



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

Leah Scholz | *Rooted in Legacy, Driven by Grit*

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. We are proud to spotlight Leah Scholz, a fifth-generation cattlegwoman whose journey reflects a deep commitment to family legacy, continuous learning and the grit it takes to succeed in the beef industry.

Built Through Experience

For Leah Scholz, agriculture has always been more than a career. It's a way of life.

Raised as the eldest grandchild on her family's fifth-generation farm in Lancaster, Kansas, Leah grew up surrounded by Angus-based commercial cattle and farmland. From an early age, her passion for cattle was clear, along with a long-term vision of continuing the Scholz legacy.

Her early experiences in 4-H, FFA and livestock judging laid the foundation for a career built on both knowledge and hands-on skill. After graduating from Kansas State University, Leah moved to Idaho to begin her career with Agri Beef, where she gained experience across multiple facets of the industry from cattle health and feeding operations to genetics and bull development.

Each step along the way expanded her perspective, giving her the opportunity to see cattle production from multiple angles and apply those lessons back to her family's operation.

A Life Built on Commitment and Sacrifice

Today, Leah balances her role in Idaho with her connection to her family's operation back home. While much of her work involves advising on herd health, breeding decisions and long-term planning, her commitment to serving others extends beyond the farm. Leah is also a volunteer firefighter, dedicating her time to supporting her local community and helping others when they need it most.

Whether caring for cattle, supporting her family's legacy or answering a call as a first responder, Leah's actions reflect a deep sense of responsibility and a willingness to serve.

Even from a distance, she stays closely involved, returning home when she can to help with harvest, cattle work and day-to-day operations. The sacrifices of missing holidays and time

with family are not lost on her, but they reflect the dedication required to support both her career and her roots.

"Family is the biggest priority in my life, second only to my faith," Leah says.

Leadership Through Perspective and Growth

One of the most impactful decisions Leah has made was choosing to leave home and gain experience beyond her family operation.

"Our mom always said, 'Home will always be here. Go learn, go grow, and please don't forget to call,'" Leah shares.

While difficult, the decision to get experience outside of her family operation has allowed her to grow both personally and professionally, bringing new ideas and perspectives back home.

By combining her grandfather's experience with her own exposure to different production systems, Leah has helped implement new practices that have improved consistency and performance within their herd. From genetic decisions to management strategies, she values the balance between tradition and innovation.

"Perspective is huge to me," she explains, emphasizing the importance of learning from others and continuously improving.

The Evolving Role of Women in Agriculture

Throughout her career, Leah has witnessed a shift in the role of women within agriculture. While the industry has historically been male-dominated, she sees increasing opportunities for women to innovate and support one another.

Her involvement in programs like Wrangler's Cowgirl 30 Under 30 introduced her to a network of women who are making meaningful contributions across the industry.

"We are the lionesses in the lions' world," Leah says, highlighting the strength and resilience women bring to agriculture.

She believes that supporting and encouraging one another is essential to continued progress and that women will play a critical role in shaping the future of the beef industry.

Through long days, uncertainty and the challenges that come with agriculture, Leah's motivation remains deeply rooted in purpose.

From a young age, she was taught the value of hard work and perseverance. Lessons that continue to guide her today. Her passion for the beef industry, combined with a desire to make a difference, drives her to keep learning, improving and contributing at both the operation and industry level.

"Our industry is constantly faced with challenges," she says. "I take it as a personal challenge - we need to do better."

As Leah looks ahead, her focus remains on strengthening both her family's operation and the legacy behind it. She is committed to building a more efficient, consistent herd while continuing to improve the land and resources they manage.

More than anything, she values the time spent working alongside her grandfather and family, recognizing the importance of preserving both knowledge and tradition for future generations.

Continuing the Story

Leah Scholz's story is one of resilience and unwavering commitment to agriculture. Through her dedication to both her family's legacy and her own personal development, she represents the strength and determination of women across the beef industry.

As the International Year of the Woman Farmer continues, USRSB is proud to highlight women like Leah who are not only carrying on traditions but also helping shape the future of agriculture through innovation, leadership and grit.

Learn more about sustainable beef and producer leadership by visiting [the U.S. Roundtable for Sustainable Beef](#).