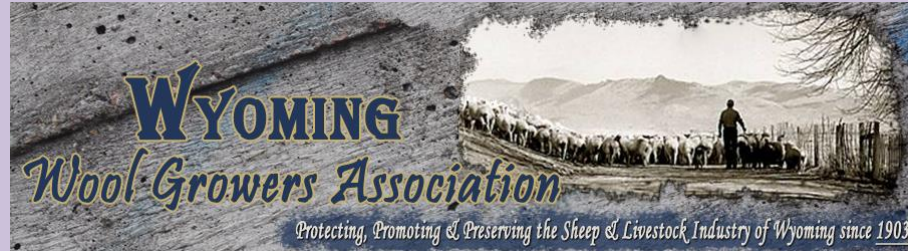


# Social and Economic Characteristics of Public Land Ranchers Nationally and in Wyoming

By: Bree Lind  
University of Wyoming

# Project Participation



**Wyoming State Grazing Board**



*Wyoming County Commissioners Association*

**Wyoming Public Lands Council**

# Why?

- ❖ Public land agencies need justifiable socio-economic information to use in policy documents (e.g. EIS, EA) and management decisions
- ❖ Understanding the diversity of ranchers will emphasize that a one-size-fits-all solution is not feasible

# Gentner and Tanaka (2002) Survey

- Determined 8 different rancher groups in western states
- Looked at reactions to potential changes in public land policy
- Followed similar survey methods in this study



# Research Question

**What are the different types of public land ranchers nationally and in Wyoming; how do these rancher groups compare to one another?**

# Objectives

To obtain statistically valid information at a national and Wyoming scale on the economic and social attributes of public lands ranchers

To understand how involved ranchers are in their local communities both economically and socially

To understand ranchers' responses to policy changes

# Survey Questions

- Questions were developed using three focus groups
  - PLC Rancher Focus Group
  - University Focus Group
  - Agency Focus Group
- Permittee lists were provided by BLM and Forest Service
- Followed methods established in Dillman et al. 2009
- IRB approval



# Sample Size

## – National:

- Population 19,735
- 37.2% response rate

## – Wyoming:

- Population 2,319
- 47.5% response rate



# Cluster Attributes

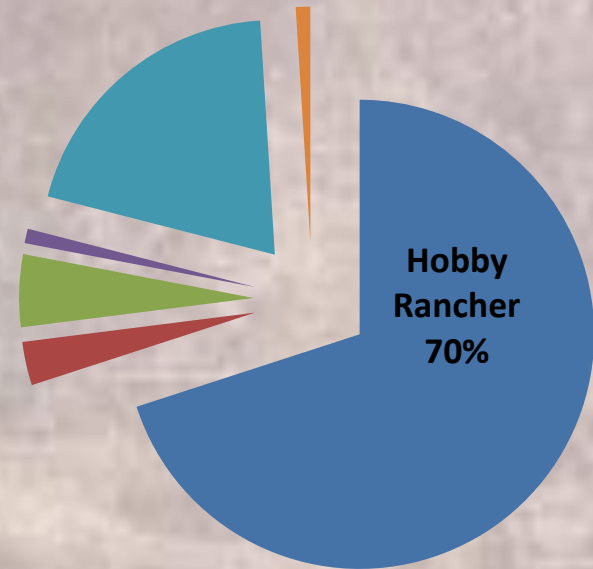
- **Values**
  - TRADITION
  - FAMILY
  - ECONOMY
  - STEWARDSHIP
  - FRIENDS
  - PROFIT
  - FOOD
  - PASS
- **Debt-asset**
- **Labor (months)**
  - Family
  - Hired
- **Business Organization**
  - Sole Proprietorship
  - General Partnership
  - Limited Partnership
  - S-corporation
  - C-corporation
  - LLC

# Cluster Attributes

- **Ranch Income**
  - Ranching
  - Ag Commodities
  - Custom Work
  - Forestry
  - Off-Ranch Employment
  - Retirement Income
  - Stock Market
  - On-Ranch Recreation
  - Energy Development
  - Other
- **Livestock Numbers**
  - Cow-Calf
  - Yearling
  - Stocker
  - Sheep
  - Horses
  - Other
- **Education Level**
- **Community Membership and Leadership**

# Hobby Rancher

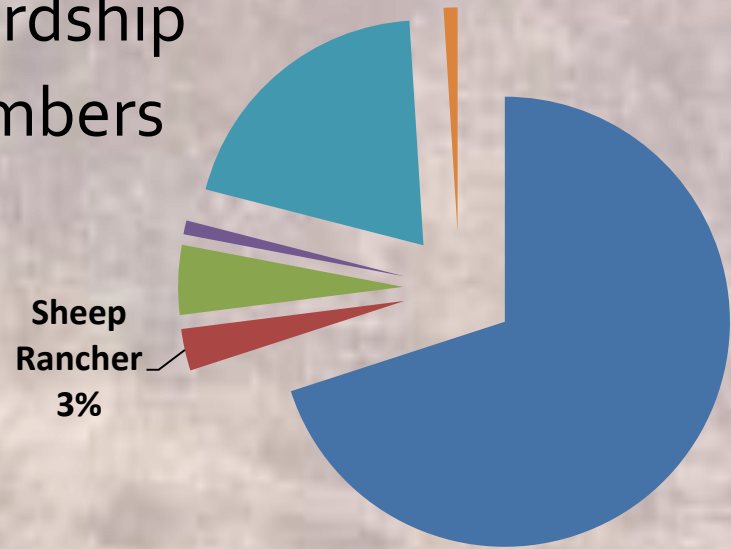
- **Value:** Tradition
- **Livestock:** Cattle < 100 head
- **Income:**
  - 43% Ranch
  - 19% Off-ranch
  - 11% Retirement
- **Community Membership:** 3  
**Community Leadership:** 1





