

Empowering Utah's Women in Agriculture Through Hands-On Learning

Alisha Wilkins

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For many women in Utah agriculture, the desire to help on the ranch has often come with stressful or discouraging experiences. Past moments—whether with family members or during busy and stressful livestock work—left some feeling anxious or unsure of themselves.

When they attended agriculture classes, they were often put in groups that focused on topics like cooking for branding day, quilting, or crocheting instead of the hands-on livestock skills they wanted. Many women didn't feel comfortable speaking up, even though they were eager to learn.

A team of USU Extension educators decided to change that.

After a statewide survey, the team learned exactly what women needed: confidence-building, practical livestock training, financial skills, and a safe place to learn with others. In 2024, they launched new programs to match those needs, including the Cattle “Boot” Camp.

Women traveled to Alton, Utah, to practice real-life ranch skills for the first time in a low-pressure environment. They learned things like how to tube a calf, work cattle calmly, provide effective calving and newborn calf care, understand basic nutrition, and even how to select quality meat. One instructor said, “The women weren't there to compete. They were there to learn, help each other, and build community.”

Participants agreed. Many left with greater confidence—not only in working with cattle but also in talking with spouses or partners about ranch decisions.

For many women, this was the first time they felt truly seen and supported in an agriculture class. As one team member shared, the program is “inspiring” because it gives women the tools, space, and confidence to step into their important roles on the ranch.

If you'd like to learn more about this program, everyone is invited to participate, check out their Facebook group, [Utah Voices in Agriculture](#).

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