

# OPINION

## Crop insurance helps preserve family farming legacies, offers peace of mind

Steve Wooten  
Beatty Canyon Ranch

—*Ed. note: Las Animas County farmer Steve Wooten wrote the below piece about the importance of crop insurance to farmers, ranchers and rural communities. Crop insurance is part of the 2018 Farm Bill being debated this year in Congress.*

Earlier this year, our family ranch was awarded the Colorado Leopold Conservation Award, which recognizes agricultural landowners actively committed to a land ethic.

This was a crowning achievement for Beatty Canyon Ranch, and we were honored to be acknowledged for our efforts to control invasive species, manage grazing and protect wildlife habitats.

Being stewards of the land is something that has always been important to us and we strive to innovate and improve at every turn. We have made great progress in our conservation methods over the years and we know that these practices are not only important for the environment but for the long-term stability of our operations.

Unfortunately, no amount of innovation can always protect us from the perils of Mother Nature. As anyone from southeastern Colorado knows, weather issues like drought are always a challenge for us.

For the last 20 years, persistent drought situations have affected



Photo courtesy National Crop Insurance Services

Steve Wooten

our cow-calf operation. We do our best to overcome these weather-related challenges, but during a severe situation like in 2002-03, when we faced both an extreme drought and a down market, we had to liquidate. That is something that is difficult to come back from.

Thankfully, today we do have some tools in place to help deal these types of weather-related risks. One of the most important tools is an efficient crop insurance program for our nation's ranchers.

When people talk about crop

insurance they don't always associate it with cattle operations like ours, and that is understandable. In its early days, crop insurance was available for only a handful of commodities. But recent farm bills have made improvements to the program and crop insurance has now been expanded to cover new specialty crops as well as the pasture, range and forage where our cattle graze.

This coverage isn't a handout—farmers and ranchers pay for the protection out of our own budgets. In Colorado, farmers and ranchers

paid \$69.7 million collectively for crop insurance policies last year, covering nearly 7 million acres.

The federal government also provides some support, which is essential to keeping the program affordable.

We don't always need this protection, and we would prefer to never have to use it, but the cost is well worth it because it offers some stability and peace of mind.

On Beatty Canyon Ranch, we currently have fourth, fifth and sixth generations involved in day-to-day operations, and our family ranching history stretches all the way back to when my great grandfather immigrated here from Ireland. While this may sound impressive, it is not uncommon among farm families.

For many ranchers across America, being able to pass down our operations to the next generation is a driving force behind what we do. That, along with playing a role in providing food and fiber for our fellow Americans while being stewards of the land is what makes all of the long days and hard work worth it.

We are doing our part, and I urge Congress to do its part by passing a new Farm Bill with crop insurance intact. It, along with our ongoing conservation efforts, will ensure that ranchers will have a legacy to pass down to future generations.

— Steve Wooten operates Beatty Canyon Ranch in northeast Las Animas County.

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**Atilano (Indio) Diaz, Jr.**  
On September 13, 2018, with his mother and sister at his side, 34-year-old Atilano (Indio) Diaz, Jr. of Trinidad, CO left this earth to walk through the gates of Heaven.

We invite you to join us in celebrating the life of Atilano Diaz Jr. at 1pm on Friday, September 28th, 2018 at Holy Trinity Church. Reception to follow that will be announced at services.

Arrangements made under the direction of the Comi Funeral Home.

**Shawn I. Cescolini**  
Shawn I. Cescolini, age 52, passed away unexpectedly on September 18, 2018 at Parkview Medical Center.

Celebration of Life will be held Saturday, September 29, 2018 from 1pm-4pm at St. Joseph's Hall, at which time you are invited to gather with the family to visit and share memories of Shawn.

Arrangements made under the direction of the Comi Funeral Home.

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**Barbara Jean Gebhart**  
Barbara Jean Gebhart, Age 77, passed away peacefully in her home on September 20, 2018 in Trinidad, Colorado.

Her family and friends ask that you join them in celebration of Barb's life at 11am in Segundo on September 28, 2018 at The Lord's Chapel with a reception to follow.

