



Economic Contributions of Federal Public Lands Livestock Grazing

Public lands grazers are a minority of livestock producers in the West and in the country...¹

- Number of livestock producers with federal grazing permits in the West: **22,350.**²
- Percentage of beef producers with federal grazing permits in the United States: **3%.**³
- Percentage of beef producers with federal grazing permits in eleven Western states: **22%.**⁴
- Number of beef producers without federal grazing permits: **880,000.**⁵

Subsidized by taxpayers, public lands grazers pay far less than market value for federal forage and grazing fees on comparable state and private lands...

- Fee to graze one cow and calf for *one month* (AUM) on federal public lands (2006): **\$1.35.**⁶
- Average fee per AUM on non-irrigated private lands in the West (2005): **\$13.40.**⁷
- Average fee per AUM on state lands in sixteen Western states (excluding Texas) (2004): **\$14.30.**⁸

¹ The majority of livestock producers on public lands are beef growers.

² Grazing permits for BLM and Forest Service allotments in seventeen western states; includes sheep growers; accounts for permittees who hold multiple grazing permits or operate on both BLM and Forest Service allotments. USDI-BLM, USDA-Forest Service. 1995. Rangeland Reform '94 *Draft* Environmental Impact Statement. USDI-BLM. Washington, DC: 3-65 (citations omitted).

³ USDI-BLM, USDA-Forest Service. 1995. Rangeland Reform '94 *Final* Environmental Impact Statement. USDI-BLM. Washington, DC: 26. See also K. H. Mathews, K. Ingram, J. Lewandrowski, J. Dunmore. *Public lands and western communities*. Agricultural Outlook (June/July 2002): 19 (noting that public lands grazing permittees account for less than 1 percent of beef cattle growers nationally).

⁴ USDI-BLM, USDA-Forest Service. 1995. Rangeland Reform '94 *Final* Environmental Impact Statement. USDI-BLM. Washington, DC: 26.

⁵ See USDI-BLM, USDA-Forest Service. 1995. Rangeland Reform '94 *Final* Environmental Impact Statement. USDI-BLM. Washington, DC: 26.

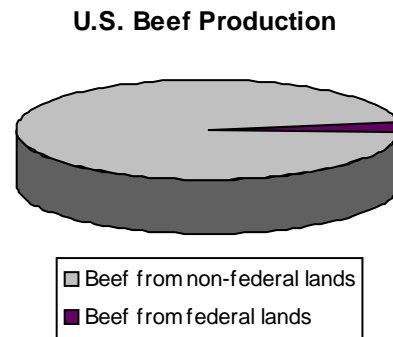
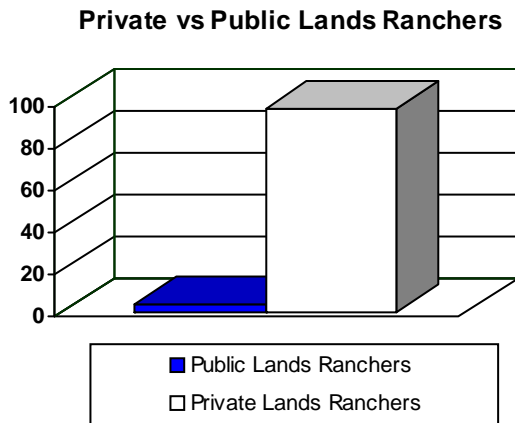
⁶ USDA-Forest Service. "Forest Service and BLM Announce 2007 Federal Grazing Fee" (Media Release no. FS-0629). USDA-Forest Service. Washington, DC. (Feb. 2, 2007).

⁷ Government Accountability Office. 2005. Livestock grazing: federal expenditures and receipts vary depending on the agency and the purpose of the fee charged. GAO-05-869. Government Accountability Office. Washington, DC: 39-40.

⁸ National Agricultural Statistics Service. 2005. "Grazing Fee Rates for Cattle by Selected States and Regions" (table). Page 65 in AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS. USDA-National Agricultural Statistics Service. Washington, DC. (Jan. 5, 2005). (<http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/reports/nassr/price/pap-bb/2005/agpr0105.pdf>).

The forage provided, and the beef produced from federal public lands is insignificant...

- Percentage of total feed for livestock (cattle and sheep) in the United States supplied from federal lands: **2%**.⁹
- Percentage of American beef produced from federal rangelands: **less than 3%**.¹⁰



Grazing livestock on western federal public lands grazing is a remarkably inefficient means to produce food and fiber given the generally arid nature of these landscapes...

- Forage consumed by one cow each month: **800-1000 pounds**.¹¹
- Forage consumed by each cow/calf unit each day: **26 pounds**.¹²
- Average number of acres required to feed one cow and calf for one month on all Bureau of Land Management rangelands: **13.7 acres**.¹³
- Number of acres required to feed one cow/calf for one year on farmlands in the East: **2 acres**.¹⁴

⁹ USDI-BLM, USDA-Forest Service. 1995. Rangeland Reform '94 *Draft* Environmental Impact Statement. USDI-BLM. Washington, DC: G-16 (citing Joyce 1989); USDI-BLM. 1992. Grazing fee review and evaluation: update of the 1986 final report. USDI-BLM. Washington, DC: 2.

¹⁰ Rogers, P. Cash cows. San Jose Mercury News (Nov. 7, 1999): 1S; Jacobs, L. 1992. THE WASTE OF THE WEST: PUBLIC LANDS RANCHING. Lynn Jacobs, P.O. Box 5784, Tucson, AZ: 354.

¹¹ GAO. 1988. Public rangelands: some riparian areas restored but widespread improvement will be slow. RCED-88-105. General Accounting Office. Washington, DC: 12.

