

## Spring Momentum: Progress on Public Lands and a Seat at the Table

*by Martin Paris, Executive Director, Nevada Cattlemen's Association*

**H**appy May everyone. I'm not sure where the time goes, but it sure goes fast. This time of year always brings a mix of long days and a cautious eye on the weather, and it's no different on the policy front. April was an action-packed month with a lot to report on.

There has been a ton of encouraging news coming out of Washington, D.C. recently. The U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior announced a new agreement between the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management aimed at improving how grazing is managed across federal lands. While we've heard plenty of promises over the years, this one is at least moving in the right direction.

At its core, the agreement is focused on cutting through some of the bureaucratic backlog that continues to slow down day-to-day operations for permittees. That includes streamlining permitting, making it easier to complete range improvements, and improving response times during emergencies. In short, it's an acknowledgment that the current system isn't working as efficiently as it should for the people on the ground.

One piece worth highlighting is the emphasis on treating ranchers as true partners in land management. The agreement calls for more direct communication

with permittees and even includes opportunities for agency staff to spend time on working ranches. That kind of firsthand experience is something we've long said is necessary if we're going to see meaningful, practical decisions coming out of these agencies.

There are also some tools included that align with what we've been pushing for here in Nevada—things like targeted grazing for wildfire mitigation, reopening vacant allotments, and tools to improve management flexibility. Additionally, there is language supporting the maintenance of grazing capacity, including a goal of no net loss of AUMs where possible.

Wildfire coordination is another area addressed, with plans to improve communication between permittees and agencies during fire response. Given the ongoing challenges we face each year, any improvement in that process is welcome.

As always, the details—and more importantly, the implementation—will matter. We've seen good ideas before that never quite make it past paper. That said, this is a step in the right direction and reflects a growing recognition of the role ranchers play in managing these rangelands.

On the heels of this announcement, leadership at the Nevada Cattlemen's Association participated in a roundtable discussion with Governor Joe Lombardo

and Secretary of the Interior Secretary Doug Burgum. NCA wasted no time in doubling down on several other key priority areas. Wild horse management was front and center, including the importance of following the law to ensure populations are maintained at Appropriate Management Levels (AML). We also emphasized the value of grazing as a tool to reduce wildfire risk and assist in post-fire rehabilitation efforts.

Another key point of discussion was ensuring that local district offices have the personnel and know-how to move projects forward—whether that be targeted grazing, reissuing permits on vacant allotments, or implementing more flexible grazing practices.

NCA made it clear that grazing remains one of the highest and best uses of our public lands—and that

— Continued on page 3 —

### NCA Membership Dues Reminder

**T**his is a friendly reminder to renew your membership with the Nevada Cattlemen's Association (NCA) for the 2026 year.

If you have not yet submitted your dues, please note that memberships not renewed by June 1 will transition out of active status. We encourage you to renew at your earliest convenience to ensure there is no interruption in receiving communications and staying connected with NCA activities.

NCA continues to advocate on behalf of Nevada's cattle producers at both the state and federal levels—working on issues such as public lands grazing, wild horse management, water policy, and regulatory challenges. Your membership plays an important role in supporting that work and keeping Nevada ranchers represented.

As a member, you receive:

- A monthly copy of Sage Signals
- Opportunities to serve on NCA policy committees

- Updates on key issues impacting the livestock industry
- Access to meetings, events, and educational opportunities
- Support for youth programs and agricultural education efforts
- Full time representation on federal and state policy matters

We appreciate your continued support of the Nevada Cattlemen's Association and the work being done on behalf of the industry.

If you have already renewed, thank you—please disregard this notice. Otherwise, we look forward to continuing your membership in the year ahead.

Membership renewals or new memberships can be completed online at [nevadacattlemen.org/membership](http://nevadacattlemen.org/membership). For questions or assistance with renewal, please contact the NCA office at 775-738-9214.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### NCA Teacher of the Year Nominations Due

— May 6, 2026 —  
www.nevadacattlemen.org

### Public Lands Council Grazing Industry Roundtable

— May 27, 2026 —  
Winnemucca, Nevada  
RSVP: info@publiclandscouncil.org

### Nevada Cattlewomen Beef & Wine Pairing

— June 7, 2026 —  
Minden, Nevada  
Park Home Ranch Venue  
1452 Nevada 88  
Tickets Available at: [www.eventbrite.com/e/beef-wine-pairing-tickets-1986867537289](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/beef-wine-pairing-tickets-1986867537289)

### State Fair of Nevada

— June 11–13, 2026 —  
Reno, Nevada  
Nevada State Fairgrounds  
statefair.nv.gov