# Sheep Rancher

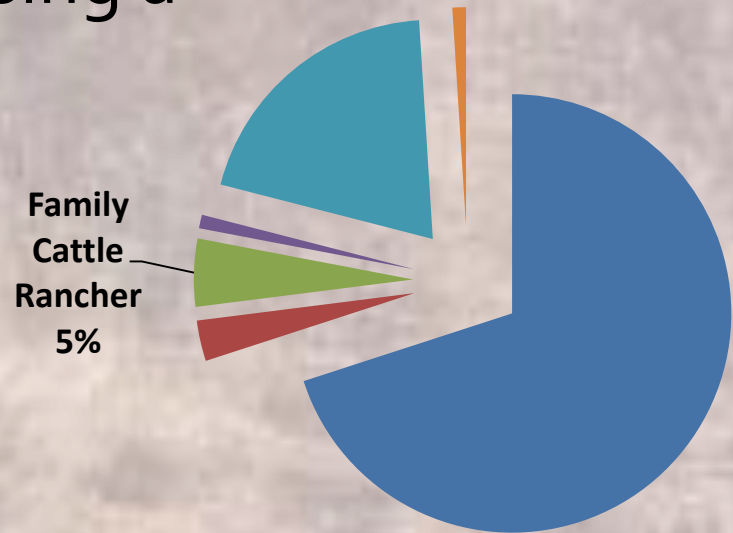
- **Value:** Tradition and Stewardship
- **Livestock:** Large sheep numbers
- **Income:**
  - 55% Ranch
  - 7% Ag Commodities
  - 9% Off-ranch
  - 6% Investments
- **Community Membership:** 4
- **Community Leader:** 2





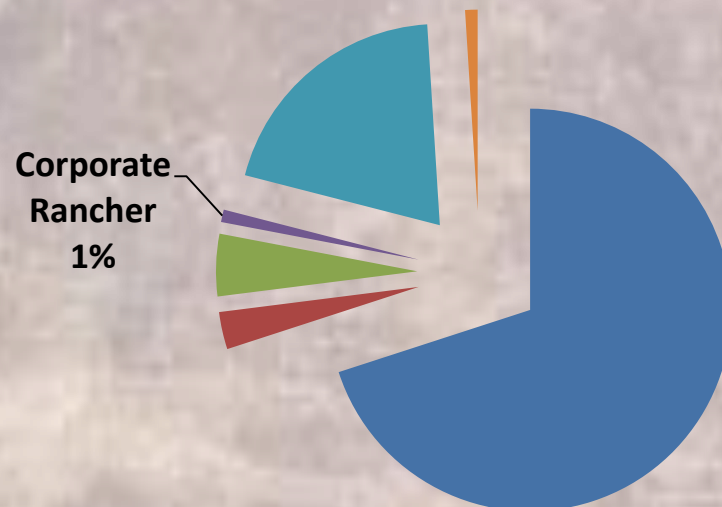
# Family Cattle Rancher

- **Value:** Tradition and Raising a family
- **Livestock:** Large cattle numbers
- **Income:**
  - 69% Ranch
  - 7% Off-ranch
- **Community Membership:** 4
- **Community Leadership:** 2



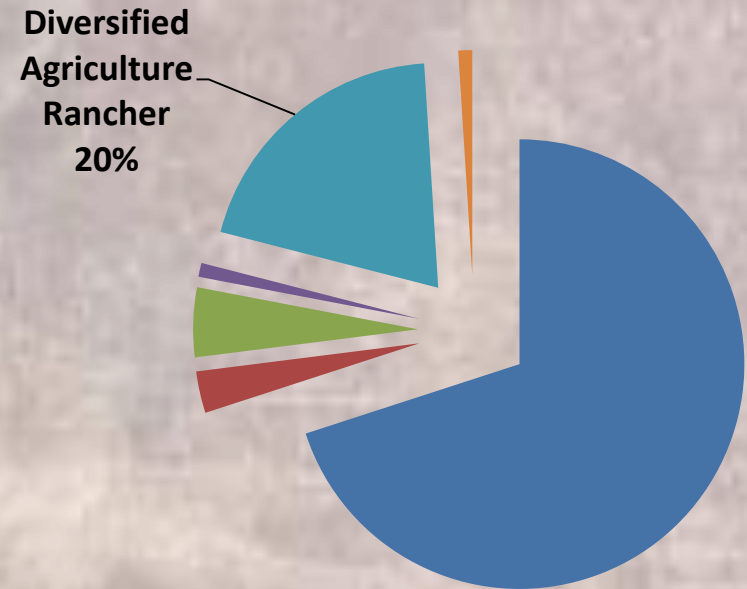
# Corporate Rancher

- **Value:** Stewardship
- **Livestock:** Large cattle numbers
- **Income:**
  - 64% Ranch
  - 8% Ag commodities
  - 8% Other income
- **Community Membership:** 4
- **Community Leadership:** 1



# Diversified Agriculture Rancher

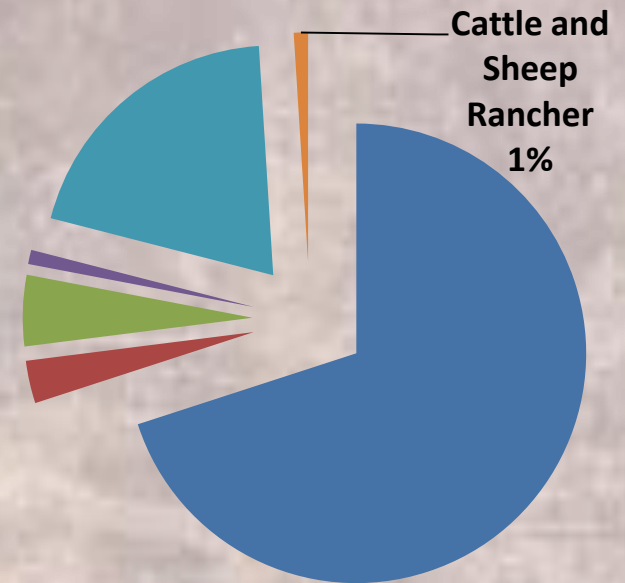
- **Value:** Stewardship
- **Livestock:** <500 head of cattle
- **Income:**
  - 62% Ranch
  - 15% Off-ranch
  - 4% Retirement
  - 3% Ag commodities
  - 2% Forestry
- **Community Membership:** 3
- **Community Leadership:** 2





