

Economic Facts of Public Lands Grazing

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

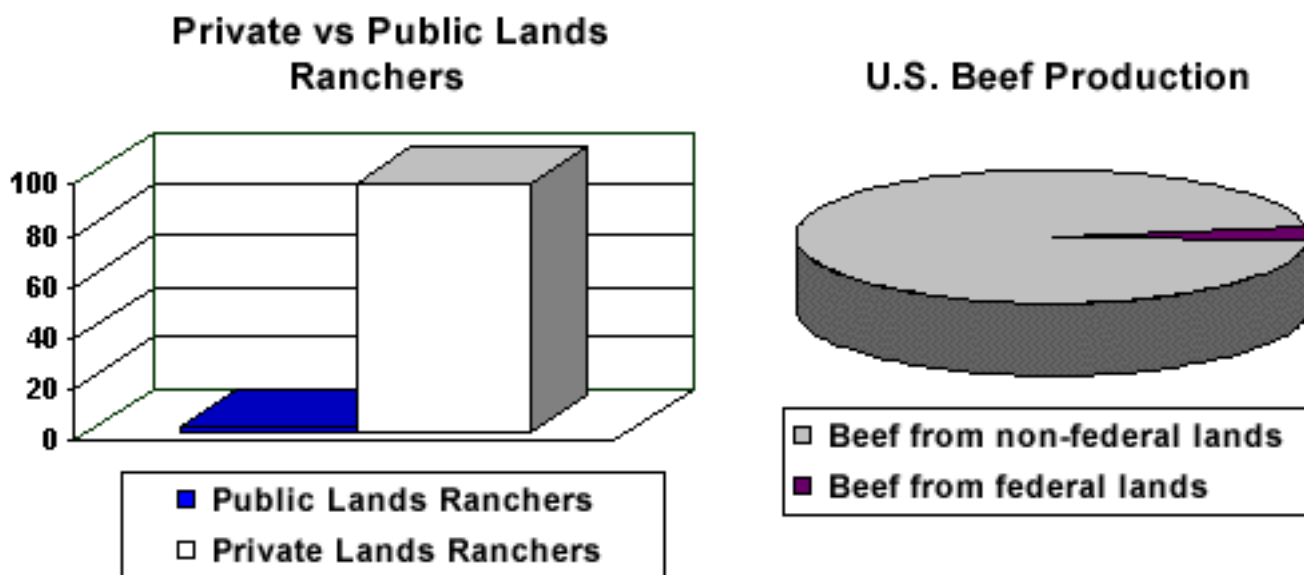
- Number of livestock producers with federal grazing permits: **27,000**. **2**
- Percentage of livestock producers with federal grazing permits in the United States: **3%**. **3**
- Percentage of livestock producers with federal grazing permits in eleven Western states: **22%**. **4**
- Number of livestock producers without federal grazing permits: **880,000**. **5**

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

- Fee to graze one cow and calf for one month (AUM) on federal public lands (2003): **\$1.43**. **6**
- Average fee per AUM on state lands in the West (excluding Texas) (1998): **\$12.30**. **7**
- Average fee per AUM on private lands in eleven Western states (1999): **\$11.10**. **8**

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

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



Federal grazing programs contribute very little to Western states' economies...

Aggregate Federal Grazing Statistics for Eleven Western States **11**

| | |
|--|--------|
| Federal grazing-dependent jobs | 17,989 |
| Federal grazing-dependent jobs as percentage of total employment | 0.06 |
| Income from federal grazing-dependent jobs as percentage of total job income | 0.04 |
| Days of normal job growth to replace all federal-dependent grazing jobs | 11 |
| Days of normal income growth to replace all federal-dependent grazing jobs | 6 |

