

# SAGE SIGNALS

*The Voice of the Nevada Livestock Industry*

Volume XLIV, #9 | July 2021

PUBLISHED MONTHLY FOR THE NCA MEMBERSHIP

## NCA SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



Mattie Merritt

*Submitted Photo*



Leanna Sarman

*Submitted Photo*

## MARVEL/ANDRAE SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



Lia McQueary

*Submitted Photo*



Mackie Griggs

*Submitted Photo*

# 2021 Scholarship Recipients Announced

*By: Martin Paris, NCA Executive Director*

On behalf of the Nevada Cattlemen's Association (NCA), we are pleased to announce four scholarship recipients this year. NCA would like to congratulate Mattie Merritt of Round Mountain, NV and Leanna Sarman of Spring Creek, NV for being chosen as the 2021 Nevada Cattlemen's Association Scholarship recipients. NCA would also like to congratulate Mackie Griggs of Elko, NV and Lia McQueary of Ruby Valley, NV for being chosen as the 2021 Marvel/Andrae Scholarship recipients.

NCA has annually awarded a scholarship to a first-year college student beginning to pursue an education within the agricultural industry. This award is open to all Nevada high school graduating seniors planning to attend a Junior or four-year University and majoring in an Ag related field. NCA also awards a second scholarship, the Marvel/Andrae Scholarship, which is targeted toward students either going into their first year of college or already enrolled in college and working towards their degree in agriculture.

Both scholarships are awarded to exceptional students who work hard, achieve high academic achievements, and work to represent agriculture in a positive way. We thank all the students that applied for these scholarships and are confident that they will all be strong future advocates for our ranching and farming communities.

Mattie will be attending the College of Southern Idaho this fall to pursue a degree in Veterinary Technology. She has been actively engaged in several organizations throughout her high school career including FFA, Superintendent Advisory Board, Round Mountain High School Class of 2021 Student Council, and Nevada State High School Rodeo Association. Mattie plans to become a licensed veterinary technician and possibly pursue a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree.

Leanna will be attending the University of Nevada, Reno this fall to pursue a degree in Agriculture Science. She has been actively engaged in several organizations throughout high school including FFA, 4-H, Society for Range Management, National/Nevada/Elko County Cattlewomen, and the Lamoille Junior Livestock Club. Leanna hopes to grow her cow/calf operation she started in 4-H and pursue a career in production agriculture after obtaining her college degree.

Lia is currently enrolled at the University of Nevada, Reno and is pursuing a bachelor's degree in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. She is in the University of Nevada's Honors College and also participates in UNR Chamber Singers. Her goal is to continue advancing through STEM classes and possibly apply to a job within the College of Agriculture, Biotechnology, and Natural Resources at the Experimental Station which would allow her to work with animals, graduate researchers, greenhouses, and irrigation sciences.

Mackie is currently attending the University of Idaho and is majoring in Animal and Veterinary Science Production and minoring in Rangeland Management and Ecology. Mackie has made the Dean's list each semester of college. She is a member of the NCA, Pi Beta Phi sorority, Student Idaho Cattle Association, and treasurer of the Block and Bridle Club. This summer she will be interning at the Lightning Creek Ranch in Joseph, Oregon. She plans to pursue a career that relates to the beef industry and eventually follow in her father's footsteps by someday managing the Maggie Creek Ranch where she grew up.

Congratulations again to Mattie, Leanna, Lia, and Mackie and we wish them good luck on their future endeavors! We are very proud of them and are confident that they will continue to serve the industry well. We look forward to all that they will accomplish.

**As part of the NCA Scholarship application process, applicants are required to write an essay on any topic within the beef industry. Please see pages 14-16, or check out our website at [nevadacattlemen.org](http://nevadacattlemen.org) to read Mattie and Leanna's winning essays.**

# Rancher Liaison Program

By Jon Griggs- NCA President Elect & Glen Uhlig- BLM Elko Fire Operations Supervisor

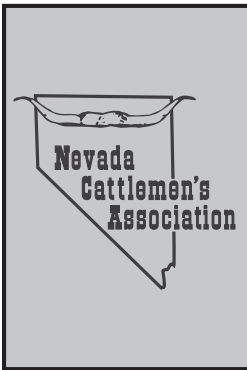
“On to the next one ol’ son” in Ranching unfortunately often means on to the next disaster. Drought is the current flavor. Although the cattle markets certainly qualify, we are often too busy dealing with the current disaster to think about what else might be coming. Wildland fire deserves our attention though. It has become more prevalent in the last 20 years or so, with fires becoming bigger and hotter, and more prevalent in drought years.

What can Ranchers do, how do we prepare for fire? We can certainly tie in with our local volunteer company, if there is one. Often the first responders to wildland fire- especially when there are multiple starts like during a lightning

event- are the Ranchers in the area. Make sure your house and outbuildings are defendable. Ranchers often tell Firefighters “don’t worry about my house, save our allotments!” They’re thinking of the “factory” that supports them, but the liability to Firefighters to choose rangelands over structures can only be overcome if the structures appear safe. If we make our ranch houses and barns fire safe now, firefighters can get straight to the rangeland. It’s a win-win. Save the house and get firetrucks on the rangeland faster.

The Rancher Liaison program exists or is being implemented by most of the Land Management Agencies in Northern Nevada for wildland fire. It is a mechanism for Ranchers and Firefighters to share crucial information during a wildland fire event. Most fires are caught during initial attack, but when they aren’t a Rancher Liaison is assigned to the Incident Commander (IC) or Team fighting the fire. Their role is to relate to the IC concerns- such as cattle in the area, access, water locations, hazards, value of the resource, tactics, etc. In return the Liaison gets from the IC to share to the Community their plan for suppression, firefighting resources available or en route, expected fire behavior, etc. This communication helps to avoid conflict during a time that’s stressful enough as it is and helps all involved to have the best possible outcomes.

Ask your contacts at BLM or USFS how you can become involved in the Rancher Liaison program. Put a good plan in place for how to deal with fire on your Ranch and you can be “on to the next one”!



