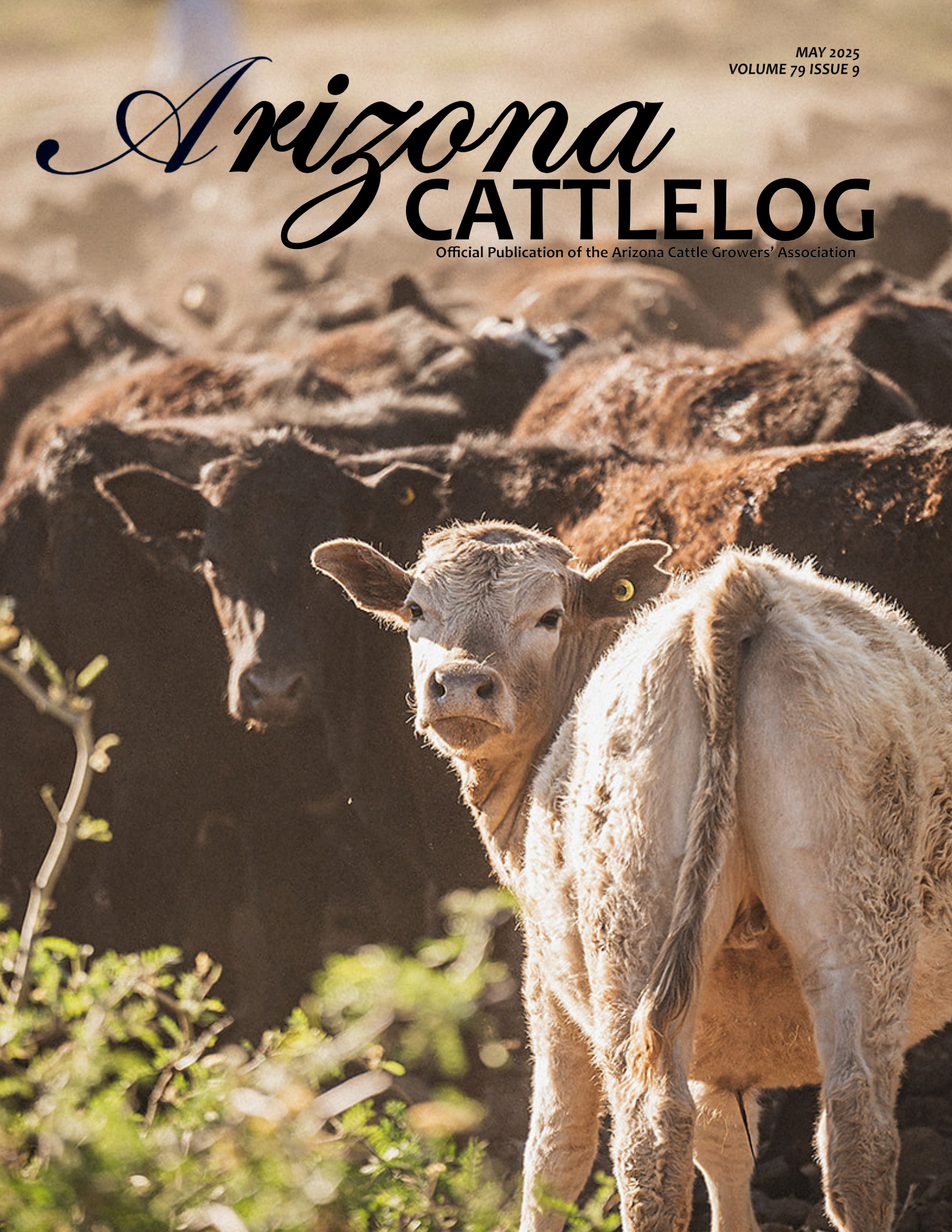


MAY 2025
VOLUME 79 ISSUE 9

Arizona CATTLELOG

Official Publication of the Arizona Cattle Growers' Association



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CATTLE GROWERS' REPORT



Letter from the Editor

Rooted in Purpose

Living and working in agriculture isn't just something I do—it's who I am. It is who we all are. It's woven into my soul, my story, and my every breath. At Mortimer Farms, I have the immense honor of leading a farm that not only grows food, but also grows understanding as we open our gates to the public. Every crop we plant, every animal we raise, and every decision we make is grounded in our mission: "connecting your family to the story of your food." Feeding the community, nurturing our land and animals, and creating moments of connection that last a lifetime—that is our purpose.

Spring is especially powerful on our farm and ranch. The fields wake up. Seeds go in the ground. Calves, lambs, kids, and piglets are born. The hope of a new season and new life fills the air. There's something deeply spiritual about watching food grow and seeing new life come into the world—something that reminds us of resilience, renewal, the miracle of birth, and the beauty of hard work.

We're a working farm that welcomes over 500,000 guests each year and connects with more than 100,000 followers daily online. Families pick their own produce and berries, children meet their first cow, and thousands of guests walk away feeling more connected to their food and the people who grow and raise it. This is what makes Mortimer Farms truly unique - the front-row seat we have to educating the consumer. This is a responsibility we take very seriously. We are not only telling our story—we are telling the story of farmers and ranchers across the state and across the country during every single interaction.

We show the heart behind the American agriculture community, the dedication we each have to animal welfare, water conservation, and sustainability. We show the long days, back-breaking work, and unwavering commitment that goes into our daily lives. We speak about the blessing it is to have food security in our country and the ability to feed our citizens—thanks to the grit and perseverance of our state's and country's farmers and ranchers. We speak about the power of supporting local, timeless family traditions, marveling in Earth's beauty, and the strength of community. This visibility has built a transparent and trusting relationship with our audience—one that allows us to talk about the hard stuff, too.

After the recent gray wolf hearing, even though our ranch isn't directly impacted, I took to social media to speak out and share the story of our fellow Arizona ranchers. I shared the real effects the reintroduction is having on ranching families across the state. That post sparked conversation, brought awareness, and gave the public a chance to hear the truth—directly from a rancher. That's the power of transparency, of connection, of storytelling.

Today, this Cattlelog is filled with stories from Arizona ranchers who are directly affected by the gray wolf—stories of heartbreak, stories of brutality, stories of livelihoods at risk due to the financial and physical burden of the reintroduction.

As you turn the pages of this issue, you will see the challenges, feel the heartbreak, and understand where we stand. I hope you feel inspired by these rancher's perseverance, informed, and empowered to help make a difference. This collection of articles is a reflection of our lives. Of our fight. Of our purpose. Of our future. Thank you for standing together, for listening, and for learning as we all continue to raise cattle, care for the land, and provide beef to our communities and country.

Ashlee Mortimer
CEO, Mortimer Farms
Editor, Arizona Cattlelog



Letter from the ACGA President

Greetings, Friends and Members of ACGA,

As we step into spring, I'm filled with hope and momentum. Across the country, we're beginning to see positive shifts in national policy that favor the ranching community—from common-sense environmental reform to renewed support for working lands and private property rights. It's encouraging to know that our voices are being heard at the highest levels, and I'm confident these changes will ease burdens and strengthen our operations in the long run. We're seeing better collaboration between ag leadership and policymakers, and those conversations are finally starting to reflect what we live and work through every day.

