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Arizona CATTLELOG

Official Publication of the Arizona Cattle Growers' Association



PARTNERS IN PROGRESS

2025

ARIZONA CATTLE
GROWERS'
ASSOCIATION

122ND ANNUAL CONVENTION



LAST CALL: ACGA's Annual Convention

Happening in Just a Few Weeks – You Don't Want to Miss This!

July 23rd-25th

Thatcher/Safford

DON'T SIT THIS ONE OUT—YOUR
SEAT AT THE TABLE MATTERS.
REGISTER NOW, PACK YOUR
BOOTS, AND LET'S MAKE THIS THE
BEST CONVENTION YET.



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CATTLE GROWERS' REPORTS



SORENSEN STUDIOS

Letter from the Editor



As ranchers, we work with the land, not just on it. We rise early, work late, and pour our hearts into protecting our herds, stewarding our resources, and preserving a way of life that feeds our families and our nation. That spirit—the grit, the heart, the mission—is woven into every page of this issue of the Arizona Cattlelog.

Inside, you'll find updates on key issues shaping our future—from wildfire mitigation efforts and new water conservation funding to biosecurity tools that help protect herd health. You'll read about a decade-long study confirming what we've long known: responsible grazing improves wildlife habitat, soil health, and the land itself. We've included a legislative roundup, export data, and critical updates on leadership transitions as we thank our outgoing Executive Committee and prepare for what's ahead.

In each issue, you will find helpful tips to share our stories with the public in the "Sharing Your Story – It Matters" article. These tips come from my hands-on experience at Mortimer Farms. We've been working hard to share the story of agriculture in every interaction. From hosting farm-to-table dinners to leading "Tools of a Cowboy" presentations at our latest festival, we're doing everything we can to bring the public into our world. We're showing families that cattle don't just feed us—they protect the land through wildfire prevention, rotational grazing, and generational stewardship. These conversations build bridges. They inspire understanding. And they give people a glimpse into the soul of our work.

This issue is packed with value because your work is valuable. What you do matters—and it deserves to be celebrated, protected, and understood. My hope is that these pages leave you informed, encouraged, and reminded that you're part of something so much bigger than a day's work.

Ranching is not just a profession—it's a legacy. It's a calling. It's a fight we will never stop fighting. And as long as I have a voice, I'll keep showing up to tell that story. I hope you do too.

Thanks for reading. And more importantly, thanks for ranching.

Ashlee Mortimer – CEO, Mortimer Farms & Editor, Arizona Cattlelog

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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Letter from the President



As I reflect on the last four years I've served as the President of the Arizona Cattle Growers' Association, I think about where we were when we started and where we are now. As volunteers, we all only have so much time. But the two boards of directors I have worked with have approached it the same way: by simply rolling up their sleeves and going to work for you, our members.

Stepping into an organization that had had its share of turmoil, we focused on building relationships throughout the industry and committing ourselves to being transparent and upfront in all of our dealings. I am very proud to say that these boards have made decisions as a whole and with everyone's input. It's perhaps cliché to say that everyone's input is important, but that really is the way we feel. Sometimes it's messy. It is often a very lengthy process. But in the end, by keeping the needs of our members at the forefront of each and every discussion, we have gauged our success by how effectively we represent and work for the boots-on-the-ground Arizona rancher.

This outlook on growth was shown in different ways. We have had more members involved in advocacy, such as testifying to legislators, than has happened in many years. We are responsive to our members' requests for assistance. And we have built strategic relationships that will help our organization move forward.

Leadership certainly is not easy, and I want to thank the board members I have had the pleasure of working with for their time, their dedication, and their friendship.

I also want to extend my heartfelt thanks to the committee chairs who were appointed during my tenure. Your leadership, time, and thoughtful engagement shaped the direction of this organization in countless ways. From policy and water to membership and youth, your work made a real impact—not just during your term, but for the long-term strength of Arizona ranching. Thank you for saying yes to the job and for always showing up ready to serve.

We will soon be electing our new Executive Committee at this year's Summer Convention in Thatcher/Safford. While there is a slate of folks who have put their names in the hat, we also allow nominations from the floor.

Earlier this year, Ken Ligon was running for President but had to step down for personal reasons. Long-time board member Brian DeGanahl will accept a nomination from the floor for the office of President.

The election will be held at our General Membership meeting on Friday, July 25, 2025. I am looking forward to seeing you all at this year's Summer Convention.

Thank you all for your well wishes, your direction, and your friendship. It has been an honor.

Mike Gannuscio, President, Arizona Cattle Growers' Association

Committee Chairs are helping us guide our advocacy efforts.

Ag Issues and Policy Committee Chair

Sonia Gasho

strongholdbeef@yahoo.com

Beef Marketing Committee Chair

Bill Inman

binman@onhir.gov

Business Member Committee Chair

Scott Pilchard

scott@westernskiesadv.com

Bylaws Committee Chair

Leatta McLaughlin

leattamc@yahoo.com

Convention Committee Chair

Suzanne Menges

communications@azcattlegrowers.org

Education Committee Chair

Joslyn Beard

jkbeard2@gmail.com

Federal Lands Committee Chair

Brian DeGanahl

bdeganahl@reagan.com

Fundraising Committee Chair

Vacant

Membership Development Committee Chair

Darcy Ely

darcyely@aol.com

Political Action (PAC) Committee Chair

Mike Gannuscio

mikeg@azcattlegrowers.com

Ranchers for Tomorrow (R4T) Committee Chair

Nate Brawley

R4T@azcattlegrowers.org

Resolutions Committee Chair

Brian DeGanahl

bdeganahl@reagan.com

State and Private Lands Committee Chair

Chris Lowman

chris.rlc@outlook.com

Water Committee Chair

Vacant

Wildlife Committee Chair

Don McDowel

don@shakerattleandtroll.com

The Faces Behind the Fight.

By Ranchers, For Ranchers.

These are the elected leaders of the Arizona Cattle Growers Association—ranchers who have stepped up to represent, advocate, and defend the interests of our industry. With boots on the ground and a heart for service, the Executive Committee and Board of Directors brings your voice to every table.

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

County Presidents/Representatives

Vacant	Apache	Ron Flake	Navajo
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	R4T

With Gratitude: Honoring Our Outgoing Leaders

Thank you for your service to Arizona's cattle industry. As we prepare to welcome new voices to the Arizona Cattle Growers' Association Executive Committee, we pause to reflect on the commitment, time, and grit of those who have served in these roles over the past year—and in many cases, for much longer.

