.m.-Heritage Barn in Lyman
- 19 Goshen County Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting at 5:30 p.m.-Lincoln Center in Torrington
- 20 Sheridan County Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting-Sheridan
- 21 Big Horn County Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting for Regular and Century Club Members at 6 p.m.—Burlington Fire Hall (RSVP 307-217-1359 or 307-272-5600)
- 25 Niobrara County Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting at 5:30 p.m.-Niobrara County Fairgrounds in Lusk
- 26 Central District Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting—Elk Mountain Hotel in Elk Mountain

## October

- 5 Southeast District Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting at 10 a.m.-Platte Valley Bank in Wheatland

## November

- 9-11 WyFB 104th Annual Meeting-Cheyenne

Visit [wyfb.org](http://wyfb.org) for calendar updates

## Working with companies to deliver right to repair solutions

**Zippy Duvall**

*American Farm Bureau Federation President*



Farmers are resourceful—sometimes by nature, but more often, by necessity. I was reminded of that one day when I decided to “clean up” my dad’s scrap pile on the farm. You see, my dad, like most farmers, was saving those spare parts to save time and money—both of which are in short supply on the farm. Sure enough, I threw out a part he needed. Dad wasn’t happy, and I learned a valuable lesson. Sometimes you need to fix things yourself or rely on a handy neighbor to help. That’s why when Farm Bureau members called on American Farm Bureau to work with ag equipment companies on right to repair, we made it a top priority to find a path forward.

Advocacy is at the heart of our work at Farm Bureau. From town hall meetings to hearings on Capitol Hill, advocacy at every level, from local to federal government, is critical to strengthening agriculture and protecting our safe, sustainable food supply. But collaboration across the food and agriculture supply chain can be just as important. In fact, sometimes opting for

a private sector solution over a legislative fix is preferred. That was the exact sentiment expressed by our members when they charged us with outreach to equipment manufacturers. Market-based solutions are effective and much less likely to get bogged down in politics and red tape. It’s about sitting down at the table and sorting things out.

Not long after our grassroots members called on American Farm Bureau to work with ag equipment companies to find a solution on right to repair, we secured our first memorandum of understanding. We kicked off the year signing that MOU with John Deere at our annual convention in San Juan. And we didn’t stop there. I said back in January that I hoped the MOU with John Deere would be the first of many—and sure enough, more have followed. Thanks to the hard work of your team at American Farm Bureau, in the subsequent five months we also signed right to repair MOUs with Case IH and New Holland, Kubota, and AGCO. In June we were pleased to announce yet another MOU

— with CLAAS. A year ago, I never would have imagined that by midyear we would have signed MOUs covering approximately three quarters of the ag machinery sold in the U.S.

Thanks to these agreements, farmers across the country now have the freedom and flexibility to repair their own equipment or work with a local mechanic. In rural communities, it can be challenging and costly to travel for hours to the nearest approved mechanic or dealer when expensive farm machinery breaks down. When your family, your neighbors and your country are counting on you to keep the farm running and the food supply coming, you don’t always have extra hours to spare.

At Farm Bureau, we are proud of the agreements we have achieved with these ag equipment companies, and we will continue working with other manufacturers as well to ensure all farmers have access to the tools necessary to keep their equipment running, and to keep food on the table for families across America. ■

## Government should employ founding document principles

**Ken Hamilton**

*Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation Executive Vice President*



I suppose it is no surprise that the current administration, after receiving a strong rejection of their promulgated WOTUS rules, should next shift the focus to keeping the overall rule, but fixing those parts of the rule it feels were rejected by the courts. This approach would only make sense if the fundamental principle for the rule was not flawed. Trying a piece meal approach will mean protracted legal fights as well as millions of dollars spent by the regulated public to determine once again whether a fix to the rule is in fact in compliance with the Supreme Court’s decision or is merely more lipstick on the pig.

At the same time as the WOTUS proposal many of us in agriculture were alarmed by the 30 X 30 executive order from the President. The alarm in the West was even more pronounced because most of us were aware that Washington, D.C. controlled a significant land area and even more minerals. Wyoming has roughly 48 % of our surface estate managed from D.C. and estimates as high as 80% of the mineral resources.

We saw much resistance to the concept early on. As time went by, the 30 X 30 concept got renamed. Or perhaps

some new lipstick was added. The newly renamed 30 X 30 looked, as one state agency head said, like an airplane running out of fuel without a place to land.

With the publishing of the Department of Interior’s “...rules on Conservation and Landscape Health” it is obvious that the plane landed at Interior. The rule relies on terms that are similar to things we read in the 30 X 30 such as “protect intact landscapes,” “restore degraded habitat,” and “maintain functioning and productive ecosystems and work to ensure their resilience.” The rule references a number of Executive Orders that would mitigate the effects of climate change (EO 13990), build resilience against the impacts of climate change (EO 14008) and help implement Secretary Order 3399 to establish a Departmental Climate Task Force.

The rule, like the 30 X 30 concept, is loaded with ill-defined terms that may sound good to some but have no agreed upon meaning. Conserving 30% of the land by 2030 ran head on into a similar problem when it became evident that no one in D.C. had any idea how much land was already conserved in the U.S. Another 30 X 30 effort which has not been heard from for some time was a national

inventory of lands that are currently conserved. Arguments erupted over what conserved lands even were. While the current administration hasn’t defined what that term means, they launched a huge rule on conservation and landscape health. In government, defining terms is important.

This past 4th of July reminded me that one of America’s founding documents, the Declaration of Independence was a masterpiece of terms that were not ill defined. “We hold these Truths to be self-evident that all Men are created equal...” Thomas Jefferson, who was credited as primary author for these words borrowed heavily from the recently adopted Virginia Declaration of Rights. Our Declaration of Independence was an effort by a “Committee of Five” who then forwarded the draft of it to the Continental Congress. Jefferson later wrote that this document, was “an expression of the American mind.” Jefferson, the Committee of Five and the Continental Congress wrote a document where everyone understood the terms used. I think how nice it would be if our current bureaucrats and Congress would employ a similar technique. ■



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**MISSION:** To represent the voices of Wyoming farmers and ranchers through grassroots policy development while focusing on protecting private property rights, strengthening agriculture, and supporting farm and ranch families through advocacy, education, and leadership development.

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# National news updates

BY KELLY CARPENTER

## Prop 12 SCOTUS

In mid-May, the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) ruled in favor of California's Proposition 12 (Prop 12) that will impact the type of pork that can be sold within the California state border. To refresh our memory, American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) summarizes the voter initiative as a 2018 measure that bans the sale of pork in California from hogs that do not meet California's production standards, no matter their geographic location from birth to processing.

