

MARCH 2025
VOLUME 79 ISSUE 7

Arizona CATTLELOG

Official Publication of the Arizona Cattle Growers' Association



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CONTENTS *Arizona Cattlelog.*



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On the Cover

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Inside Cover

Diamond K Angus Ranch

3

Arizona Cattle Growers' Report

- 4 - Letter from the Editor
- 5 - Letter from the President
- 6 - Letter from the Executive Director
- 7 - Legislative Update
- 8 - At Work for You
- 11 - Convention Information

13

Porch Talk

- 14 - We are Arizona Cattle Growers'
- 15 - The Many Faces of ACGA
- 17 - Around Arizona

19

Cattle Comments

- 20 - On the Ranch Q & A
- 21 - Stewardship Comments
- 23 - Stewardship Comments
- 23 - Sharing Our Stories
- 24 - Cattlemen's College

26

Industry News

- 27 - PLC Update
- 27 - NCBA Update
- 28 - AZFB Update
- 29 - Cowbelles Update

Inside Cover

CKP

Back Cover

Bat T Bar Ranches

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CATTLE GROWERS' REPORT



Letter from the Editor

As the CEO of Mortimer Farms, I spend my days advocating for agriculture, sharing its story, and connecting the community to the heart of farming and ranching. I manage the retail side of our business—including the Market, Restaurant, multiple concessions, Décor & Gift Shop, three wedding venues, 20+ festivals, and more—while also working hands-on in farm/ranch production.

As you know, my passion lies in sharing the story of Arizona agriculture with the public while working hands-on in production. My journey at Mortimer Farms is a chapter that is far from over.

A memory popped up on my phone just the other day, taking me back six years to my time with Cattle Growers—a time when I had the privilege of fostering relationships with you: Arizona ranchers, beef producers, conservationists, and Arizona legislators. It was an honor to work alongside you, fight for our dying profession, and be part of such a powerful movement.

So, you may be asking yourself, why are you seeing an article from me? The answer is simple: I care deeply about this industry, about you, your family, and your livelihood. That's why I am dedicated to creating an inspiring, educational, informative, and impactful monthly Cattlelog—a platform that gives me the opportunity to give back to you individually. I am happy to step in and fight for what we do day in and day out.

My position at Mortimer Farms has pushed me, molded me, and transformed me into an even stronger advocate for our livelihoods. Every day, I see the incredible connection the community has with agriculture—the magic the public feels when they witness the love, passion, dedication, blood, sweat, and tears that go into our daily lives. It has been my greatest pride and joy to be a part of building, growing, and maintaining a thriving business alongside my incredible parents and family!

The long days, the challenges, the heartbreak when things don't go as planned, and the love of pouring your entire being into a movement—a lifestyle that sustains others—bring a profound sense of accomplishment. It's an honor knowing that what we do is so much bigger than ourselves.

I have the immense privilege of working alongside men and women who dedicate their entire existence to raising beef, growing food, and caring for the land—not just working on the land, but with the land.

Ranching is a dying profession, yet it remains essential for the survival of all. Like my family, many of you own and operate ranches whose futures are threatened. Some are among the last of their kind in our state. What we do is becoming more and more endangered. Every day, we fight against the odds, working 12- to 16-hour days to protect the land, its resources, and the food it provides.

This fight is why you are reading this article today. This fight is what keeps you up at night. This fight is what your family has dedicated generations of hard work to. And this fight is far from over.

We will persevere. We will defend the ranching way of life. We will continue to provide healthy, nutritious beef for our communities, be caregivers to our animals, care for these beautiful lands, and conserve the very existence of our essential profession. Together, we will ensure that the legacy of ranching endures.

Here's to the future of our industry,

Ashlee Mortimer
CEO, Mortimer Farms
Editor, Arizona Cattlelog

P.S.: To ACGA's business partners, please contact Sidnie at operations@azcattlegrowers.org to discuss ad space and submit ads. The Cattlelog will be returning to printing at the beginning of each month. All content and ads are due by the 15th of the month preceding publication.



Letter from the ACGA President

Greetings, Friends and Members of ACGA!

As we move into March, I want to take a moment to reflect on the success of our recent Winter Meeting. It was a pleasure to see so many ACGA members **come together to connect, network, and discuss the latest developments impacting our industry.** Events like this are a testament to the **strength of Arizona ranchers** and the **dedication of our members in fighting for the future of our industry.**

On the legislative front, last month was especially busy with long committee agendas. A few weeks ago, House members were in committee until nearly 9:30 p.m. on one particular Wednesday. As we enter “Crossover Week,” the focus shifts to floor work as bills move from their chambers of origin to the opposite chamber for further consideration. Bills that have not advanced through committee are now effectively dead. Our lobbyists, Pivotal Policy Consulting, will be showing fewer bills on our tracking list as a result of Crossover Week.

Two key bills that directly impact Arizona ranchers have made notable progress. **HB2135: Unlawful Camping; Stock; Wildlife Access passed out of the House with bipartisan support, 34-24.** Meanwhile, **SB1517: Off-Highway Vehicles; Weight passed out of RAGE 5-1.** Pivotal Policy Consulting had the opportunity to **testify on our position, emphasizing the importance of funding law enforcement and personal remediation.** Senator Dunn has committed to collaborating with us and stakeholders to develop an appropriate amendment for the floor.