Serving on the ACGA Executive Committee is no small task. These individuals have juggled their own operations, families, and day-to-day responsibilities while showing up time and time again—for meetings, legislative hearings, public comment sessions, county fairs, and late-night calls with policymakers and fellow ranchers. They've advocated on behalf of every Arizona rancher, from the high country to the desert floor, keeping boots-on-the-ground realities at the forefront of every conversation.

Their leadership has been critical during a time of enormous pressure. From regulatory battles and water policy to wildfire insurance and federal overreach, our outgoing officers have stood firm. They've championed your right to ranch, to own property, to manage your herd your way, and to pass on this lifestyle to the next generation.

They've led with humility and integrity. They've listened. They've engaged. They've represented this community not as politicians, but as producers. As neighbors. As ranchers.

To those finishing their terms: thank you. Thank you for showing up. Thank you for fighting the good fight. And thank you for leaving ACGA stronger than you found it. The future is built on the foundation you've laid—and we are grateful.



Letter from the Executive Director

By the time this issue arrives in your mailbox, we will likely be just a few days away from our 122nd Annual Summer Convention. The response to this year's event has been truly remarkable. All the booths were sold out in the second week of June. The agenda features over two dozen speakers (some of whom are together on panels). The convention committee members are putting the finishing touches on their projects, and registrations are rolling in. The leadership team and committee members have stepped up to put together what will be an outstanding event, befitting such a long legacy of annual gatherings of our organization.

The Summer Convention also serves as something of a fresh start for ACGA. A new configuration of leadership at all levels will be in place, from the Executive Committee to committee chairs. The board of directors will meet on the Saturday after convention (July 26) for their first board meeting, which is open to all members, as all board meetings are. We will spend some time reviewing different aspects of our organization, setting priorities, and discussing possible projects for the coming year. As always, we welcome our members' input and ideas, because this is your organization!

Thank you to those of you who have reached out with words of encouragement and gestures of support as I have stepped into this new role. Having served as a volunteer for so many years, it's certainly a whole new world to see the other side of the organization. I have so enjoyed speaking with many of you on different issues, and I am realizing more deeply the importance of our association in dealing with situations that ranching families are facing. I look forward to serving our members, meeting new ones, and being part of creating an even stronger ACGA for you. I can be reached at the office number (602) 267-1129 or my cell (928) 458-1470.

Suzanne Menges
ACGA Executive Director
communications@azcattlegrowers.org



At Work for You!



At ACGA, we're shaking things up in the best kind of way—keeping strong to what matters: people, purpose, and keeping the cattle industry strong from the branding pen to the boardroom. Our events are about bringing folks together, tackling real issues, and making sure every rancher—no matter their acreage—has a seat at the table. From boots on the ground to suits at the Capitol.

Since stepping in as Administrative Assistant, I've been working the ins and outs of the office, helping the Executive Committee steer through everything from policy questions to Zoom malfunctions (turns out some of the fellas aren't exactly tech-savvy). It's a role that changes by the day, but always centers around service to our members and the mission we stand behind. I've been doing a deep dive into our membership program, working out the bugs and fine-tuning things so it runs more smoothly. My goal? To make sure the association works as hard for you as you do for your cattle.

Sidnie Conerly
Interim Administration Assistant
operations@azcattlegrowers.org

At Work for You!



Suzanne Menges,
ACGA Executive
Director

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Michaela Ward,
ACGA
Bookkeeper



Brittany Bingold,
Pivotal Policy
Consulting



Ashlee Mortimer,
Editor of Arizona
Cattlelog

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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.

Unfortunately, Mr. Ligon has had to decline the nomination for president. As always, additional nominations may be made from the floor.

The Committee is recommending the following nominations:

President – 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/Efzkt2hxdTBEqF9uhnJU4cB2CUt1Y4xaP9k5fwboOogaQ?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

Legislative Update

As temperatures rise across the state, so too does activity at every level of government. From budget negotiations at the Arizona Capitol to federal developments in Washington, D.C., there's no shortage of decisions being made that impact ranchers directly. That's why Arizona Cattle Growers' Association remains at the table—defending our members' livelihoods, advocating for practical solutions, and ensuring your voice is heard.

Ranchers are facing mounting regulatory pressure, uncertain weather conditions, and shifting consumer expectations—so we're making sure lawmakers understand what's at stake.

We're also seeing the fruits of long-term efforts to highlight the value of well-managed grazing. Cattle grazing not only supports ranching families, but also promotes thriving landscapes and wildlife populations.

As budget deadlines loom, now is the time to stay informed, and stay proud of the work we do every day on the land.

State Budget Nearing the Finish Line

After more than 160 days in session, the Arizona Legislature is pushing toward a final budget deal. The House released its proposal earlier this week, and the Senate is expected to follow soon. A budget must be passed by June 30 to avoid a government shutdown. Key items for agriculture and natural resource users include:

- Cooperative Extension receives \$15.3M to support education, outreach, and research across Arizona's ranching communities.
- Yuma Center of Excellence for Desert Agriculture receives \$2.75M.
- Department of Agriculture receives \$18.2M, including funding for:
 - Five new livestock brand inspectors
 - Modernized licensing and enforcement system
- Water Initiatives: Over \$18M allocated to conservation, rural water studies, and groundwater monitoring.
- Wildfire Mitigation: More than \$90M dedicated to wildfire prevention and emergency response, including funding for hazardous vegetation removal and fire incident coordination.

Federal Wins for Ranchers

◆ Cattle Health Protection in the Farm Bill

The U.S. Senate's version of the "Big Beautiful Bill" includes strong support for critical animal health programs:

- National Animal Disease Preparedness & Response Program (NADPRP)
- National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN)
- National Vaccine and Veterinary Countermeasures Bank (NAVVCB)
- These programs are vital to protecting ranch herds from foreign animal disease outbreaks.

◆ Screwworm Defense Rebuilt

USDA announced a new sterile fly production facility at Moore Air Base in Texas to combat the devastating New World Screwworm. This comes after strong advocacy from NCBA and PLC to increase domestic capacity and safeguard the U.S. cattle herd.