AFBF, along with the National Pork Producers Council, fought the good fight in the courtroom but unfortunately came up short under their claim that Prop 12 violates the Dormant Commerce Clause. The fractured opinion from the 9 justices indicated support for AFBF's argument that Prop 12 puts undue burden on interstate commerce to some justices believing this issue is best equipped to be settled by Congress. This decision could set precedent in the unclear area of the dormant commerce clause and voter initiatives impacting interstate commerce.

Both chambers of congress are working to introduce legislation to

visceralize Prop 12 as standalone bills, not inclusions in the Farm Bill.

## SGIT update

On June 6, the Wyoming Sage Grouse Implementation Team (SGIT) met in Lander to facilitate public comments regarding their process to update Core Area mapping. The interactive map can be found on the Wyoming Game and Fish Department website to view the additions and deletions that are proposed. The members of SGIT extended their invitation for public comment to the proposed Core Area map changes by July 28 at 5pm. ■



## Talking agriculture

WyFB Executive Vice President Ken Hamilton visits with Congresswoman Harriet Hageman during a late June ag issues discussion.

KERIN CLARK PHOTO.



# Member-CENTS

Visit [wyfb.org](http://wyfb.org) and click on the "Benefits" tab for a complete listing of value-added benefits.

The Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation believes constitutional government, the competitive enterprise system, property rights and individual freedom are necessary components for a strong agriculture, a strong Wyoming and a strong America. We are a centennial grassroots organization that cares about your future.

Whether you are a farmer, rancher or a consumer of food... membership is a good investment to secure stability of agriculture here in Wyoming. As a member, WyFB provides you with exclusive benefits as a way to say thank you. These benefits may pay your annual membership fee many times over.

Current members may access member benefits at [www.wyfb.org](http://www.wyfb.org) and click on the "Benefits" tab.

You may also utilize the Farm Bureau Member Benefits app on your phone to access your benefits.

Questions: email [broes@wyfb.org](mailto:broes@wyfb.org) or call 307-721-7723.

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# A kind word can impact lives

BY ALETTA (ZIEHL) GRAUBERGER, WYFB YF&R COMMITTEE SECRETARY

You might have heard of “Throwback Thursday” on social media, but if you haven’t, it is a special caption you use to share an old post, photo, or memory, and of course, done on a Thursday. Now, I am not sure what day it is when you are reading this, so we will call this a Farm Bureau Throwback.

I would like to introduce you to a couple of my mentors, Raenell Taylor and Kerin Clark.

Picture this...The year is 2018. I am 18 years old and extra focused on the Wyoming FFA Employment Skills contest. I competed in two rounds before getting into Cheyenne, Wyoming for the 91st annual Wyoming FFA Convention. I was also eager to graduate from high school within the next month. I knew about Farm Bureau and had a solid idea of what they did, but I only knew a little about the Young Farmer and Rancher Committee (YF&R). I was awaiting preliminary contest round results, so it was a prime time to step foot into the career fair. Initially, I believed it would be irrelevant to me as I had already planned my future. However, I stumbled upon the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation booth where Kerin and Raenell sat. These two women were genuinely excited to be there and shared such a joy for agriculture; they asked me how things were going and wished me lots of luck for the week.



Farm Bureau Throwback to 2018 at the Wyoming FFA State Convention. The WyFB YF&R Committee had a booth at the Career Fair to share the opportunities available to young agriculturalists through the WyFB YF&R program. In this picture, Aletta Ziehl took a photo with WyFB YF&R Committee Member Raenell Taylor and WyFB YF&R Coordinator Kerin Clark.

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Looking back, I think their kindness, encouragement, and calm during the crazy week paid off because within the next few days I won the 2018 Employment Skills Contest, along with a few other recognitions. In 2020, I became a part of the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation YF&R Committee.

I have grown and developed into a more capable agriculturalist through my involvement in various agricultural organizations. The people I have met along the way have been instrumental in helping me become a better version of myself.

Here’s one example of leadership growth. During the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation annual meeting in November, Raenell taught me how to work on the WyFB YF&R Promotions Sub-committee efficiently. Fast forward to the future, we are now in July of 2023, Raenell has moved to serve as the Promotions

Sub-Committee vice-chair, and I am the chairman of this sub-committee.

In 2018, Kerin, Raenell, and I couldn’t have predicted these roles, but I am sure glad that they took the time to offer me a kind word, a smile, and some extra encouragement to promote agriculture. I hope this story inspires you to go out and make a new friend. You never know how much their encouragement or mentorship could impact both of your lives. ■

Aletta Grauberger was born and raised in Casper, Wyoming. Aletta and her husband Ryan live on her family’s alfalfa and pig farm. Natrona county is home where they adore spending time with their families and their chocolate lab - Ellie. Aletta serves on the Natrona County Farm and Ranch Bureau board of directors and enjoys helping 4-H and FFA members with their projects and contests.



Young Farmer & Rancher Conference

Save the Date February 2-3, 2024 Laramie, Wyoming

**CONSERVATION RULE...** From Page 1

The Agency did not seek stakeholder involvement until the public comment period that closed on July 5. "There was no direct outreach to affected parties, and there were no opportunities for review prior to the release of the proposed rule," Carpenter wrote.

WyFB also requested more precise definitions. "The proposed rule is overwhelmingly nebulous in defining key terms that are needed to understand the exact intention of the Agency and their land management goals," Carpenter wrote.

"If the Agency intends to maintain recreational use of the land in tandem with conservation uses, this may be at the expense of stable interests, such as grazing and mineral development," Carpenter wrote. "If we are maintaining or increasing the number of public land users, their activities will have an impact on the environment."

Carpenter noted the proposed rule should also be subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). "This proposed rule will certainly have unknown environmental impacts when potentially changing land use," she continued.

"This rule is steeped in language indicating science-based, factual proposals, yet without clear definitions for implementation, we're left with another case of an abuse of discretion and otherwise not in accordance with appropriate actions taken by administrative agencies," Carpenter said.

The proposed rule seeks indigenous knowledge in the decision-making process while neglecting generational knowledge. "We feel the Agency is purposefully ignoring knowledge gained by ranchers, many of whom have lived and worked on federal

lands for four or five generations," Carpenter wrote. "During that time many of these individuals have gained important knowledge about what processes work and what don't but find themselves frustrated by the Agency's avoidance of their knowledge."

