



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Finalized 10-Year Sage Grouse Study Confirms Benefits of Grazing**

**BOISE (June 13, 2025)** – Today, the University of Idaho released the finalized results of their 10- year study [<https://www.fws.gov/media/grouse-and-grazing-project-effects-cattle-grazing-demographic-traits-greater-sage-grouse>] looking into the impacts of grazing on greater sage grouse populations. The study concluded that cattle grazing does not negatively impact greater sage grouse and can only benefit the species through building robust habitat, increasing forage, and reducing invasive grasses that lead to catastrophic wildfires.

Darcy Helmick, research partner and Idaho Public Lands (IPLC) Board member, emphasized the collaboration's strength: “When University of Idaho approached us about the idea of this project, we were supportive. As ranchers in grouse country, we have been seeing firsthand the healthy relationship between grouse and cattle for years, and were intrigued by the idea of having scientific data to validate what we have witnessed. Knowing the importance of the study, Idaho Public Land Council approached the National Public Lands Council (PLC) with a grant application to support the project. With PLC and Idaho Cattle Association (ICA) support, as well as many other partners, the 10 year study was completed. We are not surprised by the results, and believe the results in this important research will be a critical component in future grouse management moving forward. We commend the University of Idaho and US Geological service for pushing this across the finish line!”

The National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA), the ICA, the Public Lands Council (PLC) and the IPLC have all highlighted the benefits of grazing and pushed back against anti-grazing myths for decades, making this landmark study a must point of reference moving forward for anyone questioning the benefits of grazing.

“For years, those with ulterior motives have perpetuated the myth that cattle production negatively impacted sage grouse populations. Nothing could be further from the truth and anyone that has worked on a cattle operation with or without grouse nesting knows that grazing improves rangeland health and with it the wildlife that live on working lands. This study is another example of how cattle producers are the original conservationists and grazing cattle is a key component to maintaining the health of America’s treasured natural resources. Thank you to the University of Idaho for spending so much time debunking the unscientific myth that cattle grazing harms native wildlife.” said NCBA President Buck Wehrbein.

“America’s public lands ranchers knew that livestock production has supported sage grouse populations since our ancestors started ranching in the 1800s but we never had the comprehensive, long-term data to back up what we all took as common knowledge. This study finally proves ranchers have been saying all along – livestock grazing benefits wildlife, native





grasses and the overall landscape. This study also shows that the work and expertise of local stakeholders, including University researchers and federal grazing permittees, is crucial for conserving wildlife populations. Ranchers appreciate the decade of research conducted by the University of Idaho to reiterate the benefits of public lands ranching.” said PLC President Tim Canterbury.

Spencer Black, ICA President, said “Idaho beef producers are deeply committed stewards of the land and wildlife, managing rangelands with care, knowledge, and generational experience. Their responsible grazing practices not only support thriving ecosystems and native species but also enhance soil health, promote biodiversity, and reduce wildfire risk—making beef cattle an essential part of a balanced, resilient Western landscape. We are pleased that this research reinforces that lifelong work and that producers now have this data to substantiate the practice of grazing.”

### **Background**

Last year, preliminary results of this 10-year study, led by University of Idaho Professor Courtney Conway, were released confirming that grazing benefits sage grouse populations and has no negative effects on nesting success. The finalized study reiterates the preliminary data that supports the benefits of grazing including:

- Increasing the biomass and diversity of insect species for food.
- Reducing the risk of wildfire that can kill sage grouse and destroy habitat.
- Reducing the volume of cheatgrass and other invasive grasses that degrade the sagebrush biome.

Read the study [<https://www.fws.gov/media/grouse-and-grazing-project-effects-cattle-grazing-demographic-traits-greater-sage-grouse>].

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### **About Idaho Cattle Association**

*The Idaho Cattle Association is a membership driven organization representing beef producers of the state that works to preserve, promote, and protect Idaho’s cattle industry, with its volunteer leadership from across the state is a critical part in achieving this mission and hearing the voices of the industry. More information can be found by visiting their website, <https://www.idahocattle.org>.*

### **About Idaho Public Lands Council**

*The Idaho Public Lands Council (IPLC) is dedicated to protecting the continued livestock grazing use on Idaho's federal and state lands. IPLC exists under the umbrella of the Idaho Cattle Association and the Idaho Woolgrower's Association and together, IPLC and Public Lands Council advocate for western ranchers who preserve our nation's natural resources while providing vital food and fiber to the nation, and the world.*





### **About Public Lands Council**

*The Public Lands Council (PLC) represents 22,000 cattle and sheep producers who operate with federal grazing permits in the West. The PLC advocates for these western ranchers who preserve our nation's natural resources while providing vital food and fiber to the nation and the world. Learn more at [www.publiclandscouncil.org](http://www.publiclandscouncil.org).*

### **About National Cattlemen's Beef Association**

*The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) has represented America's cattle producers since 1898, preserving the heritage and strength of the industry through education and public policy. As the largest association of cattle producers, NCBA works to create new markets and increase demand for beef. Efforts are made possible through membership contributions. To join, contact NCBA at 1-866-BEEF-USA or [membership@beef.org](mailto:membership@beef.org).*

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