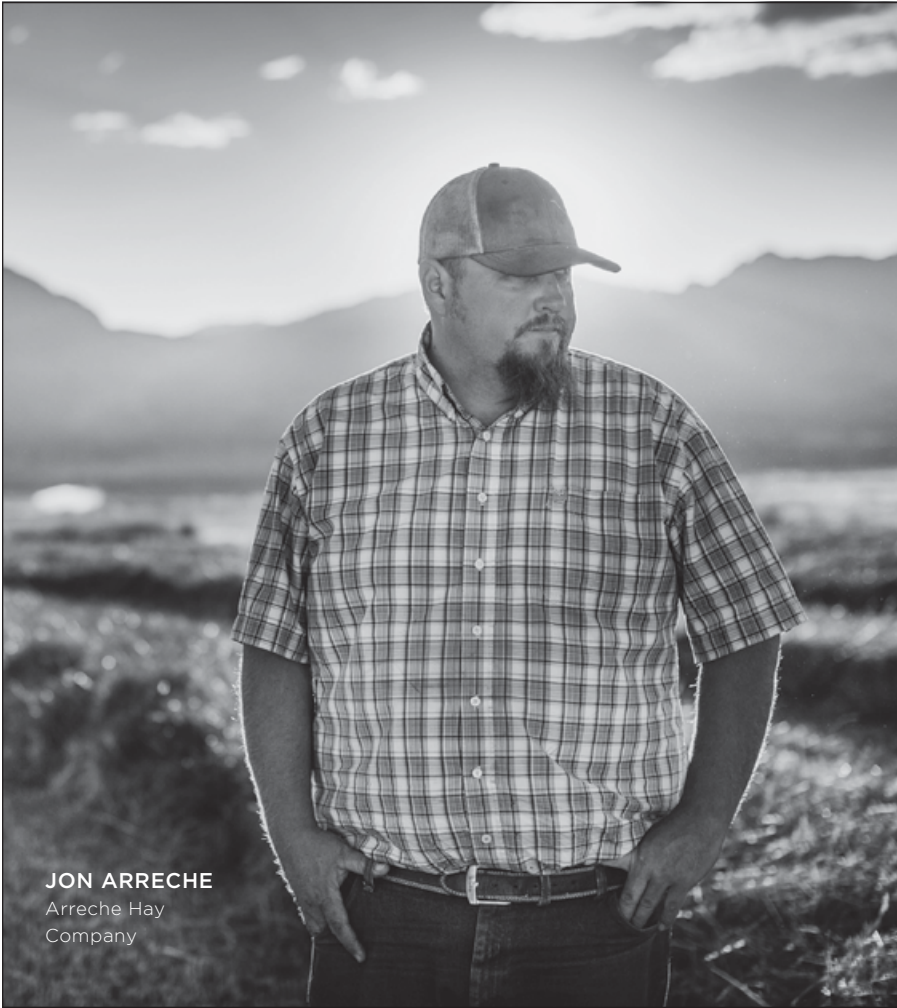
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## Nevada Cattlemen's Association

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Stockmanship & Stewardship/ Women in Ranching Education & Development Joint Program

— July 16 – 18, 2021 —

Elko County Fairgrounds  
Elko, Nevada

[stockmanshipandstewardship.org](http://stockmanshipandstewardship.org)

### 56th Annual Fallon All Breeds Bull Sale CONSIGNMENTS OPEN for NCA Members

— August 1, 2021 —

### NCBA Cattle Industry Convention & Trade Show

— August 10–12, 2021 —

Gaylord Opryland Resort &  
Convention Center  
Nashville, Tennessee

<https://convention.ncba.org>

### Public Lands Council Annual Meeting

— September 8 – 10, 2021 —

Seaside, Oregon  
[publiclandscouncil.org](http://publiclandscouncil.org)

### Nevada Cattlemen's Association Annual Convention & Trade Show

— December 9–11, 2021 —

Elko Convention Center | Elko, Nevada  
[nevadacattlemen.org](http://nevadacattlemen.org)



## PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

*Tom Barnes, President, Nevada Cattlemen's Association*

I hope everyone had a happy 4th of July celebrating the freedoms of this great nation. Freedoms that were the result of great sacrifice and hard work by so many in our nation's history. I find it discouraging that many in our country now take these freedoms we have grown accustomed to for granted. They seem to forget the life and opportunities afforded to all of us as citizens – the very reasons so many flock to our borders.

This country was built upon hard work, determination and the will to make tomorrow better than today. I hope that we will soon return to these principals. I believe it is the responsibility of each of us to work to ensure that our freedoms and the principals this country was founded upon are protected for future generations.

Walter Leberski was one those people who believed in the greatness of this country and he took it upon himself to make it better. Walt was a long-time friend of the livestock industry and believed in the mission of the NCA. He dedicated much of his time and efforts to protecting our industry right up to the time of his passing.

His dedicated support will continue as the NCA was the recipient of a very generous gift from Walt's estate. The primary focus of the endowment is education. I am pleased to announce that we will soon be able to offer another annual scholarship in the name of Walter Leberski. There were certain wishes and directives that he spelled out and we will honor those. We continue to appreciate all Walt has done for us.



July is also the time of year when

many Nevada cattle are sold for fall delivery. Given the widespread drought, feed costs and the current bottle neck in the meat processing segment, there is a lot of uncertainty in the market. I wish you all the best marketing your cattle.

## MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

*We would like to thank the following people for joining or renewing their membership with Nevada Cattlemen's Association between May 25 and June 24, 2021.*

*(New members are in bold.)*

- Battle Creek Ranch, Greg & Mary Ann Foster
- High Country Ranches, Robert Beck
- Jorgensen Charolais, Fred Jorgensen
- S & L Trailers, Davy Stix
- Synergy Resource Solutions, Inc., Jack Alexander



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# The Beef Industry Believes in BQA and So Should You!