The lack of an economic analysis is disappointing to WyFB members. "We believe this rule should be subject to the Office of Management and Budget Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs for interagency review," she wrote. "An analysis by the Small Business Administration Office of Consumer Advocacy is also warranted due to the economic factors."

According to WyFB, adding conservation leases and ACEC designations leading to non-use of lands will impact local and regional economies that depend on small businesses that utilize BLM lands.

The proposed rule would have a negative impact on completing existing grazing leases and new conservation lease permits, according to WyFB. "This would create an undesirable workload and stressful work environment for BLM staff," Carpenter wrote.

WyFB voiced concerns about expanding and increasing designation of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and conservation leases.

"In relation to the rule, the ACEC designations essentially establish de facto wilderness type designations outside of the appropriate channel of Congressional action," Carpenter stated. "The concern on conservation leases would be the roll back of the FLPMA approved multiple use mandate thus establishing swaths of land in a perpetual state of non-use."

"The numerous concerns are not only detrimental to Wyoming, but detrimental to all states that have BLM holdings," Carpenter concluded. ■

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AUG 5

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SUNDAY  
AUG 6

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MONDAY  
AUG 7

MICRKO MANIA WRESTLING



TUESDAY  
AUG 8

MUTTON BUSTIN'

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THURSDAY  
AUG 10

PIG WRESTLING

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FRIDAY  
AUG 11

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# The people of the Farm Bureau Federation

## Meet the volunteer leader Andrea Dockery

County: Fremont  
Farm Bureau Leadership  
Position(s):  
● WyFB Ag Tax Committee State Chair  
● Fremont County Farm Bureau Federation President

**Wyoming Agriculture:** Describe ranch background.

**Dockery:** I was born and raised on our family ranch along the Sweetwater River near Jeffrey City, WY. My great grandfather Albert Myers Sr came from Kansas and established our ranch in 1917, where he raised his family. My grandfather Albert Myers and great Uncle Sam Myers ran the ranch upon their father's death. In 1969 my parents, Doug and Cindy Thompson, moved to and worked on the ranch and purchased it from my grandparents. In 1999 Thad and I moved to the ranch and worked with my parents, and in 2015 Thad and I purchased the ranch from my parents. Thad and I, along with our daughters Laura and Rylee, run a cow/calf ranch, and keep our calves and run them as yearlings.

**Wyoming Agriculture:** Education, Hobbies and Other Background.

**Dockery:** Upon graduation from high school, I attended Central Wyoming College and transferred to the University of Wyoming. I graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Family and Consumer Science Education. I taught high school for 3 years, but my true passion was ranching and livestock. You can take the girl off of the ranch, but you can't take the ranch out of the girl. After Thad and I got married, I took University of Wyoming Outreach classes in the county and graduated in 2005 with my Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education. Ranching is our whole life and when you have a job you love, I don't really have hobbies. Some things about ranching, I would consider a hobby. I really enjoy branding season...wrestling calves, roping and visiting, probably because we don't see anyone all winter, so it is our first opportunity to socialize. I really love being able to watch our daughters in sports and other school activities, but most of all it is truly a blessing to have them working alongside me on the ranch. I do enjoy substitute teaching when able, sewing, reading, and welding to repair things. Besides being actively involved in the Farm Bureau Federation, I am on the Lander District Recreation Board, the Fremont County Recreation Board, Sage West Hospital Board, and the High Plains Power Board. I believe it is important to be involved in our community.

**Wyoming Agriculture:** How did you get involved in Farm Bureau Federation leadership?

**Dockery:** Thad and I got involved in the Fremont County Farm Bureau Federation in 2003 after we were awarded the Young Farmer and Rancher Couple. We believed that if the local board was willing to honor us with that award, we should at least start attending monthly meetings. That fall we attended our first Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation meeting. This is where we truly learned what the Federation was about, and we were "hooked". I got involved with the leadership of our local board when I was elected secretary. We have to step up in our organizations



Andrea Dockery



Ranching on the Sweetwater River in wintertime

otherwise they may go away. A few years ago, I was asked if I would be interested in the Ag Tax Committee chair. I was willing to do it because of the encouragement, and the guidance available. "If not us, then who?"—John Lewis

**Wyoming Agriculture:** Why do you make the time to be involved in Farm Bureau Federation leadership?

**Dockery:** In 2003 when we became actively involved we learned that the Farm Bureau Federation was a voice—a very strong voice—for our ranch, our livelihood, our culture and way of life. Ranching is in my blood so having an organization to protect and preserve our way of life did not take a second thought to get involved. We just make it a priority. No one has the time and there is always something to do other than attend meetings, but if we are not willing to be a voice in "The Voice" of agriculture, we can't expect others to.

**Wyoming Agriculture:** Can you share an example of a policy that has had a positive impact on your farm or ranch?

**Dockery:** The No Trespassing policy, which eventually became a state law, had a positive impact on our ranch. Prior to the policy, we had unknown individuals take data/photos and then use that to falsely accuse us of discharging sewer into the river, all the while it was a hose to pump water to the yard.



The Thad Dockery Family at Branding Time...Rylee, Andrea, Thad and Laura



Andrea (right) and her daughter Laura branding

**Wyoming Agriculture:** What advice do you have on how individuals can make a difference for Wyoming agriculture through the Farm Bureau Federation?

**Dockery:** The neat thing about Farm Bureau is every member has a voice. It is a simple and friendly process. Any Regular member can attend a county meeting and share their issues or concerns. There may be existing policy for the concern and if not there could be through a resolution that is drafted in the county and sent to the state convention. I believe this process truly allows every member to have a voice.

**Wyoming Agriculture:** What are some of the issues facing farmers and ranchers in your county/district state?

**Dockery:** The issues facing farmers and ranchers today are endless. One that is newly fresh is ranchers now need a prescription for so many things that were over the counter. The days of going in the ag store and picking up penicillin are gone. This is a huge burden of extra time to get the prescription and a financial burden. Before the implementation of this, if we needed a prescription for medicated mineral, our local Veterinarian charged us \$25.00 and would only allow us a ton. Now we will have more of a financial burden every time we need a prescription. Along with this, many veterinary pharmaceuticals are not even available.

Another issue is the ever-increasing property taxes and assessments due to the huge influx of folks moving to the county. When these folks come to Wyoming, they are able to offer and pay much more than the seller is asking. Because properties have been sold for so much, the properties around them are being assessed at a higher value, therefore increasing the taxes of someone who has lived there a long time. Another issue is sky rocketing grocery prices, parts, fuel and general repair. What we are getting for our cattle we sell is not covering the nearly double, if not triple, prices for everything we use or need.