In lieu of flowers, please make any donations to Noah's Ark in her memory.

### STATE BRIEFS

Associated Press

#### Chemical weapons wastewater sent from Colorado to Texas

PUEBLO, Colo. (AP) — The U.S. Army is again shipping liquid hazardous waste from a chemical weapons destruction plant in Colorado for disposal in Texas.

The Pueblo Chemical Depot in southern Colorado began loading tanker trucks on Tuesday. They were bound for an incinerator in Port Arthur, Texas.

The waste would normally be processed at the Colorado facility, but officials say that part of the plant is undergoing modifications and isn't operating.

Officials expect to ship up to 250,000 gallons (946,000 liters) of wastewater to the Texas incinerator in about 50 truckloads until the wastewater facility in Colorado is operating again.

The plant shipped a similar volume of wastewater to the incinerator last year. The plant is destroying 780,000 shells containing 2,500 U.S. tons (2,270 metric tons) of mustard agent under an international treaty.

#### Suicide ruled out in death of Colorado football player

GRAND JUNCTION, Colo. (AP) — Police say a gunshot wound that killed a Colorado college football player wasn't self-inflicted but aren't releasing many details about the shooting.

Twenty-one-year-old Brett Ojivi was shot Saturday at a home near Colorado Mesa University in Grand Junction. The running

back from Los Angeles had been a four-year member of the university's football team.

In a statement, police said Monday that they concluded his shooting wasn't a suicide based on numerous interviews and evidence they gathered. The Daily Sentinel reported that Mesa County Coroner Dean Havlik said Ojivi died of a single gunshot wound to the chest.

Police said they've identified everyone involved in the incident and all are cooperating. No arrests have been made but police said they don't believe that there is any public safety threat related to the shooting.

#### Judge orders US to revive public role in energy lease sales

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — A federal judge has ordered the reinstatement of public participation opportunities in oil and gas lease sales in Western states that were largely eliminated by the Trump administration to speed up sales.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Ronald Bush in a Friday ruling sided with environmentalists who sued in April out of concerns that upcoming sales could harm a struggling bird species.

The ruling covers sales beginning this December involving hundreds of thousands of acres in Colorado, Montana, Wyoming, Nevada and Utah. The states are home to greater sage grouse, a ground-dwelling bird that's seen its numbers plummet due to development, disease and other factors.

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management in January made it optional to take public comment on sales and shortened the time in which formal protests could be filed.

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

#### County resident congratulates, thanks Dorenkamp, Aguilar garage crew for service

Dear Editor,

Thank you Phil Dorenkamp for your outstanding service and superb leadership on the Road and Bridge Department. Your hands on problem solving decisions and availability to listen to our "boony" problems were enormously appreciated.

Congratulations to your new County Administrator position. We wish you the very best and hopefully much more happiness and less stress. Your many accomplishments speak for themselves. We'll miss you on the Boony Roads.

We also need to thank our local Aguilar garage crew and the other County road employees who accomplished the actual improvements, with everyone working on their skilled individual jobs. Sometimes you get complaints, but it's time to let you know that you are also appreciated and a welcome sight. Keep up the good work.

Much obliged,

Frank V. and Ruth C. Leuchte  
004 Ranch, Trujillo Creek



60 Obituaries

#### Valdez, Lawrence Phillip



Valdez, Lawrence Phillip 1949-2018, 69, of Lakewood, Colorado, passed away on September 21st surrounded by his family. Survived by his mother, Prospera Valdez; wife, Lila Valdez; children, Christopher Valdez, Lawrence Valdez, Jr., Gregory Valdez; granddaughter, Maija Valdez; great grandson, Jarett White; brothers and sisters; nieces & nephews. He is preceded in death by his father Jose M. Valdez. Funeral service 11a.m., St. Bernadette Catholic Church 7420 W. 12th Ave. Lakewood, Colorado. Full obituary & service information at [LatinaCares.com](http://LatinaCares.com). Memorial donations may be made to [DonateLifeAmerica.com](http://DonateLifeAmerica.com), [www.donatelifenetwork.com](http://www.donatelifenetwork.com).

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