### NCBA Cattle Industry Summer Business Meeting

— July 12–14, 2026 —  
Aurora, Colorado  
Gaylord Rockies Resort  
& Convention Center

### Public Lands Council Annual Meeting

— September 15–17, 2026 —  
Copper Mountain, Colorado  
Copper Mountain Resort

### NCA 91st Annual Convention & Trade Show

— November 12–14, 2026 —  
Elko, Nevada  
Elko Convention Center  
[www.nevadacattlemen.org/events-meetings/convention-and-trade-show](http://www.nevadacattlemen.org/events-meetings/convention-and-trade-show)



# PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

*Dave Baker, President, Nevada Cattlemen's Association*

## The Bones of the Economy

There are entire industries that form the backbone of modern life, yet most people rarely think about them. They are the skeleton of the economy—foundational, essential, and largely invisible to the majority of people in the developed world.

We tend to take these basic industries for granted. Their absence would be immediately felt, but their presence is so constant that they fade into the background. A good example came during the early days of COVID-19 pandemic. People rushed to stores and emptied shelves of toilet paper, yet there was no widespread panic about the food supply. There was an unspoken confidence that food would continue to be produced, processed, and delivered. Thankfully, it was. But that moment revealed something important: we notice disruptions to convenience faster than we recognize the systems that sustain us.

History offers similar lessons. The Guggenheim family built a vast fortune in the early 20th century through mining operations across the United States and South America. That wealth later funded major philanthropic efforts and cultural institutions, including the well-known Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation. Today, their descendants remain influential in global finance, with involvement in asset management controlling hundreds of billions of dollars.

Yet if you walk through a Guggenheim museum on a guided tour, you are unlikely to hear much about where that money originally came from. The story of mining—the hard, foundational work that made everything else possible—is often left out.

The same pattern appears in how we interpret development. In many port cities, working ports are relocated to al-

low for expansion and modernization. What the public often sees instead are waterfront shops, hotels, and river walks. It can appear as though ports were moved to make way for urban renewal, when in reality, those visible changes are made possible by relocating and upgrading the less visible infrastructure that drives commerce.

I was reminded of this recently during my granddaughters' Nevada history lesson on the Comstock Lode. The Comstock was the first major U.S. deposit of silver ore, and it had a significant impact on American history. It helped finance the Union during the Civil War, accelerated Western expansion, sped up Nevada's path to statehood, and helped establish San Francisco's finan-

cial dominance through mining wealth and technological advances.

Their lesson, however, focused on how the Comstock advanced the use of the printing press and improved communication in the region and across the nation. I suppose that makes sense—a writer might naturally focus on his or her predecessors' contributions—but it also minimizes the foundational role the Comstock Lode itself played. The communication advances mattered, but they were made possible by the mining.

That's really the point. The majority of the population in the developed world doesn't spend much time thinking about, talking about, or learning about what I would call the bones—the skeleton—of the economy. These industries are seldom part of media or entertainment.

I'm pretty comfortable being a little under the radar. But it does make it more difficult to convince others that your issues are important when your industry is almost never part of their daily conversations.

Thanks for your time.

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Dave Baker, Pres. | Marlow Dahl, Pres.-Elect | Wade Small, 1st Vice Pres.

## Momentum: *Continued from page 1*

covering rangelands with solar panels is not. We also raised concerns about the more than half a million suspended AUMs that have been lost over the past few decades. There's a lot of talk about "rebuilding the herd," and reinstating those AUMs would be a good

place to start.

Several individuals in the room noted they could not recall a roundtable like this ever taking place. For that, we are thankful.

Thank you to Governor Lombardo, Secretary Bur-

gum, Nevada Department of Agriculture Director J.J. Goicoechea, and everyone involved for taking the time to listen to the needs of Nevada's ranchers and coming ready to address challenges head-on.

Till next time.

## MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

*We would like to thank the following people for joining or renewing their membership with Nevada Cattlemen's Association between March 26 and April 24, 2026.*