# Cattle and Sheep Rancher

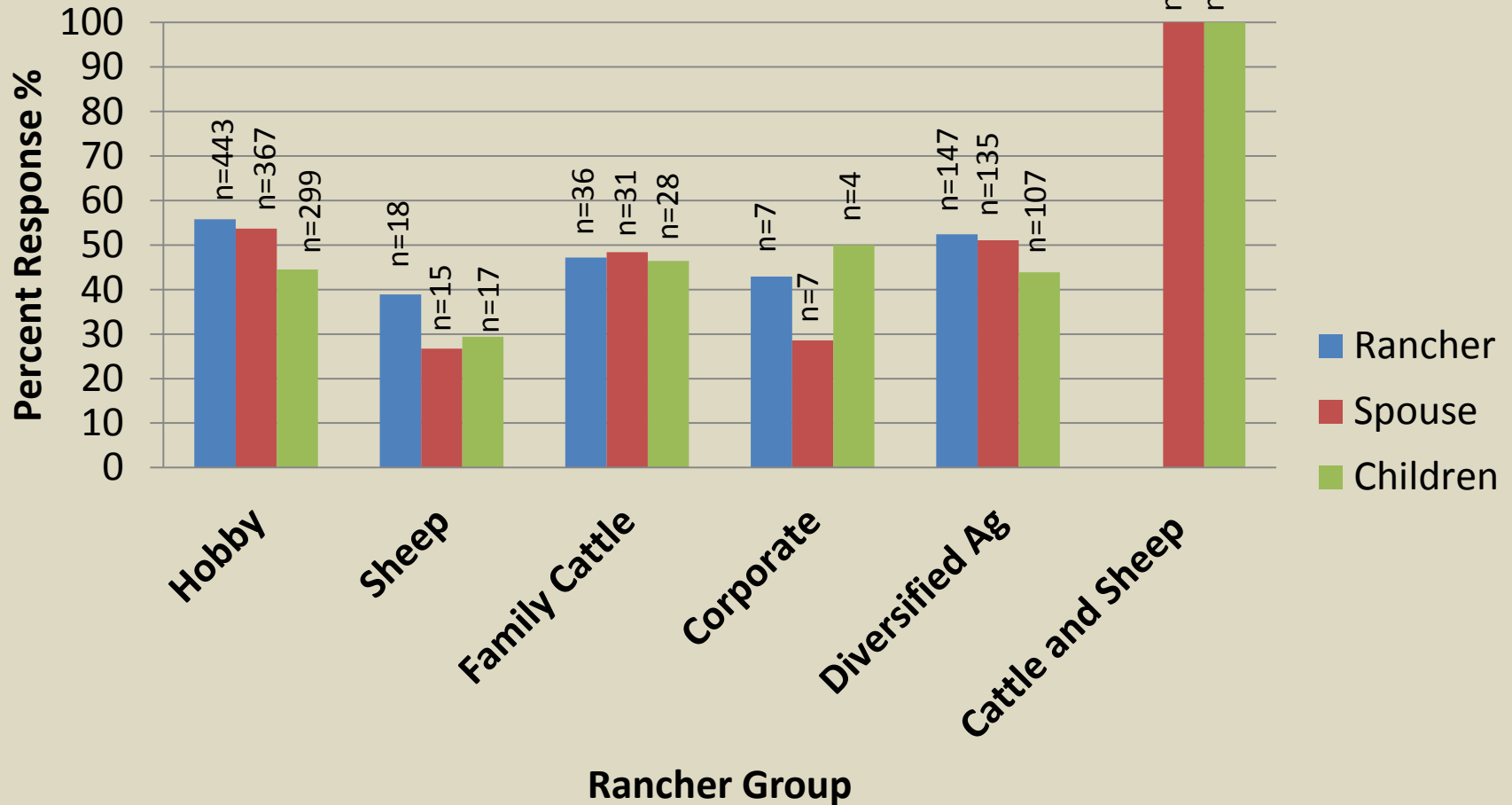
- **Value:** Tradition
- **Livestock:** Large numbers of cattle and sheep
- **Income:**
  - 98% Ranch
- **Community Membership:** 3
- **Community Leadership:** 1



