

## **LeVALLEY RANCH RECEIVES STATE AWARD**

**THE COLORADO SECTION OF SOCIETY FOR RANGE MANAGEMENT (SRM) RECENTLY PRESENTED THE LeVALLEY RANCH OF HOTCHKISS WITH THE EXCELLENCE IN RANGELAND CONSERVATION AWARD. THE AWARD WAS PRESENTED ON DECEMBER 1 AT THE SRM ANNUAL MEETING IN GRAND JUNCTION.**

**FOUNDED IN 1914 ON THE FRUITLAND MESA NEAR HOTCHKISS, THE RANCH IS OPERATED BY THE THIRD GENERATION OF LeVALLEYS. BROTHERS MARK AND HANK, TOGETHER WITH MARKS' WIFE ROBBIE ARE HAVE SEEN MANY CHANGES IN THE LAND OVER THE LAST DECADE. BEST OF ALL, THEY ARE TEACHING THE FOURTH GENERATION, JAMES, RYAN AND ROSS TO TAKE GREAT PRIDE IN CARING FOR BOTH THEIR PRIVATE AND LEASED LAND.**

**THE LeVALLEY GRAZING ROTATION ALLOWS FOR NO MORE THAN TWO WEEKS OF GRAZING IN ANY ONE PASTURE. THIS GRAZING STRATEGY IS SUPPORTED BY 17 MILES OF STOCK WATER PIPELINE. THIS PIPELINE FEEDS EIGHT WATER TANKS ACROSS THEIR BLM ALLOTMENT. THREE GUZZLERS WERE ALSO BUILT SPECIFICALLY FOR SAGE GROUSE.**

**BY CONTROLLING BOTH THE TIME AND TIMING OF LIVESTOCK GRAZING, THE LeVALLEYS HAVE A VARIETY OF COVER HEIGHTS AND TYPE ACROSS THE LANDSCAPE. THIS IN TURN PROVIDES FOR THE VARIOUS COVER NEEDS OF THE SAGE GROUSE. IN FACT, ALL OF THE LeVALLEY LANDS MEET OR EXCEED THE COLORADO STATEWIDE GUNNISON SAGE GROUSE MANAGEMENT PLAN.**

**THE LeVALLEY'S ARE DEEPLY INVOLVED IN MANY COMMUNITY AND STATE WIDE ORGANIZATIONS. THEY ARE A FULL PARTNER IN HOMESTEAD MEATS, A USDA INSPECTED PROCESSING PLANT. BIG GAME AND SMALL GAME BIRD HUNTING IS ALSO PART OF THEIR OPERATION.**

**THE EXCELLENCE IN RANGELAND CONSERVATION AWARD IS GIVEN ANNUALLY TO AN INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP BY THE COLORADO SECTION OF SRM. THE RECIPIENTS MUST DEMONSTRATE EXCEPTIONAL SKILL AND KNOWLEDGE IN PRACTICING SOUND MANAGEMENT OF RANGELANDS IN THE STATE OF COLORADO.**