Looking ahead, our **Summer Convention is just around the corner** in July. This year is especially significant as it is an **election year.** I want to commend the Nominating Committee for their outstanding **transparency and dedication to ensuring a fair and open process.** If you're **interested in running for office, please contact Sonia Gasho.** The **slate of candidates will be presented in the Cattlelog** in the coming months. **Nominations will also be accepted from the floor during the convention.**

I look forward to seeing you all this summer. Until then, stay well and take care.

Best regards,

Mike Gannuscio, ACGA President



Board of Directors are elected by Arizona Ranchers and represent you and your family.

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Letter from the Executive Director

ACGA Updates: Staffing, Events, and Legislative Efforts

Ken Ligon, Interim Executive Director

Since stepping into the role of Interim Executive Director for the Arizona Cattle Growers' Association (ACGA), I've been focused on several key priorities, with staffing being at the top of the list. The ACGA board officially appointed me during their meeting on Friday, January 10th, and I began this role on Monday, January 13th. Since then, we've made some important strides in building our team.

I'm thrilled to share that we've welcomed Sidnie Conerly as our new Administrative Assistant, effective February 6th. Additionally, we're fortunate to have Ashlee Mortimer back on board to edit and publish the ACGA Cattlelog. Both Sidnie and Ashlee bring incredible skills, enthusiasm, and a strong work ethic to our organization. You can learn more about them in their bios/articles featured in this issue. It's been a process of settling in and getting everyone acclimated to the team, but I'm confident that their contributions will make a big difference for ACGA moving forward.

Beyond staffing, we've been busy preparing for upcoming events. My wife, Victoria, and I recently traveled to Safford to meet with Suzanne Menges, who has been hard at work organizing the 2025 Summer Convention. Suzanne gave us a detailed rundown of the planned activities and even provided a tour of the key venues while introducing us to community members. I have to say, the Safford community is incredibly excited to host us this July, and with Suzanne's meticulous planning, it's shaping up to be a fantastic event. Stay tuned for more details soon!

On the legislative front, things are in full swing. Thanks to the efforts of Andy Groseta, Mike Gannuscio, and others, we are actively addressing the bills that directly impact the interests of ACGA and our ranchers. Their dedication ensures that our voice is heard where it matters most.

Looking ahead, there are two important dates to mark on your calendars: the rollover auctions at Willcox Livestock Auction on March 10th and the Prescott Livestock Auction on May 20th. These events are vital fundraisers for ACGA, helping us better support our mission. Your participation means a lot!

As always, I'm here to listen to your questions, suggestions, and ideas that can help move ACGA forward. Don't hesitate to reach out, I'd love to hear from you.

ACGA is Looking for an Executive Director

The Arizona Cattle Growers Association is in the process of hiring an Executive Director to lead the state association.

We are seeking qualified applicants to head the one hundred twenty plus year cattle association.

Interested applicants should submit a letter of interest and resume to the following email address:

John Keniston Ligon, Interim Executive Director

Email: jkligon@icloud.com

Phone: (702)672-1316

Address: P.O. Box 601, Cornville, AZ 86325

Legislative Update

The 2025 Trump Administration: Impacts on Arizona Cattle Ranchers

The 2025 Trump Administration: Ongoing Impacts on Arizona Cattle Ranchers, Border Security, and the Economy President Trump has taken "hitting the ground running" to a whole new level. In the months since taking office, he has enacted significant changes with the potential for a positive outcome for all Americans. One of the most encouraging aspects of his administration is his clear commitment to American agriculture—a breath of fresh air for ranchers who have long felt neglected by Washington.

Border Security and Arizona Ranchers

The Trump administration has introduced sweeping policy shifts, particularly concerning immigration enforcement and border security. His administration has implemented strict immigration measures, including mass deportations of criminal undocumented migrants and a reinforced border security strategy.

For Arizona border ranchers, these measures have brought much-needed relief as illegal crossings and related criminal activity have declined. However, this crackdown has also raised concerns about retaliation from Mexican cartels, whose revenue is significantly shrinking due to the new border enforcement. Recognizing this potential threat, President Trump has secured an agreement with Mexico to deploy additional troops to assist in border protection. These forces, along with American military personnel and Border Patrol agents, continue to secure the border.

Fentanyl trafficking—one of the deadliest crises facing America—has been largely fueled by cartel operations along the Arizona border. The conservative news stations are reenforcing that cartels are dangerous; they do not only traffic drugs but also human beings and children. It is critical that Arizona's border ranchers and American citizens remain protected.

Economic and Agricultural Policies

The Trump administration has also made significant progress that positively impacts the agricultural industry. With a focus on deregulation and fairer trade agreements, the administration has reduced unnecessary red tape and strengthened domestic food production. Ranchers, who have long struggled under restrictive policies and uncertain market conditions, are already seeing greater stability and profitability.

Additionally, efforts to curb inflation and stabilize the economy through tax cuts and business incentives have begun to benefit the cattle industry. Lower operating costs and increased market confidence create an environment where ranchers can grow their operations and reinvest in their businesses.