◆ Wildfire Prevention Executive Order

Public Lands Council applauds the Trump administration's new order prioritizing streamlined wildfire response and active land management—recognizing the role of grazing to reduce fine fuels and prevent catastrophic fire events.

◆ 10-Year Sage Grouse Study Validates Grazing

A landmark study from the University of Idaho confirms that well-managed cattle grazing does not harm and may even benefit sage grouse populations. The data reinforces what ranchers have known for generations: responsible grazing supports wildlife habitat, soil health, and ecosystem balance.

For more legislative updates and to stay engaged in protecting your operation and our industry, visit www.azcattlegrowers.org or follow us on Herd That.

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Convention Corner

There's no better place to connect, learn, and lead than the Arizona Cattle Growers' Association Annual Summer Convention. Whether you've been coming for decades or you're considering your first time, this event is built for you—the Arizona rancher.

The convention brings together producers from every corner of the state—commercial cow-calf, seedstock, public lands, private lands, generational operations, and folks just getting started. It's a unique chance to gather under one roof, share challenges and solutions, and speak with one voice on the issues that matter most to our way of life.

We've built an agenda that balances serious policy conversations with hands-on information and a whole lot of community. Panels will feature top voices in cattle markets, land use, water rights, wildfires, predator issues, and more. Plus, you'll hear from legislative leaders and agency representatives shaping the future of our industry.

But convention isn't just about meetings. It's about catching up with neighbors, learning something new, and bringing your family into the fold. With a trade show, social events, youth activities, and time to just visit, there's something for everyone.

This year is especially important as we welcome new leadership and elect the next Executive Committee. If you care about the future of the association and want your voice heard, this is your chance to show up.

No one understands the grit, pride, and persistence of this lifestyle like another rancher. That's why this convention matters.

We are very excited for this year's auction items! Here are some of my favorites (many other auction items coming's)!

For ACGA:

- Three-day mountain lion hunt donated by Sam Dieringer Outfitters
- \$1000 credit for a custom hat donated by Greeley Hat Works
- Original graphite drawing donated by Raenell Sollers
- Two center-court (Sec. 15, Row 11, seats 7 & 8) U of A men's basketball tickets and parking pass donated by Andy and Mary Beth Groseta
- "Gentlemen's Package" variety of spirits donated by Red Mill Distillery
- Vintage George Begay sterling & turquoise feather blossom necklace donated by Ben and Ashley Menges

For the Foundation:

- 3 head of yearling Hereford heifers donated by Jesse Hooker Davis, Sierra Bonita Ranch
- 1 week stay in a condo at Cholla Bay Mexico donated by Bill Brake
- \$1000 bull credit donated by Bar T Bar Ranch, Bob and Judy Prosser
- Custom made AZ Bell Chaps donated by Ty Barton & the Foundation Board
- Custom made Leon King Spurs donated by the Foundation Board
- Sheep Skin Pelt donated by Mike Macauley

For the Cowbelles:

- 55" X 70" handmade Western quilt donated by Trina Sue Riggs
- Pallet of salt donated by Barbara Jackson
- Basket of "Homemade Goodies Extraordinaire" donated by Pam Griffin

Come for the conversations. Come for the connections. Come because we're stronger together.

We'll see you in Thatcher-Safford!





PORCH TALK



REEDS CATTLE CO.

The Many Faces of Cattle Growers



James and Larissa Reed are first-generation cattle ranch owners living their dream in Show Low, Arizona. While they were both raised Western, with rich rodeo, ranch, and cowboy heritage, they had a mutual goal as a young couple to someday own a ranch of their own. In 2015, they started managing ranches across Arizona and Colorado, gaining experience and making connections within the ranching world. They worked hard, dreamed big, and saved aggressively so that when the opportunity came up in 2020 to buy a rundown 200 cow/calf operation in Navajo County, they were ready!

They acknowledge God's hand during the whole buying process. It was at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and should have been impossible to move such a sale through, but everything processed with very minimal trouble.

Now the Reeds are raising their three young children in the ranching life in the beautiful White Mountains, and it is a dream come true every day for them! They are always looking for other business opportunities and ways to think outside of the box when it comes to traditional cattle ranching. They currently sell grass-fed beef to their local neighbors, run a bustling social media presence showcasing the joys and nuances of ranch life, and have started a truck giveaway business for their apparel customers!

As with any agricultural tradition, there are often challenges, but the Reeds' gratitude, faith, and determination guide their success. They are determined to be good stewards of their ranch and teach their children and visitors the importance of honoring the land and animals. When asked, they just smile and say, "We just choose to enjoy the crazy, beautiful, wild, amazing journey every day!"

Find the Reeds on Facebook and Instagram @reedscattleco to support their vision and enjoy their journey with them!



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Badly Scattered Cattle Co.: A Legacy of the Flake Family

Written by Wade and Breyan Flake

Badly Scattered Cattle Co. has deep roots in Arizona's history, tracing its lineage back to the original Flake ranch, one of the earliest cattle operations in the region. The ranch, along with several neighboring operations, is part of the legacy of the Flake family, whose influence in ranching began in the mid-1800s. The Flake brand, a distinctive "F" on the right hip, was first registered by James Madison Flake in Utah in March 1850, marking the beginning of a ranching tradition that would span generations.

The brand was later brought to Arizona by William Jordan Flake, who settled the area now known as Snowflake, Arizona. It is here that the Flake family's ranching heritage truly took root, laying the foundation for what would eventually become Badly Scattered Cattle Co. as well as several other Flake-family-owned ranches. Today, this fifth-generation operation continues to carry forward the "F" brand with pride.

The name "Badly Scattered Cattle Co." has a playful origin. Fost Flake would often bid on 4-H animals. When he was the highest bidder and asked the name of his company, he'd humorously reply, "Badly Scattered Cattle Co." The name stuck, and the ranch now carries it.

The ranch spans two forest allotments and encompasses a home range located northwest of Snowflake. With a commitment to sustainable ranching practices and preserving its family legacy, Badly Scattered Cattle Co. represents not just the rich history of the Flake family but also the enduring spirit of the American West.

This legacy and the future of our family's operations are why we are a part of ACGA. We must protect our way of life!



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There's My **Cowboy**

My Senior Moment

Getting old is not so bad. I just turned seventy. And hopefully, with any luck, I've got a few left in me.

But one thing that I've noticed is my mind forgets to think. I heard one older fellow say his brain was on the blink.

