

# RANCHING

## IN NEW MEXICO

As of 2025, ranching remains a cornerstone of New Mexico's agricultural economy, contributing significantly to the state's overall economic power.

Ranchers provide day-to-day stewardship of private and public land throughout New Mexico.

Properly managed livestock grazing is a valuable resource management tool that can improve wildlife habitat, biodiversity, and overall ecological conditions while providing cultural and economic benefits to communities.

However, the sector faces challenges that could influence its future sustainability and productivity.

### KEY STATS

- **Cattle Inventory:** According to the latest New Mexico agricultural statistics, as of Jan. 1, 2024, New Mexico's inventory of all cattle and calves was 1.29 million head, a decrease of 40,000 head from the previous year.
- **Economic Impact:** According to the latest New Mexico agricultural statistics, cattle and calves are New Mexico's top cash commodity, with a production value of \$1.72 billion. The state's food and agriculture industries generated a total economic impact of \$45 billion in 2025, a 4.4% increase from the previous year.

### CURRENT CHALLENGES

- **Drought Conditions:** Persistent drought has significantly affected ranching operations, reducing forage availability and water resources. These conditions have contributed to the decline in cattle inventory and have affected overall productivity.
- **Federal Funding Delays:** A freeze on USDA funding has stalled critical conservation projects, leading to layoffs and halted initiatives to support ranchers and farmers.
- **Regulation:** Misperceptions of the environmental impact of ranching lead to regulatory challenges and uncertainty.

