



CATTLE AS A CLIMATE SOLUTION

BACKGROUND

U.S. cattle farmers and ranchers produce a wholesome, nutritious protein that is now produced more efficiently than ever before. **The same pound of beef today uses significantly less land, water and feed to produce, allowing U.S. cattle producers to be global leaders in good environmental efficiency.**

As conversations increasingly involve the relationship between individual choices and the associated environmental impact, it is important to showcase the cattle industry's role in enhancing and preserving the environment. Cattle graze on more than 660 million acres in United States - nearly one third of our nation's continental land mass. This acreage not only provides important grazing land for cattle, but also provides important wildlife habitat and naturally sequesters carbon. Grazing builds deep root systems in native prairie grasses which improves soil health. Healthy soils retain more water, sequester more carbon, and increase the resiliency of our grasslands. Cattle grazing keeps these open spaces healthy and free from development, protecting a key part of the American cultural and environmental legacy.



90% of what cattle consume is inedible to humans. Cattle spend most of their lives grazing on pasture. The United States' natural landscape allows cattle producers to graze livestock without deforesting. **Ruminant grazing** is a vital tool in managing and preserving our country's national prairies and forests.



Cattle play an integral role in the carbon cycle by increasing our grasslands' **carbon storage potential**. Cattle consume grasses and emit methane, through belches, as part of the ruminant digestive process. Within 10 years, more than 90% of that methane combines with oxygen in the atmosphere and converts to carbon dioxide. The carbon dioxide is then absorbed by grasses via photosynthesis, which are eaten by cattle, and the process starts over.



Often, this includes forage and food production byproducts. Cattle consume nutritional feedstuffs (like distiller's grains) as part of a rationed diet – byproducts that would otherwise go to landfills. In this way, **cattle effectively upcycle nutrients while actively reducing our nation's food waste.**

WHAT IS NCBA'S POLICY?

American beef production is not a significant contributor to climate change. Our improved management practices, technologies and genetics mean that direct emissions from beef account for only two percent of the nation's overall greenhouse gas emissions. NCBA will work to ensure that cattle producers have the resources and freedom necessary to produce environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable beef.

QUESTIONS? CONTACT KAITLYNN GLOVER | KGLOVER@BEEF.ORG