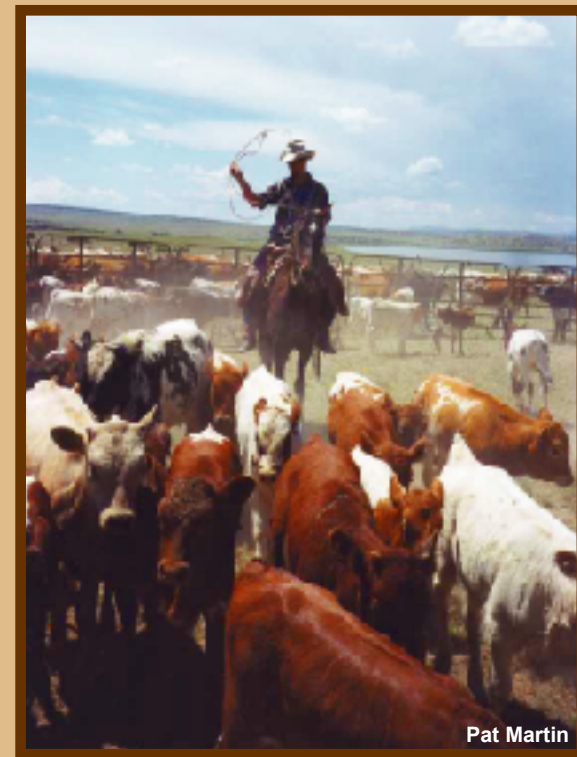




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## **Colorado Livestock**

Colorado is famous for its snow-capped Rocky Mountains and breathtaking scenery, but the state's wealth goes far beyond physical beauty. From beef and dairy cattle to sheep and swine, Colorado's livestock industry represents the backbone of the state's \$16 billion agriculture industry.

This guide provides an overview of livestock produced in Colorado. For more information about a specific species and a list of breed registries, please contact the Markets Division at (303) 239-4114.

### **Beef Cattle**

The 15,000 beef producers help make cattle and calves Colorado's number one agricultural commodity. Nearly one-third of Colorado's counties are "economically dependent" on the cattle industry.

Colorado has an inventory of more than three million of the finest beef cattle in the world. These cattle are raised, fed, processed and marketed in the state. In addition to beef, many other cattle products such as leather, hides and tallow are processed and exported.

The Colorado beef industry has also developed an advanced breeding technology. Live cattle, frozen semen and embryos are shipped to breeders around the world to improve herds and production efficiency.

Colorado cattlemen breed cattle designed for the U.S. and world palette which are then finished in feedlots utilizing the latest technology. More than 2.6 million cattle are processed in the state each year and over 10 percent of U.S. cattle on feed and fed cattle marketings occur in Colorado.

Colorado is a major center for the U.S. beef industry. It is home to the National Cattleman's Beef Association, United States Meat Export Federation and the world-renowned National Western Stock Show.



Sheila McNamara

### **Dairy Cattle**

Colorado's 89,000 milk cows produce 250 million gallons of milk each year, resulting in more than \$220 million in farm sales.

Milk is marketed to dairy plants throughout the state that process and package fluid milk, cottage cheese, yogurt, ice cream and other milk-related products. Colorado is home to the largest producer of mozzarella cheese in the world, as well as the largest organic dairy in the U.S.

### **Horses**

There are nearly 65,000 horse owners and over 194,000 horses, representing 50 breeds, in Colorado. The state's horse industry produces goods and services valued at more than \$750 million.

More than 191,500 Coloradans are involved in the horse industry as owners, service providers, employees and volunteers. Even more participate as spectators.

### **Poultry**

The temperate climate, coupled with a plentiful and close supply of feed, make Colorado an ideal location for poultry. There are over 3.5 million laying hens in the state, producing nearly 1 billion eggs annually. Colorado is also a large producer of turkeys, supplying a large poultry processor along the Front Range.

### **Sheep**

With 225,000 sheep, Colorado ranks third nationally for market sheep and lambs. The state also ranks fourth for all sheep and lambs, totaling 420,000.

The state is well-known for its tender lamb, and it is often the signature dish on menus in restaurants across the country.

Colorado is also the sixth largest wool-producing state, with 3.3 million pounds annually.

In addition, the American Sheep Industry Association has their headquarters in the state.

### **Swine**

Colorado's pork production has grown significantly in the past 10 years. Breeding hogs have increased over 350% and market hogs have increased over 150%. There are nearly 800,000 hogs in Colorado, keeping several large packing and processing plants supplied.

Producers and processors are concentrating on improving breeding stock to insure the finest meat. Colorado pork producers offer a lean, high-quality product to consumers in Colorado and throughout the U.S.



Jim Deeds

### **Alternative Livestock**

Colorado farmers and ranchers continually strive to diversify their operations in order to create new opportunities to grow. In addition to traditional livestock and crop production, Colorado growers have expanded their horizons to include aquaculture, buffalo and elk.

Over 40 aquaculture producers (or fish farmers) and distributors are licensed by the Colorado Department of Agriculture. Trout sales average nearly \$2.4 million per year. Striped bass, tilapia and alligators are also raised.

Buffalo production is also rapidly increasing to help fill the growing market for specialty meat.

The state has more than 9,000 domestic elk on 129 licensed facilities. In addition to meat products, these animals are raised for breedstock and for harvest of the velvet antlers.