

STRONG COMMUNITIES



CREATING STRONG COMMUNITIES

Cattlemen have a vested interest in helping create strong, vibrant communities that sustain camaraderie for their families, good employees to help run their businesses and services for their farms and ranches. The relationship between the farmers and ranchers who raise beef and their communities is demonstrated in numerous ways, including:

- Keeping family values alive
- Contributing to the local and national economy
- Contributing to churches, charities and civic organizations
- Feeding the hungry
- Mentoring future generations



WHERE WE ARE TODAY

When the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) was formed in the 1860s by President Abraham Lincoln, one-half of the population lived in an area considered to be rural. By 2000, that percentage had dropped to 17.3 percent.¹ Landowners who live far from their land, aging farmers and consolidating operations are changing the make-up of rural communities. This transition means the dedication of cattlemen to their communities is more vital than ever. Farmers and ranchers have historically helped shape rural America and will help define the future of these same communities by maintaining strong family ties, giving back through time and money, providing leadership and spurring economic growth.

Keeping Family Values Alive

Today, 97 percent of beef farms or ranches are family-owned; 54 percent of these farms and ranches have been in the same family for three generations or more.² In addition, 64 percent hope to continue the tradition by passing down their farm or ranch to their children.³ By keeping farms and ranches within the family for many generations, cattlemen have also been able to keep all-American family values alive and well.

In the summer of 2010, a survey of U.S. cattlemen was conducted to help create a profile of the people who raise cattle and their values, as well as to learn more about the U.S. cattlemen's influence on local, national and even global communities.²

The survey found 83 percent of farmers and ranchers are married with an average of at least two children and 60 percent of cattlemen have grandchildren. Education is also important to cattle farmers and ranchers. More than 60 percent of cattlemen have education beyond high school, with 35 percent holding an undergraduate

Committed to the Community

70 percent of cattlemen say that it is very important to invest in local communities, including creating jobs.

Interactive

[Click here to view a short video on how cattlemen create strong communities.](#)

degree or higher. Nearly one-fourth (24%) of cattlemen have served in the military, more than the national average of 14 percent. Farmers and ranchers also believe in the democratic process, with 94 percent voting in national, state and local elections compared to just 64 percent of the general population who vote. One-half of cattlemen have run for an elected office at the local, state or national level, with 81 percent of those elected for service.

Contributing to the National Economy

When viewed from a broader perspective, the beef industry directly and indirectly accounts for more than 1.4 million full-time jobs and contributes more than \$188 billion in output to the national economy.⁴ According to USDA, those who raise animals for meat were responsible for more than \$66 billion in added value to the U.S. economy in 2008, as measured by their contribution to the national output. While only 7 percent of U.S. beef was exported in 2009, it contributed more than \$2.8 billion to the U.S. export market.⁵



Contributing to Local Businesses and Jobs

Perhaps the most basic contribution farmers and ranchers make to their local communities is managing a business that relies on local services and often creates job opportunities. On average, beef operations provide jobs for more than two family members as well as two non-family members. Cattlemen also support other farmers in many cases by buying crops for cattle feed from other farms within 100 miles. Farmers and ranchers value their communities; seven in 10 specifically assign high importance to investing in local communities, including contributing to job creation.²

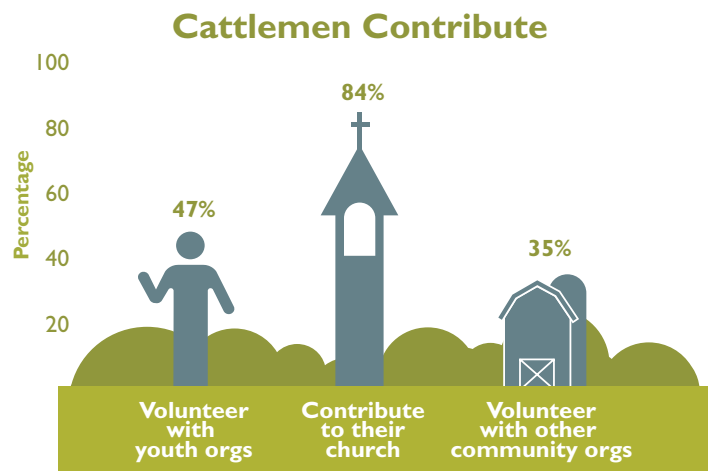
Farmers and ranchers not only raise food for a living, but they also make up the volunteer fire department, serve as the local mechanic, host school fieldtrips and much more. With the shift in population, there is a shift in the necessities of a small town. If farmers and ranchers leave rural America, the grocery stores, corner stores and other services will most likely go with them.

