A GREEN TOMORROW

As America’s **45th annual "Earth Day”** (April 22, 2015), it's a day that is dedicated to focus on *our* environment and its sustainability. The American farmers/ranchers are the original stewards of *our* natural resources: soil, water, air and minerals.

**We** with the American farmer/rancher are even more committed to protecting *our* environment and conservation. *We* have introduced and continue introduction and adoption of "Best Management Practices" for protection of our environment. *We* value and respect these natural resources, it's *our* future and legacy.

America's farmers/ranchers are *our* leaders for conservation efforts to protect *our* environment on a daily basis. *Our* stewardship is a commitment to provide quality food, enhance food safety, embrace innovations and create a future for the next generation.

Nearly half of the world’s land area is only suitable for grassland and rangeland (pastures), unsuitable for rising crops as its too steep, rocky or dry. However, these lands raise abundant quantities of grass that livestock can utilize. Grazing livestock is an important form of agriculture on these lands; thus, allowing farmers/ranchers to more than double the area utilized for raising food.

Cattlemen are continually improving these grazing lands by developing sound environmental practices such as soil nutrient management, rotational grazing, stocking rates, reducing risk for wildfires and protecting wildlife habitat.

***A few agricultural facts to consider:***\* Today, **one** American farmer/rancher raises *sufficient food for* *155 people*, compared to just 26 people a few decades ago.

\* Nearly **95%** of U.S. cattle farms/ranches are family owned and operated, with 2/3 of these being in the same family for 2-3 generations or more.

\* *Today*, cattlemen have improved environmental sustainability by 5% in just 6 years (2005-2011) these improvements include:

**10% less emissions to water
3% less water used
7% less emissions to soil
2% less greenhouse gas emissions
2% less energy used
2% less resource consumption
32% less occupational illnesses and accidents**

\* How was sustainability improved?
Increased use of precision farming practices improvement of crop yields improved animal genetics, health and nutrition.

\* Future improvements to conserve environmental impact: continue to increase waste water recovery and bio gas capture further adoption of water efficient irrigation systems
exploration of packaging alternatives to reduce inputs continue to optimize nutrient application to soil for improving crop yields reduction of food waste.

\* The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates the entire U.S. agriculture business accounts for only 6.4% of total greenhouse gas emissions. The U.S. livestock business accounts for less than 2.4% of that total. Fossil fuel use accounts for about 79% of all greenhouse gas emissions.

While many of us American’s observe "Earth Day" on April 22, many are unaware that "Earth Day" is a 365 day occurrence for farmers/ranchers as we raise food, fiber, fuel and shelter for **all** American families. *We* have a commitment for sustainability and protection of *our* environment.

It’s great to enjoy nature and work at what one enjoys!