It's called a "Senior Moment." Guess that's what most folks might say.

Or a mental aberration could be what I had that day.

My good mare, Sandi Peppy, turned up favoring her right hip. So she stayed home in the pasture and I borrowed for this trip.

And my brand new sleeping bag was big enough to be a bed. Yet I didn't sleep a wink all night. I tossed and turned instead.

Daylight showed its face and we ate french toast by the fire. I don't remember any day I started out so tired.

We finished up our breakfast and poured water on the fire.

Then we pulled our boots and hats on with the rest of our attire.

First we had to saddle up before our ride began. I'd put a saddle on a horse as much as any man.

But my borrowed horse was agitated. She would not hold still. I finally got the saddle on against that horse's will.

I tied her to a cedar tree and took a look around. Two cowboys had been watching me but hadn't made a sound.

I thought they both looked mystified. Was something on their mind? Then one of them spoke up and said, "I think you might be blind.

"My Arab mare was missing, and you seem to be the source. I don't know if you realize you've saddled up my horse."

Sure enough that cowboy's mare was wearing my old saddle.

No wonder she was acting strange and putting up a battle.

I must have turned bright crimson red. There was no use denying. I should have made a joke of it, but only stood there sighing.

Both cowboys helped me saddle up, but no one said a word. And were those cowboys wondering if my mind was also blurred?

I guess it doesn't matter that my seeing isn't clearer. As long as I still recognize that fellow in the mirror.

Bryce Angell

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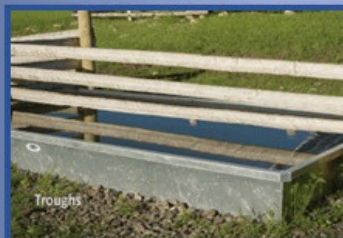
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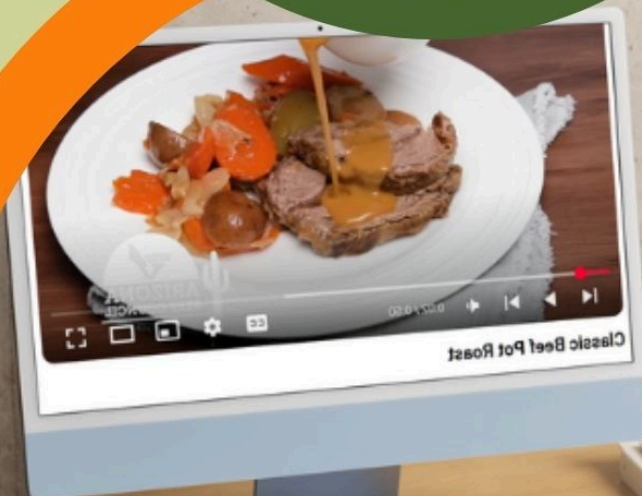
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CATTLE COMMENTS



ASH CREEK RANCH

On the Ranch Q & A

Written by Ron Flake, Owner and Manager of Legacy Ranches LLC

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

For me, I think it may be a little too early to tell exactly what effect it will have, as there are a lot of other factors at play, but I feel we have made some positive gains in the right direction at least.

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

Opportunities to help the next generation. It is so difficult right now for a young couple to get a start unless they are able to do so with a lot of help from family and the right situation.

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?

Supplementation and learning the importance of how this affects a cow's BCS. Take the time to ask questions and learn what options are available to you.

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

We have been operating a 16-pasture rotational grazing system for the last 40-plus years on our ranch. This has allowed us to not only help the health of our land but also to increase our stocking rate as the land allows.

What challenges keep you up at night, and how are you navigating them in today's ranching climate?

The major issue we are fighting right now is losing ranchland to solar farms. We just lost 4 sections of our lease to a solar operation, and I know of several neighboring ranches that will soon be affected by losing about 15 sections to another recently approved project.

How do you stay connected to your community and help others understand the realities of ranching?

We really stay connected by giving back to our youth programs. We are very involved in our county 4-H program and look forward to opportunities to share and help the youth understand the importance of what they are learning.

What advice would you go back and give yourself when you were just starting off?

Just know that things will never go as smoothly as you hope they will and not to be afraid to adjust and change as needed. Today's market is constantly shifting, so don't be afraid to try something new along with it.



Stewardship Comments

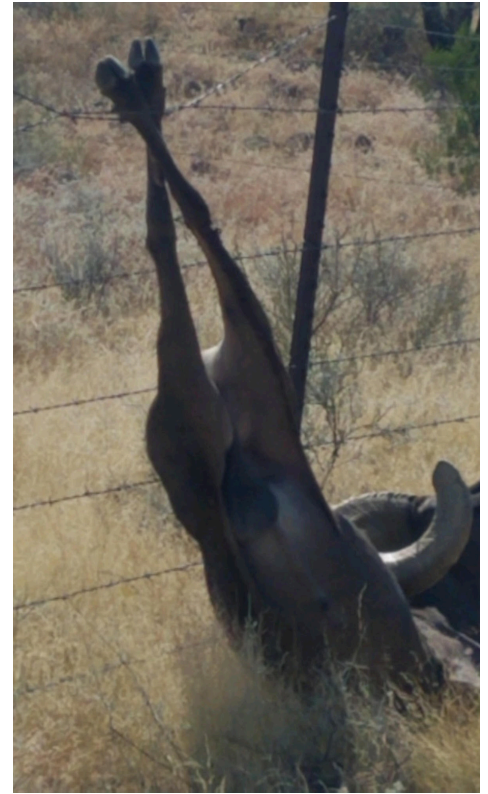
WILDLIFE COMPATIBLE FENCING

Provided by the Arizona Game and Fish Department

Fences are as much a part of the West's landscape and culture as are mountains and grasslands. Fencing is generally intended to restrict the movement of livestock, but incidentally may impede wildlife access to critical resources (e.g., water, forage, fawning grounds, cover) or restrict escape or migratory routes essential to the well-being of individuals and populations. Impacts can vary based on the animal's age, season, and resource availability. Entanglement and impalement of wildlife are two deadly effects of unfavorable fence design or placement. Damage caused by wildlife's attempts to cross fences increases maintenance costs and creates openings for livestock to escape.