Closer to home, I'd like to remind everyone that this summer's Annual Convention in Safford is an election year for the ACGA. It's an important moment in the life of our association.

It has truly been the honor of a lifetime to serve as your ACGA President. Fighting for our industry and representing Arizona ranchers has been a role I've held with deep pride and gratitude. I've had the opportunity to witness firsthand the grit, resilience, and heart that define this industry. As we near the end of my term, it's bittersweet—but I know the future remains bright because of the strength of each of you, within this organization and industry.

Our Nominating Committee has done a fantastic job following our transparent and inclusive process, and I encourage each of you to get involved. Whether it's running for office, submitting a nomination, or casting your vote, your participation matters. These roles are about protecting what we value, standing up for our way of life, representing our industry, and guiding the future of Arizona ranching.

Step forward. Let your voice be heard. Our future depends on the continued leadership, dedication, and heart of each one of you.

Best regards,
Mike Gannuscio, ACGA President



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

Executive Committee

Mike Gannuscio	President
Brian DeGanahl	1st VP
Bopper Cannon	2nd VP
Jared Lyman	Treasurer
Stephanie Teskey	Secretary
Tim Petersen	Member-at-Large
Ben Menges	Member-at-Large
Andy Groseta	Imm. Past President

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Steve Layton	AZ Strip	Vacant	Pima
Tim Klump	Cochise	Vacant	Pinal
Mike Macauley	Coconino	Vacant	Santa Cruz
Peter Oddonetto	Gila	Reuben Verner	Yavapai
Bill Sollers	Graham	Scott Pilchard	Business Rep.
Ginger Cheney	Greenlee	Vacant	Native American
Marty Byrne	La Paz	Trina Sue Riggs	AZ Cowbelles
Lisa Khan	Maricopa	Trever Hall	Foundation
John Harris	Mohave	Nate Brawley	Ranchers for Tomorrow



Letter from the Executive Director

ACGA Updates: Staffing, Events, and Legislative Efforts

Ken Ligon, Interim Executive Director

Spring is here, and ACGA has been hard at work. Our recent efforts have focused on four key areas: staffing, fundraising, relationship-building, and planning for the upcoming Summer Convention, July 23–25.

In January, the board appointed an interim Executive Director and launched a national search for a permanent hire. The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) assisted by promoting the position across LinkedIn, Indeed, and their own networks. The application window has now closed. On April 10, the Executive Board reviewed candidates and began the interview process. By the time you read this, we expect to have selected a new Executive Director, with NCBA supporting us through onboarding.

The fundraising campaign to support this role has been led by longtime member and past president Andy Groseta. His personal outreach and dedication have raised \$64,000 so far. Members are encouraged to join the effort by contributing \$2,500 to this important, restricted fund. We are especially grateful to Andy, who continues to ride for the brand while courageously facing pancreatic cancer.

I want to take a moment to say how deeply thankful I am for the opportunity to serve as ACGA's Interim Executive Director. It has been a privilege to step into this role at such a critical time in the organization's journey. The chance to work alongside dedicated board members, passionate ranching families, and partners across Arizona has reminded me of the strength, resilience, and unity of our agricultural community. I took on this role not only to help bridge the gap during transition—but to honor the mission of ACGA and ensure we stayed focused on the issues that matter most to our members. Every meeting, call, and conversation has reaffirmed my belief in the power of ranchers working together. Serving in this capacity has been both humbling and inspiring, and I look forward to seeing ACGA continue to grow and thrive in the hands of strong leadership.

ACGA is also working to strengthen partnerships across the state. Recently, I joined Executive Board Member Tim Petersen in meeting with the Southern Arizona Cattle Protective Association (SACPA), reinforcing our shared mission to support Arizona ranchers.

Meanwhile, Summer Convention Chair Suzanne Menges is organizing what promises to be an exceptional event. She's been regularly updating members and ensuring the experience will be memorable for both adults and students.

There's much to look forward to. With the teamwork of our members, board, and leadership, ACGA continues to move forward united in service of ranching, ranchers, and the beef industry.

Legislative Update

In Washington, conservative lawmakers are rallying behind the Ranching Without Red Tape Act, a 2025 proposal that cuts bureaucratic delays for ranchers working on federal lands. Backed by President Trump's administration, the bill would remove red tape and streamline approval for range improvements like fencing, water development, and maintenance—freeing ranchers to better manage land and protect their herds from drought and wildfire. This act is a major step toward putting land management back in the hands of those who live and work on it every day.

Closer to home, Arizona lawmakers are deep in budget negotiations. Talks remain tense, especially around funding for key programs and determining how much one-time money is actually available. With the Governor's recent veto strategy, little legislation is moving until budget details are ironed out. Ranchers and rural communities are watching closely, knowing that tax policy, water infrastructure, and agency funding hang in the balance.

Arizona and New Mexico are experiencing a spike in rabies cases. In just the first quarter of 2025, Arizona confirmed 51 rabid animals—including multiple human exposures. Greenlee County emergency services reports an alarming rise in incidents. Matt Bolinger stating he's "never seen so many rabid animal interactions with humans." Wolves are a transitory species. If a wolf carrying rabies kills a cow and that animal is later handled by a rancher, the human is also at risk of exposure. Ranching families and employees treating cattle injured or killed by predators—including Mexican grey wolves—are especially vulnerable. This influx of rabies cases is becoming a serious talking point in the broader Mexican Grey Wolf conversation. The goal is to educate the public that predator management is not just about livestock—it's a public health issue. When state and federal agencies ignore the on-the-ground realities of wolf-livestock interactions, they also risk overlooking the very real danger of disease transmission in rural communities.

Stay tuned as both state and federal conversations evolve—each with real implications for ranching families and the land they steward.

Around Arizona

Send your photos to cattlelog@azcattlegrowers.org for a chance to be featured in an upcoming issue of The Cattlelog!



Mark your calendars!

Event: ACGA's 122nd Annual Summer Convention

Date: July 23rd through July 25th

Details: www.azcattlegrowers.org

At Work for You!

Your Vote Matters!

Officers are elected every two years at our Annual Summer Convention. Save the date for July 24th, in Safford during the general membership session.

While our officers traditionally “move up the chain”, (for example its customary that our current first vice president will be our next president), any and all members in good standing may run for office!

The Nominating Committee is comprised of one representative from each county organization, the immediate Past President, and the current President sit on the committee. The committee contacted current officers regarding their desire to continue serving in their current position or moving into a new one. They also surfaced names of new candidates.