By Jesse Fulton M.S.,

Nebraska Beef Extension Educator & Director of Nebraska Beef Quality Assurance; University of Nebraska – Lincoln

Greetings beef producers. To continue building on previous Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) related articles, I want to talk about how the beef industry is making moves to use BQA as the gold standard of animal welfare, and how that is good news for you. Consumers care about the welfare of food animals whose product may eventually end up on their table. This leads consumers to ask questions about how their food is raised, in this instance, beef. In order to provide consumers with answers, many restaurants, food service, and retailers adopt and implement animal welfare programs. One such instance this has occurred is the BQA certification requirement set forth by most of the major beef packers. For example, Tyson requires 100% of the cattle they purchase to come from a BQA certified feedyard. Cargill requires 90%. Both of these beef packers also require transporters who haul cattle to their plants to be BQA transportation (BQAT) certified. Other beef packers have similar requirements.

Another example of how the beef industry is buying into the BQA program, is through adopting the BQA program in the industry's sustainability efforts. Sustainability has been the talk of the beef industry for several years now. Many

organizations have or are releasing sustainability goals or implementing sustainability programs. Others are participating in sustainability initiatives such as the U.S. Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (USRSB). You may wonder how does this relate to BQA? Well, to be straight forward, the USRSB has adopted that participation in BQA program meets the animal health and welfare metric of the initiative.

So, why should this matter to you? With the adoption of BQA across the industry as the animal welfare gold standard program, it means producers will not need to worry about implementing additional animal welfare programs on their operations in order to market their cattle. What do I mean by this? Think if every food service, restaurant, or retailer had their own animal welfare program. An animal welfare program created by someone who has never been a part of a cattle operation or worse, stepped foot on one. Producers would find themselves working to adopt an animal welfare program on their operations that may have unrealistic expectations in order to market their cattle. The BQA program comes

— Continued on page 6 —

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Beef Industry Believes in BQA: Continued from page 5

from recommended guidelines developed by cattle producers, veterinarians, academic representatives, and other animal welfare experts, that is backed by industry related research.

While the terrible arctic temperatures and blizzarding weather experienced back in February took a toll on the psyche of farmers and ranchers, the articles and pictures from around the country of calves in folks' homes and truck cabs showed the dedication of our industry to animal welfare. However, those positive feelings consumers felt in that moment subside, and are replaced with a call to action to provide more objective measurement of animal welfare improvements. Animal welfare is a leading discussion topic for the beef supply chain. Companies are either already implementing or having the discussion of implementing some sort of animal welfare program within their business model.

The good news for beef producers is, we have done a great job highlighting the

leading industry program that is proven to improve animal welfare across the U.S. beef industry for more than three decades, and how this program should be used as the measuring tool of the industry's progress. It is clear that as the goals and targets are discussed in these different venues, there is a recognition that trusted science-based training programs like BQA are the only real feasible approach to objective improvements to animal welfare.

While others setting goals for our industry who are not directly involved in animal production should make you nervous, the bright spot is, if they can stay focused on programs like BQA, it will provide the needed data to show marked improvement in animal welfare across the U.S. It also benefits beef producers who are already implementing BQA best management practices on their operations.

Join your fellow producers and help the industry by becoming BQA certified and implementing BQA practices on your operation today!



Foot note: This article is reprinted with permission from the author. Nevada Cattlemen's Association recommends that you and your ranch crew become BQA certified or get re-certified at <https://www.bqa.org> An in-person BQA training and certification session is scheduled to be held in conjunction with the Stockman ship and Stewardship demonstrations at the Elko County Fairgrounds July 16 and 17. More information and registration information for that program can be found at <https://www.stockmanshipandstewardship.org/> The two-day event is coordinated by Women In Ranching Educational and Development (WIRED), Nevada and National Cattlemen, Nevada Beef Council, Merc Animal Health, National Cattlemen's Beef Association, Nevada Cattlemen's Association and University of Nevada Cooperative Extension.

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# Women in Ranching Education & Development, Stockmanship & Stewardship, Beef Quality Assurance to Address the Needs in an Ever-Changing Beef Industry

*By Melinda Sarman Nevada CattleWomen Inc, President*

This symposium will be held in Elko, NV on July 16-17. This two-day event is hosted by Nevada CattleWomen, American National CattleWomen, National Cattlemen's Beef Association, Nevada Cattlemen Association's, Nevada Beef Check Off, and The University of Nevada, Reno Beginning Farmers and Rancher Development Program.

The symposium is open to women and men engaged in ranching or other pursuits within the beef industry. This symposium has been tailored for people new to the beef industry as well as seasoned pros. Events include: Hitting the Books, the Tools You Need for Running Your Business; Importance of Information Management Software; Chute Side Mannerisms, and Give it Your Best Shot; Cattle Nutrition, Trace Minerals & Their Effects on Reproduction, Immunity & Your Bottom Line, along with Beef Carcass Grading and Fabrication; Low Stress Handling for Cattle by Horseback and with Livestock Herding Dogs. All break-out sessions are building to the main focus which is the Beef Quality Assurance Certification Test at the end of this event. The goal is to have people trained in the latest livestock practices that can be implemented back at the ranch. In an ever-changing world the more men and women BQA Certified means a more educated and informed agriculture produced to meet the needs of today's consumer.

Several years ago, The American National CattleWomen developed a program, after listening to members, and a target training was developed by industry leaders and WIRED was born; Women in Ranching Development and Education. WIRED can be used to help women in many cases. For example, some women may have retired from one career and want to get back to the ranch but are not sure of new practices and technology. Or in other cases there may be a death of a spouse, where management of the ranch was done by a team and now is the sole responsibility of one. Years ago, for some women the only answers were to sell the family ranch. They just did not have the support they needed to stay in business. New numbers show that women in agriculture are on the rise. According to a United States Department of Agriculture Report (USDA), the number of farms and ranches operated by women has more than doubled since 1978. Today, more than 300,000 women serve as the principal operators on 62.7 million acres in the

United States, producing some \$12.9 billion in farm products.

