



NEW MEXICO CATTLE GROWERS' ASSOCIATION

Legislative Priorities for Rural New Mexico:

KEEP PRODUCERS ON THE LAND

New Mexico agriculture is part of the state's essential infrastructure. It supports rural jobs, local schools and businesses, food production, wildlife habitat, open space, and stewardship of our water, soil and forests.

Our request is straightforward: help keep producers on the land by supporting practical investments that solve real problems and resisting policies that unnecessarily increase the cost, risk or legal exposure of producing food in rural New Mexico.

WHAT WE ASK YOU TO SUPPORT

1. Agricultural Water and Drought Resilience

Continue and expand practical agricultural water-conservation programs that help producers:

- Improve wells, pipelines, tanks and livestock-water systems.

- Increase water-use efficiency.

- Prepare for drought.

- Improve watershed and rangeland resilience.

2. Large, Food-Animal Veterinary Services

Build on New Mexico's veterinary loan-forgiveness program by:

- Continuing strong support for large, food-animal veterinarians.

- Providing assistance while veterinary students are still in school.

- Recruiting New Mexico students before competing states do.

- Supporting rural veterinary infrastructure and emergency response.

3. New World Screwworm and Livestock Biosecurity

Maintain a dedicated animal-disease preparedness capacity as USDA considers phased reopening of the border with Mexico to livestock movement. Restoring trade is important, but it must proceed with rigorous surveillance, inspection and safeguards. Promote:

- Rapid detection and field communications.

- Ag/Livestock Incident Response Teams and veterinary diagnostic capability.

- Producer education, livestock-disease surveillance and emergency planning.

Coordination with the Livestock Board, Department of Agriculture and federal agencies.

4. Local Meat Processing

Continue helping small processors obtain equipment and technology needed for state or federal inspection, including practical composting capacity for routine waste management.

More markets for New Mexico livestock.

More rural jobs and stronger local food systems.

Additional opportunities to supply schools, senior programs and local communities.

4. Mexican Wolf Compensation and Management

Continue funding to compensate livestock producers for losses associated with Mexican wolf recovery. Recovery is carried out for a public purpose; producers and individual rural families should not bear a disproportionate share of its financial cost or public-safety risk.

6. Landscape-Scale Brush and Invasive-Plant Management

Develop a serious statewide strategy—planned with landowners, agencies and local communities—to address mesquite and piñon-juniper encroachment, salt cedar, Russian olive and other invasive or noxious plants. Thoughtful treatment can improve forage, watershed health, soil function, water availability and wildfire resilience.

7. Practical Wildlife and Rangeland Management

Management should be humane, science-based, fiscally responsible and protective of working lands. Give landowners and counties practical tools to address:

Black-tailed prairie dog damage and resulting soil and forage loss.

Unmanaged feral horse populations through humane population control, fertility management, adoption and removal where necessary.

Excessive forage competition with wildlife and predator impacts on livestock.

8. Rural Emergency and Behavioral Health Services

Strengthen the rural communities agriculture depends on by supporting:

EMT recruitment, training, retention and local emergency response.

Agricultural and rural mental-health services.

Confidential access, telehealth where appropriate and providers who understand agricultural life.

REQUIRE RESPONSIBLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT

New Mexico should welcome responsible data-center, renewable-energy and transmission development—but not at the expense of agricultural water, rural communities or existing electricity customers.

Require water-intensive facilities to demonstrate that they will not deplete water needed by agriculture or nearby communities.

Use water-efficient cooling, reclaimed water or produced water.

Require large new power users to develop and bear the generation and transmission costs needed to serve them.

Give landowners adequate time and information to understand easements, options, leases and rights-of-way before signing.

DO NOT LEGISLATE WORKING LANDS OUT OF EXISTENCE

Agriculture is a price-taking business. New mandates, lawsuits and regulatory costs come directly out of a producer's margin. We ask legislators to:

- Oppose legislation that would criminalize reasonable landowner measures used to manage stream access and protect livestock, fences, water gaps, riparian restoration, private property and public safety.
- Preserve legislatively authorized management tools to protect private lands and maintain wildlife habitat.
- Recognize the lawful use of firearms as essential ranch tools for livestock care and safety in remote areas.
- Scrutinize statewide greenhouse-gas mandates that ignore long rural travel distances, limited alternatives and agriculture's dependence on diesel equipment and heavy vehicles.
- Carefully review state acquisitions of private land and publicly funded conservation easements for effects on agricultural production, county tax bases, schools, local employment and rural businesses.
- Keep conservation arrangements voluntary and transparent, favoring continued private ownership and productive agricultural use, with early consultation of affected counties, neighboring landowners and producers.

Private working lands provide wildlife habitat, open space, watershed protection and recreational opportunity. Public policy should encourage those benefits—not make working lands harder to maintain.

A PRACTICAL TEST FOR AGRICULTURAL POLICY

Before supporting legislation affecting agriculture, ask:

Will it keep working families on the land?

Will it improve water, soil, animal health or community resilience?

Will it solve a demonstrated problem at a reasonable cost?

Has it been shaped with the people who must live with it?

Bring producers into the conversation before a bill is drafted—not after positions have hardened.

The New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association is ready to bring legislators facts, producers with firsthand experience and practical solutions. We ask you to protect the conditions that allow agriculture, working lands and rural communities to survive and prosper.

Strong agriculture means strong rural communities—and a stronger New Mexico.

**New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association
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