The Arizona Game and Fish Department developed wildlife fencing guidelines to assist landowners, project managers, land management agencies, and others in designing wildlife-compatible fences. The focus is on fence design rather than detailed fence construction specifications. The goal is to provide guidance in designing a fence that will achieve its objective with minimum impact on wildlife, while still meeting your livestock control needs.

Our detailed Wildlife Compatible Fencing guide can be found on our website (azgfd.com), on our Planning for Wildlife: Wildlife Friendly Guidelines page. If you have any questions or would like more information on this, please reach out to your nearest Arizona Game and Fish Department Regional Office.



Sharing Our Story – It Matters

Answering Consumer Questions Without Oversharing

Written by: Ashlee Mortimer, CEO, Mortimer Farms

When someone asks about how we raise our cattle, it's tempting to share everything we know—from our grazing rotations to feed ratios and vaccination protocols. After all, we're proud of the work we do. But most consumers aren't looking for a deep dive—they want a clear, reassuring answer that helps them feel confident in their food choices.

Here's how to answer confidently without overwhelming them:

1. Listen First

Let them finish asking the question. Don't jump in too soon. Listen closely to what they're really asking—it's usually something simple like:

"Are the animals treated well?"

"Is the meat safe for my family?"

"Is this good for the environment?"

2. Answer the Question—Just the Question

If someone asks, "Do you give antibiotics?" try:

"Only if an animal is sick—and never in the meat. It's all tightly regulated and I care about my animals."

That may be all they want to know. If they want more, they'll ask.

3. Lead With Your Values

You can always end your answer with something like:

"We take pride in raising healthy animals. Their well-being is our top priority every single day—from the way we feed to how we care for them. When our animals thrive, our families and yours do too."

This connects the facts to the heart behind your operation.

4. Don't Overshare

Adding extra details can unintentionally confuse or even concern someone. If they didn't ask about growth hormones, don't bring them up. Keep it focused and let them guide where the conversation goes next.

The goal is simple: be honest, be clear, and be reassuring.

That's what builds trust—and lasting connections between families and the people who raise their food.

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Cattlemen's College

Yes, Profitable Ranching Is Possible. Here's How

Written by Burke Teichert, burketei@comcast.net

You might ask, "Is profitable ranching possible?" Many experts say small ranches can't be. But I believe any ranch—no matter the herd size—can be profitable.

There are four areas to manage:

Production, Economics/Finance, Marketing, and People.

Change in one usually affects the others, and neglecting any will cost you.

As taught in Ranching for Profit schools, there are three ways to boost profit:

Increase turnover, reduce overheads, and improve gross margin.

Every management decision fits one of these and ripples across the rest.

Over decades, I've taught five essentials:

1. Be integrative and holistic
2. Continuously improve land, livestock, and people
3. Use good analysis and decision-making tools
4. Wage war on cost
5. Emphasize marketing—including non-ag opportunities like hunting

Focus on profit per acre, not per cow. You can raise per-head profit by calving changes or bigger cows—but if it means fewer cows, you might lose per-acre returns.



Key profit drivers include:

- Overhead: Land, people, and equipment must be lean and efficient.
- Stocking rate: Smaller cows and better grazing can increase carrying capacity.
- Calving season: Calve with nature to cut feed and labor.
- Fed vs. grazed feed: Machines cost money—graze as much as possible.
- Fertility: Pregnancy + survivability = realized fertility.
- Heifer development costs: A strong forward indicator of profit.
- Wise inputs: Strategic supplements pay off—overfeeding kills margins.
- Marketing: Consider time, form, and place. Retain or add value where it makes sense.

I didn't mention individual weaning weights—because pounds per acre matters more. Increasing weaning weight can backfire if it lowers pregnancy rates or carrying capacity.

Focus on improving three ratios:

Acres per cow, cows per person, and fed vs. grazed feed.

They tie back to profit. If you run a small herd, it might not support full-time labor. Supplement your income elsewhere.

Nothing works in isolation. Profitability comes from systems thinking—seeing how everything connects. Build your vision, manage strategically, and go to work. You'll get there.

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Cattlemen's College

Science Confirms What Ranchers Already Know

10-Year Study Shows Grazing Benefits Sage Grouse and the Range

For generations, ranchers have believed that cattle grazing is not just compatible with wildlife conservation—it actively contributes to it. Now, science backs them up. A newly finalized 10-year study from the University of Idaho has confirmed that livestock grazing, when properly managed, does not harm greater sage grouse populations and, in fact, benefits their habitat and food sources.

The Idaho Grouse and Grazing Project began in 2012 with a goal to evaluate the relationship between spring cattle grazing and sage grouse survival. The study spanned over a decade and included five study sites across sagebrush country in Idaho, involving 21 BLM grazing pastures. Researchers captured over 1,300 sage grouse, tracked nearly 1,300 nests, and recorded the survival of almost 400 broods. They also collected over 18,000 insect samples to analyze prey availability.

The study tested several grazing treatments—including spring-only, spring-fall, and no grazing (rested pastures)—and monitored sage grouse nesting success, brood survival, and hen health over 4–8 years. The findings showed no negative impact from grazing. In some instances, spring and fall-grazed pastures even resulted in higher brood survival and greater insect diversity compared to rested areas.

One of the key takeaways is that rested pastures, which had taller grasses and more cover, did not consistently yield better results for nesting or chick survival. Instead, climate factors like drought had a stronger impact on population outcomes. The research also revealed that grazed pastures tended to support a more diverse insect population, providing critical food for sage grouse chicks during early development.



"This study finally proves what ranchers have been saying all along—livestock grazing benefits wildlife, native grasses, and the overall landscape," said Public Lands Council President Tim Canterbury.

NCBA President Buck Wehrbein added, "For years, myths have circulated about grazing harming sage grouse. This research puts those to rest. Grazing improves range health, reduces wildfire risk, and helps wildlife."

Idaho ranchers and organizations like the Public Lands Council and Idaho Cattle Association supported the study from the beginning, helping secure grant funding and access to working landscapes. The University of Idaho, alongside state and federal partners, conducted this scientifically rigorous, peer-reviewed work with input from on-the-ground ranchers.

As conservation and land-use policy debates continue, this research arms ranchers and policymakers alike with long-overdue data: grazing isn't the problem—it's part of the solution.

To read the full report and explore more about the Idaho Grouse and Grazing Project, visit www.idahogrousegrazing.org.



