Wyoming
DEPARTMENT OF Agriculture

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The Wyoming Department of Agriculture is dedicated to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources and quality of life.

January 29, 2010

Mr. William H. Carson, Jr., Acting Field Manager
Bureau of Land Management, Newcastle Field Office
1101 Washington Blvd.
Newcastle, WY 82701

Dear Mr. Carson:

Following are the Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) comments pertaining to Environmental Assessment (EA) Number WY-P08-EA10-6 and the associated permit renewals and transfers by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Newcastle Field Office (FO).

Our comments are specific to our mission: dedication to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources, and quality of life. As this EA affects our agriculture industry, our natural resources, and the welfare of our citizens, it's important you continue to inform us of proposed actions and decisions and continue to provide the opportunity to express pertinent issues and concerns.

The WDA appreciates the effort the Newcastle FO has devoted to authorizing livestock grazing in a timely and efficient manner. As BLM allotments are an integral part of agriculture in the Newcastle area, it is important permittees continue livestock grazing to assist in maintaining economic viability for both producers and communities. In addition to its economic value, livestock grazing represents irreplaceable environmental and social values, contributing to the preservation of open spaces, scenic vistas, and the traditional image of the historic rural landscapes of Wyoming. Maintaining open spaces also provide habitat and less restrictive movement for wildlife than some alternative land uses. We appreciate the EA pointing out each of these important benefits of livestock grazing management.

The EA uses peer-reviewed science to support discussions and proposed decisions. We recognize the value this adds to the decision-making process and welcome the use of support documents. We believe this strengthens the process and the outcome.

In addition, the WDA appreciates the efforts of the Newcastle FO staff in working with permittees and strongly urge you to continue this practice.

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In conclusion, we support the continuation of livestock grazing on the analyzed allotments and look forward to continued cooperation on proposed actions and decisions.

Sincerely,

Jason Fearneyhough

Jason Fearneyhough
Director

JF/jc

CC: Governor's Planning Office
Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts
Wyoming Board of Agriculture
Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation
Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Wyoming State Grazing Board
Wyoming Stock Growers Association
Wyoming Wool Growers Association