Lower Oil and Fuel Costs: A Long-Term Win for Ranchers

Fuel costs are a major expense for cattle ranchers, affecting transportation, feed production, and daily operations. President Trump's policies focus on expanding domestic oil production, reviving pipeline projects, and reducing reliance on foreign energy, all aimed at driving down fuel prices. The tag line: "Drill, baby, drill."

Lower fuel costs mean reduced operational expenses, making it more affordable for ranchers to haul cattle, run equipment, and sustain their businesses. This stability allows better financial planning and stronger profit margins, enabling ranchers to reinvest in their operations and grow their businesses. With Trump's commitment to American energy independence, the long-term outlook for ranchers remains strong. We are looking forward to seeing the effects of these policies at the pump.

A Positive Outlook for Ranchers

While challenges remain, the Trump administration has already signaled a shift toward stronger support for the cattle industry, improved border security, and a more predictable economic environment. With a president who values American agriculture and prioritizes national security, Arizona ranchers continue to experience a renewed sense of optimism for the future.

As these policies continue to unfold, it is essential for ranchers to stay informed and engaged to ensure their voices are heard in shaping the future of the industry. We must ensure that President Trump understands what will positively affect our livelihoods and advocate for policies that move us in that direction. Your voice matters, and together, we can help shape a prosperous future for Arizona ranchers.

Mark your calendars!

Event: ACGA's 122nd Annual Summer Convention

Date: July 23rd through Saturday July 25th

Details: www.azcattlegrowers.org



At **Work** for You!

Sidnie Conerly is honored to be introduced to the Arizona Cattle Growers' Association community as the Interim Administrative Assistant. Born and raised with a deep appreciation for the land, hard work, and the values that come with this lifestyle, she has always felt a strong connection to like-minded individuals.

Sidnie is **proud to be part of this incredible industry, dedicated to preserving ranching heritage and ensuring future generations can continue to enjoy the wide-open spaces we cherish.** Her passion for making a positive impact drives her enthusiasm for this work.

Sidnie and her husband, Jacob Conerly, operate a family-run cow-calf operation in Yavapai County, where they instill strong agricultural values in their young children, Jackson and Scarlett. When she isn't ranching, you can often find her hunting—a hobby she enjoys with a sense of humor, noting, "I'm one of the good guys; I close gates."

Sidnie looks forward to connecting with fellow members of the Arizona Cattle Growers' Association, sharing ideas, and learning from everyone. Together, she believes we can continue to strengthen the industry and celebrate the lifestyle we all love.

This page in the upcoming Cattlelogs will be dedicated to our "At Work for You" article. In this section, you will hear from Sidnie or an ACGA committee or board member about what ACGA is doing for you—Arizona ranchers—every day to preserve your livelihood and this way of life.

She looks forward to meeting you all!

2025 ACGA Annual Calf Rollover Auctions

March 10, 2025

WILLCOX LIVESTOCK AUCTION

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May 20, 2025

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If you are interested in donating a calf or making a pledge on the day of the sale, please contact the ACGA office at 602-267-1129.



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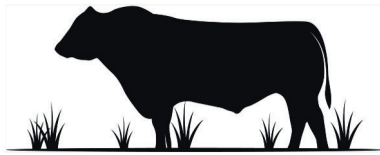
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Arizona Cattle Growers Association Advertisement

Executive Director

The Arizona Cattle Growers Association is in the process of hiring an Executive Director to lead the State Association.

It is seeking qualified applicants to head the one hundred twenty plus year cattle association.

Interested applicants should submit a letter of interest and resume to the following email address:

John Keniston Ligon, Interim Executive Director

Email: jkligon@icloud.com

Phone: (702)672-1316

Address: P.O. Box 601

Cornville, AZ 86325



Convention Information

Suzanne Menges



"Go West, young man, and grow up with the country!" said Horace Greeley, a newspaper editor from New York who inspired people to move west after the Civil War and settle the vast ranges of that area of our country. Well, everyone is invited to "Go East" instead-to the connected towns of Safford/Thatcher in Graham County for the 122nd ACGA Annual Convention!

Beautiful Eastern Arizona College will serve as the homebase of the convention. The Hoopes Activity Center has recently undergone a full remodel and boasts spacious meeting rooms, large areas for the trade show, and excellent AV systems. Large equipment can be moved in easily to the surrounding areas for display.

We already have multiple speakers confirmed from all over the country addressing the needs of our members, including market outlooks, state livestock issues, legislation affecting our industry, sustainability, and much more. Watch upcoming issues of the monthly Cattlelog and Herd That! e-newsletters for highlights of our speakers.

The dates of our gathering are Wednesday, July 23rd through Saturday July 25th, with Wednesday being time set aside for the Arizona State Cowbelles' meeting, the Foundation's Board of Trustees meeting, and any committees that would like to meet before the convention program begins. We also have several optional fun activities planned to keep spouses and families entertained that day. Our convention program will be held all day Thursday and Friday, with evening events each night, and the convention will end with a Board of Directors meeting on Saturday morning.