The Committee is recommending the following nominations:

President – Ken Ligon (Yavapai county) or David Cook (Gila county)

1st Vice President – Ben Menges (Graham county)

2nd Vice President – Bopper Cannon (Cochise county)

Member at Large – Brian Deganahl (La Paz county)

Member at Large – Tim Peterson (Yavapai county)

Secretary – Stephanie Teskey (Yavapai county)

Treasurer – Richard Searle (Cochise county)

Members are free to submit additional nominations for any of the officer positions from the floor at Summer Convention. For those positions that have only one nomination, a voice vote will be taken. For those positions that have more than one nomination, a paper ballot will be provided. Each position will be voted on separately. Visit the following link for a complete explanation of how the Committee nominations work and how the election will be run. (<https://youtu.be/Op7e3ex-qhE?si=pQPvNepM7Gxkj-zr>)



If you are unable to attend convention, you may send a proxy. Please be sure to request a current proxy form from the office, sign it, and ask your proxy to turn in the forms when they register at convention.

Here is a link to access the proxy form online:

https://mortimerfarmsaz-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/sharla_mortimerfarmsaz_onmicrosoft_com/Efzkt2hxdtdBEqF9uhnJU4cB2CUt1Y4xaP9k5fwboOogaQ?e=BDbXzr

Remember, if you give a proxy and then attend the meeting, your proxy will still vote for you. Note – if you are carrying proxies, you must turn them in at convention registration, the member must be in good standing, and forms must have an original signature.

Don't miss the general session at convention! Your Vote Matters!

ACGA Nominating Committee:

Cochise – Sonia Gasho, Chair

Past President – Andy Groseta, Yavapai

Coconino – Benny Aja

Outgoing President – Mike Gannuscio, La Paz

Graham – Bill Sollers

1st Vice President – Jared Lyman, Gila

Greenlee – Ginger Cheney

Gila – Pete Oddonetto

La Paz – Marty Byrne

Maricopa – Leatta McLaughlin

Mohave – Dan Rodriguez

Yavapai – Tim Peterson



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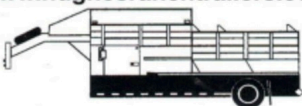
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Convention Corner

Convention Featured Speaker: Dr. David Anderson

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The 122nd Annual Convention of the Arizona Cattle Growers' Association will feature several outstanding speakers bringing extensive experience and the latest research on issues affecting the cattle industry. We are very fortunate to welcome Dr. David Anderson from Texas A&M University to our convention this year.

Dr. Anderson is a professor and AgriLife Extension economist in the Department of Agricultural Economics. His work involves the analysis of livestock market economics and policy. He has authored or co-authored more than 1,000 journal articles, publications, symposiums, and has presented numerous papers, popular press, and other articles. He has chaired or co-chaired 32 graduate students' research committees and has been a member of 101 other graduate student committees. For the past 25 years, he has taught Agricultural Economics 614, focusing on agricultural policy. He has received awards from the American, Western, and Southern Agricultural Economics Associations for his quality of research and Extension programs, and is a five-time recipient of the Texas A&M Extension Superior Service award. He is originally from Coolidge, Arizona, where his father is a cotton farmer.

You will not want to miss Dr. Anderson's session! Mark your calendars now for the Annual Convention on July 23–25 at Eastern Arizona College in Thatcher. You will find the registration and hotel information at www.azcattlegrowers.org/events.

See you at the convention!

Brought to you by: USDA-SARE Western Meat and Poultry Project



Thank you!

To our dearest friends, thank you for your kindness, support and prayers. We are blessed to have you in our lives.

With Gratitude,

- Andy & Mary Beth Groseta



Get Ready! Auction Alert!



Donate an Auction Item to the Foundation at the ACGA Summer Convention!

The Arizona Cattle Growers' Association Summer Convention is just around the corner—July 23-25—and we're calling on our community to help make a difference! We're seeking donated items for the live and silent auctions benefiting the Arizona Cattle Industry Research and Education Foundation.

Your donation supports scholarships, leadership programs, and educational efforts that protect and promote Arizona's cattle industry. Whether it's a unique experience, handmade item, artwork, ranch gear, or a great gift basket—every item helps us raise funds for a stronger future



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PORCH TALK



THIS COW WAS KILLED BY A PACK OF SEVEN WOLVES AND CONSUMED IN JUST THREE DAYS. WHEN WE FOUND HER, SHE STILL SMELLED FRESH—BUT A WEEK LATER, ONLY A SMALL PATCH OF HIDE REMAINED. THESE ARE THE HARSH REALITIES RANCHERS FACE ON THE FRONT LINES OF WOLF COUNTRY. - GINGER CHENEY

The Many Faces of Cattle Growers



I'm a fifth-generation rancher from Apache County. I have a beautiful wife named Alexandria, and we share four amazing kids together. For seven years, I've worked at Farm Credit helping producers navigate the financial side of agriculture, while running cattle with my dad on our family's cow-calf operation for the past four. I'm leaving Farm Credit to return full-time to the ranch. This was a decision driven by legacy, passion, heritage, and a need to address problems our industry faces—particularly from the wolf.

Mexican Gray Wolves—reintroduced under the Endangered Species Act—hit us hard. Direct kills of calves hurt, but the indirect losses weigh heavier: stressed herds, lower conception rates, reduced weight gain, extra labor, and higher feed costs. These costs stack up fast, yet compensation does not cover them, and getting confirmed depredations is becoming more challenging with the new evidentiary standards. Our family had to shut down our sheep operation in 2012 due to the wolves. Now, we're fighting to keep the ranch viable.

For years, many have pushed to defund and delist wolves entirely. I get the frustration—wolves complicate everything. That fight is a losing issue tangled in politics, lawsuits, and public sentiment that often romanticizes predators over producers. Defunding or delisting can take years, and meanwhile, we're still bleeding. Even if delisting were to happen under this administration, in four years we could be right back where we are now with no funding. It's not a winning battle—take it from the producers who have been fighting this issue for over two decades.

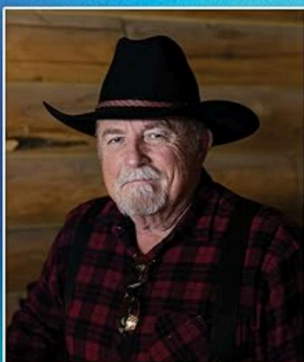
Instead, we should rally for full compensation of indirect losses. Congress controls the purse; it's practical and winnable.

"IF THE GOVERNMENT WANTS WOLVES HERE, THEY SHOULD FOOT THE BILL FOR THE CHAOS THEY CAUSE—NOT JUST THE DEAD CALVES THAT BUREAUCRATS CONFIRM OR DENY, BUT THE WHOLE MESS." - DALTON DOBSON

This is why I recently testified in the House Natural Resources Subcommittee—to bring light to this issue. It's a fight that respects our work and doesn't get lost in endless gridlock. Returning to the ranch for my family and me means doubling down on this cause. **We're fifth-generation for a reason—adaptable, stubborn, and rooted.**

Dalton Dobson, MBA

A Wrangler's Reckless Writings



By
Bryce Angell

Illustrations by Brendan Sullivan

New Book Release - A Wrangler's Reckless Writings

Cowboy poet and columnists, Bryce Angell brings humor, history, and heart to A Wrangler's Reckless Writings. The book is a collection of cowboy poetry and country stories.

