

Ten Sleep Ranchers Mentor GrowinG Interns

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Laura and Keith Galloway first read about UW's GrowinG internship program in the local paper.

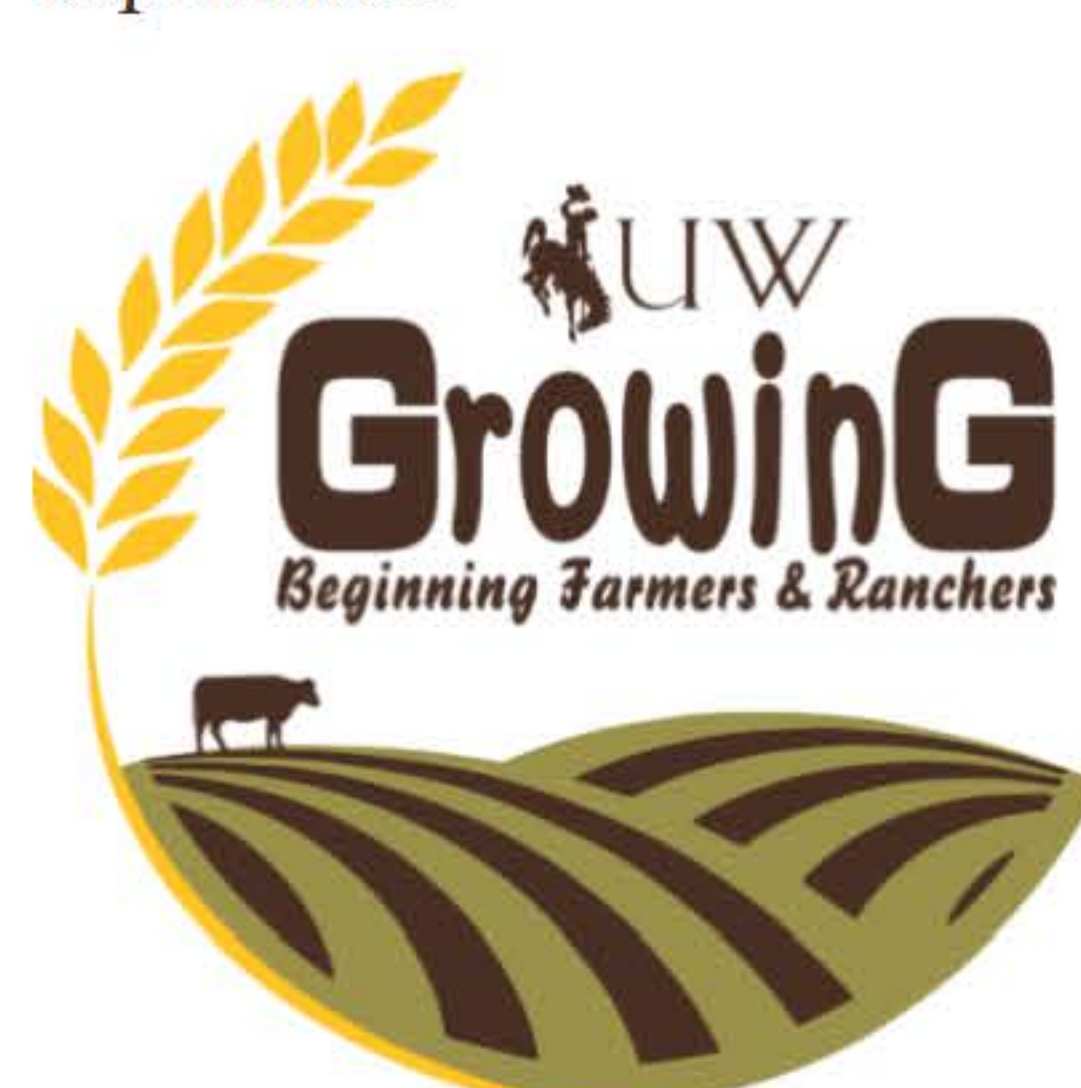
As owners of the Galloway Ranch in Ten Sleep, the couple loved the program's mission, which aims to help interns get hands-on practice with Wyoming agricultural production systems on a host farm or ranch.

"We like to help the kids, teach them what agriculture's about, because that's kind of becoming a lost art these days," says Laura Galloway. "It's good for these kids to get out and have the opportunity to see real-life ranching and farming and what it entails."