Please visit the ACGA website to register and secure your hotel rooms, and watch your inbox and mailbox for more information!

SAVE THE DATE!

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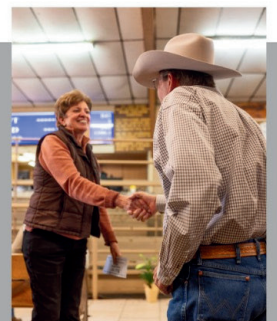
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-SONNY SHORES JR.

Photos from 47th Annual Bull Sale-2024 Photos by Karyn Carrillo



PORCH TALK

S.CARTER PHOTOGRAPHY

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We are Cattle Growers'

The cattle industry in our state faces issues at the local, state, and federal levels, and the Arizona Cattle Growers' Association has a history of more than 120 years of working on behalf of ranchers to resolve these issues. There has never been a more important time for young ranchers to become involved in ACGA, and I'm happy to do my part by being involved. **In a state where the needs of Maricopa County tend to dictate public policy, it is important for the ranchers' voices to be heard**, and ACGA is an excellent vehicle to ensure this occurs.

This is one of the reasons why I am a member of ACGA.

Ben Menges

Menges Ranches, Graham County
Arizona Cattle Growers' Member-at-Large



S.CARTER PHOTOGRAPHY



The Many Faces of ACGA

Hello from Southeastern Arizona! My name is Timothy Klump, and I'm a proud member of Dos Cabezas Cattle Co. LLC, as well as a husband and proud father to four little cowkids.

My brothers and I are running the cattle now; Dad has loosened up the reins a little bit. I am in charge of going to meetings, handling the lawyers, and representing my family on the public relations front. I have five brothers, and each of us has a unique strength that helps us run this ranch. Our main ranch goal is to get the sixth generation ready and willing to take over the ranch. Our next main focus is to get the business healthy enough to give the next generation a chance to carry on the family legacy in their own direction. If the Lord is willing, then we will accomplish this goal.

In the world of things you can't control, the first is the rain. Even though I try not to think about it, I am growing very weary of trying to shuffle the cows around enough to keep them alive and healthy. In the world of things I still can't control: politics. We are getting wolves forced on us, and they have been taking pictures of jaguars in our mountains. Cattle are the only large prey in Southeastern Arizona, so we and our neighbors will be supplying the food for these magical creatures.

We are feeling very optimistic now that Trump is back in office. I have been amazed at the amount of corruption that he has exposed in the last four years. Now, I am flabbergasted at the extreme levels of rot and lies that DOGE has exposed in the last week. We have eight miles of border wall on our ranch, and we have already seen a dramatic drop in illegal traffic. We are very grateful to Trump and his family for being willing to sacrifice so much for this country.

Additionally, we are incredibly grateful for the record-high cattle prices we are seeing. With all the challenges we face, having strong markets gives us hope and the ability to reinvest in our ranch, ensuring that future generations can continue this way of life.

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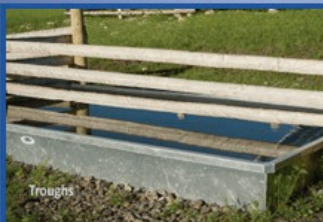
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Around **Arizona**

A few photos from February's Ranchers for Tomorrow Lunch & Learn event.



A few photos from the Mohave Livestock Association Sweetheart Dance.



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Dan Bell, ZZ Cattle Co. • Drew McGibbon, Santa Rita Ranch

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Dave Daley, Ph.D. • Public Lands Council Board of Directors &
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The Challenges and Opportunities of Public Land Grazing

Kent Anderson, Ph.D. • Zoetis

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CATTLE COMMENTS



CONERLY FAMILY

On the Ranch Q & A

A Cowboy's Journey: The Journey of a True Cowboy

Written by: Sidnie Conerly

Some kids grow up dreaming of becoming astronauts, others dream of being rock stars, but Jacob? He dreamed of becoming a cowboy. Inspired by the black-and-white westerns that flickered across the family TV screen, Jacob's heart was set on the wide-open range, the dust of the trail, and the bond between man and beast. He saw himself as the next John Wayne. But dreams do not come easy, and Jacob's journey to becoming a true cowboy is one for the books.

It all started with his older brother, Dan, who paved the way by making his mark at the legendary Babbitt Ranch in Flagstaff, Arizona. Jacob, on the other hand, was a typical defiant teenager—sneaking out of the house, going to parties, and getting into fights, much to the frustration of his parents. At just sixteen, they decided to send him to Colorado to help Dan. Little did Jacob know that those first days spent horseback would be the beginning of a journey that would shape him forever.

Under the watchful eyes of Dan and Zane Odell, owner of Z-O Cattle, Jacob learned what it meant to be the “new guy.” He was tossed on the rankest horses, tasked with building and mending what seemed to be miles of barbed wire fences, and put through the wringer with colts that needed to learn the meaning of wet saddle pads. Day in and day out, he rode the green right off their backs.