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The book is available in hardcover, paperback, and ebook. Order on [Amazon](#) Books

There's My **Cowboy**

The Wolf by Bryce Angell

When I was young, the wolves I knew were all in fairytales. Three Little Pigs,
Red Riding Hood were on a children's scale.

There was no need to fear him. He couldn't leap out from the book. But my eyes chose
not to see him. I didn't dare a look.

In my teenage years, I watched old werewolf movies on the screen. I knew they weren't for real but the scariest I'd seen.

I remember well, at eighteen years, we packed into Yellowstone. We were there to fish the
Bechler while our camp sat all alone.

The clear night settled in and we were sitting 'round the fire. The fishermen were bragging louder than the old town crier.

But soon their mouths were quiet. No more voices loud and foul. 'Cuz in the distance
we all heard a lonely mournful howl.

My father said, "That was a wolf. For safety I require- stay in camp, don't wander, and keep close here by the fire."
That single howl sent me a chill I couldn't shake all night. 'Cuz this time the howl was real and I'm sure with one big bite.
The horses were uneasy. They were blowing breaths of air. If I hadn't tied 'em solid they'd be running off elsewhere.

In 1995 the wolf returned to his old home. Reintroduction into Yellowstone now gave him room to roam.

For years they were endangered and grew exponentially. And the rancher
watched his sheep and cows get slaughtered senselessly.

Do they get their reimbursement when the wolf will kill their stock? And who pays for the extra hands who now watch
livestock 'round the clock?

And then the disbelievers with no knowledge but a gripe, will say the livestock owner's claim is hyped up, bogus tripe.

No longer does the gray wolf sit on the endangered list. You can purchase enough hunting tags to fill your empty fist.
So how do you teach a wolf to let a rancher's business run? Refer back to the fairytales. They'll show you how it's done.

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We are **Cattle Growers'**

Written by Ginger Cheney

Our family ranch has been in existence since 1891, and my boys and nieces are the 6th generation. One hundred and thirty-four years of hard work, dedication, and passion for the industry have kept us here. My great-grandfather was an original member of the Greenlee County Cattle Growers in 1914, so being a member of organizations that support our industry is also a family tradition.

I know ACGA has gone through some ups and downs during my lifetime. I felt that they didn't support us like I would have hoped during the NEPA process in the 1990s. In fact, I refused to join for a long time. Despite some of the struggles through the years, I now feel that ACGA is a worthwhile organization to belong to. The positive changes I've seen over the last few years have kept me as a member. We get support from ACGA for the battles we are encountering. Many of the problems we face are worked out as congressional issues, and we have good people working for us, bending the ears of those who need it.

Right now, we are incurring extreme wolf problems. We've had the wolves since they were first released in 1998. It has been a haul, but it has grown exponentially worse over the last few years. I will say that ACGA has been proactive in helping us get meetings with congressmen, agency people, and others to hopefully start getting some much-needed changes.

We all face challenges—from people to weather and everything in between. I'm thankful for the support that ACGA gives us to continue the good fight to produce high-quality beef for the people who enjoy our products, and that is why I am an ACGA member.



Celebrating Agricultural Legacy at the Arizona Farm and Ranch Hall of Fame

Written by Janice Ryan Bryson

The cattle industry was well represented at the annual Arizona Farm and Ranch Hall of Fame Honorees Dinner held March 22, 2025, at the Sheraton Wild Horse Pass in Chandler. Over 400 were in attendance and supported each honoree for their accomplishments in agriculture.

The Arizona State Cowbelles is the first organization to be inducted into the Hall of Fame. Organized by ranch wives as a social club in 1939 in Douglas, they formed a statewide group in 1947. The Cowbelles gave Arizona cattle women a space to communicate, promote beef, and advocate for their way of life.

Partnering with the Arizona Beef Council since 1970, the Cowbelles laid the foundation for the American National CattleWomen, with seven Arizona women having served as national president. They are a unified, professional organization supporting the cattle industry, educating youth and consumers about nutrition, conservation, and animal care.

Barbara Stevenson Jackson, past president of both the Arizona State Cowbelles and the American National CattleWomen, was honored for her many accomplishments. She began her career with Syntex in 1977, advancing into leadership roles in sales, training, public relations, and management. Barbara and her husband, Tim, returned to Arizona, founded successful livestock supply businesses, and fulfilled their dream of purchasing a ranch in Sonoita.

Barbara served on the Arizona State Veterinary Examiners Board (1999–2004) and on the Cattlemen's Beef Board (2010–2016). She was named Top Wrangler by the Arizona Cattle Growers Association in 2018. She and Tim were honored as "Friends of CALS" by the University of Arizona and Barbara has received awards from Washington State University, where her father, Carl Stevenson, was also a Hall of Fame inductee. She currently chairs the NCBA Cattle Health and Well-Being policy committee.

The Orme Family was honored, with roots dating back to JP Orme's arrival in Arizona in the 1870s. JP helped establish the Salt River Valley Water Users' Association (SRP) and served in the state's first legislature. In 1929, his son Chick and wife Minna purchased the Quarter Circle V Bar Ranch in Yavapai County. They farmed vegetables and opened a school for their children and others. That school became the Orme School, which welcomed students from across the country.

Charles Jr. and Mort Orme continued the family legacy, with Charlie and his wife, Mimi, leading the Orme School for 42 years. The ranch became a leader in holistic range management, monitoring biodiversity and rangeland health.

The fourth and fifth generations of the Orme family continue to serve as principals of Orme Ranch, recently placing a conservation easement on 900 acres of deeded land to ensure agricultural production and open space for generations to come. In 2023, the Ormes received the Wide Open Spaces Award from the Central Arizona Land Trust.

The historic Sierra Bonita Ranch, founded by Col. Henry Hooker in 1872, was also honored. Hooker began his Arizona ranching career by supplying beef to military posts. When a herd of his cattle stampeded and was found in the Sulphur Springs Valley, Hooker decided to settle there, establishing what became one of the oldest continuously operating cattle ranches in the U.S. The ranch buildings are designated a National Historic Landmark.

Hooker was a pioneer in livestock quality, importing Hereford stock and developing a renowned horse breeding operation. The ranch, known as the Crooked H, became a social hub in southeastern Arizona. Six generations of the Hooker family have lived and worked at Sierra Bonita Ranch.

Jesse Hooker Davis, the sixth generation, now leads the operation. He expanded the ranch's holdings, served as president of the Cochise-Graham Cattle Growers, and has represented Graham County on the Arizona Cattle Growers Association board. Jesse has been honored as a Conservation Rancher.

"This is bigger than me. It's just my turn to take care of it," Jesse said. "Being a legacy operation is something special. Sometimes I lose sight of the generations before me, but it's exactly what drives me to succeed. The passion, hard work, and drive runs through my veins, thanks to my forefathers."

Three farmers were also honored: W. T. Gladden of Buckeye; Leona Carlyle-Kakar of Maricopa; and Ernest W. McFarland of Florence, who also served as Senator and Governor.

Visit www.azfarmandranch.org to view all Hall of Fame honorees and learn how to nominate a farmer or rancher for future induction.