INDUSTRY NEWS

FROM PARTNERS & FRIENDS

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PLC Update

The Public Lands Council (PLC) applauds several major wins this month that strengthen the future of public lands ranching.

President Trump's Executive Order to streamline wildfire prevention programs marks a major victory for Western ranchers. By improving cooperation between the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, the administration is prioritizing efficiency and proactive management—ensuring our grazing communities are better protected from devastating fires.

In a long-awaited win for science-based policy, the University of Idaho released the final results of its 10-year sage grouse study, confirming that cattle grazing improves rangeland health and supports sage grouse populations. This research reinforces what ranchers have long known: grazing reduces invasive grasses, mitigates wildfire risk, and builds better habitat for wildlife.

Additionally, PLC named new leadership to key policy committees. These rancher-leaders will help steer grassroots priorities on grazing, wildlife, multiple use, and industry issues—ensuring the voice of permittees remains front and center in Washington.

Finally, PLC congratulates Kate MacGregor on her confirmation as Deputy Secretary of the Interior. With deep expertise in land management and a strong record of public lands advocacy, her leadership will bring critical stability to federal range policy.

Together, these updates reflect major momentum for public lands ranchers nationwide.

NCBA Update

June brought significant wins for the cattle industry, with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) championing major health and biosecurity provisions in the Senate's version of the "one big beautiful bill." These measures fund critical programs like the National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program, the National Animal Health Laboratory Network, and the National Animal Vaccine and Veterinary Countermeasures Bank—key tools to help ranchers combat foreign animal diseases.

NCBA also celebrated the relaunch of the Secure Beef Supply website (www.securebeef.org), now featuring over 100 user-friendly biosecurity resources, bilingual materials, and new training tools to help ranchers proactively safeguard their herds.

In a major step toward pest control, NCBA voiced strong support for USDA's plan to build a New World screwworm sterile fly production facility at Moore Air Base in Texas. This investment strengthens the U.S. response to this deadly parasite and ensures long-term protection for American cattle herds.

Finally, NCBA congratulated Stephen Vaden and David Fotouhi on their confirmations as Deputy Secretary of USDA and Deputy Administrator of the EPA. Their experience in trade and environmental law is expected to benefit family farmers and ranchers nationwide.

Together, these wins reflect NCBA's continued commitment to strengthening cattle health, protecting ranchers, and elevating rural voices in Washington.



Cowbelles Update

The Arizona State Cowbelles held their 3rd Annual Ranch Tour on May 3, 2025. They have affectionately dubbed the event their “Influencer Tour.” It is all about “Talking to People that Talk to People.” We truly enjoy partnering with the Arizona Beef Council for these tours.

We invite people who are excited to learn about ranching and everything “beef” on these tours. They know that we are just as excited for them to share their new knowledge with those they know. While social media is a part of that, this year we also had a few ladies who are in the medical field and interact with people every day. It is also always nice to talk with parents; they are raising our next generation of consumers. We want everyone to know that beef is part of a healthy diet and to understand how beef gets to their plates.

On the social media followers front for the attendees this year, we had approximately ninety thousand. After our tour attendees, Cowbelles members, and industry pages shared the various posts and pictures about the tour, we reached out to potentially four hundred ninety-five thousand followers.

We held this year’s tour at the EZ Ranch in Cordes Junction, AZ. It is the home of Ms. Sara Burris, one of our own committed and passionate AZ Cowbelles members. Sara is a third-generation rancher, and her love of the ranching life shone through brightly as she hosted the tour.



We started the tour with introductions and loaded onto a trailer of saddle blanket-covered hay to see other parts of the ranch. These events are always interesting—to see how the conversations change and stay the same all in one. We strive to show “the whole picture” of ranching. We visit pastures, corrals, and of course, the cattle. Some of the highlights on this tour were about:

1. Diversifying income potential to keep the ranch strong. Some examples shared from around the country include direct beef sales, raising/selling other crops in addition to beef, or even jobs off the ranch. The EZ Ranch raised Red Deer in the past as a way to diversify and still maintain a herd of them because it is part of their history.
2. Drought. Impacts on the landscape and our herds. Dreaded sales for lack of available feed. Understanding what is available for our herds at all times so we are able to supplement anything that may be lacking for optimal herd health.
3. Management of landscape with practices such as rotational grazing, removal of invasive plant species, improvements to water systems, and erosion control. Dispersing water available for livestock and wildlife alike. Keeping predators away from our herds, sometimes by just having water more spread out.

During the chuckwagon-style lunch of brisket, Tiffany Selchow from the AZ Beef Council talked about beef nutrition and great ways to add it into any healthy diet—even as one of the first foods introduced into a child’s diet. We closed with pictures and swag bags.

Arizona State Cowbelles was established in Arizona in January 1947 and is proud to still be active today around the state. We have eight local chapters around the state. They all work hard to educate and advocate for the ranching and beef industry and to support their local communities.

Trina Sue Riggs, AZ Cowbelles President

CHECKING IN ON YOUR CHECKOFF WITH THE ARIZONA BEEF COUNCIL

FROM RANCH TO TABLE: NUTRITION STUDENTS EXPERIENCE THE JOURNEY OF BEEF



On a snowy morning in March, the Arizona Beef Council hosted a Gate to Plate tour, providing University of Arizona master-level nutrition students with a firsthand look at sustainable cattle raising practices and beef's role in a healthy diet. The day-long educational experience took students to the Santa Rita Ranch, where ranchers Micaela and Drew McGibbon demonstrated their ranching methods, followed by an informative session with Emma Mortenson, RD, at the Florida Experimental Station on incorporating beef into nutritious diets.

Pre and post-tour surveys revealed significant shifts in students' perceptions about beef production and its nutritional value. Before the tour, many participants expressed concerns about environmental impact, animal welfare, and the nutritional profile of beef.

To read more, scan here or visit <https://shorturl.at/986G7>



FROM GATE TO PLATE: PRE-MED STUDENTS GAIN FIRSTHAND BEEF INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

The Gate to Plate tour for Grand Canyon University pre-med students, which happened on April 7, 2025, was designed to connect future healthcare professionals with the realities of modern beef production. It took students from the ranch where cattle are raised to an in-depth nutrition session led by a registered dietitian.