One of the most profound lessons Jacob learned was what it meant to be an “advocate for the animal.” He discovered the unspoken language of livestock, caring for God's creations as if they were his own family. He saw firsthand the harsh realities of ranching—cattle attacked by bears and wolves, and newborn calves needing protection from coyote packs. He spent his days gathering cattle through several feet of snow at 12,000 feet elevation in Colorado or enduring the sweltering 110-degree heat at 4,300 feet elevation in Utah. He learned the importance of perseverance—pushing through all of that just to get out on the ranch and gather maybe four to twelve cows in one pass, knowing darn well there were hundreds out there. Time and time again, he asked himself, Where could they be?

The work was grueling: in winter, breaking ice in frozen water troughs, jingling horses at dawn in sub-zero temperatures, and enduring frostbitten toes alongside his best friend, a dog whose ears were also frostbitten. Summer brought a new set of challenges: drought, heat exhaustion, dogs burning the pads off their feet, and horses tying up from muscle exhaustion.

Yet, for Jacob, it was all worth it the moment he saddled up and hit a trot. Despite the sacrifices—dealing with frostbitten toes, enduring sleepless nights, and gathering just a handful of cattle out of the hundreds on the ranch at a time—Jacob realized the true meaning of cowboy life: it was all for the cattle. His understanding of what it meant to be tough, dedicated, and committed to the animals transformed him into a version of himself he could finally be proud of.

The cowboy life is not glamorous. It is not about Friday date nights or lounging in a warm movie theater with a bucket of buttered popcorn and a box of Red Vines. Instead, it's about sleepless nights spent watching over first-year heifers during calving season or spending the day sorting cattle and branding calves in the dark, with nothing but a truck's headlights illuminating a small portion of the branding pen, dragging calves to the fire by the light of the moon. It's about sacrificing comfort for responsibility, trading convenience for grit. And Jacob? He embraced it all.

After years of hard work and countless lessons learned, Jacob eventually returned to his hometown of Camp Verde, Arizona. Life had more in store for him when he crossed paths with Tim Petersen—a man who saw something special in Jacob and gave him a chance to chase his dreams. Through trust and sheer determination, Jacob proved he had what it took to manage a ranch. Tim handed him the reins—literally and figuratively—to the historic N-O Ranch.

The N-O Ranch is no walk in the park. It is a tough, rocky desert filled with maverick cattle, rattlesnakes, and every thorn-covered plant imaginable. But for Jacob, it was paradise. The adrenaline rush of cowboy life rivaled the thrill of jumping out of a plane. He lived for the chase—the pursuit of wild cattle through patches of teddy bear cholla cactus, praying his rope would not fling a cactus arm back at him as it snapped tight around a 1,200-pound bull with horns like daggers. He relied on his trusty 900-pound bay mustang mare to hold steady as he forked a Palo Verde tree, wrestling the bull into submission. It is grueling work—but it is cowboy work.

There came a moment when Jacob realized: I can do this. I am good at this. I can make a living from this. And finally, my dream has come true. The weight of years of arduous work lifted from his shoulders as he embraced his identity: I am a cowboy.

Yet, even with his dream fulfilled, Jacob felt something was missing. The long days on the ranch and quiet nights under the stars gave way to a new realization: he wanted to share this life with someone who also cherished the lifestyle. He dreamed of building a family, passing on the values he'd learned—grit, hard work, and respect for the land and its creatures.

Today, Jacob's dream of family is as vibrant as his passion for ranching. He cherishes the life he's built with his wife, who shares his love for the cowboy way, and their children, who are already learning the rhythms of ranch life. Whether it's teaching them to saddle a horse or guiding them through the challenges of the land, Jacob's legacy is one of perseverance, love, and dedication.

Jacob's story is one of grit, sacrifice, and determination. From a starry-eyed boy inspired by old westerns to a man who manages an iconic ranch with pride and skill, he is living proof that dreams come true—but only if you're willing to saddle up and chase them.

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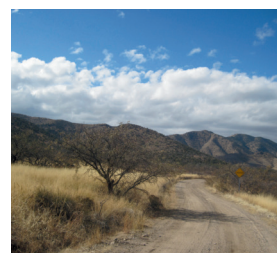
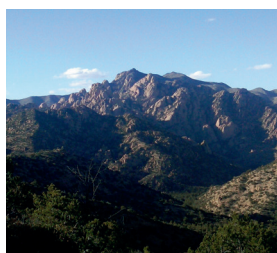
Written by: Sonia Gasho

Hello!! My family and I ranch in Cochise county. Our ranch is located in the Dragoon mountains. Headquartered near the ghost town of Pearce, it encompasses Cochise Stronghold, Soren Camp, Middlemarch, and the Cobra Loma Mine in the Dragoon mountains. and was once the home of Cochise, Chief of the Chiricahua Apache.

Our goal is to preserve ranching heritage with good stewardship of God's natural resources while producing quality natural beef. We also strive to raise public awareness of agriculture and food safety through hospitality and educational opportunities.

We cooperate with many entities: the US Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife, Bureau of Land Management, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Willcox-San Simon Natural Resource Conservation District, The Arizona Land Department, the Arizona Game and Fish, Cochise Graham Cattle Growers Association, and Cochise County Farm and Livestock Bureau. Having a coordinated resource management team allows us to work across agencies and apply conservation on a landscape level. We have been able to implement water developments, remove invasive brush species, and replace many miles of rusty fence, to improve forage, wildlife habitat, and provide water for livestock and wildlife.

