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## FUTURE OF NEW MEXICO RANCHING VISITS VALLES CALDERA NATIONAL PRESERVE FOR SECOND ANNUAL NM YOUTH RANCH MANAGEMENT CAMP

The Second Annual New Mexico Youth Ranch Management Camp wrapped up today at the Valles Caldera National Preserve. This year's class of 31 young ranchers aged 14-19 received five full days of hands on training to help them be better stewards of New Mexico's natural resources when they become leaders in the cattle industry.

"Ranching is an aging industry," says Dr. Manny Encinias, beef cattle specialist with the New Mexico University Cooperative Extension Service. "The question is how do we fill the void of the many ranch owners and managers when they leave the industry? Hopefully, this camp will encourage young people to pursue those fast approaching career opportunities in this area of agri-business."



**New Mexico Ranch Camp Class of 2012**

Photo: Sharon Niederman  
for the New Mexico Beef Council

This is the second year of the program which began as an expansion of the research and education agreement between the New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service and the Valles

Caldera Trust. That agreement led to the development of a Livestock and Range Improvement Program that combined genetic improvement of breeding lines for high altitude grazing with a range conservation and restoration strategy to provide a direct benefit to local cattle growers. Those strategies continue to be employed on the Valles Caldera and are now studied by the campers.

“The camp is tailored to introduce participants to new concepts and ideas, advanced technologies, and applied skills that are used on commercial beef cattle operations,” said Encinias. “They learned state of the art practices and techniques that they can employ when they become ranch owners and managers.”

The campers received receive college level instruction in areas of veterinary medicine, cattle marketing, wildlife management and range management among other areas of instruction. They also had a visit from New Mexico Department of Agriculture Secretary, Jeff Witte who was impressed with the camp and the students.



**NMDA Secretary Jeff Witte Visits with Campers**

Photo: Sharon Niederman for the New Mexico Beef Council

“What a great group and fantastic experience for our future producers and industry leaders,” said Witte. “The enthusiasm and commitment these young people have for the ranching way of life points the way to a bright future for New Mexico Agriculture.”

Partnering with the Extension Service in providing the camp are New Mexico Beef Council, Beef Industry Improvement of New Mexico, the New Mexico Cattle Growers Association and the Valles Caldera Trust. For more information on the New Mexico Youth Management Ranch Camp go to the camp website at <http://nmyrm.nmsu.edu/>.