Pre-tour surveys revealed that many participating students had limited exposure to agriculture. While some knew farmers or ranchers personally, over 40% reported no



connection to agriculture whatsoever. This knowledge gap was further reflected in their perceptions about beef production practices, with several students giving middling or poor grades to ranchers and feedyard operators on aspects like environmental stewardship and animal welfare.

To read more, scan here or visit <https://shorturl.at/BnwWY>



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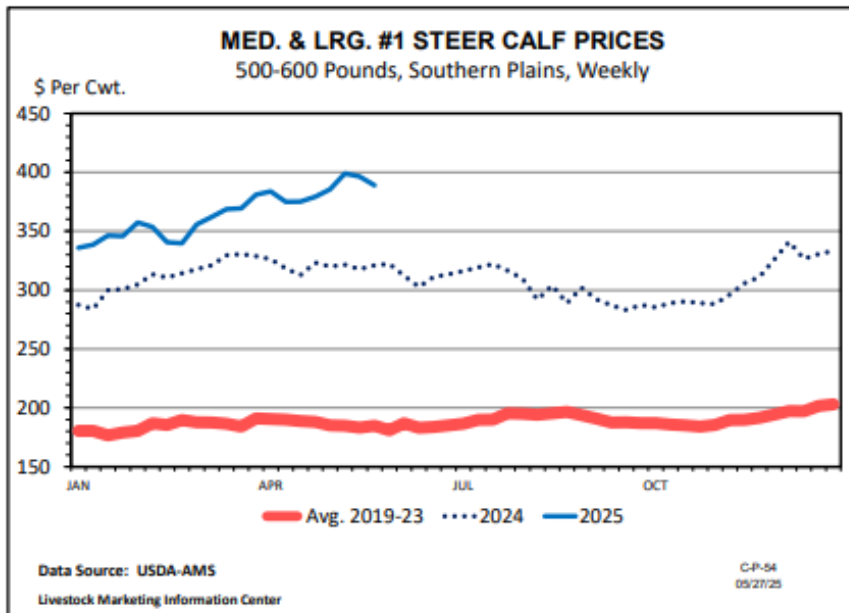
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**2025-2026 Cattle Industry
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in scholarships to 18 student.
*The Foundation has awarded over 487 awards
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**Our special thanks to all scholarship
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USDA Report



Feeder prices have eased a bit in the last few weeks following seasonal patterns. But supply constraints and strong demand have prices coming off of record high prices, and not just nominal record prices, but record highs after adjusting for inflation in some regions. Five-hundred to six-hundred-pound steers have increased 17.7% or \$58.66 per cwt over the last year. Washington State has experienced the highest increase since the beginning of the year, jumping from \$298.57 per cwt in January to \$416 in April (39.3% increase).

Recent Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) trade data reveals that beef exports declined (-9%) in April to 237 million pounds. Year-to-date through April, beef exports have dropped (-4%) to 951 million pounds, and beef imports are up to nearly 2 billion pounds (+28%). Higher beef imports were obtained from Brazil (+309%), New Zealand (+49%), and Australia

(+33%). Total pork exports were down (-11%) in April, while broiler exports increased (+4%) to 551 million pounds.

Corn prices have retreated in recent weeks with nearby futures prices declining from a \$4.71/bu average in April to \$4.47/bu in May. However, current expectations on corn available for animal feed are much lower (-6% to -8%) for this year than last year. Corn available for animal feed is the lowest it has been since 2018/19, when plantings increased by 1 million acres in the spring of 2019. Plantings are expected to have increased by 4 to 5 million acres for this year.

In the spring of 2019, corn prices had a modest pause in April but then added 70 cents in the next two months in spite of a winter wheat harvest that was 10% larger than in 2018. Our current situation of tight corn feed supply could exert upside pressure on corn prices in the coming weeks, if we have higher estimates for exports and industrial use or acreage estimates coming in lower than prior estimates.

Russell Tronstad at tronstad@ag.arizona.edu

Cattlelog Ad Prices



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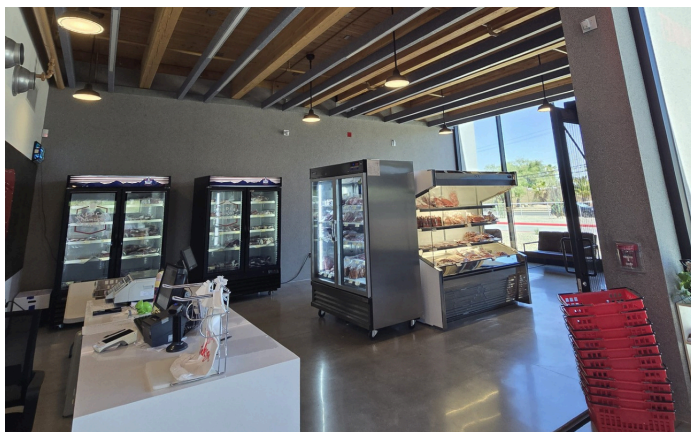
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U of A Update

Dr. D. Scott (Scotty) Merrell, Director of the School of Animal and Comparative Biomedical Sciences (ACBS) at the University of Arizona (UofA), provided the following updates for the ACGA membership.

1. FPSL, or 'meats lab': The renovated/expanded facility is open, and we are working to meet our instruction, research, and extension missions. We currently have limited capacity to process for external stakeholders; a total of 27 animals were processed for stakeholders in April and May. Anyone needing processing can reach out to us at 520-318-7021 or cml07@arizona.edu to get information on current availability and pricing.
2. The Wildcat Country Market (<https://wildcatcountrymarket.arizona.edu/index.html>) had a successful 'soft launch' on Friday, June 6, 2025. The store is currently open Fridays from 9–4, but please make sure to check the website or give us a call at 520-318-7021 to confirm that we are open and to check the cuts that we have available before stopping by our storefront at 4181 N. Campbell Ave, Tucson, AZ 85719.



1. ACBS still has an open faculty search for a Livestock Extension Specialist. Applications are being reviewed as they are submitted. Mr. John Lockhart will join us in July as a new Livestock Judging Professor of Practice. Look for future information about his work to restart our Livestock Judging program at the UofA.

As always, I'm happy to answer any questions you may have (dscottmerrell@arizona.edu) and wish you all the very best as we navigate these hot summer months.

