



NEW MEXICO CATTLE GROWERS' ASSOCIATION

“The State of the Agricultural Economy”

Economic and Rural Development and
Policy Committee

September 11, 2024





NMCGA LEGISLATIVE OBJECTIVES

Our objective is to fulfill our responsibility to be wise stewards:

1. Of our families and our neighbors,
2. Of our livestock and
3. Of our lands.



SO, NMCGA LEGISLATIVE FOCUS IS ON:

Legislation that directly impacts livestock producers.

Defense

Offense

Legislation that impacts us and the rural communities in which we live.

Defense

Offense



NMCGA: 2024 MEMBER SURVEY



Problems You Face in Your Operation and Rural Community

Please consider the issues you face in your operation and rural community. In the spaces below, provide details on which are applicable, if any. Please be as specific as possible.

Pastures/Range

| |
|---------------|
| Brush |
| Noxious Weeds |
| Water |
| Other |

Production

| |
|-----------|
| Predators |
| Other |

Cost of Production

| |
|-----------|
| Fuel |
| Insurance |
| Property |
| Auto |
| Health |
| Other |

All Rural Issues

| |
|--------------------------|
| Roads (Which Ones & Why) |
|--------------------------|

| |
|---|
| Health Care Professionals (Recruitment & Retention) |
| Health Care Facilities (Maintenance & Other) |
| All Other Health Care Issues |

| |
|---------------------|
| Education |
| Vocational Training |
| 4-Day School Week |

| |
|----------------------------|
| Other: |
| Libraries & Bookmobiles |
| Internet/Broadband Access |
| Volunteer Fire Departments |

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

May we contact you for further details? Yes _____ No _____



RESPONSES:

PASTURE/RANGE ISSUES

Brush

- *How do we manage mesquite WITHOUT using Roundup? Is buffle grass a viable option?*
 - *Eradicating invasive plants (yucca, cholla, tamarisk, pinon/juniper) must be addressed to support healthy soil efforts.*
 - *Monitor and control woody species encroachment.*
 - *Cedar. We have a huge amount of new growth. This species really affects the water table and turf quality.*
-
- *Cactus. Snakeweed. Pigweed. Loco weed.*



RESPONSES: PRODUCTION ISSUES

Predators

- *Control coyote, mountain lion and bobcat populations.*
- *Oryx are overpopulating. Causing issues with grazing and water.*
- *Mexican wolves and gray wolves. If they're going to be on the landscape, compensate livestock producers for all our damages from them.*
- *New Wildlife Service evidence rules for Mexican wolf depredations are the worst in the entire West.*
- *Fight adoption of new evidence standards for confirming Mexican wolf depredations.*
- *Banning trapping on public lands is just a precursor to the effort to ban it on private lands. Help the NM Trappers Association with their lawsuit to overturn the current ban.*
- *Challenge the ban on coyote calling contests.*
- *Bears and mountain lions pose dangers to pets, livestock, children and adults.*



RESPONSES: COSTS OF PRODUCTION

Fuel

- *Why go the way of California? Laws restricting/regulating how and what kind of equipment we can use in our operation is a concern.*
- *Fuel prices are already too high.*
- *New taxes on fuel are a huge detriment to agriculture, with no benefits.*
- *Vehicle mandates punish rural NM.*

Insurance

- *Liability insurance prices are extremely high. Availability.*

Property

- *Insurance premiums are constantly increasing. Coverage for fire.*

Health

- *Health insurance premiums are ridiculously expensive.*



RESPONSES: ROADS

- *East of Mosquero, Hwy. 102 to Hwy. 402 junction is so corrugated it is dangerous and could cause a driver to lose control. It needs immediate improvement.*
- *US and state highways receive considerable traffic by semis transporting goods to urban areas. Ensure fair use of federal and state funds to maintain such highways.*
- *Provide grants for employment and equipment to maintain local, primarily gravel roads.*
- *Develop a system for payment of “fair share” of road maintenance by EV owner/operators (given they don’t pay a road tax on fuel purchases).*
- *Road Infrastructure: Increases safety for both farmers/ranchers traveling and livestock hauling. It lowers input costs for equipment and decreases wear and tear caused by rough roads.*