Not surprising, many of the real-life women behind the USDA numbers, have ties to the land going back generations. These women have an independent nature and a strong set of ethics and values based on that background. I know women from across the state who are planning on attending this event. Many women have been ranching in Nevada for several generations.

The presenters will be coming from across the United States and some from Nevada. NCBA will be having Curt Pate, Dr. Ron Gill, Dr. Dean Fish and Ron Torell, (NV BQA Coordinator) to present for low stress cattle handling and herd health. The financial session will be presented by Kelly Barnes, from American AgCredit and from USDA, FSA Claire Kehoe and Micki Wines. Tim Davis from Midwest MicoSystem will present software systems. Dr. Don Goodman from Multimin USA, will present on trace minerals for cattle nutrition. Moly Manufacturing will have a livestock chute for everyone to see and use then Gene Dubes will be there to answer all your questions. Dr. Lindsay Chichester along with Charlie Mori both with UNR Extension will be showing the new Mobile Processing Trailer and the benefits it can have on your home-grown beef program. Our friends from Merck, Alltech, Moly Manufacturing, Multimin and Datamars are part of our team of sponsors that support the men and women in production agriculture. For more information visit [stockmanshipandstewardship.org](http://stockmanshipandstewardship.org)

For this combined event, our goal was to make it easy to register. The registration link will be available on the web site for American National Cattlewomen at [ancw.org](http://ancw.org) or [stockmanshipandstewardship.org](http://stockmanshipandstewardship.org). If you have any questions don't hesitate to call me at 775-385-3619 and I will be happy to pass on more information.

The 2021 Cattle Industry Summer business meeting and Annual Convention will be August 8-12 in Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center, Nashville, TN. This event is for anyone in the cattle or agriculture business. The 2021 event will be one of the largest on record. This convention will have Cattlewomen and Cattlemen from across the country. Event organizers expect to have over 9,000 people attend this convention. The trade show will be truly unbelievable with over seven acres of agriculture booths for livestock production and business management. The businesses at this convention will help make every animal and acre on a ranch more profitable. These meetings are educational, hands-on workshops from industry leaders. More information can be found at [ancw.org](http://ancw.org) or [ncba.org](http://ncba.org). If you have any questions, please give me a call.

My last topic is the Nevada CattleWomen fundraiser for 2021. Thanks to our friends at Smith Valley Garage, NVCW is able to raffle off a Kubota Four Wheel Drive Gasoline Utility Vehicle! A maximum of 200 tickets will be sold for the Kubota Four Wheel Drive Gasoline Utility Vehicle RTV-XG850 Sidekick at \$100/ticket. The drawing will be held August 1, 2021. Need not be present to win. Must be 21 years of age to purchase a ticket. Get your tickets now before they are sold out – only 200 tickets sold. Contact your NVCW Executive Board for tickets: Maddie Bowers (775) 388-3259; Ana Dagenhart (775) 790-5892; Staci Emm (775) 312-0424; Keri Pommerening (775) 721-4888; Erin Costa (775) 720-3760; or myself Melinda Sarman (775) 385-3619

Until next time,

Melinda Sarman Nevada CattleWomen Inc, President

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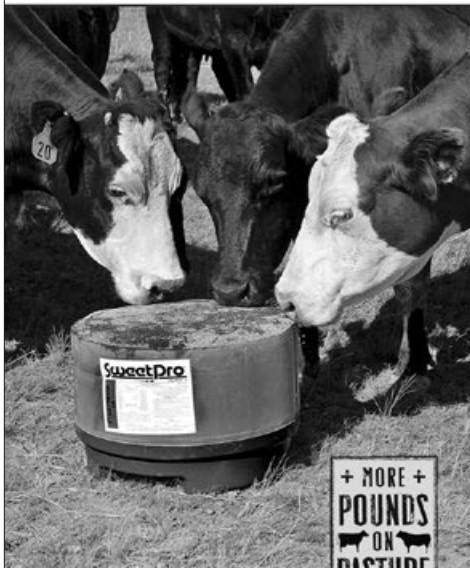
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# The BLM and USFS Seek Nominations to Fill Vacancies on National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board

GRAND JUNCTION, Colo. — The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) are seeking nominations to fill three positions on the National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board. The Board plays an important role in the efforts of both agencies to be good neighbors in states where the BLM and USFS oversee wild free-roaming horses and burros. The Board advises the agencies on the protection and management of wild free-roaming horses and burros on public lands administered by those agencies.

This call for nominations is for the positions that represent public interest (with special knowledge of natural resource management), veterinary medicine and wild horse and burro advocacy, which will become vacant on September 20, 2021.

The National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board is comprised of nine members who represent a range of interests. Individuals qualify to serve on the Board because of their education, training, or experience that enables them to give informed and objective advice regarding the interest they represent. Successful nominees will demonstrate experience or knowledge of the area of their expertise and a commitment to collaborate in seeking solutions to resource management issues.

Board members typically meet twice annually; however, additional meetings may be called when necessary. Members serve a three-year term without salary, though members are reimbursed for approved travel and per diem expenses related to their activities on the board.

Any individual or organization may nominate one or more persons to serve on the Board; interested parties may also nominate themselves. Current federal and state government employees are not eligible to serve on the Board.