**Wyoming Agriculture:** How important is each member of the Federation?

**Dockery:** Farm Bureau Federation is a grassroots ag organization. Something grassroots is at the most basic level of something, down there in the dirt with the roots of an idea or activity. If you're looking to make a change from the ground up, start at the grassroots. Every member and their ideas matter. If it were not for the members, we would not have this amazing organization that is our voice for agriculture. ■



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- 1/3 cup sour cream
● 1 tbsp mayonnaise
● 1 tbsp white vinegar
● salt and pepper to taste
● 4 cups frozen sweet peas
● 8 slices of bacon, cooked and chopped
● 1/2 small red onion, diced
● 6 oz cheddar cheese, cut into small cubes

PREPARATION:

- 1. In a small bowl mix together the sour cream, mayonnaise, white vinegar, salt and pepper for the dressing.
2. In a large bowl add the peas, bacon, onion, and cheese. Stir to mix.
3. Add the dressing to the pea mixture. Stir to coat. Cover and place in the fridge for at least one hour. Enjoy.

FOR MORE RECIPES VISIT: www.modernranchwife.com

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The "Make WyFB Magnetic" workshop at the Membership Committee Meeting provided a look at member engagement. Shown here sharing ideas are Kristi Ellis, of Uinta County, and Nicole Ziehl, of Natrona County. KERIN CLARK PHOTO.



WyFB Membership Coordinator Brooke Roes delivered a workshop on member engagement at the 2023 WyFB Membership Committee Meeting. KERIN CLARK PHOTO.

# 2023 WyFB Membership Committee Meeting

BY KERIN CLARK

Sharing ideas and discussing membership with fellow members from around Wyoming provides great value to the annual Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation Membership Committee Meeting. Nearly 40 people attended the meeting June 1 in Casper.

Committee members discussed membership quota and awards as well as reviewed reports. One of the most

beneficial components of the meeting is the networking and idea sharing that takes place during the discussion as well as the workshop session.

This year's workshop was titled "Making WyFB Magnetic." Led by WyFB's Brooke Roes and Kerin Clark, the workshop focused on leadership, member engagement and events. Members were encouraged to start their conversations with "Why" to show others why they


get, and stay, involved in the Federation. Member engagement and event planning explored opportunities to connect with members and potential members on the local level. The workshop concluded with a presentation by Carbon County Ranch & Farm Bureau Federation President Kyle Berger on what they've learned about planning local events. Berger shared about the success of the recent Cabin Fever Ball they produced.

Just like our grassroots policy development process, membership success is driven by the work of the grassroots members at the local level. Have ideas to share? Questions on membership? Reach out to WyFB Membership Coordinator Brooke Roes at broes@wyfb.org

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## New Members

## ALBANY

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## BIG HORN

Cannon Cook (REG), Greybull; Joshua Moore (REG), Big Horn; Bart Burningham, Ten Sleep; James McLauchlan, Shell; Ron Dalin (REG), Greybull; Travis Tianer, Manderson; Holly Turner, Burlington; Linda & Cecil Mullins (REG), Manderson; Sam Good, Greybull; Karen Brown, Basin; Patsy Shepard, Greybull; Jeff Probst, Green Valley, AZ; Joshua Carris, Greybull; Clarence Duncan, Basin; Kent Anderson, Greybull; Casey Neumeyer, Greybull; Clarajo Bennett, Burlington;

Eugene Barnes, Shell; Emily Gradwohl, Basin; James Kelso/ Kelso Farms LLC (REG), Emblem; George Kelso(REG), Emblem

## CAMPBELL

Russell Hall, Newcastle; Kelly & Aaron Cannon, Gillette; Michael Elmore/ Total Construction, Inc (REG), Gillette; Tomi Barbour (REG), Gillette; Laurie & Matthew Walker, Gillette; Marshall Herbst, Gillette; Megan & Porter Campbell, Gillette; Ethan Edwards, Gillette; Dylan Collins, Sheridan; Amy & Matthew Dewey, Gillette; Susie & Dan Reynolds, Gillette; Kim Ferron, Gillette

## CARBON

Brian Talamantes, Encampment; Marcy & Skyler Knotwell, Encampment; Sheril Bailey, Rawlins; Robyn & Colton Miller, Saratoga;

Chester Carson, Rawlins; Michelle Sidun, Rawlins; John Manbeck, Dixon

## CONVERSE

Blake Nelson, Glenrock; Julie & Kenneth Johnson, Douglas; Toni Coates, Glenrock; Kylie Wolford, Douglas, Luke Bethea, Douglas, Tammy Bratton, Douglas; Daniel Johnson, Douglas

## CROOK

Pat & John Heinz, Moorcroft; Sally & James Neiman (Reg), Hulett; Carole Bennett (REG), Sundance; Wade Pearson (REG), Aladdin; Gabe Gill (REG), Moorcroft; Wendy & Mark Neugebauer (REG), Moorcroft; Jackpot Ranch Inc (REG), Sundance; Tonya Tysver, Hulett; Megan & Josh Franzen (Reg), Sundance; Krystal & Zach Steele (REG), Sundance; Colter Ellsbury/ Ellsbury Ranch LLC (REG), Sundance

## FREMONT

Michael Hines, Riverton; David Kallgren (REG), Lander; Peggy & Milton Miller (REG), Crowheart; Laurie & Lyle Alexander (REG), Crowheart; James Dewey (REG), Riverton; Chad Franke (REG), Lander; Cindy Jaure, Shoshoni; Janet & Rayburn Beck, Fort Washakie; Mary & Barry Perryman, Lander; Derik Myers (REG), Riverton; Jessica & Jacob Raymond (REG), Riverton; Benjamin Gose (REG), Lander; Amber & Vay Jensen (REG), Pavillion; Jessalyn & William Meeks, Riverton; Jenna Ackerman (REG), Lander; Tammie & Alex Jones (REG), Riverton; Crystal & Cody Myers, Riverton; Susan & Zale Vacher (REG), Riverton; Rebecca & Robert Emerson, Riverton; Abilene Philleo, Evansville

## GOSHEN

William Lewis/ Painted Meadows LLC (REG), Lingle; Harold Thomas, Fort Laramie; Denton Shaw, Torrington; Debra Thomsen, Torrington; Danny Hockensmith, Lingle; Brodie Mackey, Torrington; Cheryl Raboin, Torrington; Worthy Keller (REG), Torrington; Ross Bethers, Lingle

## HOT SPRINGS

Rhonda Perrie, Casper; Jocelyn & Ronald Jurovich, Thermopolis; William Devries, Thermopolis; Tony & Allen Nettles, Thermopolis; Lindsey Woodward, Cheyenne

