



The Power of Leveraging Local and Federal Dollars to Strengthen Agricultural Land Easement Investments

Wyoming - FRPP Economic Research

Importance of Agriculture to the State

- The value of the agriculture sector output in Wyoming annually approaches or exceeds \$1 billion.¹ In 2009, the value of agricultural sector production equaled \$1.22 billion.
- In 2010, 11,000 farms and ranches were operating in Wyoming with a total land area of 30.2 million acres. Wyoming ranks 11th nationally in total land in farms and ranches.
- Wyoming ranks 1st in average size of farms and ranches. The average size of farms and ranches in Wyoming is 2,745 acres compared to 418 acres nationwide.
- The cattle industry is by far the largest component of Wyoming agriculture accounting for 64% of all cash receipts in 2010.
- Cattle also led the way in 2010 in terms of value of production at \$495.8 million. All livestock production was valued at \$625.5 million, up 24% from 2009.
- Hay is the leading crop in Wyoming in terms of value of production totaling \$216.0 million in 2010, but most is fed to livestock.

Importance of Agriculture to Sublette County

Value of agriculture in Sublette County 2010²

- Cash receipts from marketing \$34,143,000
- Cash receipts: livestock and products \$30,068,000
- Cash receipts: crops \$4,075,000

Overview of Sublette County³

- No. of farms 366 (statewide 11,069)
- Land in farms 599,300 acres (30.2 million statewide)
- Total public lands 2.57 million acres (35.7 million statewide)
- Sublette County is 15th in total agricultural production value among the 23 Wyoming counties.

¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, Wyoming Field Office. Wyoming 2011 Agricultural Statistics.

² Bureau of Economic Analysis 2012 CA45 Farm Income and Expenses

³ U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, Wyoming Field Office. Wyoming 2011 Agricultural Statistics.

Importance of Agriculture to the Community

- Sublette County has more than doubled in population over the last 20 years, and most of that growth has occurred in the last 10 years.⁴
- Population increases have not been concentrated in the largest population centers. In Sublette County, the population of the largest city (Pinedale) has increased, but the pace is slightly lower than the county as a whole.
- While most of the growth is the result of oil and gas drilling and production within the county, the number of farm proprietors in the county has also increased slightly. Farm proprietorship has increased from 235 in 2000 to 288 in 2009. While this may also be an indication that ranches are becoming smaller, it does show that it is an important component of attracting new people to the area.
- While the number of farm proprietors has increased over the last 10 years, cash receipts from livestock and products has decreased as a portion of total farm receipts. In Sublette County, livestock sales have consistently accounted for approximately 90% of total farm sales. While this accounts for less than 2% of the total output of \$1.4 billion in the county it is an integral part of the local communities. The agriculture base of the communities has remained constant during the last century and will hopefully remain after the oil and gas exploration and drilling have vacated the region.
- Farmers and ranchers spend money in the local economy and support local businesses. Total farm production expenses in Sublette County were \$27.3 million in 2007, or \$74,720 per farm. Expenses include things like feed, supplies and repairs, and hired labor.

Threats to Agriculture

- The American Farmland Trust has estimated that 2.6 million acres of prime ranchland in Wyoming could be converted to residential development by 2020.⁵ This study found that Sublette County was among the top 25 counties in the Rocky Mountain region in terms of potential for conversion of prime ranchland to residential development.
- More than 145,000 acres of ranchland in Sublette County changed hands between 1990 and 2001.⁶

Other Benefits

Out of economic necessity, most agricultural operations in the West cover large areas, and thus agriculture contributes substantially to maintaining open spaces on private ranch and farm lands.⁷

- Water
 - Healthy waterways depend on a healthy agriculture industry.⁸ Privately owned land covers 43 percent of Wyoming surface area, of which 98% is owned by agricultural landowners. Thus agricultural operators play an important role in supporting habitat.

⁴ Ecosystem Research Group. 2012. Greater Sage-Grouse/Grazing Economic Analysis. Prepared for Sublette County Commission, Wyoming and Wyoming Stock Growers Association. February 17, 2012.

⁵ American Farmland Trust. 2002. Strategic Ranchland in the Rocky Mountain West: Mapping Threats to Prime Ranchland in Seven Western States.

