



Growing beginning farmers and ranchers in Wyoming

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) recently announced an investment of over \$50 million to 140 organizations and institutions that teach and train beginning farmers and ranchers.

“Strengthening and growing the pipeline of the next generation of farmers and ranchers is vital to the continued success of American agriculture,” said NIFA Director Carrie Castille. “We recognize that beginning farmers and ranchers have unique needs for education, training, and technical assistance.

“Their success, especially in the first 10 years, often hinges on access to reliable, science-based information and the latest educational resources so they can improve their operations’ profitability and sustainability long-term.

“This investment supports curriculum creation, as well as informational materials and professional development on a wide range of important topics for new farmers and ranchers, such as managing capital, acquiring and managing land, and effective business and farming practices. These projects will benefit a rising generation of beginning farmers and ranchers regardless of their age or production choice,” Castille said.

The Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Wyoming was awarded funding for a Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) project for 2021–2024. The goal of Growing Beginning Farmers and Ranchers in Wyoming is to provide education, mentoring, and technical assistance to offer beginning farmers and ranchers the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to make informed decisions for their operations and enhance their sustainability. The project looks to ensure Wyoming beginning producers are well-informed of risk management alternatives. This allows them to take full advantage of existing insurance products and other risk controls by offering training and resources covering various financial management, risk management, enterprise assessment, and risk analysis topics.

The project’s multidimensional approach will make available training and resources under four broad objectives.

- The project will provide educational opportunities directly to beginning farmers and ranchers through regionally offered on-site programming and online resources;



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- Provide on-site and online educational programs to Wyoming’s new, beginning, and limited resource farmers and ranchers via FFA classrooms and other venues;
- Coordinate and provide hands-on internships on working farms and ranches to Wyoming’s beginning farmers and ranchers each summer in cooperation with state producer organizations and educational institutions; and
- Develop and circulate media-based education on various financial management, risk management, enterprise assessment, and risk analysis topics statewide via articles in agriculture-focused newspapers and producer-organization newsletters.

“We are excited by this opportunity to work with new and beginning operators across the state,” noted John Hewlett, project coordinator and UW Extension ranch/farm management specialist. “There are numerous resources available to help

both get things off on the right foot, as well as keep them running smoothly once up and rolling. We look forward to making those resources better known, as well as putting individuals in touch with needed support via extension and the broader university.”

More information about the project may be found at GrowinG-WY.org or by emailing information@GrowinG-WY.org.

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The Wyoming Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development project will benefit interns with first-hand experience on farms and ranches across the state.



Meridith Nails