## JOHNSON

Kirk Strom, Buffalo; J & P LLC (REG), Casper; Cotter Kinghorn, Buffalo; Kevin Lund (REG), Kaycee; Mary & Mike Plank, Buffalo; John

Zorbas, Buffalo; Lloyd Davis, Kaycee; Casey Freise, Buffalo; Richard Griffith, Buffalo; Patsy & Larry Wirth, Buffalo

## LARAMIE

Cherie Schlumpf, Cheyenne; Catherine Heyl, Cheyenne; Corleen & Charles Skinner, Cheyenne; Mary & Thomas Parish, Cheyenne; Stacey Cameron, Cheyenne; Jeff Ketchum (REG), Cheyenne; Sandra Theriquit, Cheyenne; Kurt Garman, Cheyenne; Rhonda & Mark Sutherlnad, Cheyenne; Christina & Ronald Canterbury, Cheyenne; Tori Manning, Cheyenne; Glen Sisson, Pine Bluffs; Kathy & Vince Thrush, Carpenter; Shaunarae & Shane Wilson, Cheyenne; Nicholas Lamp, Cheyenne; Connie & Bernard Volk, Lusk; Jennifer & Willima Newcomb, Laramie; Darren Moore/ Moore's Funny Farm LLC (REG), Cheyenne; Donald Chestnut, Cheyenne; John Frank, Cheyenne; Peggy Garrett, Cheyenne; Brandon Geisler, Cheyenne; Ron Catterson, Carpenter; Eileen Sanchez, Cheyenne; Darlene Hammons, Cheyenne; Tanner Leuning (REG), Burns; Gary Grigsby, Cheyenne; Andrea & Jason Aguir, Cheyenne; Ronald Mulberry, Cheyenne; Cindy & Clay Weibel, Cheyenne; Michael White, Cheyenne; Amy Dooley, Cheyenne; James Baker, Cheyenne; Brian Hall, Cheyenne; Brenda & Rodney Berg, Cheyenne; James Rogers, Cheyenne

## LINCOLN

Ruth & Wes Miller, Kemmerer; Phillip Krall, Kemmerer; Rachel & Roby Roberts, Afton; Jenee & Alec Rudy, Kemmerer; Shane Pope/ Shane Company LLC (REG), Cokeville; Brian Toomer, Cokeville; Anna Gruenwald, Thayne; Travis Ladner, Alpine; Sara Christensen, Kemmerer; Mallory & Trevor Ware, Afton

## NATRONA

JoAnn Skeim-True/ Cretaceous Land LLC, Casper; Michael McMurray, Evansville; Cynthia & Loren Tappe, Bar Nunn; Denise Cornejo/ Cornejo, LLC, Tucson, AZ; Gary Van Zandt, Casper; John McCoy, Casper; Denise Miller, Casper; Raeann Weber, Mills; Melinda Schamel, Casper; Nancy Mangus, Casper; Dana Hudson, Mills; Derek Barsness, Casper

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# Wyoming Needs Agriculture event September 9 in Laramie

BY KERIN CLARK

Wyoming Cowboy fans mark your calendars for September 9 in Laramie. The Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation will host the 10th annual Wyoming Needs Agriculture event. This event gives Cowboy fans of all ages the opportunity to interact with farmers and ranchers and learn more about agriculture.

The event will feature the fun “Ag Olympics” course and the “Field to Fork Family Feud” game. The first 400 participating fans will receive a Wyoming Cowboys/Wyoming Needs Agriculture t-shirt. The event will be held in the Indoor Practice Facility during pre-game festivities. The Cowboys play Portland State University on September 9 with kick-off at 2 p.m.

Wyoming Cowboys are steeped in traditions; both the Cowboys on the football field and the Cowboys in the pasture working in agriculture. Agriculture is the heart of Wyoming. From the food we eat to the open spaces we enjoy to the economy to the people...Wyoming Needs Agriculture! ■



**NEW MEMBERS...** From Page 10

**PARK**

Mike Allen, Powell; Byron Bennett (REG), Meeteetse; Tawny & Jared Belford, Powell; Jay Holloway (REG), Cody; Griffon Farms LLC (REG), Cody; Mark Carsey (REG), Powell; Katharine Steves, Cody; Elaine & Bill Dobbs Deaver; Alexander Cianflone/ Wapiti Valley LLC, Cody; Kristina Smith, Cody; Diana & Jim Volk, Sheridan; Kelly Hunt, Cody; Dan LaPierre (REG), Powell; Mark Schneider (REG), Powell; Nathan Lind, Powell; Megan Fallon, Cody; Seaton Smith, Powell

**PLATTE**

Myron Wakkuri (REG), Wheatland; Rebecca Simpson & Tyler Cundall, Guernsey; Wapiti Ridge Ranch LLC, Wheatland

**SHERIDAN**

Jennifer & Andreas Irion, Rancheater; Brent Thompson, Sheridan; Bradford Townsend, Sheridan; Graham Hurley, Sheridan; Ladonna & Jeffrey Daniels, Banner; Glenn Getter, Sheridan;

Julie Barker, Sheridan; Jennifer Dart, Sheridan; James Lollar (REG), Sheridan; JD Hill, Rancheater; Merritt Purdy, Sheridan; Deborah & John Shepardson (REG), Sheirdan; Micheal Dart, Sheridan; William Horn (REG), Sheridan; Leah & Nate Anderson, Sheridan; Sonia & Ole Anderson, Sheridan; Adam Henderson (REG), Rancheater; Claude Powell, Rancheater; Baileigh Rodriguez, Clearmont; Lanis Rawlings, Dayton; Chester Christensen (REG), Sheridan; Robert Boyle, Sheridan; Nancy & David Dearcorn (REG), Dayton; Cathie Fort (REG), Sheridan; Jennifer & Rod Robinson, Dayton; Patricia Stevens, Sheridan; Donna & Michael Hoover, Sheridan; Chad Franklin, Sheridan; Amy & Dan Doke, Big Horn; Dakota Benoit (REG), Sheridan; Donald Tescher, Sheridan; Catherine & Paul Kukowski (REG), Wyarno; John Will, Sheridan; Carol & Michael Fordyce, Sheridan; Kayla Crouse, Sheridan; Brian Granger, Buffalo; Misty Fields, Sheridan; Patrick Hayworth, Sheridan; Robert Crawford, Sheridan; Joel Dingman, Sheridan; Andrew Ward (REG), Sheridan; Deana & Dean Cole (REG), Sheridan;