Dr. Dale Grotelueschen, DVM, senior veterinarian for Pfizer Animal Health, described the contribution of farmers and ranchers to rural communities in this way: “Having spent most of my life in beef-based communities, I have witnessed the critical support it provides to a vibrant rural economy...

It is all about the people.” Beyond supplying rural areas with jobs and an economic driver, farmers and ranchers volunteer time and donate funds to community programs and services.

Contributing to Churches, Charities and Civic Organizations

Cattlemen have strong commitments to faith-based organizations, charities and civic organizations. The Profile of U.S. Cattlemen Survey brings to life many of the contributions cattlemen make to their local communities:²



Source: Profile of U.S. Cattlemen, Aspen Media & Market Research, July 2010

- Farmers and ranchers volunteer. Nearly one-half (47%) volunteer with a youth organization compared with a national average of about 7 percent. About one-third donate their time to community civic organizations beyond youth groups. Local 4-H clubs and FFA (formerly the Future Farmers of America) chapters are among the most common organizations supported by cattlemen and their families. On average, cattlemen volunteer 11 hours each month to non-profit organizations or charitable causes.
- Faith matters to farmers and ranchers. Eighty-three percent belong to a church or religious organization and of these 84 percent contribute either time or resources to their church or another faith-based organization.
- Farmers and ranchers are not just generous with their time, but also contribute to charitable causes. About one-half of farmers and ranchers donate at least \$500 annually to local or national charities and nearly one-third donate at least \$1,000. This is in addition to the state and national cattle and beef groups they contribute to which, in turn, participate in national charitable events.

There are a number of examples of cattlemen working together on charitable causes across the country. The Governor’s Charity Steer Show in Iowa has raised more than \$1.7 million for Ronald McDonald House Charities since its inception. The Nebraska Cattlemen’s Ball, which began in 1998, is held at a cattle farm or ranch each year and provides an evening of entertainment for cattlemen, their families and the local community, while raising money for the University of Nebraska Medical Center’s Eppley Cancer Center. Ten percent of the funds raised stay within the community, benefiting local healthcare organizations. The ball has raised more than \$4.8 million since 1998 and is the state’s largest cancer fundraiser.

Feeding the Hungry

Cattlemen help feed a growing population, both by raising a nutrient-rich food for consumers globally and by helping feed the hungry in their own backyards. For example, Idaho and Washington formed the “Beef Counts” program to unite cattle farmers and ranchers and Agri Beef Co. to provide beef to families in need. High-quality protein sources are often difficult for food banks to acquire, yet the donation of one beef animal or the cash equivalent can supply approximately 1,600 servings of beef. So far, in Washington alone, the Beef Counts program has contributed \$75,000 worth of beef to the local food bank, Second Harvest, which translates to more than 10,000 family-size portions of beef, or 30,700 pounds of product. The donation reflects an annual \$50,000 contribution to Second Harvest from Agri Beef Co. and individual donations from cattle ranchers and feeders across Washington that have been collected since the program’s launch in October 2010. Learn more at www.BeefCounts.org.



Feeding America

For one-in-six Americans, hunger is a reality. Each farmer in the United States produces enough food and fiber to feed 155 people in the United States and abroad.

“ Beef is gold to us. ”

Kevin Seggelke, Food Bank of the Rockies

Similarly, Missouri farmers and ranchers led the program, “Farmers Care about Feeding Missouri,” aimed at filling Missouri’s food banks and pantries. They collected nearly 15,000 pounds of food to benefit families seeking food assistance. Missouri ranks sixth in the nation for food insecurity and is fifth in the nation when it comes to children experiencing hunger.