Interested parties should submit an application packet that includes a resume and nomination letter. The following information should also be provided as part of the application packet:

- The nominee's first, middle, and last name
- Position(s) for which the nominee wants to be considered
- Business and home addresses and phone numbers
- E-mail address
- Present occupation/title and employer
- Education (colleges, degrees, major field(s) of study)

- Career highlights (significant related experience, civic and professional activities, elected offices, including prior advisory committee experience or career achievements related to the interest to be represented)
- Relevant education, training, and experience
- Experience or knowledge of wild horse and burro management
- Experience or knowledge of horses or burros (equine health, training, and management).
- Experience in working with disparate groups to achieve collaborative solutions
- Identification of any BLM permits, leases, or licenses held by nominee or employer
- Indication of whether the nominee is a federally registered lobbyist
- Explanation of interest in serving on the Board
- Reference letter(s) from special interests or organizations the nominee desires to represent. References may include, but are not limited to, business associates, friends, co-workers, and local, state and/or federal government representatives or elected officials. All nominations must include at least one letter of reference

Submit nominations by e-mail to Dorothea Boothe, Wild Horse and Burro Program Coordinator, at [dboothe@blm.gov](mailto:dboothe@blm.gov). To send by U.S. Postal Service, mail to the National Wild Horse and Burro Program, U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Attn: Dorothea Boothe, HQ-260; 9828 N. 31st Avenue; Phoenix, Arizona 85051. To send by FedEx or UPS, please mail to the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Wild Horse and Burro Division, Attn: Dorothea Boothe; 9828 N. 31st Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona 85051. For questions, Ms. Boothe can also be reached by phone at (602) 906-5543 or at the email address listed above.

Nominations must be received no later than 30 days after the notice has been published in the Federal Register or postmarked by the same date. The notice will appear in the June 24, 2021 edition of the Federal Register. For more information on the National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board, visit the BLM website at [BLM.gov/WHB/Advisory-Board](http://BLM.gov/WHB/Advisory-Board).





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# PLC Renews Call for Wild Horse Management

WASHINGTON (June 4, 2021) — Today, the Public Lands Council (PLC) renewed the call for responsible, proactive management of horses and burros managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Recent activist efforts to undermine the truth about overpopulated rangelands seek to exploit political transitions and undermine progress that has been made toward improved management of wild horse and burro populations on federal lands in the West.

The recent flurry of misinformation and inflammatory rhetoric is simply an attempt to hide the truth — there are too many horses and burros on the land, and ecosystems, wildlife, and multiple uses pay the price.

PLC remains committed to protecting rangelands, ensuring that the diverse and plentiful natural resources we love remain healthy. This means that horse and burro populations must be managed and on-range populations of horses must be reduced. This means making hard choices, choices that those who are truly dedicated to a sustainable future are willing to make. Public lands ranchers, working together with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and a coalition of animal advocate groups — know that the only way to reach sustainable herd populations, restore rangelands, and prevent future damage is to implement a comprehensive strategy that includes gathers, fertility control, adoptions, and expanded off-range holding.

“In order to sequester carbon out of the atmosphere, rangelands need to be healthy. In order to mitigate the risk of catastrophic wildfire, rangelands need to be healthy. In order to support inspiring natural landscapes and thriving native wildlife populations, rangelands need to be healthy. We cannot have healthy rangelands without the active management of wild horse populations and reduced on-range populations,” said Public Lands Council Executive Director Kaitlynn Glover. “The conflict here is not between horses and cattle — the conflict is between overpopulated and under-managed horse herds and everything else that wants to live on that range. Overpopulated herds create a monoculture, in which many don’t survive and nothing thrives. PLC will continue to support an informed management strategy from BLM that draws on generations of experience from those who manage these landscapes and see the destructive impact of horse overpopulation firsthand.”

## More Facts About Wild Horse and Burro Management:

### Fact: There are too many horses on the rangeland.

Based on environmental analysis that examines forage conditions, water availability and other factors on the landscape, the BLM set a nationwide “Appropriate Management Level” (AML) of approximately 26,690 horses. Conservative estimates from the BLM place the number of horses actually on the range at 95,114, which is more than three times the environmentally-driven stocking rate set by the BLM. Estimates from on-the-ground monitoring suggests the population far exceeds 100,000 horses.

### Fact: Overpopulated herds cause significant range degradation.

When there are too many animals in a given area, a few things happen: they consume more forage than they would under ideal grazing patterns, leaving little for other animals that also need to eat. These grazing patterns compromise the regrowth of native grasses, decrease the resilience of the landscape to invasive species encroachment, and decrease the health of soil and carbon storage poten-



tial. Overpopulated herds also need to become more aggressive in their search for water, having higher impacts on riparian areas and streambeds than a smaller herd would do.

Read more about damage from the Devil’s Garden herd, which was more than 7 times over the AML at <http://calag.ucanr.edu/archive/?article=ca.2016a0021>

Read more about the damaged rangelands and starving horses in Nevada at <http://www.nvnaco.org/wp-content/uploads/WHB-Factsandphotos.pdf>

### Fact: Horse populations are competing with themselves and wildlife, not livestock.

Horse herds have expanded to the point that in most cases, multiple use is not compatible with the lands managed as Herd Management Areas (HMAs). Horse populations have spiraled out of control, and where livestock grazing may have once been permitted on BLM lands, range conditions often preclude any livestock presence on or near an HMA. Grazing permits are authorized and managed based on range conditions, whereas horse herds do not have the same management triggers. In short, if the BLM sees range conditions deteriorating as a result of drought, overuse, or fire, they can remove livestock, but don’t have the same tools for horses.

### Fact: Ranchers are supportive of solutions that keep horses on the landscape — in reasonable numbers — and don’t advocate for complete elimination.

Livestock producers are deeply invested in reaching a sustainable balance that allows for healthy horse populations, healthy rangelands, wildlife biodiversity, and responsible multiple use. In collaboration with BLM, agriculture groups, conservationists and animal advocates, PLC helped develop the recommendation that 15,000-20,000 horses — or just 16 to 22 percent of the total population — be removed per year from 2020-2023, with that number falling to just 6 to 11 percent per year after fertility control measures start to take effect. This means that many horses would stay on the landscape, but in more sustainable numbers.

### Fact: The BLM is prohibited by law from sending horses and burros to slaughter.

The BLM is prohibited from sending horses to slaughter, selling horses to slaughter directly, or allowing horses to be adopted by an individual(s) who would send the horse to slaughter. In fact, the BLM’s adoption contract and bill of sale, signed by each individual who adopts a horse(s) stipulates that the buyer or adopter agrees to keep the horse and not send the animal to slaughter directly or through secondary sale of horses. The bottom line: BLM doesn’t slaughter horses, and does everything within its power to prevent private buyers from sending their horses, private property, to a sale barn or slaughter facility.