Charles Roberts, Sheridan; Michael Fordyce, Sheridan; Sondra Chandler, Sheridan; Bonnie Hahn, Sheridan; Tyler Kane(REG), Sheridan; Jennifer & Lee Kahm, Sheridan; Brian Hamilton, Sheridan; Richard Davis (REG), Sheridan; Willow Timothy, Sheridan; Reagan O'Neal & Travis Fitzpatrick, Sheridan

**SWEETWATER**

Bianca Alderson (REG), Green River; Jess Knezovich, Rock Springs; Rachel Boren, Green River; Annie & Andrew Fletcher, Rock Springs; Charles Bermeier (REG), Green River; Kyle Cowan (REG), Boise, ID; David Young, Green River; Sharla Parks, Evanston; Alan Zanetti, Rock Springs; John Newman, Green River; Joseph Nicotera, Rock Springs; Morgan Asay, Green River; Joseph Douglas, Pinedale; Richard Vasa, Rock Springs; Delores McGowan, Farson; Andrew McGahuey, Rock Springs; Alice & Larry Metz (REG), Farson; Lisa Ryberg, Rock Springs

**TETON**

Karl Weber, Moose; Tom Nulman, Alta; Sarah Fisher, Jackson; Adrienne

Benson, Jackson; Angela & Josh Doering, Jackson; Julio Jaimes-Angeles, Jackson; Michele Labounta, Jackson; Kyon Buckley, Florence, MT; Ahmad Bashirimoghaddam, Jackson; Amy Staehr, Jackson

**UINTA**

Toni & Quinn Martin (REG), Fort Bridger; Shannon Meeks (REG), Mountain View; Amy Anderson (REG), Mountain View; Eric Quinney, Lyman

**WASHAKIE**

Nadine & Ross Dworshak, Worland; Kristen & Nathan Decker, Worland; Kathleen & James Wray Worland; Sandra & Marvin Wake, Worland; Angela Wagner, Worland; Patricia Schweighart, Worland; Tammy Schrage, Worland; Allyson & Tucker Molzahn, Worland; Jeff Lyman (REG), Ten Sleep

**WESTON**

Jared Hanson, Newcastle; Ian D'Ambrogi (REG), Newcastle; Stacey Kirsch, Newcastle ■

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## Albany County Summer Events

The Albany County Ranch & Farm Bureau Federation held their annual meeting and picnic on June 24 at the Johnson 99 Ranch. Members enjoyed a great meal, business meeting and entertainment by the Starks Family. *BROOKE ROES PHOTO.*



Celebrating America's Independence at the Freedom has a Birthday event in Laramie. The Albany County Ranch & Farm Bureau Federation had a booth with Corn Hole and Ag Trivia bowl to showcase who they are and what they do for ranchers and consumers in Albany County. In this photo members Wyatt Starks and Russ Austin help a young participant enjoy the corn hole game while Samantha Starks stands by to gift an agriculture book to the participant. *CHRIS STARKS PHOTO.*

## Albany County awards college scholarships

SUBMITTED BY SHARLEEN CASTLE, ACRFBF BOARD MEMBER

The Albany County Ranch & Farm Bureau Federation (ACRFBF) awarded three college scholarships to member's children for the 2023-24 school year.

- Lauren Balcom - \$1,500. Balcom graduated this spring from Laramie High School. She is active in FFA and Albany County Farm Bureau Federation YF&R.
- Jackson Devine - \$1,000. Devine completed his first year in the pharmacy program at the University of Wyoming and has made the President's List both semesters
- Lucas Wall - \$1,000. Wall completed his first year at the University of Wyoming with a Molecular Biology major. He plans to become a dentist. He maintains a 4.0 GPA.

All three applicants have strong leadership experience and are all Laramie High School graduates.

The ACRFBF would like to thank this year's scholarship judges. The judges were Jonathan Despain, State 4-H Director; Brian Coxbill, LHS FFA advisor; and Cheryl Leach, ACRFBF member. ■



Carbon County Ranch & Farm Bureau Federation Board Members at the June 28 county annual meeting. Quade Palm - Vice President, Hilary Proctor - Secretary, Amanda Knotwell - Events Chair, Stacy Berger - Treasurer, Kyle Berger - President



Thank You members and guests for making the Carbon County Ranch & Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting a great one. Thank you Alex Bakken-Carbon County Sheriff and Matt Withroder, Regional Wildlife Supervisor-Wyoming Game & Fish Department for speaking and engaging in questions regarding Trespass and the collaboration between land owners and sportsman. Thank You Wyoming Congresswoman Harriet Hageman for taking time to stop by and visit. Thanks to Daron Little Music for the wonderful music and The Malt for the great food!! The Board is appreciative to all that took the time to join us.

## Niobrara County scholarship

SUBMITTED BY LEXIE PAINTER, NCFBF BOARD MEMBER

Niobrara County Farm Bureau is proud to announce the 2023 Scholarship Winner, Karen Alvis! Karen works at the Niobrara County Library and is attending

Colorado Christian University to obtain her Bachelor of Arts degree in Creative Writing. Karen's family has been involved with Farm Bureau in Northern Indiana and she is an active member in Niobrara County. Congratulations and good luck, Karen! ■



SUBMITTED BY CHELSEA BAARS, NCFBF PRESIDENT

We are pleased to announce this year's Ag Books for Kids winners, (L-R) Vincent Grey, Wyncee Brott, Carter Bannan, Harper Fontenot, Tyree Hubbard, Amy Kate Hanson, Randus Martin, Oliver Martinex, Aadison Gross.



Thank you to all our students and teachers who participated in our contest. We hope you all learned something new while reading this year's ag book, "Popcorn Country" by Cris Peterson (available for checkout at the Niobrara County Library).



The Niobrara County Farm Bureau Federation was pleased to make a \$300 donation this spring to the Niobrara County SkillsUSA Chapter. The Federation's Board of Directors believes these students possess passion, vision, skills, confidence, and the hope for our community's future. These students are learning the necessary skills to read and write plans, draft models, fabricate quality work that will meet and exceed the testing requirements of today's employers, along with the professionalism required for proper interview skills. The Niobrara County Farm Bureau Federation believes that agriculture needs to work and support the technical trades hand-in-hand in order for our community to truly grow and flourish. As your local member-driven agricultural organization, we are a proud supporter of the Niobrara County SkillsUSA Chapter.

