



**Robbie LeValley**

### **CLUB 20 Agriculture Chairman**

Robbie LeValley is the Chairman of CLUB 20's Agriculture Committee. With a lifetime of experience in agriculture and over a decade in agriculture extension, Robbie is widely respected as the Extension Agent for Livestock & Pasture for the counties of Delta, Montrose, Mesa and Ouray. Robbie submits the following snapshot of the importance of agriculture in Colorado.

Agriculture is a 4.5 billion dollar industry in the state of Colorado. Agricultural lands not only provide inexpensive and high quality food for Coloradoans, they provide benefits to society that do not commonly trade in the marketplace but are important to our way of life, just the same. Colorado's farm and ranchlands are some of the state's most valuable assets; the loss of this scenic open space impacts Coloradoans quality of life as well as threatens those who profit economically from Colorado's natural landscape. It is estimated that 80% of Colorado's wildlife spend a least a portion of their life on private lands.

#### **Economic**

- 33% of Colorado counties report that agriculture Municipal budgets will be tightly squeezed. Large lot rural developments in Colorado represent \$1.65 in infrastructure costs for every tax dollar they bring in; private agricultural land provides almost double the revenue than it costs to deliver their services.
- \$550 million in revenue from the tourism industry will be threatened. Statistics from Gunnison County visitors indicate that 58% of tourists would limit their visits to the area if the farms and ranches were transformed into developments. (*Losing Ground: Colorado's Vanishing Agriculture Landscape*. April 2006. Environment Colorado).

Agriculture is a critical and steady component of many Colorado counties, however, the economic contribution to Western Slope counties is often not known or valued. The CLUB 20 Agriculture committee can lead the way by continuing to address Ag issues, relaying the importance of Ag, and increase the economic opportunities for Ag.