



# 2026 TOP ISSUES



**A**griculture and specifically livestock production, intersect with nearly every area of public policy in Colorado. Colorado Cattlemen's Association identifies priority issue areas each year to guide proactive and responsive engagement in legislative, regulatory, and ballot-driven policy. These priorities, informed by grassroots membership engagement, focus CCA's efforts on advancing workable solutions for cattle producers while responding to policies that threaten producers, livestock operations, working lands, and private property rights.

## **BUILDING BRIDGES**

CCA will continue to serve as the voice of Colorado's cattle producers by building trust and credibility across sectors. This includes engaging policymakers, conservation partners, business leaders, and community stakeholders to ensure livestock production is understood as essential to food security, land stewardship, rural economies, and wildlife management.

### **CONNECTING WITH URBAN ALLIES**

- Strengthening relationships with urban and Front Range decision makers
- Communicating the important role of working ranches in open space, conservation, wildlife management, and as economic drivers for communities
- Countering misinformation about animal welfare, land use and livestock production.

### **STRATEGIC ADVANCEMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

- Defending science-based, outcome-driven approaches to animal care and environmental and wildlife policy
- Ensuring policies recognize economic realities and operational constraints of livestock producers
- Advancing voluntary, incentive based programs rather than prescriptive regulatory mandates

### **COALITION BUILDING**

- Continue to advance models like the United Wolf Coalition that work alongside aligned agriculture organizations on shared issues
- Partnering strategically with conservation, wildlife, and hunting entities
- Coordinating messaging to avoid fragmented or conflicting advocacy efforts

### **PREPARING FOR A NEW STATE ADMINISTRATION**

- Build early relationships with gubernatorial candidates and transition teams
- Clearly communicate CCA priorities and concerns
- Position CCA as a credible, solutions-focused partner

## **WATER**

Water will always remain a critical issue for Colorado's agricultural industry. CCA is dedicated to ensuring that agricultural water rights are upheld, and will actively monitor and engage in policies that could impact agricultural production.

### **STREAM ACCESS**

- Clear legal protections for landowners to avoid takings
- Opposition to legislative or ballot efforts that erode private property rights
- Respect for current statutes and practices

### **COLORADO RIVER**

- Engage on every level to ensure a deal that is brokered does not harm Colorado agriculture in any way
- Protection of agricultural water rights and recognition of agriculture's role in rural economies and food productions
- Opposition to mandatory conservation measures

## **WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT**

CCA members and livestock producers across the state provide wildlife habitat and protections that would be lost without their stewardship efforts. The association will continue its efforts to counter outside forces that unfairly use wildlife management issues as a vehicle for attacking livestock production and agriculture in Colorado.

### **WOLVES**

- Meaningful producer involvement in planning and decision making
- Fair, timely and adequate compensation programs
- Availability of effective tools for conflict prevention and response including lethal management
- Accountability and transparency from state and federal agencies

### **SPECIES MANAGEMENT**

- Be driven by credible data and adaptive management
- Regional flexibility and local input
- Avoid placing disproportionate burdens on landowners

### **NORTH AMERICAN MODEL OF CONSERVATION**

- Respect private landowners and land access decisions
- Management approaches that do not shift the wildlife impacts on producers

## **PROPERTY RIGHTS PROTECTIONS**

This is fundamental to CCA. CCA will oppose any policy (regulatory, legislative, or ballot-driven) that undermines private property rights, agricultural viability or long-term stewardship of working lands. This includes overreach related to land use, wildlife management, environmental regulation and recreational access.

## **MEMBERSHIP SERVICES & SUPPORT**

CCA's grassroots membership across all 64 counties in the state provides input and direction that guides the association. The grassroots policy process of CCA brings forward the most important policy priorities established by members. Additionally, issues management for individual members and local affiliates is one of CCA's core competencies. Providing direct, individualized support means that CCA is only ever a phone call away if issues arise.

## **NEXT GENERATION OPPORTUNITIES**

CCA will continue to invest in the future of Colorado's cattle and beef industry by supporting leadership development and engagement opportunities for young and beginning producers, ensuring the continuity of multi-generational ranching and first-generation operations alike. Advancing the legacy of the beef industry in Colorado requires dedicated action to ensure a productive operating environment for new and beginning producers.

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