

# Ruth Howe

## January 14th 1955 to January 5th 2023

For many, 4-H is a multi-generational experience, Ruth Ward Howe was no exception. Born on January 14th 1955 in Lusk Wyoming, Ruth was raised on a large homestead about 50 miles from Lusk. Ruth, along with her 2 brothers and 2 sisters, spent most of her life involved with 4-H becoming an official member when she was 9. "My mother was a 4-H member, I joined when I was old enough and I put my own children through 4-H and now my grandchildren are members," Ruth explained in an interview with the Lovell Chronicle.

She showed horses, steers, breeding cows, Sheep and goats. Ruth also participated in sheep shearing competitions where she won at state and took 3rd and 5th at the National competition both years she went. She often had personal races with her family and brothers about who could shear the most sheep. Back then that wasn't an activity that many women participated in, but Ruth excelled and eventually made a living out of it before turning to ranch work. Ruth learned to sew at a young age a skill that she passed to her children and grandchildren. She won grand champion at state fair for a beautiful wool jumper she sewed when she was 11. She also sewed all 3 of her wedding dresses. Ruth fondly recalled stories about the Greased Pig competition for the girls and the Catch-a-Calf contest for the boys and was extremely proud of the fact that both she and her brother won calves. "It was exciting because my brother and I both won black calves, and my father raised Herford's (typically red with white markings), so it was fun to see the black animals versus the Herford colored animals" She would often say. The Ward family raised around 60 head of cattle on dry- land farm. "I was on a horse gathering cows when I was just a kid" Ruth would say, she continued riding horses for most of her life. Her sister remembers her trick riding on the horses at the ranch and just having fun. As a child she participated in 4-H for 9 years. Participating in 4-H was a big part of her social life, which was otherwise isolated on a farm that was located far away from town. "It was a learning experience for me" Ruth said "I learned how to judge animals but most of all it helped me to mingle with other children because we lived 50 miles from the nearest town and until I went to high school I didn't have a lot of social interaction with other children, except my brothers and sisters. For many years we were the only kids in our little country school.

She had a great love for animals and even had a few unusual pets growing up including a skunk and a badger. She carried that love well into her adult life and raised her 4 kids on a farm raising all manner of livestock and animals. Ruth was the "Key-Leader" for the Eagle Rock 4-H Club in Lovell, she was well known for the Petting Zoo booth at the 4-H carnival and at the Big Horn County Fair. Ruth's encouragement for her children and grandchildren's participation in 4-H has led to a continued role in the long standing tradition of active 4- H membership in her family. Ruth served as a 4-H leader for 35 years before losing her fight with cancer on January 05 2023. Her children and grandchildren remember that even when she wasn't feeling well in her last year, she came to the barn to help with the animals when she could and helped with craft activities at the house because she loved them and 4-H so much. Most people remember how hard she worked and many often commented about how "she could outwork any man", but she still remained so humble and never bragged. She was loved by so many and is missed by all who knew her.