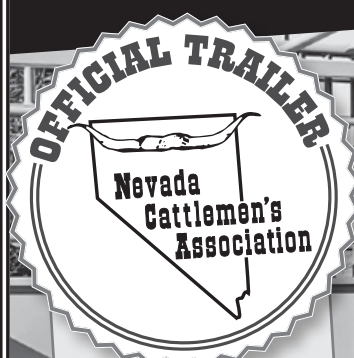
### Fact: Horses and burros have robust populations and are not at risk of extinction.

Horses and burros have robust populations nationwide, which is the root of the current management challenges. Horse herds typically grow 15-20 percent per year, and would be more likely to reproduce more quickly with the healthier rangelands that would result from smaller herd sizes at AML.

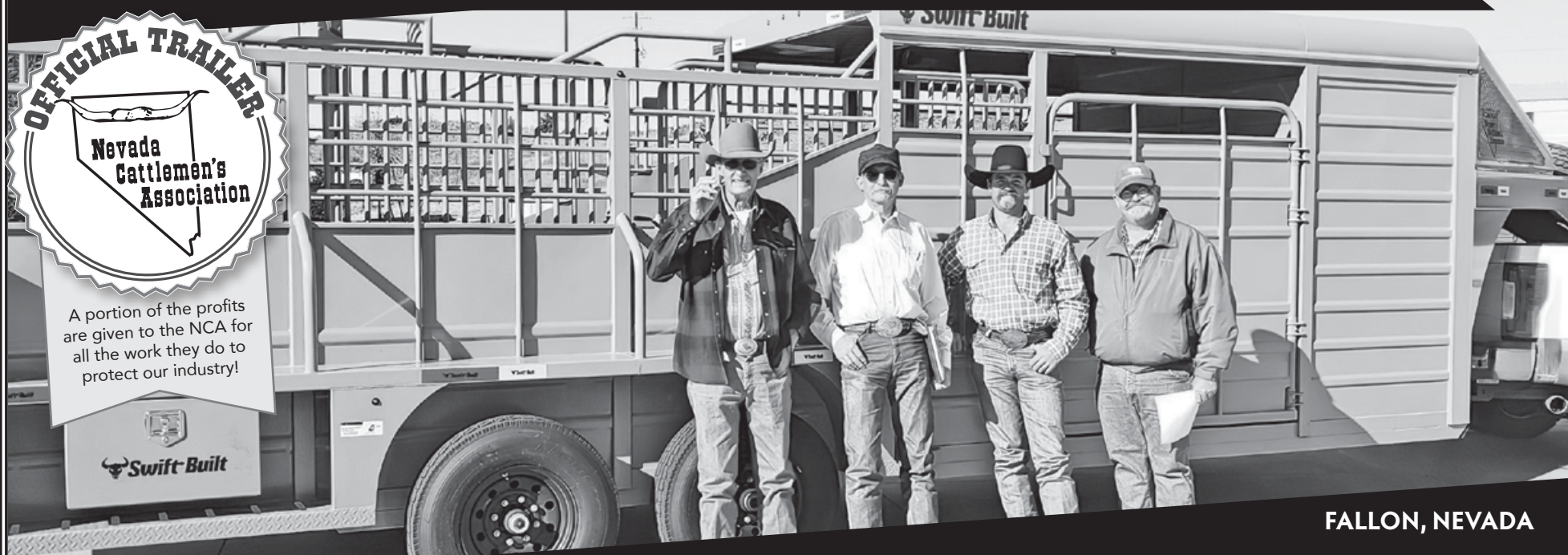


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# Wolves in Nevada, Are They Closer Than You Think?

By: Leanna Sarman, NCA Scholarship Recipient

I once read an article in my local newspaper *The Elko Daily Free Press* titled “Wolf Den Confirmed in Nevada,” Interested I decided to read. The article said that in February 2017 snowmobilers spotted two wolves in the Jarbidge Mountains. As I kept reading, I came across an interesting sentence. “Of course, today is April 1st, so an April Fool’s Day hoax is in order. There are no confirmed wolves in Elko County, and definitely no wolf dens.” The whole article is a ruse, but this ruse isn’t a complete tall tale.

Due to the near extinction, the wolves were put on the endangered species list in 1974. In 1995 and 1996, 66 Northwestern wolves known as the Alaskan timberwolves were then released in Yellowstone National Park. Since then the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service has been attempting to delist the gray wolves nationally ever since the animals had met the target recovery populations. The wolves’ population currently exceeded that recovery number by up to 300%. The main thing halting the delisting is the Center For Biological Diversity and similar animal rights groups that are constantly suing the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service so that no legislation can occur. Finally, in October 2020, the Trump administration delisted the gray wolves nationally, meaning the management of the animals would be up to the individual states. Many people are excited about this. Others say that the delisting was done not because of science, but solely to get more rural voters for the upcoming election.

Many people in Nevada are encouraging the introduction of the wolf. Wolves were once found in the Silver State but were removed shortly after European settlement, and now people want them back. The presence of wolves placed Yellow-

stone in better ecological condition. In the National Park, the wolves have greatly decreased the Elk population and how they grazed. This allowed for plants to flourish in places that they were overutilized. For this reason, wolves are described as a “keystone species,” whose presence is vital to maintaining the health, structure, and balance of ecosystems.

But, a healthy ecosystem will not be the case in Nevada. When I interviewed a biologist from the Nevada Department of Wildlife she said that there is not enough wildlife in Nevada to support the wolves, and because of that they will most likely not come. But, according to the International Wolf Center “... due to the close proximity of viable wolf populations in Idaho and Wyoming, wolves may move into Nevada.” Not to mention the fact that Wolves are confirmed in Oregon and Arizona. There are also confirmed sightings in Utah and a confirmed pack in California. Nevada is surrounded and so the arrival of wolves is unpreventable. With the lack of wildlife in Nevada, it is inevitable that the wolves would have to turn to other food resources in order to survive including pets and livestock.