¹² Mathews, K. H., K. Ingram, J. Lewandrowski, J. Dunmore. *Public lands and western communities*. Agricultural Outlook (June/July 2002): 19 (a publication of USDA-Economic Research Service).

¹³ GAO. 1988. Public rangelands: some riparian areas restored but widespread improvement will be slow. RCED-88-105. General Accounting Office. Washington, DC: 12.

¹⁴ Rogers, P. 1999. Cash cows. San Jose Mercury News (Nov. 7, 1999): 3S.

The contributions from federal livestock grazing to Western states' economies is miniscule...

Aggregate Federal Grazing Statistics for Eleven Western States¹⁵	
Federal grazing-dependent jobs	17,989
Federal grazing-dependent jobs as percentage of total employment	0.06
Income from federal grazing-dependent jobs as percentage of total job income	0.04
Days of normal job growth to replace all federal grazing-dependent jobs	11
Days of normal income growth to replace all federal grazing-dependent jobs	6

- Few western communities are economically dependent on public lands livestock grazing,¹⁶ while most public lands ranchers must rely on off-ranch income to support their ranch.¹⁷ Local communities are not dependent on public lands ranching, *rather public lands ranching is dependent on the employment, infrastructure, and services in local communities to persist.*
- “Bureau of Leisure and Motorhomes” - October 2004: for the first time in the history of the agency, the Bureau of Land Management collected more revenue from recreational fees than annual grazing fees. This despite the fact that recreational fees are often collected through voluntary pay stations, while grazing fees are mandatory and enforced, and BLM does not charge fees for many recreational offerings on BLM lands.¹⁸
- In Nevada (the state with more federal land than any other outside of Alaska), federal public lands grazing provides 1,228 jobs.¹⁹ By comparison, one casino in Las Vegas employs 37,000 people.²⁰
- In Wyoming, agriculture, including ranching, is “largely a ceremonial occupation.”²¹ Florida raises more beef cattle than Wyoming.²²

¹⁵ Power, T. 1996. LOST LANDSCAPES AND FAILED ECONOMIES: THE SEARCH FOR A VALUE OF PLACE. Island Press. Washington, DC: 184-185 (table 8-2). See also USDI-BLM, USDA-Forest Service. 1995. Rangeland Reform '94 Draft Environmental Impact Statement. USDI-BLM. Washington, DC: 45.

¹⁶ See, e.g., GAO. 1991. Rangeland management: BLM's hot desert grazing program merits reconsideration. RCED-92-12. General Accounting Office. Washington, DC: 46.

¹⁷ See USDI-BLM, USDA-Forest Service. 1995. Rangeland Reform '94 Draft Environmental Impact Statement. USDI-BLM. Washington, DC: 3-75. A. F. Smith and W. E. Martin. 1972. Socioeconomic behavior of cattle ranchers, with implications for rural community development in the West. Am. J. Ag. Econ. 54: 223-224, describing survey results that 80 percent of ranchers had other income to support their ranch, while 20 percent derived their income from local sources. These statistics comport with recent data for beef operations nationally and agriculture as a whole, T. Power. 1996. LOST LANDSCAPES AND FAILED ECONOMIES: THE SEARCH FOR A VALUE OF PLACE. Island Press. Washington, DC: 186. M. Steinbach described different classes of public lands ranchers (e.g., full-time, part-time, hobbyist, etc.) and their dependence on off-ranch income. M. Steinbach. 2004. Evaluating the consequences of public land grazing permit buyout program, permit reductions, and increased fees on land ownership and open space in western states. Ph.D. Diss. University of Montana. Missoula, MT: 91-97.

¹⁸ French, B. Rec fees surpass grazing for first time in BLM history. *Billings Gazette* (Oct. 7, 2004).

¹⁹ Power, T. 1996. LOST LANDSCAPES AND FAILED ECONOMIES: THE SEARCH FOR A VALUE OF PLACE. Island Press. Washington, DC: 184 (table 8-2).

²⁰ Greenhouse, S. Behind Las Vegas's glitter, heavy losses and layoffs. *New York Times* (Oct. 19, 2001).

²¹ Western, S. 2002. Pushed Off the Mountain, Sold Down the River: Wyoming's Search for Its Soul. Homestead Publishing. Denver, CO: 14.

²² USDA-National Agricultural Statistics Service website, www.nass.usda.gov, “Livestock and Animals”; visited Sept. 14, 2006. Wyoming had an inventory of 1,440 thousand beef cattle and calves in 2006, and Florida had 1,690 thousand cattle and calves.

- Alternative uses of federal public lands contribute much more income to local and regional economies than livestock grazing. In the Central Winter Ecosystem Management Area on the Kaibab Plateau, Arizona, dispersed recreation is worth \$200,000 annually to the local and regional economies; fuelwood is worth \$48,984; livestock grazing is worth \$45,988; and deer and turkey hunting is worth \$1,324,259.²³
- Federal public lands ranchers include banks, large corporations, grazing associations, wealthy individuals, and small family operations. However, only a minority have been in the business for more than a generation.²⁴ Over half of public lands ranchers are classified as hobbyists.²⁵

For more information, please contact Mark Salvo, Sagebrush Sea Campaign at mark@sagebrushsea.org.

²³ Souder, J. 1997. How does livestock grazing fit into the larger societal uses of wildlands? *in* PROC. SYMP. ON ENVIRONMENTAL, ECONOMIC, AND LEGAL ISSUES RELATED TO RANGELAND WATER DEVELOPMENTS. Arizona St. Univ. Tempe, AZ: 305.

²⁴ Donahue, D. L. 2005. Western grazing: the capture of grass, ground, and government. *Environmental Law* 35: 731 (citations omitted).

²⁵ Tanaka, J. A. and B. J. Gentner. 2002. Classifying federal public land grazing permittees. *J. Range Manage.* 55: 11.