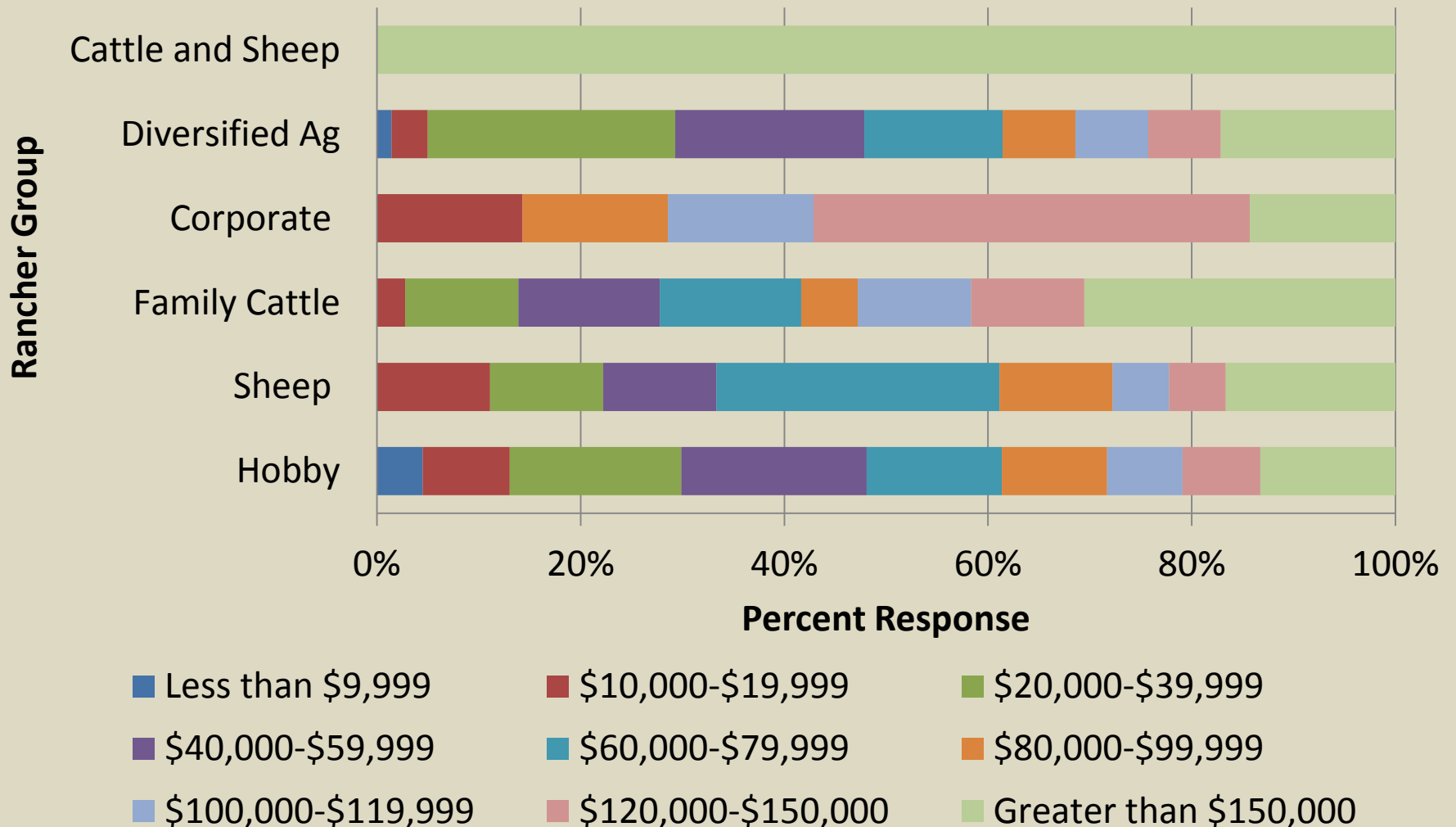


# Social Organizations

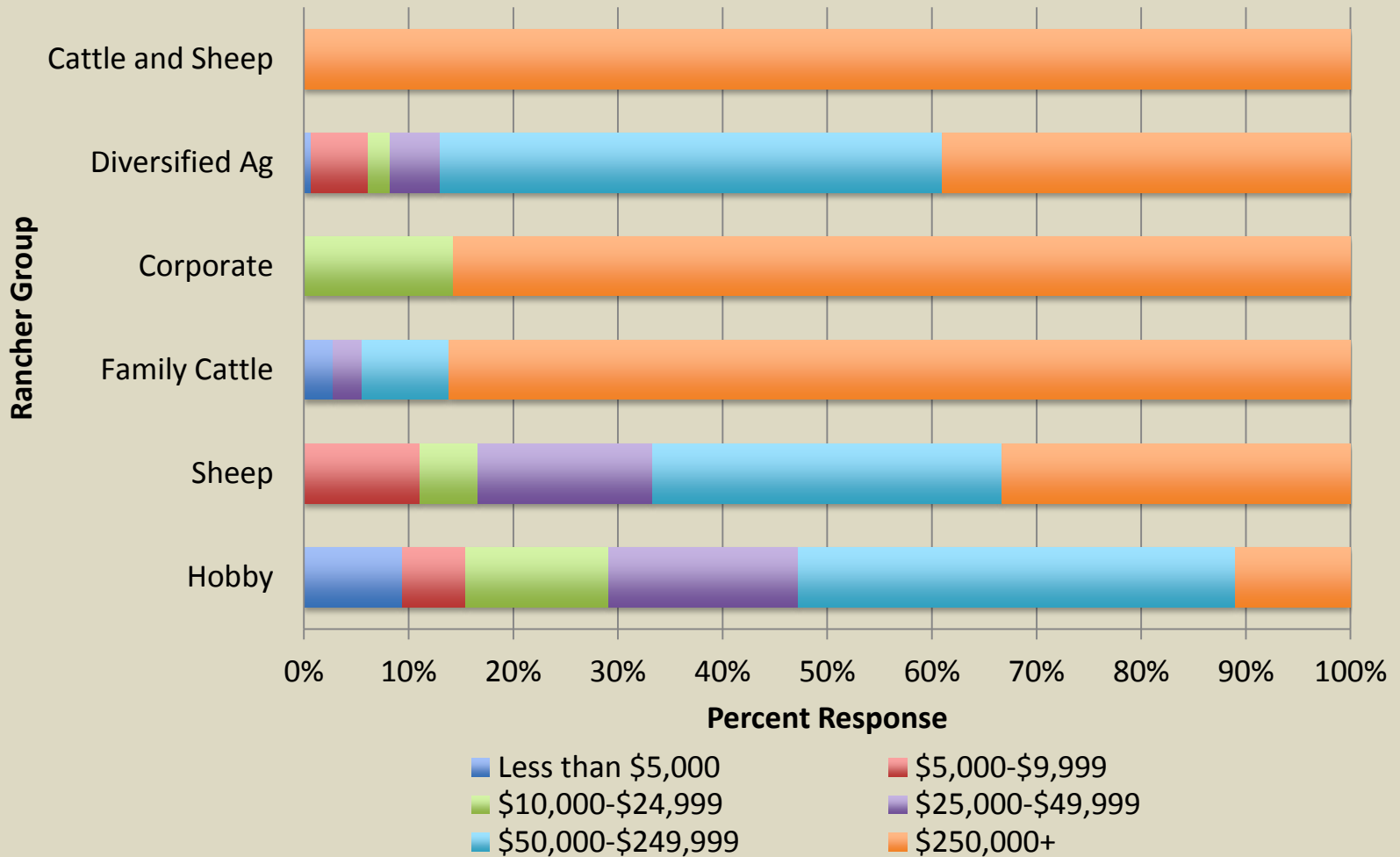
## 1-3 Social Organizations



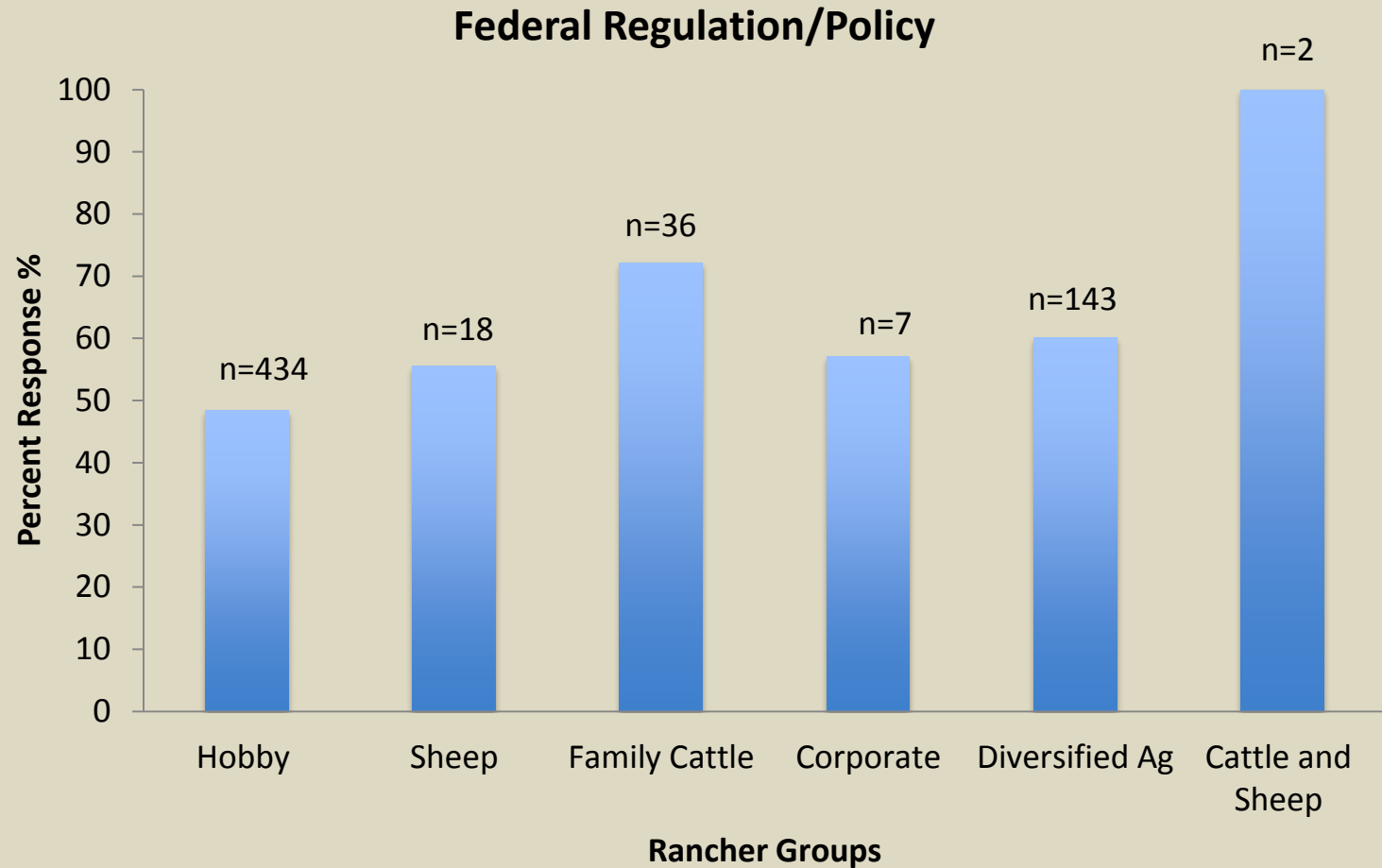
# Household Income



# Livestock Sales

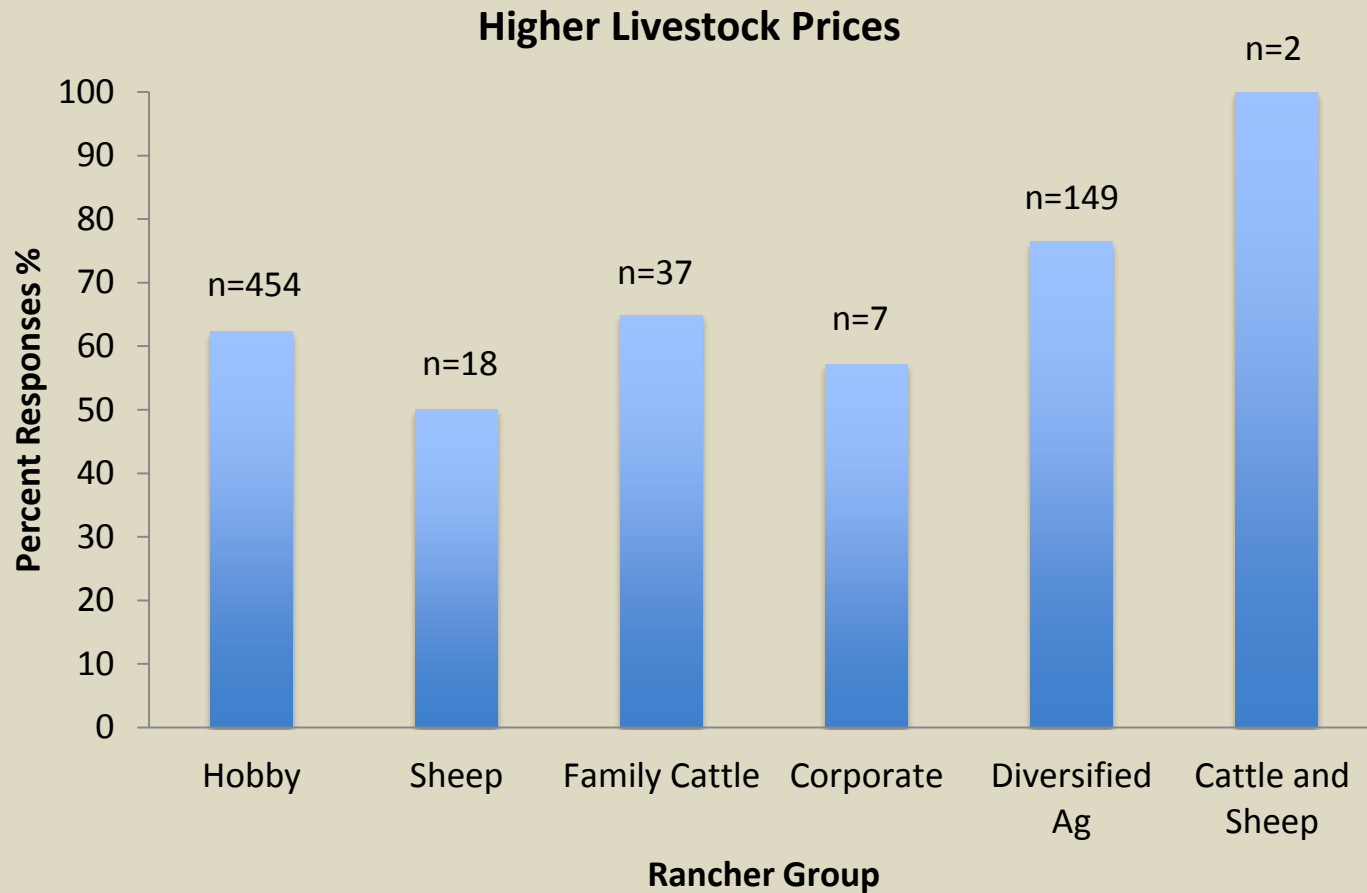