⁶ Travis, W.R., J. Hobson, and H.G. Schneider. 2002. Project Report: Ranchland Dynamics in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Center of the American West, University of Colorado, Boulder.

⁷ Taylor, D. 2003. The Role of Agriculture in Maintaining Open Spaces in Wyoming. University of Wyoming Open Spaces Publication.

⁸ Trout Unlimited. 2005. The Economic Value of Healthy Fisheries in Wyoming. Wyoming Water Project Report.

- Nearly 1/3 of Wyoming’s residents are anglers who spend over 90% of their fishing days in Wyoming.
- Angers spent approximately \$423 million in Wyoming in 2002. The sportfishing industry creates 3,500 jobs in the state.
- Wildlife
 - Sage Grouse
 - During Fiscal Year (FY) 2011, Wyoming NRCS applied for, and received \$52.2 million dollars in Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program funds.⁹ Of the \$52.2 million, \$40.2 million was specifically allocated to Wyoming in support of the NRCS Sage-Grouse Initiative. Ultimately, these funds will be used to permanently conserve over 88,000 acres of Wyoming working ranches, which also play host to a large population of sage-grouse within Wyoming’s core areas.
- Recreation & Tourism
 - Travel spending by all domestic and international visitors in Wyoming was approximately \$2.9 billion in 2011.¹⁰ This is equivalent to approximately \$8.1 million dollars per day.
 - During 2011, travel spending in Wyoming directly supported nearly 30,000 jobs with earnings of approximately \$731 million.
 - Local and state tax revenues generated by travel spending were about \$120 million in 2011 (excluding property taxes). Without these travel generated tax revenues, each household in Wyoming would have had to pay an additional \$540 in taxes to maintain these current state and local tax revenues.
 - Travel spending in 2011 in Sublette County was \$44.3 million; providing \$14.0 million in earnings; 430 jobs; \$0.5 million in local taxes, \$1.0 million state taxes, and \$1.5 million in total taxes.
 - The key activities that motivate people to choose Wyoming are national parks, scenery and natural experiences.¹¹ See the table below.

Wyoming Visitor Activities and Motivations		
All 2011 Trips	Participate	Motivate
Visiting a national park	45%	30%
Scenic drive	47%	17%
Hiking or backpacking	43%	14%
Wildlife watching	32%	10%
Camping	20%	8%
Shopping	29%	6%
Fishing	13%	5%
Snow skiing or snowboarding	5%	5%
Visiting historical sites	26%	4%
Visiting a state park	33%	3%
Sightseeing tour	15%	3%

⁹ Natural Resources Conservation Service. Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program Wyoming

¹⁰ Dean Runyan Associates. Wyoming Travel Impacts 1998 to 2011. Prepared for Wyoming Travel and Tourism. May 2012.

¹¹ Strategic Marketing & Research, Inc. 2011 Overnight Visitor Profile Research. January 2012.

Visiting hot springs	15%	3%
Attending a festival or fair	9%	3%
Attending a rodeo	5%	3%
River rafting	9%	3%
Snowmobiling	3%	3%
Horseback riding	8%	3%

Source: Strategic Marketing & Research, Inc. 2011 Overnight Visitor Profile Research. January 2012.

- Cost of community services
 - While residential development does increase the tax base, this increase is often offset by the increased costs of providing community services such as fire and police protection, roads, and busing to area schools.¹² In Sublette County the cost to the county government for rural residential services is \$1.06 for every \$1.00 of revenue.

About this project

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About the Land Trust Alliance

The mission of the Land Trust Alliance is to save the places people love by strengthening land conservation across America. Land trusts are nonprofit organizations that work with private landowners to voluntarily conserve forests, farms, parks and other cherished places that enrich our lives. We focus our work on three strategic goals: accelerating the pace, improving the quality, and ensuring the permanence of conservation. By building highly effective and well-governed land trusts that protect lands with the highest values to their communities and ensure their protection in perpetuity, we can preserve healthy human and natural communities, clean air and water, beautiful vistas, recreation areas and working lands.

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¹² Coupal, R., D. Taylor, D. McLeod. 2002. The Cost of Community Services for Rural Residential Development for Wyoming. University of Wyoming Open Spaces Publication.