



International Year of the Woman Farmer (IYWF): March 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

Robbie LeValley | *Championing Public Lands and Sustainable Ranching*

As the world recognizes 2026 as the International Year of the Woman Farmer (IYWF), U.S. Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (USRSB) is turning the spotlight on the women shaping agriculture every day here in the U.S. From innovative land management strategies to raising livestock with care and precision, women are vital contributors to our food systems and communities.

This month, USRSB is proud to highlight Robbie LeValley, a rancher and passionate advocate for public lands and sustainable beef production.

A fourth-generation rancher, LeValley operates a diversified cow-calf operation in western Colorado, where her work reflects a deep commitment to stewardship and the long-term viability of both land and livestock. Her story reflects resilience and a strong belief that agriculture can, and must, balance productivity with environmental care.

LeValley's connection to ranching began in northwest Wyoming, where she grew up on a cow-calf operation south of Cody. From an early age, she experienced firsthand the realities of working lands that blended private acreage with federal grazing allotments, a model that continues to shape her approach today.

After attending junior college, she transferred to Colorado State University, where she earned both her bachelor's and master's degrees in animal science. Shortly after, in 1989, a career opportunity in livestock extension enabled Robbie to remain in Colorado, the same year she became part of the LeValley Ranch through marriage.

Since then, LeValley has helped build and sustain a multigenerational operation alongside her family, blending tradition with innovation to ensure the ranch's long-term success.

The ranch philosophy

Today, the LeValley Ranch is a diverse and dynamic operation. In addition to running a cow-calf herd, the ranch integrates multiple business components, including grazing management across public and private lands, a USDA-inspected processing facility, retail beef sales, and recreational opportunities.

Central to LeValley's work is a commitment to conservation and land stewardship. Through years of rangeland monitoring, she has helped document improvements in both vegetation

and overall ecosystem function. Her science-based approach allows her to demonstrate that well-managed grazing can support both livestock production and wildlife habitat.

“It’s not about choosing one or the other,” LeValley explains. “It’s about the ‘and.’ It’s about livestock *and* wildlife, production *and* conservation.”

This philosophy has not only guided the ranch’s management decisions but has also positioned it for collaboration. LeValley regularly welcomes producers, policymakers, environmental groups and members of the public onto the ranch to see the science in action and the outcomes firsthand.

In 2023, the LeValley Ranch was recognized with the prestigious Leopold Conservation Award, honoring its dedication to sustainable land management and environmental stewardship.

Grazing as the solution

Beyond the ranch, LeValley’s career reflects a lifelong commitment to education and service.

From 1989 to 2012, she served as a Tri River Area Extension Agent, working directly with producers and communities to strengthen agricultural practices and outreach. Today, she continues to support research and innovation through her involvement in agricultural and meat science initiatives.

Her background in science plays a critical role in how she approaches ranching. By collecting and interpreting data on rangeland conditions, LeValley is able to make informed decisions and communicate the positive impacts of well-managed grazing systems.

That ability has proven especially important in conversations around public lands, where misconceptions about agriculture can persist.

“Too often, grazing is seen as the problem,” she says. “But when you have the data, you can show it’s part of the solution.”

Learning, leadership & collaboration

LeValley’s influence extends across the beef industry through her involvement in numerous organizations at the local, state and national levels. She has dedicated countless hours to ensuring that the voice of producers is represented in policy discussions and industry initiatives.

Her leadership roles include past service with the Public Lands Council, National Cattlemen’s Beef Association, Colorado Cattlemen’s Association, Society for Range Management, and Colorado Beef Council.

For LeValley, this involvement is not optional; it is essential.

“If we’re not at the table, we don’t have a voice,” she explains. “The infrastructure, policies and opportunities we have today exist because previous generations stepped up. It’s our responsibility to do the same.”

Her commitment to collaboration is also evident in her mentorship of the next generation. Whether working with young producers or early-career ranchers, she emphasizes the importance of strong relationships and thoughtful decision-making.

Leading in action

As a woman in agriculture, LeValley has witnessed both challenges and progress throughout her career. Her perspective is grounded not in titles or recognition, but in action.

“Leadership doesn’t always mean being out front,” she says. “Sometimes it means supporting others, and that’s just as important.”

She hopes young women entering agriculture will see that leadership is demonstrated through daily work and integrity, not just words.

Her advice is simple but powerful: Work hard. Build relationships. Find mentors. And lead by example.

“Work hard in silence,” she adds. “Let success make the noise.”

Continuing the story

LeValley’s impact reaches far beyond her own operation. She is helping shape the future of ranching and the role of women in agriculture.

Her work demonstrates that stewardship and productivity are not opposing goals, they are interconnected. By embracing both, she is advancing the beef industry and ensuring its resilience for years to come.

As the International Year of the Woman Farmer continues, stories like LeValley’s highlight the leadership of women across agriculture.

They remind us that ranching is more than a livelihood; it is a legacy shaped by care for the land and a strong sense of purpose for the future.

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