True conservation, managing our renewable resources for future generations is our ultimate goal. We are thrilled that our son Daniel and his wife Rebekah are now the second generation working on the ranch. It's all about the Life, Legacy, and the Land.





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Stewardship Comments

Taken from AACD 2024 Spring Catalog written by Heather Baker

YY Ranch, owned and managed by David and Tina Thompson, is a testament to the enduring legacy and sustainable practices of Arizona's ranching heritage. The history of the ranch dates back to 1879 when Tina's great-great-grandparents, Brannick and Mary Riggs, homesteaded the land. Today, the Thompsons are the fifth generation to manage the ranch, with their son Cory representing the sixth, and their granddaughters, also actively involved in the family business, are the seventh generation. **Conservation is at the heart of YY Ranch's cattle operations.** Over the past decade, the Thompsons have focused on water conservation and availability, continuously adding better, more reliable water sources for both cattle and wildlife. They practice rotational grazing to allow pastures to rest during the growing season, closely monitoring grazing habits to optimize the health of their rangeland grasses. Other projects include improving dirt tanks and installing a trick tank in areas less grazed by cattle to ensure even distribution of grazing pressure. Thanks to the proactive management of encroaching mesquite by Tina's father and grandfather, the ranch has only needed minor brush management to maintain control over the invasive species; however, it remains a challenge, and effective management strategies are always at the forefront of planning efforts. Solar water pumps help distribute waters to wildlife and livestock in a more energy-efficient manner across the open rangelands of the ranch.

Sharing Your Story – It Matters

How to Talk to Consumers About Agriculture: A Simple 1-2-3 Approach

Written by: Ashlee Mortimer, Mortimer Farms

Consumers today are more interested than ever in where their food comes from. Answering consumer questions builds trust and helps bridge the gap between agriculture and the public. Recently, one of our customers emailed in a vaccination question. Here's how I answered the question to show that we care about animal welfare:

1. Acknowledge and Appreciate

Start by recognizing the consumer's interest in learning more and expressing gratitude for their support. This builds goodwill and sets a positive tone for the conversation.

Martha asked: "...Do you vaccinate your livestock and/or get your calves from sources that vaccinate them?..."

Our Response: "Thank you for reaching out to our farm. We are happy to hear that you have enjoyed our products, and we take great pride in producing and delivering safe, local, and delicious food to consumers like yourself."

2. Provide Clear Information and Show You Care

Share factual information about your practices in a way that is easy to understand. Keep your explanation straightforward and avoid using jargon that may be unfamiliar to consumers. Refer to your welfare program.

Our Response: "We do vaccinate our animals as part of our animal welfare program, ensuring they are protected from preventable diseases. This program gives them the best opportunity to thrive in their environment on open range. We follow all FDA and USDA guidelines to maintain the highest level of care for our animals."

3. Reassure and Maintain Trust

End by reinforcing your commitment to quality, safety, and ethical practices while inviting further conversation.

Our Response: "We thank you again for your support of our family's livelihood and for your interest in knowing where your food comes from. We look forward to continuing to provide safe and delicious products for you and others for many years to come."

By following this simple approach—1) Acknowledge and Appreciate, 2) Provide Clear Information and Show You Care, and 3) Reassure and Maintain Trust—we can foster positive conversations with consumers, helping them feel confident in the food they purchase while strengthening the connection between agriculture and the community.

Cattlemen's College



4 Ways to be Effective This Winter

Caitlin Word
Ranching for Profit

My phone rang the other evening, and it startled me because I was just about to call it a night. It had been pitch black for hours, and I thought to myself “who would be calling me at this ungodly hour?” Then I glanced at the clock before answering – it was 7:08 pm. Ungodly hour, indeed.

In the summer, I'm still hard at it outside at 7 pm, with hours yet to go! I lose all sense of time in the winter. At times I feel like I have barely started the day before I'm racing the sunset to finish what I had planned. So I have been thinking, how can I pack as much into my day with only 8 hours of sunlight as I can with 12 hours in the summer? Or, is that even the right question – maybe it's “how can I be more efficient with my time now that I have less daylight? Or perhaps I need to be looking for the unique opportunities in this season of “forced rest,” opportunities that are easy to shrug off as distractions when life is busier and the days are longer.

I think fewer daylight hours can challenge us to find creative and different ways to be effective with our time. Winter can be a slower time for a lot of us in ranching, partly due to the lull in the production calendar, partly due to the shorter days. But there are still lots of ways to use that “extra” time this season to be effective in your business.