RESPONSES: HEALTHCARE

- *Rural NM is virtually without health care facilities, emergency medical care, and facilities for caring for the elderly.*
- *Doctor recruitment and retention: recruit physician's assistants for clinical work: (1) construct housing and provide at minimum rate to nurses and Pas; (2) include nurses and Pas in student debt repayment programs if the service in medically underserved areas; and (3) ensure wages and benefits are competitive with urban areas to ensure retention.*
- *We need comprehensive tort reform, increases in Medicaid reimbursement and increases in school loan forgiveness.*



RESPONSES: EDUCATION

Education

- *Construct and provide free or reduced cost housing to teachers who meet standards.*
- *Develop a program to reduce or pay off student debt for eligible teachers in rural communities.*
- *Provide grants to focus on underperforming schools (hiring additional human resources).*
- *More ag education in school. It should be required to graduate from high school.*
- *Similar problems as above but medical care a concern for teachers.*
- *Hold school boards accountable for poorly performing schools*



RESPONSES: OTHER ISSUES

Libraries & Bookmobiles

- *Support bookmobiles and libraries.*
- *Bookmobiles – finance timely replacement/maintenance of vehicles and widen availability and timing of services. Lack of adequate library services will hurt long-term literacy.*

Internet/Broadband Access

- *Fund infrastructure. More Cellular towers*
- *Support Broadband Internet*
 - *Allows farmers/ranchers to work remotely from their operation.*
 - *Assists producers with marketing their products through online platforms.*
 - *It gives homeschooled rural students the same opportunity to access online programs as public school students.*



From Our Livestock Producers

Production

1. Funding to pay for Mexican wolf depredations and indirect damages.
2. Amend Legacy Fund so no payments or match for acquiring land that is then removed from our county tax base and economic activity.
3. Provide inducements for large animal veterinarians and veterinary technicians in rural areas. Revise statutes as needed for veterinary medical practitioners.
4. Increase law enforcement during hunting season to get hunters to slow down on gravel roads and to catch and prosecute those who cut fences and throw down gates.
5. Assist private landowners with installing riparian restoration projects.
6. Provide a tax credit
 - (1) from the Clean Fuels Tax for fuel used in vehicles for farm and ranch operations.
 - (2) for all diesel used on a farm or ranch.
 - (3) for water conservation technology and maintenance.



From Rural New Mexico:

Rural Life

7. Provide Volunteer Fire Department retention payments/inducements:
 - (1) Health insurance—employer (volunteer department) shared funding,
 - (2) Retirement—increase retirement level (now \$125/month after 25 years of service),
 - (3) Change fire marshal rules so departments may use a portion of funding to pay volunteers,
 - (4) Transition from an all-volunteer to a mix of paid/volunteer departments by
 - (i) initially paying volunteers per attendance at incident and training (fire or EMS) and
 - (ii) establishing paid positions that anchor departments (i.e., two full-time individuals on main “shift” when majority of calls occur).
8. Establish and help fund a cowboy veteran program in NM for service men and women about to muster out of the service so they can be trained and work on NM ranches.
9. Authorize hardship licenses for underage rural kids to use to drive to school/school bus.
10. Develop a system for payment of “fair share” of road maintenance by EV owner/operators (given they don’t pay a road tax on fuel purchases).



From Rural New Mexico

Rural Health

11. Make tax credits for expanded medical service providers permanent.
12. Provide inducements to educate/attract physician assistants and nurse practitioners to rural areas:
 - (1) construct housing and provide at minimum rate to nurses and PAs;
 - (2) include nurses and PAs in student debt repayment programs if they serve in genuinely medically underserved areas; and
 - (3) ensure wages and benefits are competitive with urban areas to ensure retention.



From Rural New Mexico

Rural Education

13. Clarify, as needed, that the Four-Day School Week is for local school boards to decide.
14. Construct and provide free or reduced cost housing to teachers who meet standards.
15. Develop a program to reduce or pay off student debt for eligible teachers in rural communities.
16. Allow retired teachers to return to teaching without limits on pensions or other benefits to encourage experienced teachers to return to teaching.
17. Bookmobiles – finance timely replacement/maintenance of vehicles and widen availability and timing of services. Lack of adequate library services will hurt long-term literacy.



Let us work with you to invigorate the agricultural economy in rural New Mexico.

Our Ask:

- You want us to produce the beef that New Mexicans want to eat.
- We want to do that.
- Please do not pass legislation that makes our job (as price takers) more expensive or more difficult.
- Please work with us on the initiatives rural New Mexicans have identified.



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