Wolves around the nation have been proving detrimental to ranchers despite popular belief. According to Lines of Defense: Coping with Predators in the Rocky Mountain Region, conflicts between wolves and livestock are on the rise. Wolves reportedly killed 8,100 cattle in 2010. But, It is extremely difficult to get an accurate number of how much livestock is killed by wolves every year because many of the animal carcasses are never found. For every confirmed kill, there are probably eight more unconfirmed losses. These wolf killings are also very expensive. In

— Continued on next page —

## NCBA NEWS

### NCBA Thanks Reps. Johnson and Spanberger on Critical Processing Capacity Bill

WASHINGTON (June 25, 2021) — This week, the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA) secured the introduction of the Butcher Block Act in the U.S. House, a bipartisan bill that would provide critical funding to expand capacity for small, regional, and independent processing facilities. The bill is the latest in a long line of efforts by NCBA to create more opportunities for cattle producers to get their cattle processed and capture more of the beef dollar.

Introduced by Rep. Dusty Johnson (R-SD) and Rep. Abigail Spanberger (D-VA), the legislation would establish a stand-alone loan program through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to help processors expand capacity, improve marketing options for cattle producers, and encourage competitive markets and pricing for live cattle.

The legislation would also authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a grant program that would support a range of research and training efforts aimed at strengthening the workforce to meet labor needs, and helping processors become federally inspected.

“When there’s not enough capacity to process the current supply of live cattle, our producers lose leverage in the market. Expanding capacity is an essential component of the multifaceted effort to increase the opportunities for profitability for cattle producers, and we’ve been hearing for months that the two biggest obstacles standing in the way of that are lack of capital and lack of labor,” said NCBA President Jerry Bohn. “The Butcher Block Act addresses both of those

hurdles, and would go a long way to alleviating the bottleneck that is depressing live cattle prices for our farmers and ranchers. We thank Congressman Johnson and Congresswoman Spanberger for their bipartisan work on this urgent need.”

The supply of live cattle and the demand for U.S. beef are both strong, but a lack of processing capacity or “hook space” has stifled producer profitability and created unsustainable market dynamics. The urgency of this need for more hook space has been underscored by recent “black swan” market events, like the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2019 fire at a Tyson Foods plant in Holcomb, Kansas.

A recent study by Rabobank found that under the current dynamics of supply and demand, the industry could economically accommodate an additional 5,700 hooks per day of processing capacity, or processing roughly 1.5 million additional head per year. However, access to capital is a major barrier. The average start-up cost for a beef processing facility is roughly \$100,000 per hook, which means that someone trying to open a modest 25-head-per-day facility has to secure \$2.5 million in financing just to turn on the lights.

USDA recently announced the creation of two new grant funding opportunities for small, regional, and independent meat processors using funds that NCBA fought hard to secure during December 2020 negotiations over the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021. NCBA has also actively engaged with USDA to ensure that increased processing capacity is a component of the \$4 billion Build Back Better initiative.



# NCA SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT ESSAY

— Continued from page 14 —

Colorado it is estimated that it cost taxpayers more than \$9,000 per wolf in 2018 to investigate livestock depredations and remove problem wolves; and in 2010, ranchers and farmers reported spending \$185 million on non-lethal forms of wildlife control.

Unfortunately, that is not the only expense wolves produce. Cattle who have been living with wolves experience PTSD causing an increase in heart and blood pressure after being exposed to wolf scents and sightings. This causes weight loss, lower pregnancy rates, and sickness, increasing management by about \$250-\$300 per cow. Additionally, data is from collared wolves and cattle show a single wolf encountered the same cow 140 at less than 500 yards in a 137 day time period. The collars also show that cattle are spending less time in riparian areas than before wolves' arrival, and staying in the open flat areas. There, it is safer for the cattle but there is less food available. This causes the cattle to overuse these areas hurting the rangeland that the ranches, as well as many others, value greatly. The cattle also spend a lot of time bunched up in fence corners where the wolves often come to them. The collars on the wolves show the animals constantly circling the cattle as if they were hunting them. The owner of the ranch where the study was conducted says that he has several animals with wolf bites, and more crippled animals than before. This means that the animals constantly need expensive treatment and cannot be sold due to the injuries and vaccine treatments. The rancher also noticed a serious behavior change in his animals. The animals that were once often worked with dogs chased the dogs, seeing them as a threat. The animals are also extremely standoffish towards anyone who tries to work with them, even the young calves are in a constant fight mode and chase anyone who gets near them.

The rancher also reports seeing wolf tracks 50 feet from his home. And this is not an isolated incident. The collared wolf came within 500 yards of one of the houses on the ranch, where a family with young children live; 307 times in a single summer, putting the family in danger. This proves that wolves are interacting with people more and more and are losing their natural fear. This will prove to be extremely dangerous to anyone who lives near the wolf habitat.

Wolves will also prove to be detrimental to Nevada's wildlife and rangeland health. An introduction of any animal to an ecosystem causes severe damage to the area and the animals who live in it. The Battle Born State does not have the

wildlife to support wolves, especially in large numbers. Due to this, wolves will not only over hunt their natural prey but, prey on other animals such as domestic cattle, and sheep, feral horses, house pets, and the already threatened sage grouse. Wolves' natural prey consists of many of Nevada's rangeland grazers and a wolf population will lead them to be overhunted. The loss of the grazers will throw the rangeland out of balance and the land will become greatly overgrown. This overgrowth will then dry out during the scorching hot summers and become a fire danger as we have never seen before. Nevada is the driest state in the United States and often sees numerous wildfires every summer. In 2019 alone there were 46,706 wildfires in Nevada burning 4.6 million acres. But, with the increase of fires larger and more frequent wildfires will burn every year. These fires will then allow the invasive cheatgrass and other invasive species to completely take over the rangeland that was once flourishing with native plants.