*(New members are in bold.)*

- Bison Pipe, Darren Sparks, Thomas Carroll
- Carter Griffin
- Coverley Ranch, Dan Coverley
- Egbert Livestock, LLC, Scott Egbert
- Galeppi Land & Livestock, Russel & Barbara Byington
- Jennifer Garrett
- Gudel Cattle Co., Kris Gudel
- Holland Ranch LLC, Mitchell Goicoechea
- Hussman Ranch, David Hussman
- Jersey Valley Cattle Company, Mike Stremler
- Kamtec, Inc., Matt Torley
- Lazy D Livestock, Pete Delmue
- **Locke Farm, Tony Locke**
- Cyd McMullen, Russell and Anne McMullen
- Mike Marvel Ranching, Mike Marvel
- Pete & Kathi Marvel
- Sam Monteleone
- NV High Desert Outfitters, Mitch & Rachel Buzzetti
- NW Mixer Feeders, Leah Scholz
- John E. Neff Co., Inc., Sam Neff, Adam Neff
- Nine S Brangus, Connie Simkins
- Perigo Hay & Cattle, LLC, Jess Trask
- Pine Forest Land & Stock Co., Michael Montero
- Range & Riparian Services, Tamzen Stringham
- Redd Summitt Ranches, Steve Redd
- Sawtooth Gelbvieh, Dick or Jean, Darrell Williams
- Snyder Livestock Co., Inc., Lucy Rechel
- Sustacha Ranches, Marilyn Sustacha, Jess Sustacha, Jr.
- Synergy Resource Solutions, Inc., Jack Alexander
- Wes & Linda Tews
- Top Notch Feed and Fence, Leo Baptiste
- Venturacci Schuler Partners
- Vipham Angus Ranch LLC, John and Marjorie Vipham

## CATTLEWOMEN'S CORNER OF THE CORRAL

# Let's Meet our Treasurer, Paige!

*by Charmi Mitchell, NVCW President*

This month we are highlighting our new Treasurer, Paige Poulos, and what led to her passion for agriculture and sharing her time with Nevada Cattlewomen.

Fifth generation in a pioneer Northern California family, Paige was raised among the vast cattle and sheep ranches of rural Mendocino County. She spent her childhood making ranch calls with her father in his veterinary practice and developed a deep affinity for livestock that has lasted her entire life.

Following college at UC Davis, Paige worked in executive public relations and marketing roles in the wine industry before founding her own firm in 1990. Her work and that of her dynamic team created close relationships with vintners, winegrape growers, chefs, broadcast, print and internet journalists, and farmers and ranchers in the United States and Europe. In 2004 she was named one of the world's leading women entrepreneurs for her culinary communications success and was later inducted into Les Dames d'Escoffier, a women's culinary honor society.

In 2010 Paige became very concerned about the development of genetically modified hays and livestock feeds and their impact on the health of livestock, humans and wild grassland habitat. She assigned firm clients to her senior staff and moved back to Mendocino County from the San Francisco Bay Area and launched a new career as a broker of certified organic and non-GMO hay for dairies and grass-fed meat operations. Expanding into 5 western states, she moved to Idaho

in 2016 and then to the Elko area in 2018 to focus on her Nevada hay brokerage work which included a contract with Newmont Mining among others.

Today her home base is Marys River Ranch in Deeth, Nevada where her partner and his family raise red Angus cross cattle. Her greatest passions are providing hay to Nevada cattle operations, advocating for the use of cattle and sheep to enhance soil, wildlife and resource quality on public and private lands, the protection of the large landscapes of the West for grazing, local and regional meat production and recreation, and Western cowboy art, gear, poetry and culture. She feels strongly that we have collective duty to do all we can to ensure that all Americans have access to USA born and raised grass-fed beef and lamb. She belongs to the Elko Chapter of Nevada CattleWomen, is a member of both Nevada and National Cattlewomen Associations, Nevada Cattlemen's Association and is a member and supporter of the Western Folklife Center.

She is honored to serve her community and fellow cattlemen as Treasurer of the Nevada CattleWomen's Association.



*Submitted Photo*

Paige Poulos



# Nevada Beef Council Update – May 2026

## Your Checkoff Dollars at Work

By Annette Kassis—Director, Consumer & Brand Marketing

### BEEF INDUSTRY REVIEW AND CONSUMER INSIGHTS: A Look at Consumer Demand Drivers Through Early 2026

What drives consumers to choose the proteins that make it into their grocery baskets and onto their plates? The Market Research program at BeefResearch.org regularly compiles and analyzes data on consumer demand drivers—the things that can influence a consumer’s decision to purchase. Their most recent insights report was released in February, 2026. All report data is compiled and analyzed by the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA), a contractor to the Beef Checkoff.