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BARBARA MARKS

Stewardship Comments

1891 by Barbara Marks

Ever since Great-Grandpa Henry Jones homesteaded the WY Bar Ranch in 1891, water has been important to this family. From the start, waters have been established, from developed springs to dirt stock tanks which had to be dug by hand and a Fresno. These waters helped scatter cattle and wildlife so they could better utilize the forage resource. Stewardship for all animal mothers who didn't have to travel as far for water when their babies were little is important to us. Keeping these water sources in good condition is imperative. When the Mexican wolves were released, it was vital that we kept these waters maintained to hopefully mitigate livestock/wolf problems.

The dirt tanks on our summer country are fairly easy to maintain, using bulldozers and loaders, after getting clearances from the Forest Service. However, our winter country is not only in the last Primitive Area in the U.S., but also roadless as well. It's very rough, rugged, and remote with some open ridges and small flats, but does well for grazing cattle. Tank cleaning has to be completed with non-mechanized equipment. Some tanks have been maintained by hand with shovels and sleds, but others have been done using a tumblebug, similar to a Fresno, which looks like a fifty-five-gallon drum with part of the side cut out and pulled by a team of mules or horses. Drawn along, it scoops up the dirt loosened with a horse-drawn plow, and then rolls over to dump the dirt onto the dam. We've partnered with Arizona Game and Fish Habitat Partnership and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation to accomplish this difficult and expensive task, but for the sustainability of the resource, our ranch, and wildlife, it is worth it!



Photo 1: Kenneth Thompson with the reins and his daughter Jamee handling the plow to loosen the compacted soil for the tumblebug to remove.

Photo 2: Kenneth Thompson operating the tumblebug cleaning a dirt stock tank.

Photo 3: Clean stock tank full of water.

Photo 4: Loading the dismantled tumblebug onto pack horse for transport into Primitive Area to clean tanks.

Sharing Your Story – It Matters

Speak Their Language: Bridging the Gap Between Agriculture and the Public

Written by: Ashlee Mortimer, Mortimer Farms

When talking to the public about agriculture, the words we choose matter. Most consumers don't speak "rancher" or "farmer"—and that's okay. It's our job to meet them where they are. Using terms like "heifer," "calving rate," or "stocking density" may make perfect sense to us, but for someone unfamiliar with agriculture, those words can be confusing and overwhelming. Instead, translate those terms into everyday language: say "young female cow," "birth rate," or "number of animals per pasture." This helps build trust, not barriers.

When we speak clearly and kindly, we invite people into our world. We open the door for understanding, appreciation, and connection. The goal isn't to water down the truth—it's to share it in a way that resonates. If we want the public to support agriculture, they first have to understand it—and that starts with the words we choose.



On the Ranch Q & A

Written by Darcy Ely

How has the new U.S. administration impacted your livelihood as a rancher?

It has reduced the number of range staff and archeologist available on our FS District for conservation project assistance. It is looking strong that our NEPA in process will be expediated and have greater flexibility with this administration and grazing will be a tool for prevention of wildfires.

How have wolves impacted your operation?

We are in the primary recovery zone and have been adapting for 25 years to the many changes of wolf reintroduction to find a ground of sustainability.

What policy changes do you hope to see in the near future regarding wolves and why?

The primary zones prey base is unable to sustain the number of current wolves and cannot meet the new recovery plan criteria to delist, therefore this administration needs to manage on science instead of politics. Management needs to be turned over to the States asap. Economic impacts need to be factored into the decisions of what T&E species we need to manage for and to what extent.

What is the single largest factor contributing to the profitability of your ranch or operation, and how does this relate to the health of your herd and your calving rate?

Rain and water! Balancing the daily changes of drought, predators, public, wildfire and current conditions by adaptive management and on the ground among your livestock.

What role does your operation play in sustainability, and how do you balance conservation with profitability?

A healthy range land gives you healthy livestock. Having a long-term outlook helps you prepare and plan for future issues and gives you management flexibility, all needed with the wolves.

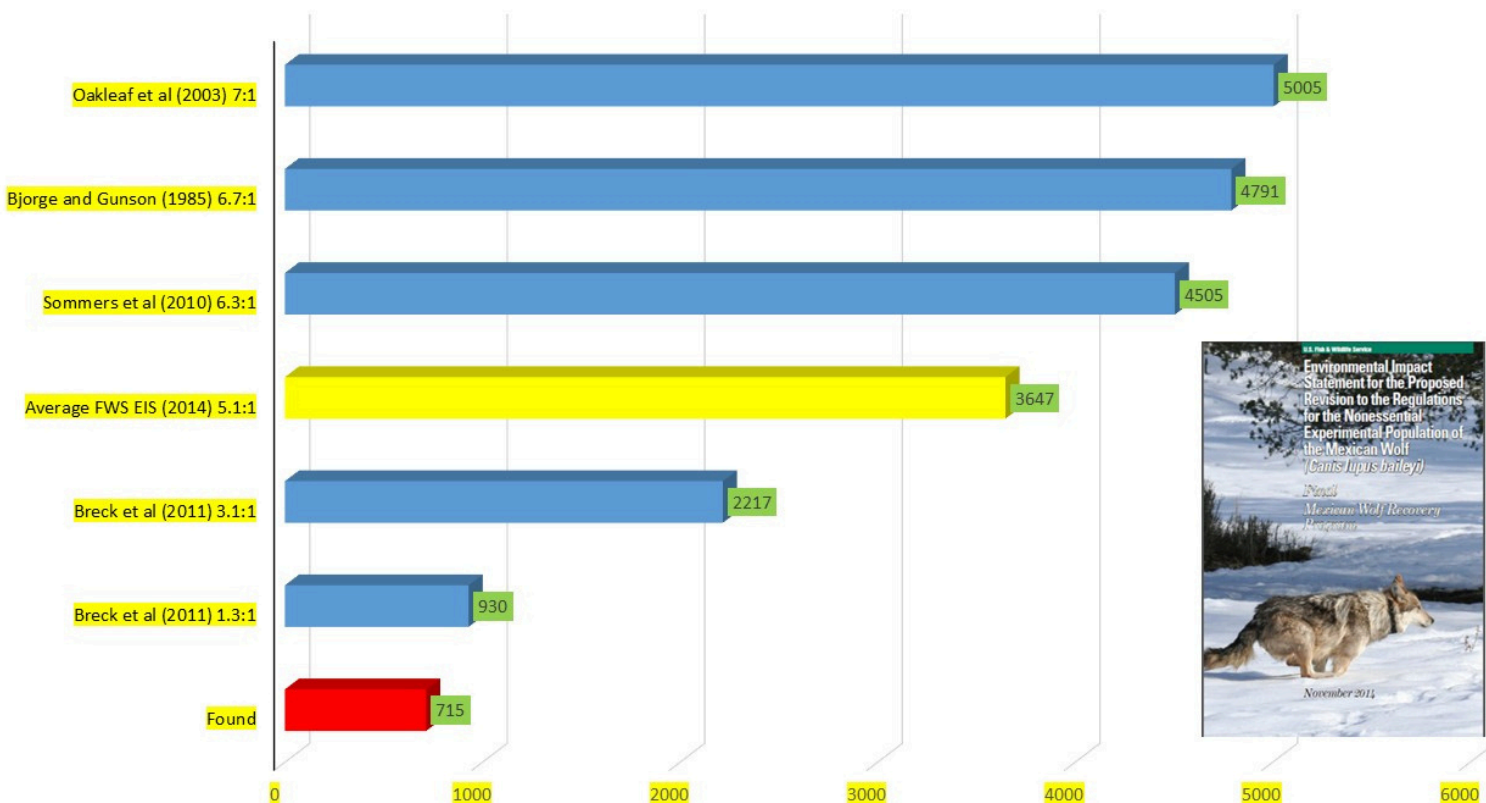
What advice would you give another rancher that is just starting to be affected by wolves, and why?

