

THE REALITY OF RECRUITING THE NEXT GENERATION OF AG PROFESSIONALS

Wyoming ranchers face many challenges to operating a sustainable ranch. Wyoming's climate creates unique challenges and necessitates that a ranch manager be extremely competent in managing range and pasture resources. Limited access to markets and end consumers also increases the amount of management skill and commitment needed from a Wyoming rancher. Additionally, Wyoming's unique landscapes and terrain require producers to pay close attention to their herd genetic base. Finally, land prices and values, make it very difficult to get started in ranching and can reduce the margin for error as a rancher.

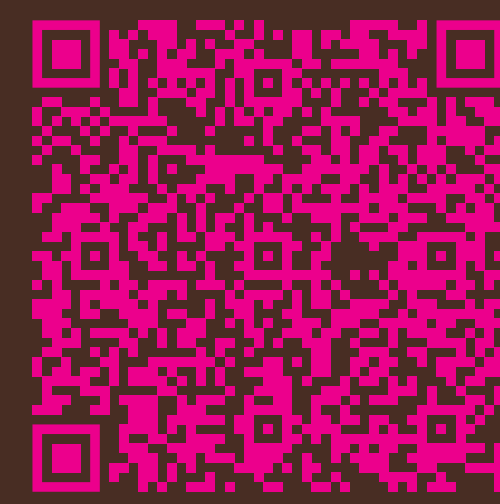
With experience, producers facing the challenges can be daunting. It is imperative that young and beginning producers be given opportunities to hone and practice their skills to better prepare them for these challenges. Helping ranchers meet these challenges is not only important for the individual ranchers but is also critical to the sustainability of Wyoming communities. Recently several regional economic impacts studies have been completed that look at the impacts to Wyoming communities when ranch enterprises are lost. All these regional impact analyses have made it very clear that many, if not nearly all, Wyoming communities would struggle without vibrant ranching enterprises.



Scan for scenes from
Ranch Camp 2021 on YouTube



Scan for the
Ranch Camp 2024 Brochure



Scan for the
Ranch Camp 2024 Application

WHAT IS THE WYOMING RANCH CAMP?

The Wyoming Ranch Camp concept provides an experiential, in depth learning experience targeted towards recent high school graduates and college-age young adults. Each year, a new class of participants spends five days on a long-established diversified Wyoming ranch. During those five days, participants tour the operation and learn about the many aspects of working on and managing a ranch. Participants are exposed to realities on the ranch and gain firsthand education from UW Extension Educators & Specialists and other industry professionals. Topics such as ranch economics, meat science, animal science, ranch recreation, and rangeland management are covered each day in addition to participating in hands-on learning opportunities provided by the host ranch (i.e., processing/handling cattle, docking lambs, artificial insemination, etc.)

WHO IS WYOMING RANCH CAMP FOR?

Ranch camp is designed for agriculture's upcoming generation to obtain skills necessary to help tackle some of the hard and challenging decisions that all producers face. This can include, recent high school graduates, college students, and current Ag professionals.

HOW PARTICIPANTS ARE SELECTED

Participants apply for the program by submitting an application and statement of interest essay to a member of the planning committee. Nominations from individuals or local groups help identify participants.

PRESENTATION OF RANCH PLANS

Throughout the camp, teams of participants compete to develop a complete ranch plan for the host ranch. Participants utilize the information they are taught throughout the week to create their plans. Plans are evaluated by principal educators and ranch managers. Members of the winning team receive scholarships and monetary awards.

RESULTS

Participants gain applicable knowledge and experience which will help their careers and the future of Wyoming ranches in general. Many participants have reported that skills learned at Ranch Camp have helped them obtain jobs and present ideas in professional settings. A 2022 participant student, who had indicated that she had little ranching background, had the winning ranch plan presentation. She has now completed a Masters Degree in agriculture and has recently accepted a position with UW Extension as an Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Educator. Another participant utilized the skills learned in the class to purchase property and create an operational plan to start her own cattle operation. Our team is continuing to monitor the long-term impacts of the Wyoming Ranch Camp.



PARTICIPANTS

- Hosting Ranches: Broadbent Ranch (2021 & 2022) and the Padlock Ranch (2023 & 2024)
- 32 participants (2021-2023): 24 female, 8 male
- Ages: 17-36 years old
- Individual Ag Experience: 23 some to extensive, 9 little to none
- Home states: Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, Montana, Nebraska, Washington, California, and Austria (international student)

RANCH CAMP TOPICS

Day 1: Economics. Basics of a ranch business plan, economic tools for analyzing ranch decisions, and incorporation of risk management into a ranch business plan.

Day 2: Ranch Tour and Ranch Diversification. Benefits of ranch diversification and the importance of managing people not cows.

Day 3: Plant, Soil, and Range Science. Managing pastures and rangelands for long-term sustainability. Calculating and managing stocking rates and grazing timing.

Day 4: Animal Science. Key considerations in managing herd genetics, nutrition, and health.

Day 5: Ranch Plan Day. Presentation by teams of their ranch plan for the host to a panel of Extension personnel and seasoned successful ranchers.



Chance Marshall, University of Wyoming ANR Extension Educator, Fremont County, cmarsha1@uwyo.edu, (307) 332-2363
Hudson Hill, University of Wyoming ANR Extension Educator, Lincoln County, hrhill@uwyo.edu, (307) 885-3132
Barton Stam, University of Wyoming ANR Extension Educator, Hot Springs County, brstam@uwyo.edu, (307) 857-3654
McKenna Julian, University of Wyoming ANR Extension Educator, Uinta County, mbrinton@uwyo.edu, (307) 783-0570