According to the most recent Beef Industry Review and Consumer Insights, consumer demand for beef remained exceptionally strong, despite economic headwinds in 2025 that included inflation uncertainty, international conflict, and tighter beef inventories. The industry achieved another record-setting year, with retail beef sales surpassing \$45 billion and volume exceeding 6.2 billion pounds, marking a 12.4% increase in value and 4.3% growth in volume year-over-year. Beef continues to dominate the meat case, driving over 55% of total fresh meat value, compared to chicken at roughly 25% and pork at just above 10%.<sup>1</sup>

As we moved into 2026, the beef supply was projected to hold steady, and consumers showed no signs of reducing demand. However, economic pressures are influencing behavior: households are dining out less, prioritizing home-cooked meals, and adopting strategies to stretch their budgets.<sup>2</sup> These strategies include:

- Seeking deals and using coupons more frequently
- Stocking up and freezing beef products

- Opting for store or private-label brands
- Shopping at mass merchandisers
- Repurposing leftovers creatively

When looking at Consumer Demand Drivers [see figure 1], they are divided into three main categories:

- Consumption
- Preference
- Value

In addition, consumers making purchasing decisions look at four key factors when evaluating what protein to buy:

- Eating Experience
- Convenience/Versatility
- Price
- Nutrition

A consumer purchase can be a balancing act of a variety of factors. The “Consumption” category encompasses all four of the key factors. “Preference” comes into play when considering the eating experience, convenience/versatility, and nutrition factors, but is not part of the price factor. “Value” is a factor in considering price, of course, but also in considering nutrition, and convenience/versatility. In other words, “Value” is more than price: it is value for the money, whether that be nutritional

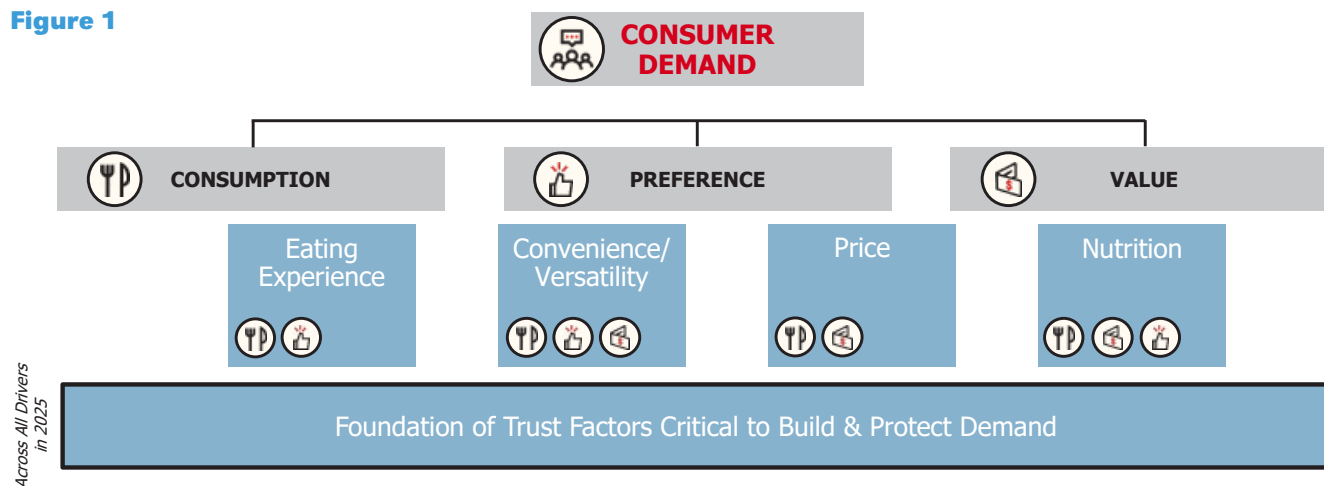
value of one protein over another, or the value of beef’s convenience and versatility.

These Consumer Demand Drivers are based on self-reported consumer data collected through the Consumer Beef Tracker survey by Beef Research. These insights help determine what components are driving consumption, the preference of one protein over another, and the perceived value of a protein.

The behaviors seen in the February 2026 report align with the Value and Versatility demand driver and reinforce the importance of recipe resources like BeefItsWhatsForDinner.com. Looking ahead, reinforcing beef’s competitive advantages will be critical, including:

- Top source of high-quality protein
- Superior taste and eating experience
- Nutritional benefits that fit healthy diets

Figure 1



Across All Drivers in 2025

Source: Demand Drivers Report January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024; N=12000. Independent analysis of self-reported consumer data, commissioned by the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association, a contractor to the Beef Checkoff

#### NEVADA BEEF COUNCIL

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## NV BEEF COUNCIL CONTINUED

- Ideal for social gatherings & special occasions
- Convenience & versatility across meal types

Additional insights to note from the Beef Industry Review:

- Consumer perceptions of beef remains positive: Over 90% expressing favorable or neutral views, and 70% considering how food is raised when purchasing.
- Price sensitivity is growing: Willingness-to-pay for steak and ground beef is lagging behind actual retail prices, underscoring the need to communicate value.
- Behavioral trends: Consumers plan to buy more ground beef and chicken while cutting back on higher-priced cuts like steak.
- Protein preferences: Nearly three-quarters of consumers eat beef weekly, and over one-third rank it as their top protein choice.
- Foodservice outlook: Beef volume surpassed 2019 levels and is projected to grow through 2027, though chicken remains dominant in restaurants.
- Meat alternatives: Weekly consumption continues to decline, reinforcing beef's strong position in the protein market.

