

# Governor Ritter signs three new ag bills

by Bert Entwistle  
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On Wednesday, May 14, the Capital looked a bit like the old West with cowboys lined up on horseback in front of the West entrance. Among the cowboys was Governor Bill Ritter on a mount provided by the Colorado Horse Council, the group that first came up with the idea for Support The Horse. Senate Bill 178, sponsored by State Senator Jim Isgar, and State Representative Marcia Looper, provides Colorado horse enthusiasts a new license plate with a horse logo.

Ritter said, "This bill creates a special license plate that acknowledges the unique contribution the horse industry makes to our economy and our culture. Fees generated by the sale of this license plate will benefit the Colorado Horse Authority and the Colorado horse industry. The Colorado horse industry accounts for more than \$440 million in economic activity."

The Colorado horse industry has a total economic impact of \$1.6 billion

across the state. The state has more than 256,000 horses owned by some 55,000 owners across the state, accounting for more than 20,000 related jobs.

Senate Bill 201, sponsored by Senator Isgar and Representative Curry, is designed to phase out over the next 10 years the practice of using confining crates for veal calves and pregnant hogs. This bill, worked on by the livestock industry and the animal protection community and Colorado Agriculture Commissioner, John Stulp, was praised by all parties involved for helping to reach a consensus on this issue.

House Bill 1399, sponsored by Senator Isgar and Representative Buescher provides for interest revenue from the Unclaimed Property Fund to be directed to agriculture related needs like fighting invasive weeds, agri-tourism promotion the Colorado State Fair and developing alternative energy from agricultural commodities.

Governor Ritter said that Colorado's economic well being depends to a great extent on the health of our states agricultural sector. "I think these bills will help us enhance the role that it plays in our economic development. Overall, agriculture is a \$16 billion a year industry in Colorado, it generates more than 100,000 good jobs in Colorado. It is clearly one of the most important economic sectors in the state and I don't just say that just because my background was in farming."

After the ceremony the Governor joined horse owners from all over the state for a photo op, and looked pretty comfortable in the saddle — even though a suit and tie were his working clothes for the day. ❖



**Governor Ritter on horseback with a few Colorado cowboys that turned out in support of the bill.**





**Governor Ritter signs the *Support The Horse* bill.**

**Governor Ritter and Colorado Horse Council Executive Director Brian Kitchen head for their mounts after the signing.**