The University of Arizona is proud to announce the rebirth of its Collegiate Livestock Judging Team, reinvigorated under the guidance of newly appointed Professor of Practice and Judging Coach, John Wesley Lockhart. Dormant since 2022, the program is poised for a strong return, with a renewed commitment to student development and industry connection.

A Strong Heritage and a Fresh Start

While U of A's judging history dates back nearly a century, with documentation of active participation as early as the 1920s, the modern team most recently competed through 2022. Its recent dormancy provided time for reflection and restructuring. Now, with new momentum, the team is being reestablished not only as a competitive outlet but as a cornerstone for student learning and industry engagement.

A Timely Revival: Industry Needs Talent

The U.S. cattle industry is at a pivotal moment. As of January 1, 2025, the nation's cattle herd numbered just 86.7 million head, the smallest since 1951. Beef cow inventories also plunged to a 64-year low, around 27.9 million head. These historic lows, driven by drought, feed costs, and high demand, have sparked record-high beef prices, with consumer prices climbing and ranchers focused on rebuilding. In this environment, cultivating young, skilled professionals in livestock evaluation is more than timely...it's essential.

Meet the Coach: John Wesley Lockhart

Originally from Grafton, West Virginia, Lockhart brings more than a decade of experience in agricultural education and competitive coaching. A graduate of West Virginia University he has spent the past 12 years mentoring students through 4-H and FFA programs.

Under his leadership, teams earned four state championships, three reserve titles, and top 10 national finishes. He's known for developing youth who are not only strong competitors but confident leaders.

"There's no better classroom than a barn aisle, a judging contest, or a county fair," Lockhart often says, capturing the philosophy he brings to Arizona.

Vision for the Team: Competition with Purpose

Lockhart's plan for rebuilding the U of A program is built around three pillars:

- **Student Recruitment:** Working with Arizona FFA, 4-H, and ag teachers, Lockhart will recruit passionate students and provide opportunities for scholarship support.
- **Rigorous Training & Education:** Judging-specific coursework, practices, and travel to major national contests will develop competitive excellence and practical skill.
- **Industry Connection:** Partnerships with Arizona producers and ag businesses will integrate students into real-world evaluation, marketing, and production roles.

"Seeing young people grow in confidence and leadership through agriculture, that's what drives me," says Lockhart.

We welcome you to join us in celebrating, and supporting, the return of a team that represents the heart of what it means to raise livestock and lead with integrity.

Arizona Dept. of Ag Update

IMPORTANT MESSAGE:

In the near future, the Arizona Department of Agriculture will begin charging a service fee on all transactions paid with a credit or debit card.

Up until now, the Department has absorbed the fees that are assessed by credit card companies, which have been averaging over \$80,000 a year. Due to state budget cutbacks, we must now pass these fees on to our customers. Upon implementation, the Department will charge a transaction service fee of 2.2% or \$2.00, whichever is higher.

This fee can be avoided by paying electronically via ACH electronic funds transfer or e-check.



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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.: 20134 End Date: 7/13/2025	Cattle: RH Horse: RH Sheep: LH Goat: LH		Brand No.: 20132 End Date: 7/12/2025	Cattle: RH Horse: NO Sheep: NO Goat: NO		Brand No.: 20131 End Date: 7/12/2025	Cattle: LH Horse: NO Sheep: NO Goat: NO
	Brand No.: 20133 End Date: 7/12/2025	Cattle: LH Horse: LH Sheep: NO Goat: NO		Brand No.: 20130 End Date: 7/10/2025	Cattle: NO Horse: LS Sheep: NO Goat: NO		Brand No.: 19979 End Date: 7/10/2025 AMEND	Cattle: RR Horse: RT Sheep: NO Goat: NO
	Brand No.: 20075 End Date: 7/6/2025	Cattle: RS Horse: RS Sheep: RS Goat: RS		Brand No.: 20075 End Date: 7/6/2025	Cattle: RS Horse: RS Sheep: RS Goat: RS		Brand No.: 20014 End Date: 7/6/2025	Cattle: LR Horse: LT Sheep: NO Goat: NO
	Brand No.: 17815 End Date: 7/5/2025	Cattle: RH Horse: RH Sheep: RH Goat: RH		Brand No.: 17724 End Date: 7/4/2025	Cattle: LH Horse: LT Sheep: NO Goat: NO		Brand No.: 20129 End Date: 7/3/2025	Cattle: RH Horse: LT Sheep: NO Goat: NO
	Brand No.: 20128 End Date: 7/3/2025	Cattle: RH Horse: NO Sheep: NO Goat: NO		Brand No.: 20127 End Date: 6/28/2025	Cattle: LH Horse: LH Sheep: LH Goat: LH		Brand No.: 20126 End Date: 6/27/2025	Cattle: RH Horse: NO Sheep: NO Goat: NO
	Brand No.: 20125 End Date: 6/26/2025	Cattle: LR Horse: LS Sheep: NO Goat: NO		Brand No.: 20124 End Date: 6/21/2025	Cattle: RS Horse: RS Sheep: NO Goat: NO		Brand No.: 20123 End Date: 6/21/2025	Cattle: LR Horse: LT Sheep: NO Goat: NO
	Brand No.: 20122 End Date: 6/20/2025	Cattle: LH Horse: NO Sheep: NO Goat: NO		Brand No.: 20121 End Date: 6/19/2025	Cattle: RH Horse: NO 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 June, 2025

The Arizona Legislature is moving quickly toward a resolution, with the Senate expected to release its budget next week following the House's proposal. Lawmakers face a June 30 deadline to avoid a government shutdown.

Key agriculture-related highlights from the House proposal include:

- Arizona Cooperative Extension: \$15.29 million to maintain core programming.
- YCEDA: \$2.75 million to continue research in desert agriculture.
- Natural Resource Users Law and Policy Center: \$1.57 million, including \$500,000 for water rights adjudication.
- Department of Agriculture: \$18.2 million total, including funding for five new livestock brand inspectors and \$1.7 million for a new licensing system.
- Water Programs: Over \$18 million allocated for groundwater recharge, water quality, rural water studies, and conservation.
- Wildfire Mitigation: \$27.1 million for prevention and \$65 million for emergency response.

The Arizona Farm Bureau Government Relations team will continue to monitor the session and advocate for agriculture priorities as final negotiations unfold.

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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 appreciate the support and attendance of more than 200 people at our "Honoring the Past and Looking to the Future" Field Day.

THANK YOU

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