Information like that contained in the Beef Industry Review and Consumer Insights and in the Consumer Beef Tracker survey is used by the Nevada Beef Council staff when determining tactics, strategies, and messaging in their consumer, retail, foodservice, and nutrition outreach programs.

To view the complete report, go to [BeefResearch.org](http://BeefResearch.org).

1. Circana, Fresh Beef Sales by Volume and Value, Data Ending 12/28/2025.
2. Consumer Beef Tracker, January – December 2025.



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# USDA, DOI Move to Boost Support for American Ranchers, Help Lower Prices for Consumers

(Washington, D.C., March 31, 2026) — U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Secretary Brooke L. Rollins and U.S. Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum today announced new actions aimed at boosting the supply of American born, raised, and harvested beef by supporting American ranchers with the signing of a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will strengthen coordination, cut bureaucratic red tape, and deliver immediate, tangible support for America's farmers and ranchers who rely on public lands.

Building on the USDA's recently released Grazing Action Plan, the agreement formalizes collaboration between the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service (FS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to ensure more efficient, transparent and responsive grazing management across federal lands.

"Today's signing sends a clear message: the Trump Administration is putting America's farmers and ranchers first," said Secretary Rollins. "Building on our action plan for American ranchers announced in the fall, the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management are already delivering. This is another example of President Trump eliminating costly bureaucracy in order to lower consumer prices. Our public lands are there for the people, and this action demonstrates the commitment at USDA and the Department of the Interior to improve our services so farmers and ranchers who use public lands can run more efficient operations."

"The Grazing Action Plan is built on a collaborative partnership dedicated to strengthening ranching operations while safeguarding our public lands," said Secretary Burgum. "By working closely with American ranchers, we are enhancing communication, investing in innovation, and modernizing our approach to land management practices to deliver real results for the people who feed and sustain this country. In coordination with the Department of Agriculture, the Trump administration is advancing actions designed to support farmers and ranchers - securing a more resilient future for grazing on public lands and protecting America's ranching heritage for generations to come."

For generations, ranchers have played a vital role in feeding the nation, supporting rural economies, and stewarding public lands. The MOU recognizes permittees as essential partners and directs federal agencies to engage directly with those who live and work on the land.

## Key actions under the agreement

- **Cutting red tape and improving efficiency** – The MOU streamlines permitting and processes and encourages agencies to use existing authorities more effectively – reducing delays for grazing permits, infrastructure improvements, and emergency response actions.
- **Strengthening rancher partnerships** – Agencies will expand collaboration with permittees through structured engagement, including learning roundtables and enhanced communication channels.
- **Ranch immersion programs for federal employees** – New initiatives will place agency staff on working ranches to build firsthand understanding of operational challenges and realities on the ground.
- **Enhancing transparency and data access** – Improved data systems will make grazing allotment information more accessible and predictable, giving producers greater certainty to plan and invest.
- **Expanding practical land management tools** – The agreement promotes targeted grazing to reduce wildfire risk, supports reopening vacant allotments, and encourages adoption of innovative technologies such as virtual fencing.
- **Wildfire coordination and response** – The creation of Grazing Permittee Wildfire Liaisons will ensure ranchers have clear points of contact and a voice during wildfire response and recovery efforts.
- **Maintaining grazing capacity** – The MOU affirms a goal of maintaining grazing capacity wherever possible, including no net loss of Animal Unit Months within allotments, consistent with applicable law.

Officials emphasized the agreement supports not only producers, but also American families by strengthening the domestic food supply chain. By lowering costs and improving efficiency for ranchers, the initiative helps keep food affordable and reduces reliance on foreign imports.

Today's signing marks an important step forward in modernizing federal grazing management and reflects a broader commitment to rural prosperity by fortifying the American beef industry as directed by President Trump's order Ensuring Affordable Beef for the American Consumer.

## Additional background

More than 20,000 ranchers and farmers across 28 states graze on federal lands. The FS and the BLM are responsible for a total of 240 million acres of federal rangelands. The two agencies together administer more than 23,000 permits and leases held by ranchers who graze their livestock on approximately 29,000 allotments. About 10% of grazing allotments, or roughly 24 million acres, are not under permit but are targeted as opportunities to allow more grazing on federal lands. The FS collects an average of \$6 million annually in grazing fees.