Although the overgrowth on the rangeland could be combated by allowing more livestock grazing, it will likely be refused. Due to the high possibility of protection of wolf habitat under the Endangered Species Act at the state level. In addition, the sage grouse and other animals will be threatened or even endangered from the overhunting of the wolves, causing further regulations on the land. But, unfortunately, people will still find a way to blame the rancher. Cattle are often seen as a threat to sage grouse by many people. So, even though the cattle actually protect the sage grouse from predators and will lower the threat of habitat destruction from wildfires, and overall improve the rangeland with responsible grazing, people will not allow cattle to graze. This will be detrimental for the small-time Nevada cattle rancher. This is because Nevada is over 85% public land and ranchers buy grazing permits to graze their animals on public lands. Many ranchers in Nevada rely on these permits to feed their animals. The restricted grazing permits with the additions of the other burdens ranchers suffer the consequences of introducing large predators to ecosystems that have adapted to function without them.

It is important that producers in Nevada learn about all the ways their business and livelihoods will likely be affected by this upcoming nationwide hot topic. So we can be better prepared and get the conversation started with lawmakers and the general population so everyone can be better informed of the issue from all sides so we can do what is best for our state's wildlife, rangeland, and livestock producers.

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# The Monopoly in the Beef Packing Industry

By: Mattie Merritt

I think we can all agree that not much good has come out of the current coronavirus pandemic, but perhaps one good outcome is the exposure of the monopoly in the meatpacking industry in the United States. In 2020, reports and stories circled the national news and social media platforms, exposing an industry issue that has been buried for decades. Even President Trump addressed the need for exposure and change. Turns out, the meat packing industry is controlled by four major corporations who have been running the show for a hundred years. Millions of Americans, including myself, were shocked to find out of the current corruption that commercial producers and ranchers were dealing with. After researching some history and digging up truths, my curiosity led me to contact a local rancher to see his perspective on the meatpacking industry issues. What was historically a natural progression of progress and growth has turned into a controlling monopoly of greed and power.

In the early 1900's two urban stockyards and processing plants - Omaha and Chicago - dominated the commercial meat market. Back then, the Big Four meat processing plants were Armour, Swift, Cudahy and Wilson. They controlled 40% of the fresh beef trade. Cattle were transported to these feedlots, then processed and sent out to butcher shops around the country, but not the way meat is seen in grocery stores today. Sides of beef were sold to local butcher shops who then sold cuts of meat to customers. The government stepped in in the 1940's to break up the monopoly of the Big Four and from that intervention a new Big Four was formed. It wasn't until the 1960's when most homes had refrigerators and freezers that "boxed beef" in clear packaging was sold in grocery stores, thanks to the innovation of IBP, or Iowa Beef Packers. (Ganzel, 2007) From then on, meat was processed and packaged at packing plants and shipped out fresh or frozen through the newly expanded highway system, allowing boxed beef to be transported by truck as opposed to rail.

According to one 2013 source, 85% of all US beef is still produced by four producers. The Big Four, as they're still known by, are underregulated and over-protected by the government. After the Big Four was exposed to the public about their strategies that are forcing ranchers to sell the cattle under market value, the lawsuits broke out in an attempt to get these companies split up. Tyson Foods, JBS, Cargill, and National Beef control most of the beef packing market and dictate prices all the way down to the rancher. Due to the control that the Big Four has on the processing and packing of beef in the United States, ranchers are forced to use these companies because there are no other alternatives. After the cattle are sold to one of the companies associated with the Big Four, the prices are heavily increased once the meat is sold in stores. This results in a giant profit margin for the Big Four, while cattle producers barely break even. Ranchers are attempting to hold their cattle back and get them sold locally, but there comes a point when the cattle must be sold in order to still have valuable meat. Local packing plants

would not be able to accommodate the mass processing of cattle as well as their current clientele. An online reference states, "...smaller local custom plants are busier than ever, but are carrying on their business with integrity." (Stadheim, 2020). Local packing businesses are doing their best to meet the needs of all people, while still keeping their prices fair.

Even though the Big Four seems so far removed from what goes on in Nevada, the effects of this monopoly reach rural Nevada ranchers. To get the inside scoop, I interviewed Mike Hastie, the owner and operator of the Twist Ranch in Big Smoky Valley, Nevada, to ask him just how far the Big Four's reach goes. Mike states, "The packers have a huge profit margin with little to no risk involved where the rancher or stocker has a very narrow profit margin with the big risk of losses due to death of calves, weather (drought), and high feed or pasture cost. The packers are under scrutiny but nothing has been done to remedy it to this point." (M.Hastie, March 9, 2021, email interview). Commercial and local ranchers are dealing with tight budgets to begin with and then not making money from the sales of their feeder cows due to the control from the packing industry puts them in more of a bind. In theory, when the supply of a resource goes up, the retail value should go down. The packing industry has reversed this and paid less for a resource that is in demand so they can charge more to increase their profit. After the exposure of the corruption that has been occurring, ranchers and stockers are encouraging citizens to buy their beef locally, instead of supporting the Big Four. While this helps in the short-term, legal action will be required to make long-term changes that will positively affect the industry. Mike is hopeful that the current legislation known as the Cattle Market Transparency Act of 2021, will hold packing plants more accountable for fair prices and fix the current monopoly in the meatpacking industry. The Cattle Market Transparency Act of 2021 was developed on March 2 of this year by Deb Fischer and Ron Wyden. This bill aims to have the meatpacking industry held accountable for the prices they pay and charge, as well as having mandated requirements through the USDA. Ranchers and commercial producers have come up with this proposal to combat the monopoly that the meatpackers have formed.

In closing, the exposure of the meat packing plant monopoly has developed an uproar in citizens across the country, including myself. For many years, this issue has been buried, and not brought to the attention of the consumer. The Big Four have taken over the United States packing plants, and are in total control. While industry progress and growth over the last 100 years spurred the conception of the current meat packing system in the US, government regulation and controls need to be put in place to prevent the collapse of the US beef producer. Mike and other ranchers are hopeful that this new legislation will be the beginning of change that's been a long time coming.

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