



Getting Started in Ag: You CAN Farm Wyoming

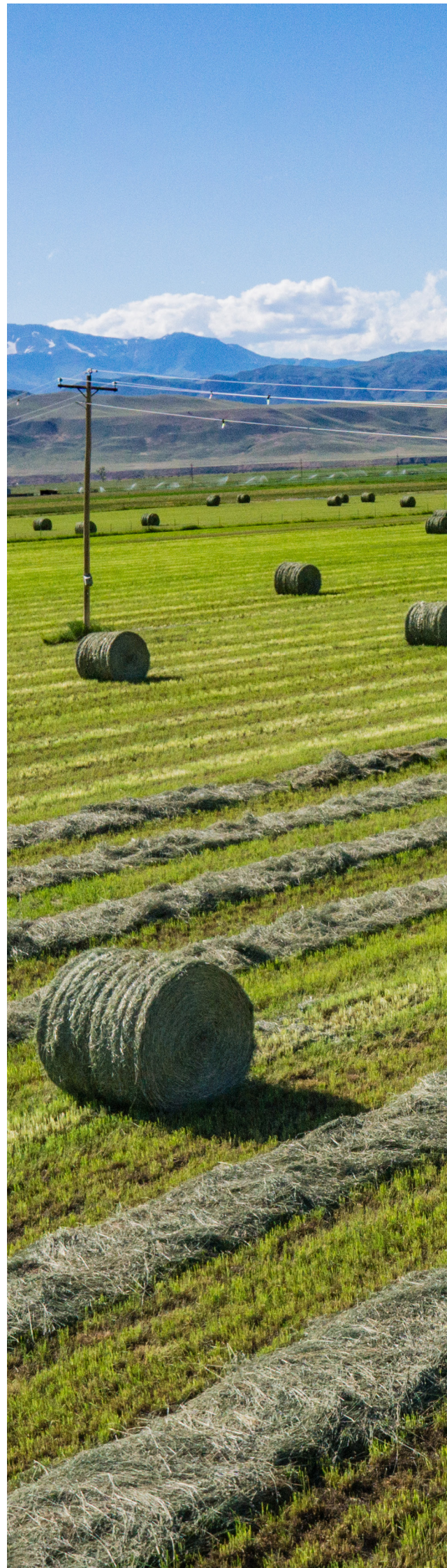


Photo by Ken Kistler

Starting out as a new farmer, rancher or agribusiness person can be tough. There is so much to learn that often must be picked up through experience. To put yourself on a pathway to success and minimize learning “the hard way,” take advantage of resources that share the experience and insight of those who have been through it themselves.

You CAN Farm Wyoming is a web-based resource developed by Custom Ag Solutions and the University of Wyoming Extension. This online community offers a platform where new or aspiring producers can find support, training, and educational resources, as well as mentorship opportunities.

Educational Resources

You CAN Farm provides educational resources on a wide range of topics relevant to beginning producers. Subject areas include business and strategic planning, farm financial management, marketing plans and strategies, and risk management. While many of the topics, like writing a business plan or compiling accurate financial statements, do not represent the glamorous side of farming and ranching, they are often crucial to long-term success.

Another key aspect of learning is gaining firsthand experience. You CAN Farm helps connect new and beginning farmers and ranchers with mentors, providing a wealth of experience and advice.

You CAN Farm Talks

You CAN Farm Talks is a video podcast series where producers and agricultural professionals share their insights and experience on topics they feel are most relevant to those starting out in production agriculture. Guests share their background stories and are asked about the “one thing” they feel is important for beginning farmers and ranchers to know. Several guests from a wide range of agricultural backgrounds have already offered great advice to new producers; many more are scheduled to appear this fall.

Cindy Garretson-Weibel is a business development consultant for Leading Edge Consulting and has advocated for Wyoming agriculture throughout her career in various leadership, marketing and communications roles. In her 2023 You CAN Farm talk, she emphasized the importance of communication at all levels of your business and organization. Developing good communication and networking skills can



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YOUR ONE-PAGE FARM BUSINESS PLAN



open up numerous opportunities for your business and foster important professional relationships.

Guest speaker Todd Fornstrom is a farmer, agribusiness owner and current president of the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation. Fornstrom has served the agricultural community in many capacities in addition to his work with Farm Bureau and emphasizes that connections are all important to building a successful farm business and continuing to learn.

His main message for new and beginning producers is to get involved in the agricultural community, whether through producer associations, local community groups, professional societies or other avenues. Engaging with advocacy groups can help build relationships and offer educational opportunities, as well as providing service to others.

Like Fornstrom and Garretson-Weibel, Keith Kennedy advises new and beginning producers to continue learning as much as possible and to cultivate relationships with people who can help move their business forward. Kennedy is the owner and manager of Agrimind, a consulting company providing executive director services to the Wyoming Ag Business Association and the Wyoming Wheat Marketing Commission. He also lobbies for a variety of ag groups.

Kennedy urges new producers to embrace the financial aspects of their

business. To successfully manage both the input and output side of agriculture, it is critical to know where your business stands financially. This means regularly constructing and analyzing financial statements and making adjustments accordingly.

Guest speaker Amanda Winchester is an agriculture and meat science instructor at Central Wyoming College in Riverton. In her 2023 talk, she provided suggestions for producers looking to use direct and alternative marketing to promote their products, as well as opportunities to capitalize on small meat-processing options to add value to their livestock enterprises. Amanda’s “one thing” is to develop a local focus that benefits both the operation and the local community. There are numerous opportunities for producers to market their livestock locally, opening up a larger potential market, increasing the profit potential per animal, and benefiting the local community by providing a high-quality product and food security.

To view the archived You CAN Farm Talks and other podcasts, visit ycfwyo.com/you-can-farm-talks. The Talks tab offers the option to become a member and participate in live forums as well as interact with the guest speakers and post comments. Additional talks are scheduled to begin in September and run through the winter months.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit You CAN Farm Wyoming at ycfwyo.com to view a series of interviews with individuals involved in different facets of the ag industry, each offering advice for those beginning their journey in the field. Educational resources and information about potential support and mentorship opportunities are also available, providing access to a wealth of information and experience for new and beginning producers.