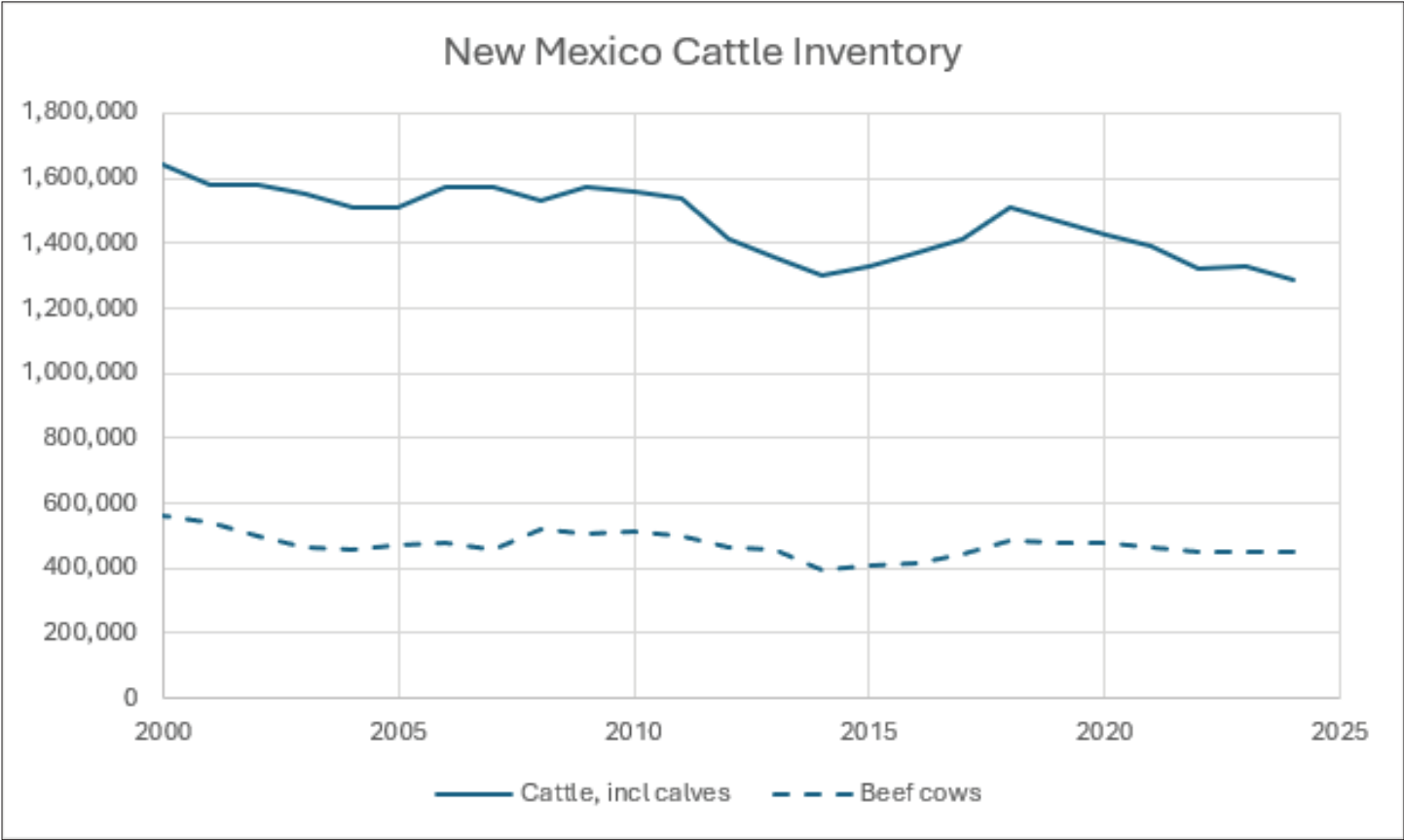
### Implications for NM agriculture

Ranching's significant contribution to New Mexico's economy underscores its importance within the agricultural sector. However, environmental challenges and funding uncertainties threaten the industry's sustainability. Addressing these issues is crucial to ensure the continued vitality of ranching and its role in supporting the state's agricultural economy.

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*NMDA supports the ranching industry through initiatives such as developing opportunities for direct marketing to consumers and expansion of in-state meat processing capacity.*

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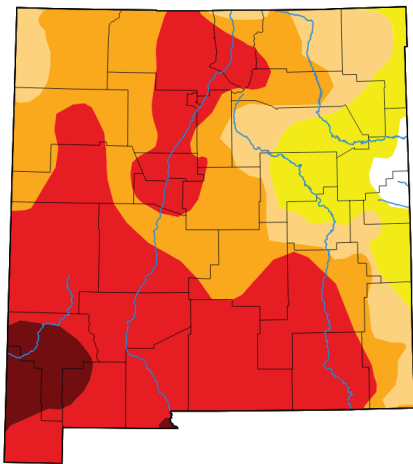


U.S. DROUGHT MONITOR

N.M. LAND OWNERSHIP

*Drought is the number one factor impacting New Mexico's ranching industry.*

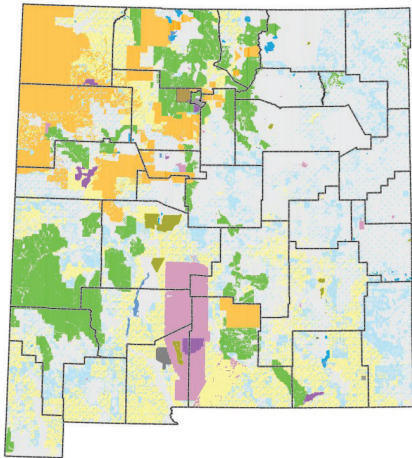
*New Mexico's intermingled landownership presents unique challenges to ranching operations.*



Map released: Thurs. May 8, 2025  
Data valid: May 6, 2025 at 8 a.m. EDT

- Intensity**
- None
  - D0 (Abnormally Dry)
  - D1 (Moderate Drought)
  - D2 (Severe Drought)
  - D3 (Extreme Drought)
  - D4 (Exceptional Drought)
  - No Data

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- Bureau of Land Management
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Defense
- Department of Energy
- USDA Forest Service
- Fish and Wildlife Service
- Bureau of Indian Affairs/Tribes
- National Park Service
- Valles Caldera National Preserve