# Threat





# Positive Impacts

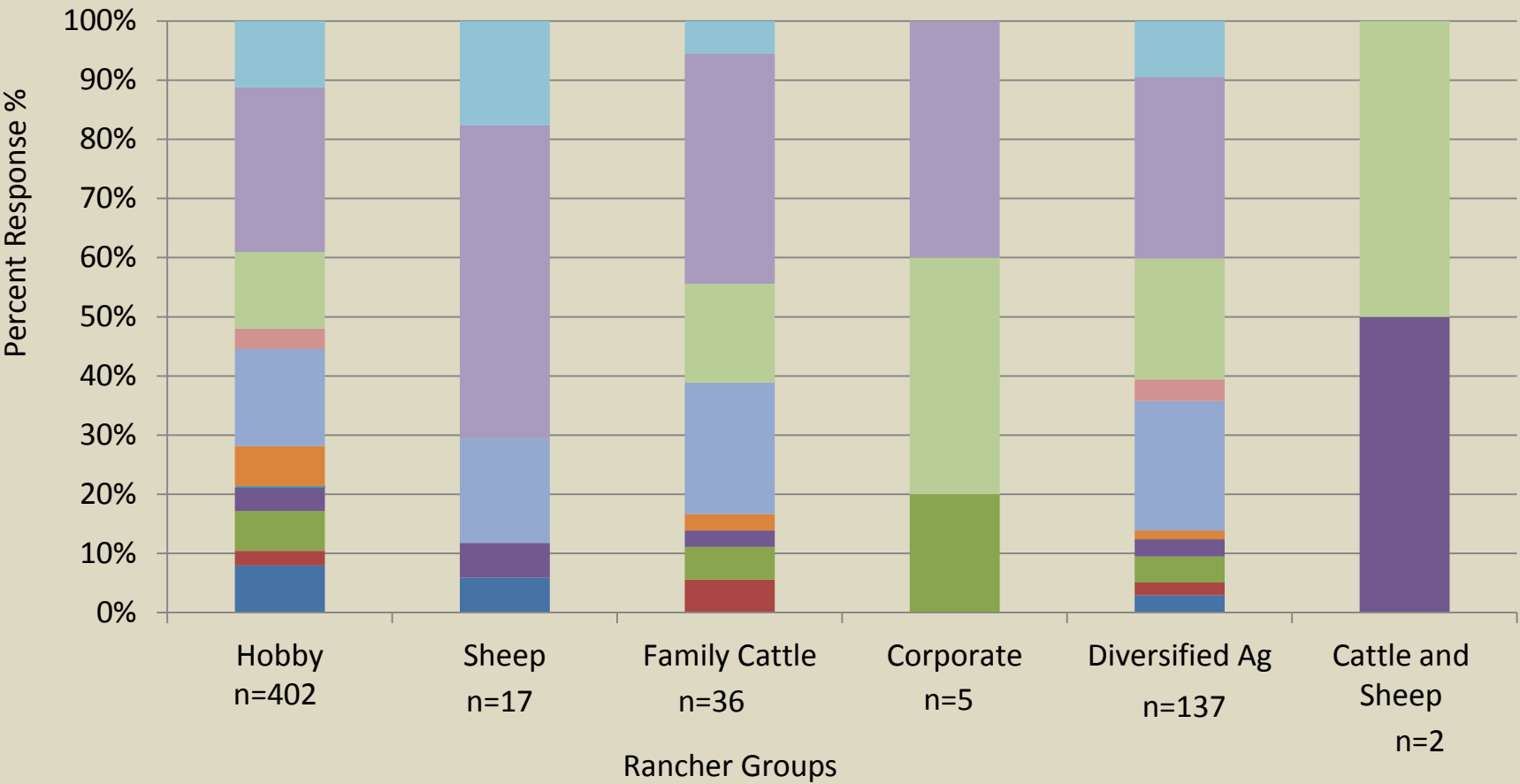


# Policy Questions

## Strategies

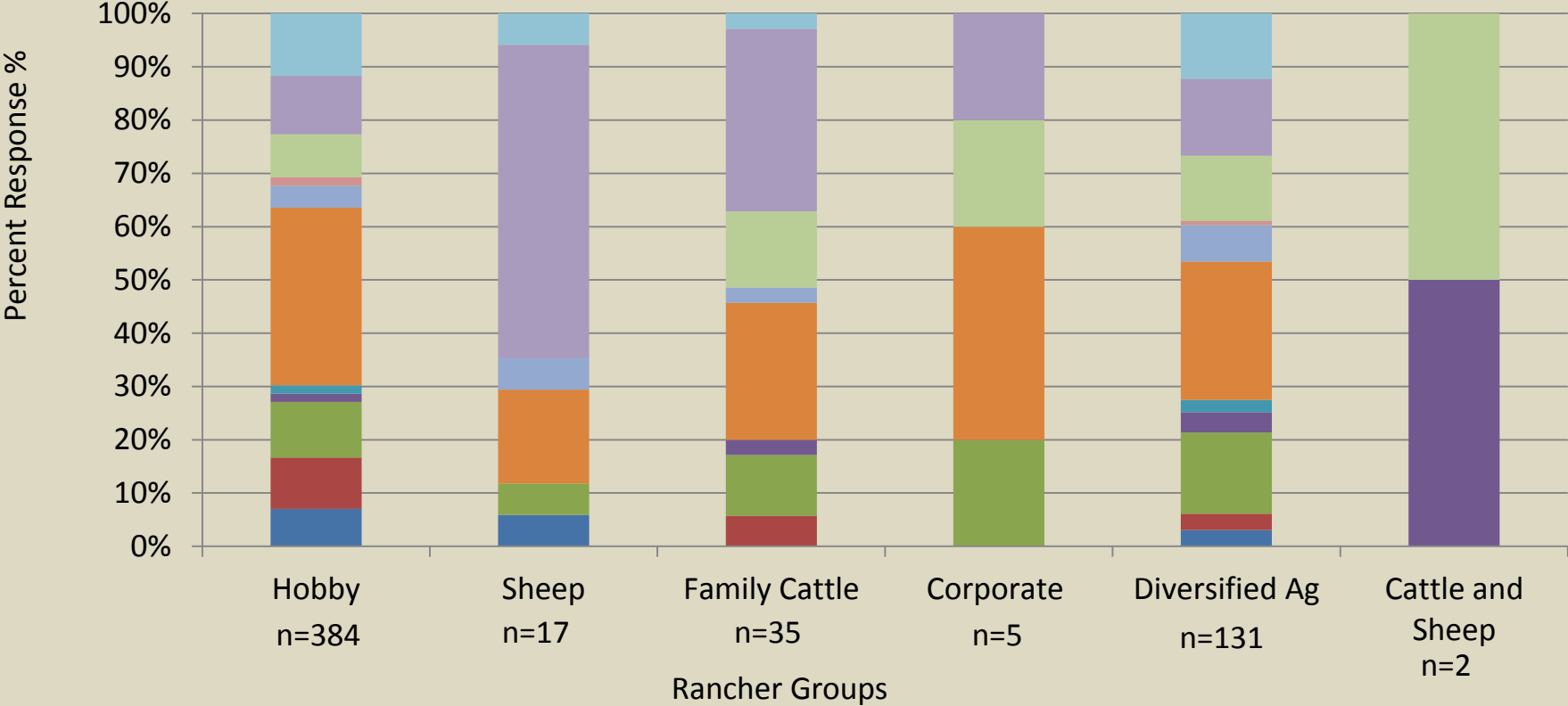
1. Pass the operation on to family members
2. Continue what you are currently doing because you don't have the resources to change
3. Intensify use of private grazing land
4. Diversify on the ranch
5. Increase herd size
6. Current operation will work in the future
7. Sell or lease land
8. Diversify off-ranch
9. Buy or lease more private grazing land to expand operation
10. Cut back on livestock production or decrease herd size
11. Other