Livestock grazing on national forests and grasslands contributes about 14,200 jobs and \$645 million to the nation's gross domestic product annually, supporting agriculture-related sectors and private operations. Across Western rangelands, livestock grazing on BLM lands generate \$2.7 billion in total economic output, supporting 35,000 jobs and \$700 million in total labor income.



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**Wednesday, May 27, 2026**

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**1:00 - 4:00 p.m.**

**Location provided on RSVP.**

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# New World Screwworm: What To Look For

by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association

As New World Screwworm (NWS) treks north through Mexico, USDA and NCBA, in partnership with state affiliates, are taking action before it reaches the U.S. southern border. While the pest was eradicated in the U.S. in 1966 using the sterile fly technique (more on this in the next issue of *National Cattlemen*), there have been numerous cases identified less than 200 miles south of the Texas border.<sup>1</sup>

Screwworms are fly larvae, or maggots, that burrow or hook into the flesh of living animals causing serious, and even deadly, damage to the animal. Not only can the parasite lead to animal suffering, but also economic loss for operations,

as many producers can attest to during the 1960s when the NWS was prevalent in the U.S.<sup>2</sup>

It is critical that cattle producers are vigilant in searching for signs of NWS, especially as temperatures rise heading into summer, as the NWS thrives in warmer temperatures.<sup>3</sup> The adult screwworm fly resembles a common household fly but is slightly larger and has distinctive orange eyes, a metallic blue or green body and three dark stripes along the back.<sup>2</sup>

Signs to look for on cattle include:

- Bloody or light-colored drainage from a cut or wound.
- A cut or wound that rapidly enlarges for seemingly no reason.
- White or cream-colored runny substance (the eggs) in and around a wound.
- Presence of fly larvae (maggots) in wounds.
- Irritated behavior and signs of pain.
- Head shaking.
- Reduced appetite.
- Fever and other signs of secondary infection.
- Foul odor or smell of decay.

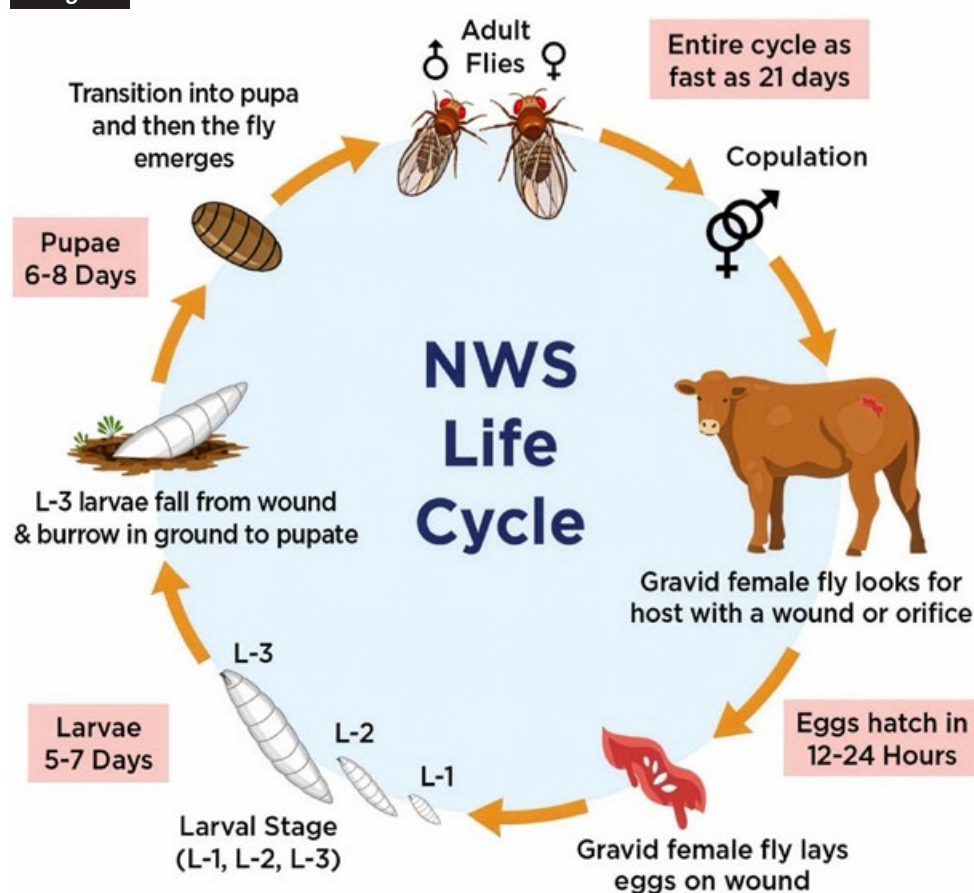
Infestations begin when a female fly lays eggs on an open wound or orifice of a warm-blooded animal. Females can lay 200–300 eggs at a time and up to 3,000 eggs during her lifespan of 10 to 30 days. Within hours at an optimal temperature, the eggs hatch into larvae and burrow into the wound, causing pain and tissue damage. After about a week of feeding, the larvae drop to the ground, pupate in the soil, and emerge as adult flies within 7 to 54 days, depending on environmental conditions (Image 1).<sup>4</sup>