Immediately document and put multiple forms of identification on calves as soon as they are born, with wolves the calves are there one day and gone the next.

Technology is a great tool, but don't let it overrule the old school of watching for tracks, your cattle reactions and behavior and signs of injuries.

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At first glance, this calf showed only minor visible injuries—just a few small marks on her head. But hours later, after she passed, the extent of the trauma was revealed: her skull had been crushed. These photos are a stark reminder that the visible signs of a wolf attack can be deceiving, while the internal damage is catastrophic.



Wolves and Livestock By Ginger Cheney

As the Mexican wolves' numbers explode and their territory expands, more and more people are being affected by these apex predators. It's critical for people to know their rights and some of the signs they need to look for.

If you see wolves actively attacking your cattle on private land, you can kill them. You cannot shoot them on public land if they are attacking cattle. You can't shoot them if they are attacking your dogs. We've had situations where wolves will follow us, trying to lure our dogs away from us. Thankfully, our dogs have been too scared to take the bait.

If you have wolves in your area and you find a dead cow, calf, bull, or horse, call Wildlife Services. We've had animals without obvious marks, and when the hide was peeled back, they were full of bites. If you find a calf leg, call Wildlife Services (WS). I had only a small piece of a leg that went just above the ankle. There was enough evidence for a confirmation. I've learned to always call. Sometimes we can't find any evidence that fits with the new WS standards. Besides dealing with wolves, those standards are my greatest frustration. The WS investigators can no longer look at the fight scene and all of the other clues; it's only subcutaneous hemorrhaging, and it has to be within a two-week time period, even for probables. It's absolutely ridiculous! After WS completes their report and sends it to Colorado for the "review," you will get paperwork back whether or not the animal is confirmed, probable, or unknown. It has instructions to turn it in to the Arizona Livestock Loss Board for compensation. FSA also has a compensation program, but does not pay 100% yet. Please contact your FSA office for options. You can only turn in one or the other.

Some nonlethal measures do work. USFWS always wants to promote range riders and fladry, and I think they work to a point. Our problem is range riders don't ride horses, so they are not effective on the Blue. Food caches absolutely work, but improve pup survival. Ask for help.

One of the biggest pieces of advice I can give you is: be proactive... go on the investigations, ask questions, learn, and know your AZGFD and WS people. They will help you. I text daily with AZGFD and WS personnel when we are having problems. They are great at communicating with me. I don't wish this scourge on anyone, but wolves are here.

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Cattlemen's College

Summary of Arizona Game and Fish Department's Mexican Wolf Recovery Program – Q1 2025

This summary is created from the findings/information in the Arizona Game and Fish Department's (AZGFD) First Quarter 2025 Mexican Wolf Recovery Program Update, focusing solely on Arizona.

As of the end of 2024, 124 Mexican wolves were documented in the wild in Arizona—part of a total minimum population of 286 wolves across Arizona and New Mexico. This marks a 9th consecutive year of population growth. Arizona now has 22 documented wolf packs, many of which are tracked via radio collars maintained by the Interagency Field Team (IFT).

In Q1, the IFT conducted multiple captures, collarings, and monitoring efforts throughout eastern Arizona, including new wolf pack confirmations and tracking of individual wolves. Several wolves were recollared, and some new dispersers were recorded. Four Mexican wolf mortalities were documented in Arizona during this quarter and are under investigation.

Confirmed livestock depredations attributed to wolves in Arizona totaled 10 animals killed and 3 injured during the quarter. These numbers contribute to a total of 37 depredations per 100 wolves, down from 43 in 2023 and significantly lower than in 2021 (63 per 100 wolves). ***Something not mentioned in the article — but known all too well by many ranchers — is that this is not a complete number, as many wolf kills are labeled as unconfirmed.***

The report also detailed proactive management efforts, including 115 wolf monitoring events, carcass removal, and deployment of deterrent tools like fladry and fox lights.

AZGFD reminds the public that killing a Mexican wolf is a federal offense and urges anyone with relevant information to call Operation Game Thief at (800) 352-0700. Full details and past updates are available at azgfd.gov/wolf.

Wolf Contact List

Call CCSO Ranch Deputies first, then call Caleb with USDA, then other contacts depending on situation:

1st call: COCHISE COUNTY SHERIFF / RANCH DEPUTIES –

- Jesse Mitchell 520-686-9030
- Cody Essary 520-559-7381

2nd call: US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE:

- Caleb Garzanelli – Wolf Boss (Inspector – call when you find a kill) 928-525-4233
- Dave Bergman – State Director / Boss 602-758-7803
- Chris Carrillo – District Supervisor 480-292-1830

AZGFD Contacts:

- Clay Crowder - State Wildlife Boss 602-717-9890
- Jason Capps – IFTL AZ (Field Team Leader – Wolf Locations) 928-358-0813
- Bailey Dilgard (Garzanelli) - Wolf Biologist (NORTHERN AZ) 480-828-6306
- Monty Fox – Wolf Biologist (SOUTHERN AZ) 602-809-6830

US Fish and Wildlife Service (Department of Interior):

- Brady McGee – Boss / SW Regional Director 505-908-8491 or 505-761-4748
- Allison Greenleaf – Field Team Leader 928-215-1098
- Frank Montoya – Captain Law Enforcement Specialist 520-508-7181

US Forest Service:

- Jay Olson – Forest Liaison (Call for Wolf Location) 928-551-7378

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM TAMMY SMITH:

- Having the support of your sheriff is important. Our ranch deputies are not certified with USDA, they are not there to verify a wolf kill. They will be there to rule out any criminal activity by doing their own investigation. However, they will be documenting the scene and filing a report. Documentation is key!
- To prove “Undue Economic Hardship” we should collectively compile all death losses. The Cochise County Sheriff's Department can help us with a record of this by the reports they file.
- Never meet with anyone face to face without an outside witness present if possible
- Do not let anyone remove your animal from the premises. That animal belongs to you!
- If you find a potential kill: document tracks, injury to the animal, etc by taking many photos. Focus on bite marks, teeth rakes, and hemorrhaging. Cover carcass to discourage or keep other predators away. Make your phone calls. Be present when someone arrives. The inspector is supposed to respond on site within 24 hours.
- You have the right to photograph and video necropsies, despite what you might be told!
- Request that range riders give you 24 hours' notice before they “haze” on your property
- Texts/emails provide documentation of requests and responses.



