



International Year of the Woman Farmer (IYWF): Spotlight

Developed by the U.S. Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (USRSB) in recognition of the International Year of the Woman Farmer (IYWF)

by Karley Williams

Emily Fulstone | *Rooted in Stewardship, Driven by Progress*

As the world recognizes 2026 as the International Year of the Woman Farmer (IYWF), the U.S. Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (USRSB) continues to highlight the women whose dedication, resilience and leadership are shaping the future of agriculture. This month, we are proud to spotlight Emily Fulstone, a seventh-generation rancher whose journey reflects a deep commitment to land stewardship, continuous learning and the grit required to sustain both a legacy and the environment it depends on.

Legacy and Purpose

For Emily Fulstone, ranching is more than an occupation. It's a responsibility carried across seven generations. Her family homesteaded their ranch in Smith, Nevada in 1856, and today, she works alongside her father to continue that legacy. Together, they raise all-natural Angus-Hereford cross cattle while producing high-quality hay for dairies and horses.

Their commitment to stewardship has also been recognized beyond the ranch, with the Fulstone family receiving the [2022 Environmental Stewardship Award Program \(ESAP\) award](#) in recognition of their efforts to protect and improve the natural resources they depend on.

Emily's path back to the ranch wasn't always certain. After graduating from the University of Oregon in 2014 with degrees in environmental science and biology, she initially envisioned a career in habitat restoration and conservation. However, in 2015, her family began a large-scale sage grouse habitat restoration project, drawing her back to the ranch.

What started as an opportunity to contribute quickly became a calling she couldn't leave behind.

A Fresh Perspective

Returning home gave Emily a unique lens to view the family operation, especially with her new training in environmental science. She began to evaluate the ranch not just as a business, but as a living ecosystem.

Recognizing that traditional input-heavy practices were working against more natural systems, Emily led a shift toward regenerative agricultural practices. With research and data to support her vision, she worked with her father to begin implementing changes in 2016.

The results were significant. Within a year, the ranch no longer required pesticides due to reduced pest pressure, and by 2019, they eliminated the use of synthetic nitrogen altogether. These changes not only reduced input costs but also overall productivity.

"This has been one of the most positive changes we've ever made on the ranch," Emily explains, emphasizing the long-term impact of aligning production with natural processes.

Life Shaped by the Seasons

Like many producers, Emily's daily work follows the rhythm of the seasons. From calving and managing winter grazing permits early in the year, to branding, irrigation preparation and hay production in the spring and summer, her role is constantly evolving.

Fall brings gathering cattle, weaning calves and pregnancy checking, while winter focuses on feeding, equipment maintenance and preparing for the next production cycle.

Alongside the physical demands of ranching, Emily also contributes to the business side of the operation, helping manage records and ensure everything runs smoothly.

She shares that it's a lifestyle that requires adaptability, attention to detail and a willingness to step into any role needed to keep the operation moving forward.

Leadership Through Innovation

One of Emily's proudest leadership decisions has been guiding the ranch toward regenerative practices. By focusing on soil health and ecological balance, she has helped create a system that is more resilient to both environmental and economic challenges.

Operating in the Nevada desert, water is one of the most critical resources. Emily is a passionate advocate for how improved soil organic matter can significantly increase the land's ability to retain water – an essential factor in managing drought conditions and sustaining production.

"I can't control the market or the weather," she says. "But I can control how well our soil functions."

Her approach reflects a broader understanding that long-term success in agriculture depends on working with the land, not against it.

Motivation in the Lifestyle

Despite the challenges often presented in ranching, Emily finds motivation in the lifestyle itself. Time spent on horseback, often alongside her dogs, offers a sense of purpose and connection that reinforces why she chose this path.

Even during the most demanding seasons, that connection to the land and animals continues to drive her forward.

"We do this because we love this way of life," she says.

Moving forward, Emily says she is most excited about the continued evolution of the ranch through regenerative practices. Each year brings noticeable improvements – from increased biodiversity to healthier soils and higher-quality forage.

She remains focused on building a system that will continue to thrive for generations to come, honoring her family's history while embracing innovation.

"I wish more people understood how much we care," she shares. "Our livelihoods depend on the health of the land, and we work to protect it every single day."

Continuing the Story

If someone were to spend a day alongside Emily, she said she hopes they would walk away with two key lessons – no job is too small and the pursuit of knowledge never stops.

Emily Fulstone's story is one of innovation grounded in tradition. As the International Year of the Woman Farmer continues, USRSB is proud to recognize producers like Emily who are leading with purpose and advancing the sustainability of agriculture for generations to come.

To read about other IYWF features or to learn more about sustainability across the U.S. value chain, visit the [U.S. Roundtable for Sustainable Beef](#).