

GROWING-WY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Steady Hands, Slow Lessons: This Summer's Growing Interns

Nine 2026 interns are deep into their ten weeks across Wyoming ranches and farms, from mountain cattle drives to hay fields, sheep camps, and diversified operations. Each week they submit a written reflection on what they did, what they learned, and what they're still puzzling over. Here are a few of their stories.

Rattlesnakes, Storms, and Mountain Trails

One intern spent a week trailing cattle from the hills up to the mountain, entirely on horseback. Sunrises, thunderstorms,

rattlesnakes, and narrow timber trails all made the list, but the lesson that stuck was less dramatic:

"There is no handbook that tells you exactly how to do something."

2026 Growing Intern

how much of a working ranch depends on maintenance and preparation that never makes it into the highlight reel. "The work we completed this week may not have appeared as significant from the outside," they wrote, "but it was necessary to keep the operation running smoothly." They also came away with a new appreciation for horsemanship, watching how much trust exists between a rider and a horse crossing rough country.

Bottle Calves, Branding, and Better Questions

One intern spent part of the internship nursing a bottle calf through a rough recovery and learning to run plant transects,



tallying vegetation across 18 pastures to help evaluate rangeland health. They also attended their first rope-and-drag branding, a contrast to the table branding they'd learned on their own operation. That contrast led to a bigger question: why do agricultural traditions split people so firmly into camps, each certain their method is the only right one? They used the moment to challenge something else too, encouraging seasoned producers to stay welcoming to newcomers, since the industry needs more people willing to learn.

"It was the kind of steady, unglamorous day that keeps everything running."

2026 GrowinG Intern

Fence Building and Finding Balance

When the ground was too rocky to set posts, one host family built a buck-and-rail fence instead, hauling bulky material down a draw by four-wheeler. But the lesson their intern carried past the fence line was about rest. The host family treats Sundays as a day away from ranch work, set aside for family and faith. Watching the family hold to that discipline led the intern to rethink their own habit of putting rest off until the work ran out. "The work will always be there," they wrote, "and that idea gives us even more of a reason to give our bodies and minds a day to relax."

Bales, Broken Gates, and Better Communication

One intern's week landed in the middle of a heat wave, triple-digit temperatures, over 300 bales moved into storage, and irrigation pipe rebuilt by hand. A missed communication about an uncapped irrigation line, left running for days, turned into a lesson about how much a ranch depends on everyone passing along the small details. By week's end, they'd added a different kind of endurance to their skill set: the kind built by finishing physically demanding work in extreme heat without quitting on it.

From Chick Sheds to Cattle

Herding: A Fast-Paced First Week

One intern's first week alone covered chick delivery, rotational grazing, processing sheep and a cow at a local meat facility, egg sales under Wyoming's Food Freedom Act, and flood irrigation. Drawing on prior experience in a university meat lab, they started asking sharp questions early, about processing efficiency, feed strategy for nursing cows, and whether the labor cost of rotational grazing's electric fencing pays for itself. It's the kind of week that sets the tone for a summer of asking why, not just how.

"The trait I want to highlight this week is creativity... by thinking outside of the box, we were able to tackle and solve every issue."

2026 GrowinG Intern

Profit, Planning, and Practical Ranch Work

Not every week was on horseback. One intern spent three days at a school, learning the financial and grazing-management side of the business, then came back to shoe horses and knock out the odd jobs that keep a leased operation running. The two halves of the week reinforced each other: the business school gave them language for decisions they'd already been watching their host make in the field. They closed the week with a question a lot of ranchers wrestle with: how do you weigh long-term herd health against short-term cash flow, especially with the cow market and where it's been the past couple of years.