INDUSTRY NEWS

FROM PARTNERS & FRIENDS

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PLC Update

Public Lands Council Spring Update – May

Kaitlynn Glover, PLC Executive Director

April held both showers and flowers in Washington, D.C., as the administration rolled out news on tariffs, agency staffing, funding opportunities, and a wide variety of policy updates that affect the cattle industry. (PLC had an announcement of our own: Join us at our 57th annual meeting this September 16–18 in Flagstaff! We are looking forward to a strong Arizona presence!)

Here in Washington, PLC continues to engage with the administration to ensure land management agencies have the staff they need to facilitate timely turnout, permit administration, studies and surveys, and all of the other processes necessary to manage grazing on federal lands. Equally, PLC is working with our partners to ensure that any potential impacts from tariffs and labor adjustments can be addressed prior to the wildfire season, since we know ignitions are likely to start early in most of the West. When I spoke at the Arizona Agribusiness Roundtable in March, I emphasized the opportunity ranchers, university partners, conservation districts, and other organizations have to work together to ensure smooth land management, particularly during times of adjustment and transition.

While tariffs and trade, labor and immigration, and even taxes held the attention of the nation, in Washington we're having robust conversations around all of the issues you prioritize on your operations. Arizona was well-represented at PLC's Legislative Conference in early April, where attendees were able to interact with political leadership who have a direct impact on grazing permit administration. Forest Service Chief Schultz made clear that his priorities, and the administration's, align with PLC's goal to ramp up fuels treatments to reduce the wildfire risk while also improving operations of the grazing program across the National Forest System. In a surprising turn of events, the nominee to lead the BLM withdrew her nomination just before her Senate debut. Nevertheless, permittees were able to hear directly from familiar faces like BLM's Mike Nedd and Interior's Karen Budd-Falen on all issues that depend on efficient government processes at the Department of the Interior.

It's fitting that branding season is upon us, because PLC is striking while the political iron is hot. PLC's top priority for this administration is to create and defend long-term improvements to grazing permit administration that protect families, property rights, and Western lands. We have delivered recommendations to BLM on improvements to be made to the grazing regulations and will continue to lead this discussion as the organization that represents all grazing permittees in the 14 Western states. At the Forest Service, PLC is focused on finalization of improvements to the handbook and directives to bring flexibility and common sense to the dual role of grazing as a key part of Western commodities and a crucial land management tool.

A key part of the conversation this last month has surrounded water, fire, and what to do when the two converge. President Trump has been consistent in his message surrounding catastrophic wildfire, and in April, Agriculture Secretary Rollins issued a memorandum ramping up timber production and addressing catastrophic wildfire risk through expedited fuels removal. This memorandum paired nicely with the Senate's consideration of Representative Westerman's Fix Our Forests Act, which not only addresses the timber part of fuels management but increases the use of grazing as a fine fuels mitigation tool.

When PLC Legislative Conference attendees were on the Hill, they were able to share a number of benefits of grazing. Many of these are related to fire, since Congress and federal agencies have been singularly focused on how to reduce the budgetary and environmental impacts from fire. Here are a few fast facts to include in your own conversations:

- Grazing reduces the risk of wildfire ignition by up to 50% and decreases wildfire severity, making fires smaller, less intense, and safer for firefighters and responders. This can be up to 80% in areas with higher fuel loads!
- Grazing stops invasive annual grasses. When ruminants graze on invasive annuals, they remove fine fuels, and the seeds from those grasses are rendered inert through the digestion process. This means grazing can permanently remove that invasive species' foothold!
- Grazed rangelands are home to 2 or 3 times more native pollinators than ungrazed rangelands. PLC is actively working with partners to combat adverse impacts from USFWS's proposed ESA listing of the monarch butterfly. Grazing creates habitat, which should be used to reduce regulatory burdens in an ESA listing!

As we look ahead to summer, PLC will be working with the administration on withdrawing the BLM Public Lands rule, pushing Congress to address key issues in a tax package, and pressing forward with ESA reform in all available venues.

Look forward to seeing you in Flagstaff!



NCBA Update

NCBA Testifies on Trade Priorities Before Congress

Robby Kirkland, chairman of the Texas Cattle Feeders Association, testified before the House Ways and Means Committee, urging the U.S. to pursue stronger trade agreements. Representing the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, he emphasized the need for market access, fair treatment, and science-based policies. Kirkland called on the U.S. to hold countries like Brazil and Australia accountable for unfair practices and delays. He highlighted the urgent need for the U.S. to re-engage in trade talks to protect American cattle producers and ensure equitable treatment in global markets.

Cowbelles Report

Arizona Cowbelles Inducted into the Arizona Farm and Ranch Hall of Fame

We are proud to share that the Arizona Cowbelles were inducted into the 2025 Arizona Farm and Ranch Hall of Fame in recognition of their long-standing dedication to promoting beef, supporting ranching families, and advocating for agriculture across the state.

For over 80 years, the Cowbelles have worked tirelessly to educate the public on the importance of beef in a healthy diet and the role of ranchers in stewarding our land and livestock. From hosting local beef promotions and youth education programs to showing up at community events and policy meetings, the Cowbelles have been a trusted voice for Arizona ranching.

This induction honors generations of Cowbelles who have given their time, hearts, and voices to ensure our industry continues to thrive. It also reflects the powerful legacy of women in agriculture—rooted in tradition, driven by purpose, and committed to the future.

We are incredibly honored to be included among the incredible individuals and organizations in the Hall of Fame, and we look forward to continuing our mission with the same passion and strength that brought us here. Congratulations, Cowbelles—you've made history!



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TYPES OF MEMBERSHIPS

SEEKING VOTING MEMBERSHIP

CATTLE PRODUCER \$200

Any person, partnership, firm, or corporation breeding or producing cattle, a ranch owner, or a large animal veterinarian.
Cattle dues include up to 100 head. Fair Share, over 100 head is an additional dollar per head added to your original dues.

BUSINESS MEMBER \$450

Any state and national companies or entities engaged in serving the needs of the cattle industry with customers across the state.

SEEKING NON-VOTING MEMBERSHIP

BUSINESS ASSOCIATE \$125

Any local businesses or entities that engage in serving the needs of the cattle industry with regional customers and companies.

ASSOCIATE MEMBER \$125

Any person, partnership, firm, or corporation which is not engaged in breeding or producing cattle in Arizona, but who is interested in the livestock industry.

RANCHERS FOR TOMORROW \$75

Any person who aspires to make a living in the cattle industry may or may not own cattle.

FRIENDS OF THE INDUSTRY \$25

Any person, including a student, who may or may not own cattle, living in-state or out-of-state, is interested in the Arizona agricultural industry.

