



Wyoming Agricultural Leadership Council
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Wyoming ag leadership program in full swing

CHEYENNE, Wyo. - Fourteen Wyoming agricultural producers and agribusiness men and women were chosen from around the state to participate in Class 14 of the Wyoming Leadership Education and Development (L.E.A.D.) program.

The 14-month training program, managed by the Wyoming Agricultural Leadership Council, a non-profit organization, began in November 2015. Throughout the program, fellows participate in 10 educational seminars in an effort to enhance their leadership skills and understanding of all aspects of agriculture and policy making. Eight seminars take place in Wyoming and one is held in Washington, D.C. An international study seminar will be held near the end of the program.

Class 14 participants include:

- **Dustin Burggraff** is a ranch manager for a commercial cow/calf operation near **Burlington**. His goal is to improve the cow herd through an extensive artificial insemination program. He has also focused on producing high quality alfalfa. Dustin and his wife, Lynn, have four boys all under the age of seven.
- **Kelly Curuchet** is a loan officer with First Interstate Bank in **Buffalo**. She grew up on a farm and ranch near Kaycee and continues to be involved with the family sheep operation. She is vice president of the Johnson County Wool Growers Association.
- **Nathan Graves** lives on the family ranch west of **Kaycee**. He is a fifth generation beef producer and is involved in a diversified operation including construction, excavation and outfitting. The Graves Ranch was recognized as a Centennial Ranch for operating in the same family for over 100 years.
- **Sally Gray** of **Douglas** works on her family's ranch near Orin Junction. They run a commercial cow/calf operation that raises Charolais cross cattle. They also raise their own hay. The ranch has been owned and operated by the family for over 130 years.
- **Kate Jackson** of **Chugwater** is a sales associate for State Farm Insurance and has extensive experience in claim handling, marketing and operating small businesses. She and her husband, Craig, are part of the DL Jackson Ranch, a fourth generation family ranch near Chugwater. Kate has served on the Chugwater Economic Development Board and the local Cemetery District.

- **Sarah Kauer-Griffith** of **Laramie** works for the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources within the Department of Ecosystem Science and Management at the University of Wyoming. She currently serves as the Southeast Council representative for the Wyoming Section of the Society of Range Management.
- **James Kruse** of **Lusk** is a geologist for a consulting firm and helps on the family ranch in northern Niobrara County. He is the fourth generation working on the ranch and runs purebred Hereford cattle. James and his wife, Katherine, have two young sons.
- **Brian Lee** of **Torrington** is a research scientist for the University of Wyoming College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and is stationed at the James C. Hageman Sustainable Agriculture Research and Extension Center in Lingle. As an agricultural economist, Brian helps producers become more profitable.
- **Dicksie Michael** of **Powell** works for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in Park County. She comes from a farming/ranching background. She and her son continue to raise Black Angus cattle at the family ranch in Montana. Dicksie is a beef and sheep 4-H leader and serves as sheep superintendent at the Park County Fair.
- **Darla Rhodes** of **Ralston** is the County Executive Director for the Park County Farm Service Agency in Powell. She is the fourth generation that grew up on her family's ranch between Thermopolis and Meeteetse. Darla has been active in the Wyoming Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Rancher program, and served as secretary.
- **Stephanie Rosencranz** of **Beulah**, along with her husband, Ted, own Rosencranz Construction, a company dedicated to serving ag and small businesses. She is the mother of five boys, a certified health specialist and a food advocate. She is active in her local community and has been a 4-H leader for more than 10 years.
- **Joseph Shumway** of **Afton** is a six generation dairy farmer. He is a partner in his family's dairy, Shumway Farms, located just south of Afton in Star Valley. In addition to providing milk, the farm is developing value-added dairy products. Joseph and his wife, Arit, have three children.
- **Forrest Smith** is an entrepreneur and agribusiness man from **Powell**. He is a founder and part-owner of GF Harvest, a gluten-free mill. He is involved with the oat crop from planting to packaging. Forrest is currently serving as secretary of the Powell Chamber of Commerce.
- **Nate Winninger** of **Powell** is a fourth generation rancher that is involved in his family's beef cattle operation. He and his father utilize rotational grazing of beef on irrigated pastures. They recently transitioned from an advanced beef cattle reproduction business.

"I am very impressed with the participants we have in this program," said Cindy Weibel, Wyoming L.E.A.D. Director. "Their diverse backgrounds and experiences enhance the program. The skills, knowledge and personal growth they will gain through the L.E.A.D. program will be a great asset to Wyoming agriculture," Weibel added. Wyoming L.E.A.D. was established in 1984 and thirteen classes, totaling 218 men and women have graduated from the program since its creation. For more information, contact Weibel at 307-214-5080 or wylead@gmail.com



Photo Cutline: L.E.A.D. Class 14 participants include (Back L-R): Joseph Shumway, Afton; Forrest Smith, Powell; Nate Winner, Powell; James Kruse, Lusk; Stephanie Rosencranz, Beulah; Nathan Graves, Kaycee; Dicksie Michael, Powell; Dustin Burggraff, Burlington; Brian Lee, Torrington; Cindy Weibel, Program Director, Cheyenne.

(Front L-R): Kelly Curuchet, Buffalo; Sarah Kauer-Griffith, Laramie; Sally Gray, Douglas; Darla Rhodes, Ralston; Kate Jackson, Chugwater.