As a foreign animal disease, NWS must be reported if suspected or found. It is critical to stop infestation early so it is not spread to other animals or operations. If you believe you've found NWS, contact your veterinarian immediately. Find resources for what to look for at [ncba.org/education-resources/industry-updates-resources/new-world-screwworm-resources](http://ncba.org/education-resources/industry-updates-resources/new-world-screwworm-resources).

References:

1. <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/stop-screwworm/current-status?page=1>
2. <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/cattle/ticks/screwworm>
3. [https://www.cdfr.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal\\_Health/screwworm/#:~:text=Climate,Parasite%20of%3A](https://www.cdfr.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal_Health/screwworm/#:~:text=Climate,Parasite%20of%3A)
4. <https://www.ncba.org/education-resources/industry-updates-resources/new-world-screwworm-resources>

Image 1



*Save the Date*

Nevada Cattlemen's Association

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# Chuck Knows Best?

by Colin Woodall, NCBA CEO



A tried-and-true strategy we utilize in Washington, D.C., is building coalitions of Representatives and Senators to work on advancing our policy priorities. We find our success improves when a large number of these members of Congress band together and push for action. However, we are always careful in whom we ask to join these coalitions because one wrong name could keep many good ones from signing on or keeping our request from being considered. We are also constantly looking for coalitions being built to support actions against us. One such coalition has formed in the U.S. Senate to support the “Family Grocery and Farmer Relief Act.”

Democrat Senators Chuck Schumer from New York, Peter Welch from Vermont, Cory Booker from New Jersey, Elizabeth Warren from Massachusetts, Bernie Sanders from Vermont, Ruben Gallego from Arizona, Jeff Merkley from Oregon, Brian Schatz from Hawaii, Dick Durbin from Illinois, Ed Markey from Massachusetts, Andy Kim from New Jersey, Chris Murphy from Connecticut, and Sheldon Whitehouse from Rhode Island are the coalition behind this bill which you’ve heard called the “Schumer Bill” in many agriculture news stories. Don’t let the real name of this legislation fool you. Representatives, Senators and their staff spend countless hours coming up with novel names for their legislation in order to draw attention to it. It’s a well-known Capitol Hill pastime.

We treat every piece of legislation like a used car. The paint might look good and the car might have new tires, but you need to pop the hood, look under the car, and crank it to make sure it runs the way you want it to. The same goes with legislation. The name might sound great, but you must read every word, check every reference to existing regulations, and know that the difference between the words “shall” and “may” can make legislation do different things than what the title might suggest. While “Family Grocery and Farmer Relief Act” sounds great, nothing in this bill achieves relief for farmers or for family grocery bills.

The main provision of the bill is focused on breaking up the packers. More specifically, it requires packers to choose which protein they want to process, thus eliminating the ability of companies to process beef, pork and/or poultry. I’ve yet to figure out how that is going to help competition. That would be like the government telling John Deere they can only produce swathers; New Holland they can only produce balers; and Kubota they can only produce tractors. The legislation goes on to cap the number of cattle a feedlot can sell to any one packer. The government dictating how many

cattle a feeder can sell to a packer sounds more like an artificial restraint of commerce than it does a free market where willing buyers and willing sellers can enter into business deals. NCBA consistently opposes government intervention in the market like the provisions found in the Schumer bill.

While this coalition of Senators aren’t ones we typically go to for cattle issues, they do represent states with cow-calf producers and NCBA members. Our members in these states are right to expect their Senators to engage with them before cooking up an elixir that doesn’t cure any illness. For many years, NCBA has fought similar proposals allowing government a bigger role in the cattle markets. A great example is what we have long called the “GIPSA Rule.”