1. Read a book (or a few.) Henry Ford once said that “anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young.” That's motivation enough for me to pick up a book and learn something new. RMC has a book club in the [Ranching for Profit Network](#) accessible to all [Ranching for Profit Alumni](#) where we read a book a month on anything from ecology to leadership to business strategy; it's an opportunity to network with like-minded people and come up with new ideas or challenge old paradigms.
2. Take advantage of the shorter days and look for ways to maximize your efficiency with fewer daylight hours. Working 12 hour days shouldn't be your badge of honor – rather, it can be the fast track to burnout. Challenge yourself to be more efficient with less time, and spend more hours outside of the business – or at least outside of [WITB](#) (Working In The Business).
3. Rest. I'm a firm believer that taking a step back, taking a breather, and spending time with your family is a great reset and can help revitalize your purpose and your perspective. Sometimes not being able to spend as much time outside with our livestock and in the sunshine can be hard on us but being forced to take a step back can be a really healthy thing. Take the opportunity to reconnect with your “why” in the quieter winter months and regroup for the year.
4. Continuing education – back to keeping yourself young with new opportunities for learning. [Register for a Ranching for Profit School](#) this winter, whether it's your first one or a refresher. Connect with other ranchers and start the new year with a fresh mindset and new ideas – we would love to have you, and are happy to help you step into 2025 with a new motivation.



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INDUSTRY NEWS

FROM FRIENDS OF THE INDUSTRY



PLC Update

Forest Service Withdraws Environmental Impact Statement on Old-Growth Forests

Last month, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) announced that they will be withdrawing their notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement on old-growth forests. The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) and the Public Lands Council (PLC) released the following statement praising the agency's decision to listen to local stakeholders who knew from the beginning that this was the wrong approach:

"We are pleased to see that the Forest Service has **abandoned their ill-conceived plan amendment process. Going down this road would have put ecosystems at higher risk of catastrophic wildfire.** Even worse, formalizing this kind of old growth strategy **would have been a direct affront to the work cattle and sheep producers have been doing for decades to protect lands and waters.** In one fell swoop, the Forest Service would have taken decades of work to prevent pinyon juniper encroachment and turned it on its head, penalizing the very people who prevented total woody conversion of grasslands and rangelands. The agency should not have needed to raise widespread alarm through an official agency notice when the science – and history – are abundantly clear," said PLC Executive Director Kaitlynn Glover. "NCBA and PLC thank the Forest Service for **abandoning their top-down approach and urge them to resume partnerships with landowners and producers who have spent decades managing our nation's National Forest System.**"

NCBA Update

Ken Ligon, Interim Executive Director

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) Annual Convention, held from February 3rd to 6th, 2025, proved to be an invaluable event filled with educational opportunities, networking, and entertainment. From the informative Cattlemen's College and engaging general sessions to a variety of educational workshops and an expansive trade show, the convention offered everything a rancher and their family could need to thrive.

The entertainment didn't disappoint either! Attendees enjoyed lively receptions, the exciting "Big Tex" cowboy event on Wednesday night, and an unforgettable "Cowboys' Night" at the San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo on Thursday.

Beyond the fun, the convention provided a platform for important policy discussions during business sessions, culminating in decisions presented at the board meeting. A big thank you to Barbara Jackson for coordinating the sessions we attended and for ensuring our voices were heard during the meetings through our votes.

Arizona made a strong showing with 38 participants, including vendors, presenters, and attendees. It was great to see our state so well-represented! If you missed this year's convention, I highly recommend attending future ones—it's a fantastic way to connect, learn, and strengthen our Arizona presence in the cattle industry.



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AZFB Update

Arizona Farm Bureau: Advocating for Ranchers and Agriculture
Daniel Harris, Arizona Farm Bureau Government Relations Manager, www.azfb.org/join

The Arizona Farm Bureau continues to champion policies that support the agricultural industry, focusing on water management, land use, tax policy, and economic stability for ranchers and farmers across the state. Here are some of the most pressing issues AZFB is engaged in this month to protect the future of Arizona ranching.

Balancing Growth and Agriculture: Ag-to-Urban Policy

With Arizona facing challenges in both housing affordability and water conservation, Senator T.J. Shope has reintroduced the Ag-to-Urban legislation, a proposal allowing voluntary conversion of irrigated farmland into residential developments. This bill could alleviate the housing crisis while reducing groundwater use, benefiting both urban and rural communities. Last year, the bill passed the Legislature but was vetoed by Governor Hobbs. AZFB remains actively involved in shaping policies that balance urban expansion with the protection of Arizona's agricultural lands.

Water Rights and the Willcox Active Management Area (AMA)

Water continues to be a central concern for Arizona ranchers. The newly designated Willcox AMA imposes restrictions on groundwater use, including limits on irrigation expansion, well monitoring requirements, and new compliance standards. AZFB is ensuring that ranchers' voices are heard in the policy discussions and advocating for flexible water management solutions, such as local-led conservation efforts and recharge projects that enhance water availability without stifling agriculture.

Defending Ranchers in Tax Policy

With many provisions of the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) set to expire at the end of 2025, Arizona ranchers could face a significant tax burden increase. Provisions such as business income deductions, bonus depreciation, and estate tax relief have been critical in keeping family ranches financially sustainable. AZFB is actively working with national ag organizations to ensure Congress extends these benefits to prevent financial strain on Arizona's agricultural producers.

Looking Ahead

As Arizona continues to grow and evolve, AZFB remains a steadfast advocate for its ranchers. Whether it's fighting for water security, ensuring responsible land use policies, or protecting producers from tax hikes, the organization plays a key role in shaping the future of Arizona agriculture. Stay engaged, stay informed, and make your voice heard—AZFB is here to ensure the legacy of ranching in Arizona remains strong.