To view our Terms and Privacy policy or to apply online please visit our website: www.azcattlegrowers.org

Arizona Cattle Growers' Association receives requests for your contact information from interested business members for marketing and other purposes. Will you allow your contact information to be shared? : ☐ Yes ☐ No

The membership form can be emailed to operations@azcattlegrowers.org or mailed to the office. To make a credit card payment over the phone, please call 602 267 1129 or a check can be mailed to **PO BOX 1267 Buckeye, AZ 85326**. Please make checks payable to ACGA, noting (Membership) in the memo line.

U of A Report



After more than a decade of impactful leadership at the University of Arizona, Dr. Shane Burgess resigned his administrative roles April 16, 2025. Dr. Burgess will transition to his faculty position as professor.

Under Dr. Burgess's leadership, CALES has made major contributions in areas critical to the state, from food security and sustainable agriculture to economic development and environmental resilience. His tenure has also included advancements in community engagement, supporting Arizonans through practical, science-based education and community collaboration.

We are pleased that Dr. Michael Staten, Professor of Agricultural and Resource Economics has graciously agreed to serve as the Interim Dean, and we will begin an expeditious but thorough national search for this important position.

"In my long career at multiple universities, I have never met a finer group of colleagues than we have here in CALES, nor a team more committed to working collaboratively in pursuit of a common mission. Together with our Cooperative Extension and Arizona Experiment Station, we are quite literally the face of the university to our communities across Arizona," said Dr. Staten, who has served as CALES Associate Dean for nearly a decade.

"My personal pledge is to do my very best to help put the college and our division in as strong of a position as possible so that we are poised and ready for our next leader."

More information on the search for Dr. Burgess' successor will be forthcoming.

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Arizona Dept. of Ag Update

The Arizona Department of Agriculture (AZDA) is supporting local ranchers by sharing valuable information and making connections through initiatives like the Try It Local and Farm to Food Bank programs. Both programs help connect Arizona ranchers with buyers, ensuring that locally sourced beef reaches Arizona schools and food banks and provides fresh, regional products to students.

Additionally, AZDA supports local farmers and ranchers through grants with the Regional Food Infrastructure Grant Program, Livestock Operator Fire and Flood Program, Livestock and Crop Conservation Program, and the Southwest Regional Food Business Center.

As part of its efforts to support local agriculture, AZDA is relaunching its Arizona Grown program. This program offers a range of resources for producers, including training, marketing support, digital tools, and networking opportunities to connect with potential buyers. With updated branding, free marketing templates, and low-cost materials, Arizona Grown hopes to support local farmers and ranchers in growing their businesses and contributing to the state's economy.

Licensing Section
1010 W. Washington St., Phoenix, AZ 85007
Mail To: 1802 W. Jackson St #78
Phoenix, AZ 85007
PHONE (602) 542-3578 FAX (602) 542-0466

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.: 20086 End Date: 5/15/2025	Cattle: RH Horse: RT Sheep: NO Goat: NO		Brand No.: 20084 End Date: 5/11/2025	Cattle: LH Horse: LH Sheep: NO Goat: NO		Brand No.: 20085 End Date: 5/11/2025	Cattle: LH Horse: LS Sheep: NO Goat: NO
	Brand No.: 20083 End Date: 5/10/2025	Cattle: NO Horse: LT Sheep: NO Goat: NO		Brand No.: 20082 End Date: 5/9/2025	Cattle: RR Horse: NO Sheep: NO Goat: NO		Brand No.: 20081 End Date: 5/9/2025	Cattle: LH Horse: LS Sheep: NO Goat: NO
	Brand No.: 20080 End Date: 5/7/2025	Cattle: RH Horse: RH Sheep: RH Goat: RH		Brand No.: 20079 End Date: 5/4/2025	Cattle: LS Horse: LS Sheep: NO Goat: NO		Brand No.: 20078 End Date: 5/2/2025	Cattle: RH Horse: NO Sheep: NO Goat: NO
	Brand No.: 20076 End Date: 5/1/2025	Cattle: NO Horse: RS Sheep: NO Goat: NO		Brand No.: 20077 End Date: 5/1/2025	Cattle: RH Horse: RS Sheep: RS Goat: RS		Brand No.: 20075 End Date: 4/27/2025 AMEND	Cattle: LH Horse: LS Sheep: LH Goat: LH
	Brand No.: 20074 End Date: 4/26/2025	Cattle: NO Horse: NO Sheep: LH Goat: NO		Brand No.: 20072 End Date: 4/24/2025	Cattle: LR Horse: LT Sheep: LH Goat: LH		Brand No.: 20071 End Date: 4/24/2025	Cattle: LH Horse: LH Sheep: LR Goat: LR
	Brand No.: 20073 End Date: 4/24/2025	Cattle: LS Horse: LS Sheep: LS Goat: LS		Brand No.: 20070 End Date: 4/20/2025	Cattle: LH Horse: LT Sheep: LH Goat: LH		Brand No.: 20069 End Date: 4/20/2025	Cattle: RH Horse: RT Sheep: RS Goat: RS
	Brand No.: 20068 End Date: 4/19/2025	Cattle: RS Horse: NO Sheep: NO Goat: NO		Brand No.: 20067 End Date: 4/16/2025	Cattle: RS Horse: RS Sheep: NO Goat: NO			

Arizona Farm Bureau Update

Arizona Farm Bureau: Advocating for Ranchers and Agriculture

Daniel Harris, Arizona Farm Bureau Government Relations Manager, www.azfb.org/join

Written on April 18, 2025

Budget negotiations are slowly gaining traction following recent meetings of the Finance Advisory Committee (FAC) and rumored high-level discussions. However, momentum was halted when the Governor placed a moratorium on signing new legislation until a funding solution is reached for the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), whose COVID-era funding expires soon. The FAC recently projected \$340 million less in available funds than originally anticipated, adding uncertainty to discretionary spending.

As the legislative workload lightens with most bills already processed, both chambers are expected to adopt shorter calendars in the coming weeks. Now, focus shifts to budget negotiations. While Senate members anticipate another round of "one-time funding" to secure votes, some House Republicans are pushing for a more conservative budget, doubting sufficient funds exist.

With both chambers needing to agree on a path forward, the session is shaping up to be lengthy once again. More updates will follow as developments unfold.

DROUGHT= **Extra Expense and** **Loss of Income**

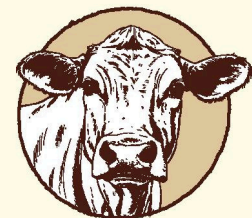


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THANK YOU!

Our deepest gratitude goes to 35 repeat Arizona buyers and 14 repeat buyers from California, Colorado, Idaho, New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Texas and Mexico who took home 184 bulls for an average of \$6,730 at our centennial celebration.

A special thanks to our Pioneer, Homestead, Trailblazer and Foreman award recipients. Your continued support is greatly appreciated!

We are humbled and honored to have served the cattle and range industry for more than 100 years and appreciated the support and attendance of more than 200 people at our "Honoring the Past and Looking to the Future" Field Day. Thanks to the sponsors and speakers for making this possible.



THANK YOU

To our Field Day Sponsors.

We could not have had such a successful centennial Field Day without your support.

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