The “GIPSA Rule” goes back to language included in the 2008 Farm Bill that wanted to change the Packers and Stockyards Act (PSA). While we have supported common-sense changes to the PSA over time, we have always maintained that full funding for USDA’s Packers and Stockyards Division would give the agency the resources it needs to do the job as Congress intended. That includes staff who can conduct audits, investigations, and recommend cases for prosecution. In short, full funding would allow the PSA to be effective at curbing bad behavior by market participants. They have the authority now, they just don’t have the money and manpower to get it done. What good is adding more PSA regulations to enforce if they can’t currently enforce what they have? Sounds like typical government, so that is why we have to expose it and make people aware of how ridiculous the idea is. Congress’ “power of the purse” gives these Senators the authority to provide USDA with adequate funding to do their jobs. Interestingly enough, they would have support from Republicans and NCBA to get that done. Ensuring that the Packers and Stockyards Division is well funded and staffed would go a long way in working on cattle industry competition issues.

If the Senators behind the “Schumer Bill” coalition don’t like that suggestion, we have any number of other actions they could take to help producers. Pass the rest of the Farm Bill, secure a workable guest worker program, support delisting the gray wolf, and many more. Legislating for the sake of legislating never works out for the government or those covered under the new rules and regulations. Many of these Senators are power players in their party. We suggest they use that power for good rather than chasing legislation that won’t come close to providing relief to anybody, much less cattle producers and consumers.

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# Showing Up, Staying Engaged, and Delivering for Cattle Producers

by Gene Copenhaver, NCBA President

Every once in a while, Washington, D.C., produces a moment that clearly illustrates why engagement matters — how a strong, unified voice for cattle producers delivers real results back home. For NCBA members, the past several weeks provided exactly that reminder.

Recently, NCBA leaders and producers joined a White House event recognizing the Working Families Tax Cuts included in the One Big Beautiful Bill. While the setting carried historic symbolism, the impact of these policies is anything but abstract. For cattle producers across the country, these tax provisions directly affect whether family farms and ranches can survive, grow and be passed on to the next generation.

For years, NCBA has worked steadily to explain how the Death Tax threatens family-owned operations. When land values rise but cash flow doesn't, heirs are often forced to sell land, livestock, or entire operations just to pay a tax bill. That's not theoretical. It's happened to neighbors and friends in every cattle-producing state.

At the White House event, lawmakers heard directly from NCBA members about what these policies mean in real life. A first-generation ranching family from South Dakota described how small-business provisions and Section 179 deductions allowed them to expense equipment and fencing — giving them the opportunity to expand their cow herd and launch a direct-to-consumer beef business. A cattle producer from Pennsylvania shared how predictable, commonsense tax policy helps his family plan for the long term and bring the next generation home to the operation.

Those stories highlight something cattle producers already understand instinctively: smart tax policy isn't about politics. It's about stability, planning and thinking beyond the next year.

Earlier that same day, NCBA participated in a tax roundtable with U.S. Treasurer Brandon Beach, continuing the behind-the-scenes conversations that shape how policy is written and implemented. These meetings don't always grab headlines, but they are where outcomes are decided. Being at the table early, before decisions are locked in, is one of the ways we work to protect your operation.

That same principle was on full display during NCBA's 2026 Legislative Conference, when our nationwide network of state affiliates brought producers from across the country to Washington, D.C. Throughout the week, NCBA members met with policymakers on Capitol Hill and engaged directly with key federal agencies, including USDA, FDA and EPA.

Priority issues were discussed, like passing a Farm Bill, delisting the gray wolf



by passing the Pet & Livestock Protection Act, and securing funding to combat the Longhorned tick and the diseases it carries.

This is what grassroots advocacy looks like: real producers, from real operations, sharing first-hand experience with decision-makers who craft policies that affect us every day. Policy decisions made hundreds of miles away can have immediate consequences at the ranch gate. That's why showing up matters.

For cattle producers, NCBA membership may be the cheapest risk management tool you can buy. Think of NCBA membership as catastrophic coverage. One overreaching regulation, one lost market access opportunity, or one harmful tax change can cost far more than years of dues. Advocacy doesn't eliminate every challenge, but it dramatically improves the odds that cattle producers aren't blindsided.

These wins don't happen overnight. Legislation like the Working Families Tax Cuts builds on years of persistent effort by NCBA and, most importantly, NCBA members being willing to engage. Credible data, trusted relationships, and producer voices who are willing to show up make all the difference. That continuity only exists because thousands of producers invest in NCBA year after year. Outcomes like these happen because producers decide that standing together matters.

As president of NCBA, and as a cattle producer myself, I take that responsibility seriously. Our job is to protect your ability to operate, grow and pass your ranch on to the next generation. Engagement

in Washington, backed by the strength of our state affiliates and grassroots members, is one of the most effective tools we have to do exactly that.

These meetings don't always grab headlines, but they are where outcomes are decided. Being at the table early, before decisions are locked in, is one of the ways we work to protect your operation.

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