In February 2011, cattle farmers and ranchers worked with JBS USA to donate 16,000 pounds of beef to the Feeding America food banks throughout the state of Colorado. According to Kevin Seggelke, executive director of the Food Bank of the Rockies, who received the donation, “Beef is gold to us,” and helps nourish families in need with high-quality protein and essential nutrients. Hundreds of families and children throughout the country have benefited from the charitable contributions made by America’s cattlemen.

Mentoring Future Generations



As the age of farmers and ranchers in the beef industry climbs higher—the average age² of a cattle rancher is 61—investing in the development of the next generation increases in importance. While cattlemen already contribute time and funds to youth organizations such as FFA and 4-H, the industry also provides leadership development to younger farmers and ranchers, in essence building strong future business leaders and community members.

For example, the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA) runs the beef industry-sponsored Young Cattlemen’s Conference, which has helped develop future beef industry leaders for 30 years. More than 1,000 cattlemen and women have graduated from the program, designed to develop leadership qualities in young cattlemen and expose them to all aspects of the beef industry.

The Young Producer’s Council (YPC), established in 2008, focuses on farmers and ranchers under the age of 35 and helps foster leadership skills through continuing education and professional development activities.

“We want to create opportunities for our young members to grow in this business,” said Andy Groseta, past president of NCBA, about the YPC. “This group represents the future and it is important that we offer them avenues to gain a better understanding of our industry and their impact on its future.”

Resources such as the Livestock Learning Center, a philanthropic institution that promotes the future of the industry through research and education, and NCBA’s Cattlemen’s College, which helps cattlemen assess their farms and ranches and identify ways to become more efficient, also serve as tools to better inform future generations or cattlemen who are new to the beef industry about best practices.

Telling the Beef Story

The average American today is at least two generations removed from agriculture, meaning that future generations may not understand how food is raised or who raises it. Cattle farmers and ranchers funded the Masters of Beef Advocacy (MBA) program to meet the growing interest among consumers to know more about the beef community. Launched in 2009, the MBA program offers training that helps farmers and ranchers tell their story and effectively communicate with consumers about topics such as environmental stewardship, animal care and beef safety. Two years after its creation, more than 2,000 cattle farmers and ranchers from 47 states and Washington, D.C. have graduated and additional 1,700 plus cattle farmers and ranchers are currently enrolled.

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Farmers and ranchers have the ability to continue contributing to their communities by:

- Identifying more complete and consistent ways to quantify the beef industry's contribution to the community and the country's economic stability, helping to facilitate concrete data sharing and goal development in conjunction with long-range sustainability planning for the industry and its farmers and ranchers.
- Enhancing availability of educational sessions and information resources for future farmers and ranchers, using new technology to provide online trainings, information libraries and a network of resources.
- Encouraging farmers and ranchers to become educators within their field by taking steps such as hosting relevant Cattlemen's College sessions and identifying potential partnerships with higher education institutions.
- Reconnecting beef customers with the pasture-to-plate experience and more regularly engaging farmers and ranchers with their consumers.
- Becoming more engaged in official and organized efforts to support rural communities, such as those housed within USDA Rural Development, or local, county and state economic development entities.
- Fostering alliances and partnerships with like-minded, community-focused or religious organizations in order to better understand the relationship between the beef industry and its communities and to help ensure continued, positive contributions by the industry to community health.

Masters of Beef Advocacy

More than 2,000 cattle farmers and ranchers have graduated the MBA program.



STRONG COMMUNITIES REFERENCES

¹ 2004 Justin Smith Morrill Lecture – Purdue University

² Profile of U.S. Cattlemen, Aspen Media & Market Research, July 2010

³ Beef Producer Survey, Aspen Media & Market Research, December 2008

⁴ D. Otto, J.D. Lawrence, Economic Impact of the United States Beef Industry.

⁵ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service.
<http://www.ers.usda.gov/news/BSECoverage.htm>