# Event planning and lessons learned from leadership development

BY KYLE BERGER, CARBON COUNTY RANCH & FARM BUREAU FEDERATION PRESIDENT

Membership has been at the forefront of our county Farm Bureau Federation discussions for several years. We are responsible for making the best decisions for our members that we can. Two years ago, we asked ourselves if there was something that we could do that would be of value for our members. A lot of our members live out of town on ranches and winters can get very long in Wyoming. We decided that some kind of community event might be beneficial sometime during the winter.



Our first step that we took to plan a big event was to make a name change. I talked to many people in our county and very few knew that "Farm Bureau" was not just insurance. We made the change to "Carbon County Ranch & Farm Bureau Federation." Most all of the members we represent are ranchers and this helped to distinguish us from the insurance as we promoted.

We decided that mid-February might be a good time of year, being far enough away from Christmas and before people get busy with calving. Those months can seem the longest and we speculated that some ranch guys might want to go to town and catch up with some friends. So we set a date, got the best facility, great food,

a great band and told people to show up wearing their best. People don't often have an occasion to dress up but for this they did!

We called our event the Cabin Fever Cowboy Ball and it was successful to say the least! The first year of planning is always the hardest but we offered tickets sold online so we would hopefully know how many people would attend. We were hoping for around 200 people but we ended up with near 300! The big surprise was that over 100 people showed up at the door who had not bought tickets. Thankfully we had a caterer who was able to adapt and everyone was fed.

The Wyoming and American Farm Bureau Federation have conferences and trainings offered year after year. My wife, Stacy, and I have taken advantage of many of these trainings over the years. We have learned quite a bit and attribute much of our success to the knowledge we have gained.

During our planning process we put some of those trainings into action. They helped us to identify things like what our county mission is, how we can serve our community and what is the best use of our resources.

At our first conference in Scottsdale we learned the value of listening to people to know what their needs are so we can serve them.

At a workshop in Pittsburg a few years ago we learned three key elements



Stacy and Kyle Berger. Kyle is the president of the Carbon County Ranch & Farm Bureau Federation. Kyle and Stacy are former members of the WyFB Young Farmer & Rancher Committee with Stacy having served as WyFB YF&R State Chair from 2017-2018.

to putting on a successful event. Those are social, informative and making a difference. Although it is difficult to have all three, we took that advice and in addition to having a great social opportunity all those who attended helped us to raise money for scholarships. In fact, they helped us to give away more than four times the amount that we normally give!

Another workshop in Puerto Rico earlier in the year showed us how to articulate in a few words what Farm Bureau is and we put that information on a power point loop that ran all night during the event. Somewhere along the way we learned not to be afraid to spend some money on an event and do it right.



A glimpse of the packed house at the 2023 Carbon County Ranch & Farm Bureau Federation Cabin Fever Ball held this past February.

The Cabin Fever Cowboy Ball was basically a big reception. We had a silent auction with some amazing items donated by our incredible local businesses. We raffled a hunting rifle and we did a lot of dancing. We even had students from the University of Wyoming Swing Dance Club give lessons beforehand.

Because everyone was having such a great time, we really didn't get to stop the momentum to talk much about who we are or what we do. However, the event was intriguing enough that the local newspaper asked to do a story and we were able to share all that information there.

This has been a big step in getting our name out there. It was something the community needed and appreciated. We plan on continuing to serve our community and show more people the benefits of membership and involvement with the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation. ■

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# Public lands grazing vital to the Rural West

BY DANIEL MUNCH, AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION ECONOMIST

AFBF/JULY 5, 2023

WWW.FB.ORG/MARKET-INTEL

Chances are, when you think of the West, images of cattle and horses and the ranchers that manage them are top of mind. For centuries, grazing livestock have been at the heart of rural economies across what is now the Western United States. Through these many generations, ranchers have contributed far more than their job titles indicate. They are county commissioners, teachers, bankers, truck drivers, energy workers, hunters, sportsmen and more – contributing directly to the stability and longevity of the communities in which they live. This article reviews the latest available economic metrics evaluating both direct and indirect benefits of livestock grazing on federally owned lands.

## Background

The federal government owns roughly 640 million acres of the 2.27 billion acres of land in the United States – just over 28% of total land. The percentage of federally owned land in each state varies widely, from 0.3% in Connecticut and Iowa to nearly 80% in Nevada. Federal ownership of land is heavily concentrated in the West with 61.3% of Alaska federally owned, along with 46.5% of the 11 next westernmost states. In comparison, the federal government owns 4.2% of land in the remaining 38 states. Five major federal agencies administer 620 million acres of federally owned land, led by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) at 248.3 million acres, Forest Service (FS) at 193 million acres, Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) at over 90 million acres, the National Park Service (NPS) at 80 million acres, and Department of Defense (DOD) at just over 11 million acres. Residents of heavily federally owned states that utilize lands for commerce have to abide by these federal agencies' regulations – a challenge much of the rest of the country does not encounter.

Agencies administer permits that allow ranchers to graze livestock on specified public lands for a fee. Grazing fees through BLM, in 2023, for example, cannot fall below \$1.35 per animal unit month (AUM) and any fee increase or decrease cannot exceed 25% of the previous year's levels. An AUM is the amount of forage needed to sustain one cow and her calf or one horse, or five sheep or goats for a month. Actively permitted AUMs in 2022 ranged from a low of 254 in South Dakota to 2.1 million in Nevada, with a total of 10.8 million across the country. Active permits ranged from four in Oklahoma to 3,813 in Montana, with a national total of 17,911. Any U.S. citizen or validly licensed business can apply for a BLM grazing permit if they buy or control private property, known as a base property, that has been legally recognized as having preference for use of public lands grazing or acquire property that can serve as a base property and then apply to BLM to transfer a grazing preference from an existing property to the acquired property. There are different types of permits, the most common being the term permit, which may be issued for up to 10 years. Term permits describe the season of use, number of AUMs authorized and the kind and class of livestock that can be grazed on a specified area of federal lands. Temporary permits may be issued for a period not to exceed one year and are sparingly used.

Livestock use permits are issued for a primary use other than grazing livestock for a year or less and are commonly used in research circumstances.

The Congressional Research Service reported that of the 248 million acres administered by the BLM, 154 million acres (62%) are available for grazing, though only 139 million acres (56%) are in use. Of the 193 million acres managed by the FS, more than 95 million acres are available for grazing (49%) and 77 million (40%) are actively grazed. There is also some grazing on NPS land, though this number is comparatively small. Of the approximately 640 million acres of federally owned land, about 35% is actively permitted for grazing purposes.