The Galloways hosted their first intern in 2022, which was the inaugural year of the GrowinG program. This summer, two interns are spending their days on the Galloway ranch.

An innovative program

The GrowinG internship program, directed by the [UW Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics](#), accepts applications from anyone over the age of 18 with fewer than 10 years of agricultural ownership experience.



Interns are matched with a host operation, which provides room, board, and mentorship for 10 weeks. GrowinG provides the intern a \$5,000 stipend paid over the course of the internship. Interns can arrange to receive college credit, but they do not have to be students—they just need to be interested in learning about agricultural production.

In addition to working with established hosts, interns must attend an educational event that connects them to Wyoming agricultural organizations, such as the summer meeting of the [Wyoming Stock Growers Association](#) or the [Wyoming Sheep and Wool Festival](#).

John Hewlett and Ben Rashford, co-directors of the GrowinG program, note that interns learn from all aspects of the program. "It is easy to tell from our calls to check in with them, their photos and videos, what they report in their weekly work summaries, and what they relate after attending their required educational event, that the interns are continuously learning practical skills throughout their internship," says Hewlett.

Selling steers, fixing pivots, branding bulls

The Galloways expose their interns to all aspects of running a ranch, from working with animals to mechanical repair to bookkeeping. Keith, Laura, and two of their sons each have a different role on the ranch, and each teach the interns about their specific niche.

"It's kind of fun when you're teaching them about irrigation water. It's kind of like a lightbulb comes on: this doesn't come out of the faucet!" says Laura Galloway. "You know you've succeeded when you can watch them comprehend things they didn't realize before."

Laura Galloway works for the U.S. Department of Agriculture [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#), but on weekends she helps the interns learn about recordkeeping, ranch finances, and vaccination. Keith Galloway oversees the overall operation as well as cattle and ranch management. He's showed the interns the ins and outs of everything from 50-mile trail drives on horseback to selling steers through the [Superior Livestock Video Auction](#), among many other tasks.

The interns work with Ethan Galloway on irrigation systems, some mechanical repairs, cattle work, and some farming aspects of the operation. Under Tyson Galloway's supervision, the interns learn firsthand about fencing, livestock water systems, and mechanics.

Conservation conversations

In addition to covering the basics of ranching, the Galloways teach their interns about being stewards of the land.

The Galloways have a long history of improving the land around them. They practice rotational grazing and create irrigation systems that keep the rivers around them healthy. In 2021, they received the [Environmental Stewardship Award](#) from the Wyoming Stock Growers Association for their stewardship efforts.

This summer's interns have helped the Galloways retrofit fences to make them wildlife-friendly, install solar systems, and remove invasive species. Laura Galloway highlighted previous efforts to create sage-grouse habitat in collaboration with the [Bureau of Land Management \(BLM\)](#). The Galloways integrate conservation seamlessly into other ranch tasks.

Ranching challenges

Ronni Owens is one of two GrowinG interns at the Galloway Ranch this summer. She's found the experience has pushed her to do more than she realized she was capable of.



Photo by Ronni Owens.

"[My hosts] have been in the industry a long time and want to share that info with anyone that wants to listen," says Owens. "They know we're learning, and they want to help us learn."

Though working at the Galloway Ranch has been rewarding for Owens, both she and her hosts recognize that the work isn't easy. "We have some long hours. Sometimes we get some complaints, but that's just part of it. We're here to look out for the welfare of the animals and the land," says Galloway. Owens adds wryly, "Cows don't know what weekends are."

Owens will graduate from [Sheridan College](#) in the fall of 2024 with an associate's degree in range management. She plans to pursue a career in range management, but would love to ranch if she found the right opportunity.

"I love the ranching lifestyle. It's the backbone of the US, and unfortunately, it's kind of dying," Owens comments. "Anyone else who gets this opportunity should absolutely jump on it. The connections I've made this summer, it feels like I've got my foot

in the door."

To read more details of what this summer's GrowinG interns are up to, check out the InternTales at [growing-wy.org/post/Intern_Tales](#). Those interested in applying to be an intern or host should submit applications at [growing-wy.org/apply](#) by Feb. 1, 2025.

Contact Kendra Faucett at coordinator@growing-wy.org or (307)-223-5594 with questions.