- **Bureau of Leisure and Motorhomes** - October 2004: for the first time in the history of the agency, the Bureau of Land Management collected more revenue in recreational fees than annual grazing fees. This despite the fact that recreational fees are often collected through voluntary pay stations, while grazing fees are mandatory and enforced, and BLM does not charge fees for many recreational offerings on BLM lands. **13**
- In Nevada (the state with more federal land than any other outside of Alaska), federal public lands grazing provides 1,228 jobs. **12** By comparison, one casino in Las Vegas employs 37,000 people. **14**
- Alternative uses of federal public lands contribute much more income to local and regional economies than livestock grazing. In the Central Winter Ecosystem Management Area in the Kaibab Plateau, Arizona, dispersed recreation is worth \$200,000 annually to the local and regional economies; fuelwood is worth \$48,984; livestock grazing is worth \$45,988; and deer and turkey hunting is worth \$1,324,259. **15**

- As part of his research on public lands grazing economics, Dr. Thomas Powers produced [two tables of data](#) that are widely cited to refute the contention that public lands grazing is essential to western state economies.
-

1. The vast majority of "livestock producers" on public lands are beef growers.
2. Grazing permits for BLM and Forest Service allotments; includes sheep growers; accounts for permittees who operate on both BLM and Forest Service allotments. USDI-BLM, USDA-Forest Service. 1995. Rangeland Reform '94 Final Environmental Impact Statement. USDI-BLM. Washington, DC: 3; see also P. Rogers. Cash cows. San Jose Mercury News (Nov. 7, 1999): 2S (reporting 26,300 permittees on BLM and Forest Service allotments).
3. USDI-BLM, USDA-Forest Service. 1995. Rangeland Reform '94 Final Environmental Impact Statement. USDI-BLM. Washington, DC: 26.
4. USDI-BLM, USDA-Forest Service. 1995. Rangeland Reform '94 Final Environmental Impact Statement. USDI-BLM. Washington, DC: 26.
5. See USDI-BLM, USDA-Forest Service. 1995. Rangeland Reform '94 Final Environmental Impact Statement. USDI-BLM. Washington, DC: 26.
6. USDI-BLM. 2004. 2004 Federal Grazing Fee Announced (press release). BLM. Washington, DC. (Feb. 20, 2004).
7. USDA-National Agricultural Statistics Service. 1998. Agricultural graphics-17 state grazing fees adjusted AUM. USDA-NASS. Washington, DC. Available at <http://www.usda.gov/nass/aggraphics/graphics.htm>.
8. Rogers, P. Cash cows. San Jose Mercury News (Nov. 7, 1999): 2S.
9. USDI-BLM. 1992. Grazing fee review and evaluation: update of the 1986 final report. USDI-BLM. Washington, DC: 2.
10. Rogers, P. Cash cows. San Jose Mercury News (Nov. 7, 1999): 1S; Jacobs, L. 1992. THE WASTE OF THE WEST: PUBLIC LANDS RANCHING. Lynn Jacobs, P.O. Box 5784, Tucson, AZ: 354.
11. Power, T. 1996. LOST LANDSCAPES AND FAILED ECONOMIES: THE SEARCH FOR A VALUE OF PLACE. Island Press. Washington, DC: 184-185 (table 8-2).
12. Power, T. 1996. LOST LANDSCAPES AND FAILED ECONOMIES: THE SEARCH FOR A VALUE OF PLACE. Island Press. Washington, DC: 184 (table 8-2).
13. French, B. Rec fees surpass grazing for first time in BLM history. Billings Gazette (Oct. 7, 2004).
14. Greenhouse, S. Behind Las Vegas's glitter, heavy losses and layoffs. New York Times (Oct. 19, 2001).
15. Souder, J. 1997. How does livestock grazing fit into the larger societal uses of wildlands?, *in* PROC. SYMP. ON ENVIRONMENTAL, ECONOMIC, AND LEGAL ISSUES RELATED TO RANGELAND WATER DEVELOPMENTS. Arizona St. Univ. Tempe, AZ: 305.