## Direct Effects

In this analysis, "direct effects" refers to the portion of monetary value of livestock sales linked to forage produced and utilized on public lands. Typically,

ranching of cattle, sheep and goats uses a combination of private and public grazing lands, as well as grazed forage and purchased forage and/or grain. This means that while a finished steer that ultimately ends up at market somewhere in the Midwest may have started on public lands forage, many other sources of forage contributed to its final market weight. In a recent study by the U.S. Forest Service, researchers focused on quantifying economic contributions of federal grazing at the state and national level by adjusting sales values reported by the census of agriculture by active AUM numbers. This methodology allows us to estimate the value of end livestock sales directly attributable to public lands forage. In total, over \$1 billion in livestock sales value is attributable to public lands forage. States like New Mexico, Wyoming, Idaho and Montana all come in at over \$100 million each. The small values calculated for some Eastern states is linked to small cattle grazing

allotments under the FS. NPS grazing was not estimated.

Close to 90% of the estimated total livestock value, or \$893 million, is linked to cattle production. Idaho (\$122 million), New Mexico (\$119 million) and Wyoming (\$100 million) are the top public lands cattle states. The value of sheep and goat sales attributed to public lands forage is nearly \$110 million in total value. Colorado leads at \$38 million, followed by Utah (\$21 million) and Wyoming (\$14 million). These direct sales values contribute to the income basis for thousands of rural families in these states. Economic modeling specific to Idaho, Oregon and Nevada showed the loss of 5,389 active grazing permits resulted in an average 60% decline in cattle sales, 50% decline in labor income, a 65% decline in personal income (from \$33,940 to \$11,812), per operation, and billions in downstream economic losses.

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Additionally, the tax revenue received on these sales supports public safety, education and infrastructure in locations that are often already underserved and don't otherwise receive tax revenue from federally-owned land.

**Indirect Effects**

There is a wide array of indirect economic effects associated with public lands grazing. Notably, ruminants like cattle, sheep and goats utilize forage on otherwise marginal lands to convert low-quality forage into high-quality nutrients humans can consume. Ranchers who can pair private land forage and purchased feed with public lands forage lower their input costs, helping make margins workable, especially during periods of high feed costs. Though the direct sales value of livestock weight gained on public lands is a little over \$1 billion, the value of cattle and calves produced in the 13 westernmost states sits at over \$16 billion. In 2021 alone, states with large swaths of public land like Colorado (35% federally owned), California (45% federally owned) and Idaho (62% federally owned) yielded \$4.2 billion, \$3.1 billion and \$1.6 billion in total cattle and calf sales, respectively. Many of the cow-calf pairs and yearlings raised in these states spent some time grazing on public lands, meaning those lands contributed to the lifecycle and final marketable value of these animals. Removing the option of public lands would further pressure private lands to produce additional forage and feed, increasing input costs for producers and food costs for consumers. Not to mention, many communities reliant on grazing systems are often isolated in remote locations making them

difficult to access. In many cases, federal land often crisscrosses and even divides private property into what geographically looks like abstract checkerboards of federal and private land. A decrease in the ability to feed livestock on rangeland that exists near or adjacent to a rancher's own property often shifts demand to offsite feed resources that can be expensive and difficult to receive, potentially undermining the viability of the ranch operation.

Grazing also provides indirect economic benefits by helping preserve regional ecosystems. Properly managed rangelands can increase soil organic matter, improving soil structure and contributing to increased water storage capacity and filtration, which is important for reducing the severity of drought conditions. Grazing ruminants feed off perennial forage, promoting complex roots structures that minimize soil erosion and increase carbon sequestration. They also help maintain distinctive plant communities necessary to support certain threatened and endangered species. General wildlife habitat, open space and recreation opportunities are just a few of the many other benefits retained when land is used for grazing. These benefits are often not present in alternative land uses and are difficult to replace with human-made services. In a University of Wyoming study, researchers estimated the value of some ecosystem services generated by cattle grazing on both private and public lands. Researchers identified four different types of ecosystem services: 1) provisioning, such as production of food and water; 2) regulating, such as control of climate and disease; 3) supporting, such as nutrient cycles and crop pollination; and 4) cultural, such as spiritual and recreation benefits. Though many of these services are difficult

to put a monetary value on because they are not sold or traded, estimates were generated for forage production, general services (intended to capture conservation and climate-related benefits) and wildlife values (focused on wildlife preservation and recreation).








Nationally, it was estimated that federal rangelands contribute \$3.7 billion in ecosystem services which translated to \$20.15 per public acre grazed. For comparison, after adjusting for the approximately \$26 million ranchers pay in grazing fees each year, taxpayers support appropriations for rangeland management programs at about 30 cents per acre. Excluding all other benefits of public lands grazing, consumers have a net return of \$19.85 per 30 cents spent to support federal lands grazing. Utah and Oregon had the highest ecosystem service values at \$610 million and \$575 million, respectively.

An often-overlooked benefit of public lands grazing is the land stewardship benefits offered by ranchers, their families and their employees. The federal government employs thousands of conservation scientists, foresters, rangeland management specialists, forest and conservation technicians and others tasked with helping manage and conserve land appropriately. Most ranchers do a portion of these tasks free of charge to taxpayers as part of their everyday role as rangeland operators. Median government salaries reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics for these positions range from a low of \$39,180 for entry-level technicians to well over \$64,010 for more specialized positions. A hypothetical removal of public lands grazing would shift the burden of ground-level management of millions of acres currently shared by private ranchers and their employees to government agencies.

To grasp the extent of this cost, the replacement value of public lands permittee operators, their spouses and two hypothetical workers was calculated. At the \$64,010 rate for operators and their spouses and \$39,180 for each of the workers, each ranching operation would, conservatively, cost the government \$206,380 to replace. Between 2002 and 2016, the number of operators with grazing permits was averaged to 15,755 operators. This means, in total, the labor replacement value of these ranching operators would be at least \$3.25 billion annually. The highest replacement costs are in Montana (\$692 million) and Wyoming (\$528 million), both very sparsely populated states where rural residents take on the brunt of rangeland management responsibilities. The families who live in rural communities are often drawn by the inherent role they play in stewarding the land, a passion that saves taxpayers billions in rangeland management duties.

**Conclusion**

Cattle, sheep and goat producers across the Western U.S. have partnered with federal agencies for generations to manage hundreds of millions of acres of land. As a result, consumers across the country have benefited from a more resilient and economical domestic food supply, countless ecosystem and climate-related gains of ruminant grazing and open lands preservation, and the effective and careful management of public lands. With each dollar produced by an agricultural community multiplying through downstream channels into many billions in economic value, public lands grazing is a vital part of the Western economy, and its loss could threaten the livelihoods and traditions of thousands of rural communities. ■

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