# 100% AUM Reduction



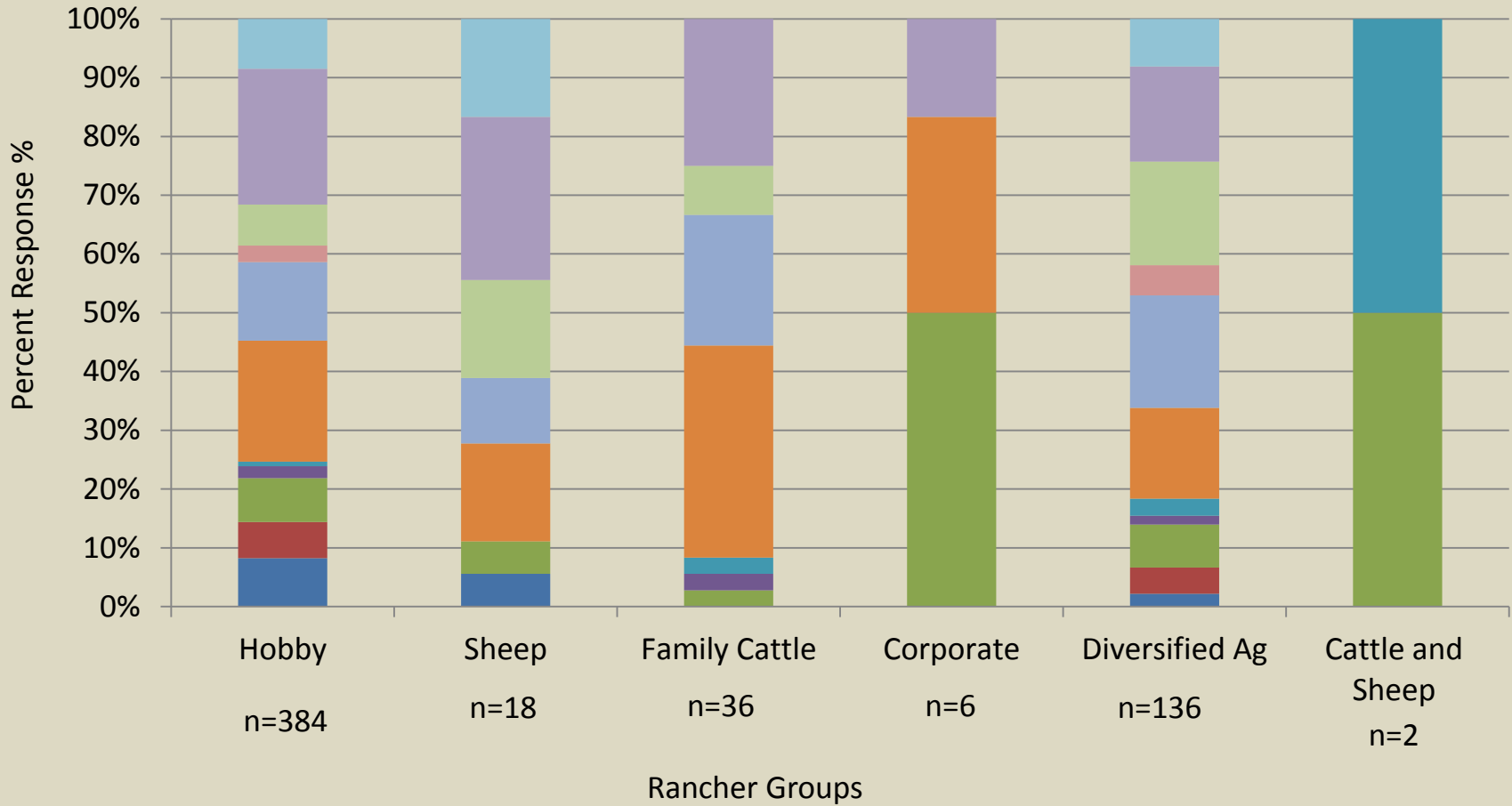
- Pass operation
- Continue current operation
- Intensify
- Diversify on ranch
- Increase herd size
- Current operation works in future
- Sell or lease land
- Diversify off-ranch
- Buy or lease private
- Cut back
- Other

# Spring Grazing Season



- Pass operation
- Continue current operation
- Intensify
- Diversify on ranch
- Increase herd size
- Current operation works in future
- Sell or lease land
- Diversify off-ranch
- Buy or lease private
- Cut back
- Other

