

Cattle Ranching a Green Profession, Survey Finds

America's Cattle Farmers and Ranchers Highlight 40 Ways They Protect the Environment in Honor of the 40th Anniversary of Earth Day

DENVER, April 15 /PRNewswire/ -- When your office is the great outdoors and your commute is on horseback, preserving and protecting the Earth is part of the job description. This Earth Day, America's 1 million cattle farmers and ranchers are being recognized as having one of the greenest jobs.

In a new national survey of American beef eaters, cattle ranchers and farmers were selected as the third greenest profession from a diverse list of jobs, with park rangers topping the list. This survey was conducted by IPSOS Public Affairs for The Beef Checkoff Program.

Generations of Earth Day Values

It's no surprise to Gary Teague, a Colo. cattle rancher and environmentalist: "We work every day to teach our three children what it means to be truly passionate about the land and the animals.

Preserving natural resources is how we make our living and how we secure our family business for our children and grandchildren."

Two-thirds of US cattle farms and ranches have been in the same family for two generations or more (Aspen Media & Market Research, 2008). American cattle farmers and ranchers have embraced the values of Earth Day for generations, and Americans recognize that commitment. Eighty-six percent of Americans surveyed think cattle farmers and ranchers are committed to environmental preservation.

"Every day is Earth Day on our ranch - it's the right thing to do and our ability to keep feeding Americans depends on it," said Teague. "As short-term stewards of this land, it's our job to ensure it's left in better shape for the next generation."

Many Shades of Green

In honor of Earth Day's 40th anniversary, cattle ranchers are celebrating [40 different ways](#) raising cattle can contribute to environmental sustainability. Cattle are raised in every state in the nation, in nearly every type of climate and geography. While the practices may vary from state to state or region to region, the goal is the same: leave the land in better shape for the next generation.

Among the 40 are practices that prevent erosion, maintain clean waterways, guard wildlife or recycle resources, while providing a flavorful source of protein for the world. The survey found that Americans value these practices as important ways to protect the environment. Actions seen as very important by more than half of Americans surveyed include things common to cattlemen like planting crops and grasses to control erosion, rotating cattle pastures to prevent overgrazing and planting trees to provide windbreaks and shelter.

Other interesting survey stats:

- Park rangers were the clear leader when consumers were asked to choose green professions. However, there was no statically significant difference between the second greenest profession, dietitians, and cattle ranchers and farmers.
- **An overwhelming majority of respondents (86%) believe farmers and ranchers are committed to protecting and preserving land and natural resources.**
- **Most Americans' impressions of farms and ranches are not from personal experience.** Only 22% of people surveyed get their impressions about cattle ranches from first-hand experience with a rancher. Of almost equal proportion, 21% get their impressions from newspapers and magazine articles and 30% from TV shows and movies about the American West.

Consumers aren't the only ones who find the actions of farmers and ranchers critical to protecting our environment. For example, a group of sportsmen, conservation and outdoor interests, including The Nature Conservancy, is collaborating on a new "[Thank a Rancher](#)" campaign in Wyoming that recognizes the importance of agriculture and ranching in maintaining our open spaces and conserving wildlife habitat.

For more information on how beef is produced in the U.S., visit [ExploreBeef.org](#).

The Beef Checkoff Program was established as part of the 1985 Farm Bill. The Checkoff assesses \$1 per head on the sale of live domestic and imported cattle, in addition to a comparable assessment on imported beef and beef products. States retain up to 50 cents on the dollar and forward the other 50 cents per head to the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board, which administers the national Checkoff program, subject to USDA approval.

Consumer-focused and producer-directed, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association and its state beef council partners are the marketing organization for the largest segment of the food and fiber industry.