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Proposed BRANDS

The official location for notice of proposed brands is the Arizona Department of Agriculture's website at <http://searchagriculture.az.gov/mastercontent/brandsnotice.aspx>. To view the complete list of proposed brands, be sure to check the AZDA website. Below are a few of the brands submitted in accordance with A.R.S § 3-1261(C).

These brands are not available for sale by the Arizona Department of Agriculture. The "End Date" shown is the deadline for receiving protests for the proposed brand. All protests or objections must be submitted in writing and postmarked before the "End Date" in the chart below. Protests that are postmarked after the End Date will not be considered.

Brand	Brand No. End Date	Location	Brand	Brand No. End Date	Location	Brand	Brand No. End Date	Location
	Brand No.: 20053 End Date: 3/16/2025	Cattle: RH Horse: RH Sheep: NO Goat: NO		Brand No.: 20052 End Date: 3/15/2025	Cattle: RR Horse: RT Sheep: NO Goat: NO		Brand No.: 20051 End Date: 3/7/2025	Cattle: LR Horse: LH Sheep: LH Goat: LH
	Brand No.: 20048 End Date: 3/7/2025	Cattle: LH Horse: LH Sheep: NO Goat: NO		Brand No.: 20050 End Date: 3/7/2025	Cattle: RH Horse: NO Sheep: NO Goat: NO		Brand No.: 20047 End Date: 3/7/2025	Cattle: NO Horse: RT Sheep: NO Goat: NO
	Brand No.: 20049 End Date: 3/7/2025	Cattle: LH Horse: RS Sheep: NO Goat: LH		Brand No.: 20044 End Date: 3/6/2025	Cattle: LH Horse: LS Sheep: NO Goat: NO		Brand No.: 20045 End Date: 3/6/2025	Cattle: RH Horse: NO Sheep: NO Goat: NO
	Brand No.: 20046 End Date: 3/6/2025	Cattle: LH Horse: LS Sheep: NO Goat: NO		Brand No.: 20042 End Date: 3/5/2025	Cattle: LR Horse: NO Sheep: NO Goat: NO		Brand No.: 20043 End Date: 3/5/2025	Cattle: RT Horse: RH Sheep: RH Goat: RH
	Brand No.: 20041 End Date: 3/5/2025	Cattle: RH Horse: LS Sheep: NO Goat: NO		Brand No.: 20039 End Date: 3/5/2025	Cattle: RH Horse: LH Sheep: RH Goat: LH		Brand No.: 20040 End Date: 3/5/2025	Cattle: RS Horse: RS Sheep: NO Goat: NO
	Brand No.: 20036 End Date: 3/2/2025	Cattle: RS Horse: RS Sheep: NO Goat: NO		Brand No.: 20037 End Date: 3/2/2025	Cattle: RH Horse: RH Sheep: NO Goat: NO		Brand No.: 20038 End Date: 3/2/2025	Cattle: LR Horse: LT Sheep: NO Goat: NO
	Brand No.: 20035 End Date: 3/2/2025	Cattle: LH Horse: LH Sheep: NO Goat: NO		Brand No.: 20034 End Date: 3/2/2025	Cattle: NO Horse: RT Sheep: NO Goat: NO		Brand No.: 20033 End Date: 3/1/2025	Cattle: LH Horse: LS Sheep: LR Goat: LR

Cowbelles Update

Industry Partners Working Together for a United Voice
Trina Sue Riggs, ASC President



It is an inspiring thing to see all of our industry beef organizations work together as we strive to educate and advocate for the industry that we love. When I joined Cowbelles almost 24 years ago, I did not realize how all of us worked to stay connected. I learned that in Arizona Cowbelles, if you are one of our local Cowbelle/Cattlewoman Presidents, you hold a seat on the AZ State Cowbelles Board of Directors. This doesn't stop at the state level—if you hold the ASC State Presidency (or any affiliated state), you sit on the American National Cattlewomen's Board of Directors. I know the Cattlemen's and Farm Bureau groups have similar structures. We all work to take local concerns and voices to the state and national levels, ensuring they are heard by our elected officials.

It has been a privilege to share Arizona's Cowbelles' voice at national meetings. At the beginning of February, some of our ladies were able to travel to San Antonio, Texas, for the National American Cattlewomen and National Cattlemen's Beef Association meetings to represent Arizona. Although we were never all in the same place at the same time to remember to get a group picture, we did manage to get five of us together at the American National Cattlewomen's Cowgirl Cotillion.

Picture: From L to R – Pamela Griffin (Past ASC & ANCW President), Stephanie Teskey (Past ASC President), Trina Sue Riggs (Current ASC President), Suzanne Menges (Past ASC President), and Barbara Jackson (Past ASC and ANCW President).

White Mountain Herefords

Bulls for Sale: Horned & Polled

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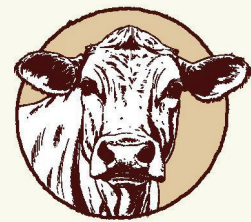


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- All sale bulls' averages rank in top 18% for Teat and Udder.

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