# \$8+ Grazing Fee



Pass operation

Intensify

Increase herd size

Sell or lease land

Buy or lease private

Other

Continue current operation

Diversify on ranch

Current operation works in future

Diversify off-ranch

Cut back

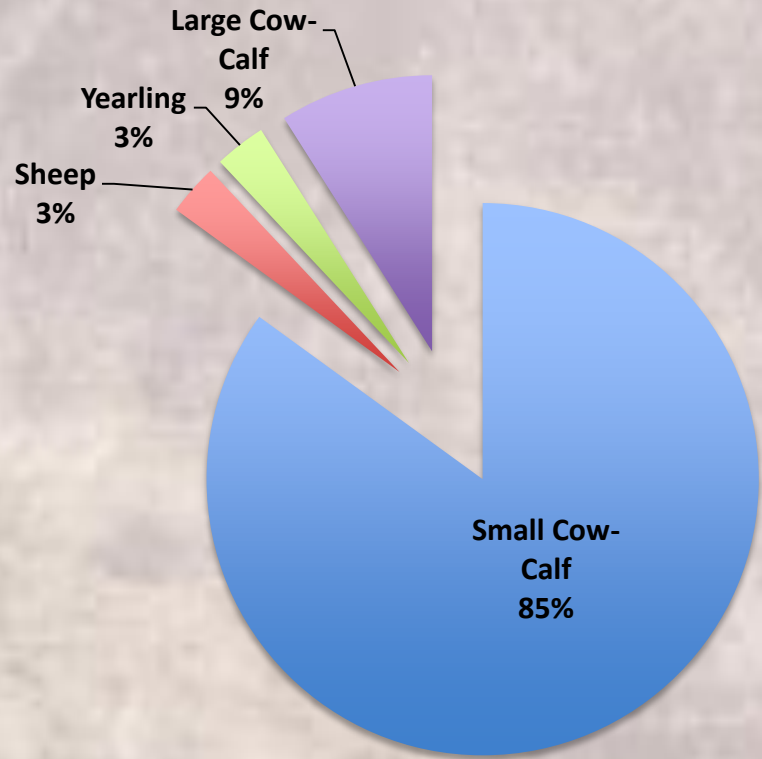


# Wyoming Results



# Wyoming Rancher Groups

- Four rancher groups in Wyoming
  - Small Cow-Calf Rancher
  - Sheep Rancher
  - Yearling Rancher
  - Large Cow-Calf Rancher
- All value tradition
- <40% of income from ranch
- Bachelor's Degree



# Western Custom and Culture

Public Hunting and Fishing Occasional Culture Erosion

**Livestock** Wyoming **Neighbors** Income **Family**

Traditional Ways **Cattle** Future Generations

**Ranch** Western Way of Life **Horses** Birds **Land**

Annual **Open Space** Modern Local Produce

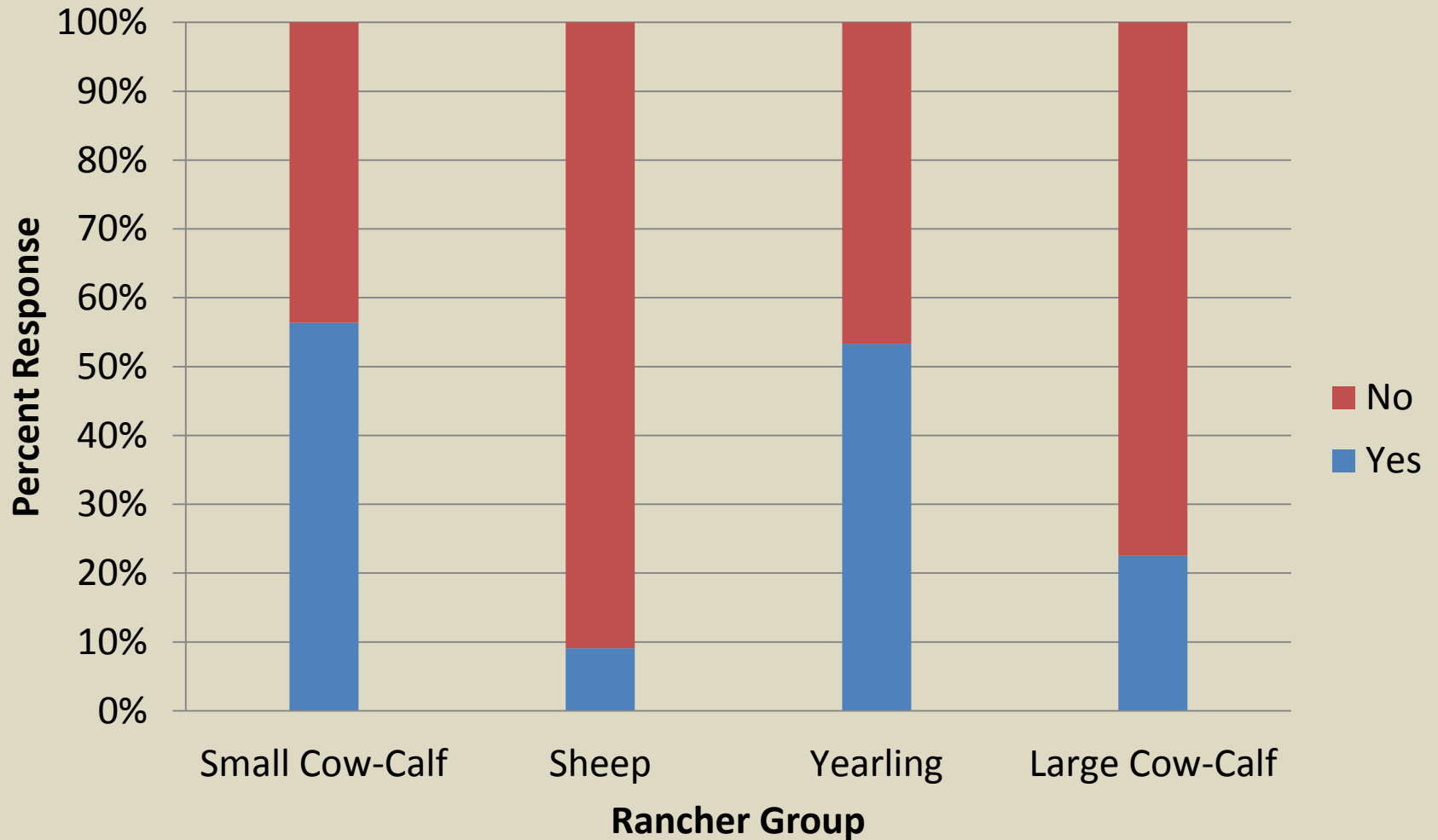
Contribute Recreation Providing Food Remain

# Economic Vitality

**Family** Returned Shop Million Land Raise Food Contribute  
Open Spaces **Wyoming** Local Charities **Community** Produce  
**Buy Local** Resources **Taxes** Quality **Ranch** Purchase Our  
Supplies **Business** Public **Money** Energy **Income** Mineral  
**Employment** School District **Labor**



# Ranch Viability



# Conclusion

- Public land ranchers across the nation are diverse
- Economics of rancher operations are diverse
- Ranchers are involved in their local communities and hold leadership roles
- Responses to public land policy change are diverse showing the heterogeneity of public land ranchers

# Thank you!

- Public Lands Council
- Bureau of Land Management
- USDA Forest Service





Questions??

