



SPOTLIGHT

Growing Beginning Farmers & Ranchers in Wyoming



2022

Makenna McGraw

Makenna McGraw began her GrowinG Internship Program eager to gain hands-on ranching experience and explore agricultural career paths. “I saw a flyer in the Ag building and thought this would be a good experience and look great on my résumé,” she shared. The internship took her across two ranches, where she gained invaluable lessons in adaptability, sustainability, and leadership.

A key takeaway for Makenna was the importance of rangeland management. “Without it, not only do livestock suffer, but the whole ecosystem does as well,” she reflected. Practices like exclosures to protect wildlife and grazing areas highlighted how ranchers can balance productivity with environmental stewardship.

She also developed practical skills in livestock health and low-stress cattle handling. Moving cattle in smaller increments, for instance, reduced stress and improved mother-calf bonding, resulting in healthier herds. “Knowing and watching your animals is a priority as a rancher,” she explained.

The internship opened doors for networking with influential figures, including Wyoming’s governor and leading ranchers. “Those connections were inspiring and invaluable,” Makenna said.

Now preparing to graduate, Makenna plans to use these lessons to help her family establish a successful ranch. “This experience was a learning process I’ll use for years to come,” she concluded, praising the GrowinG Internship as a transformative opportunity to grow both personally and professionally.

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