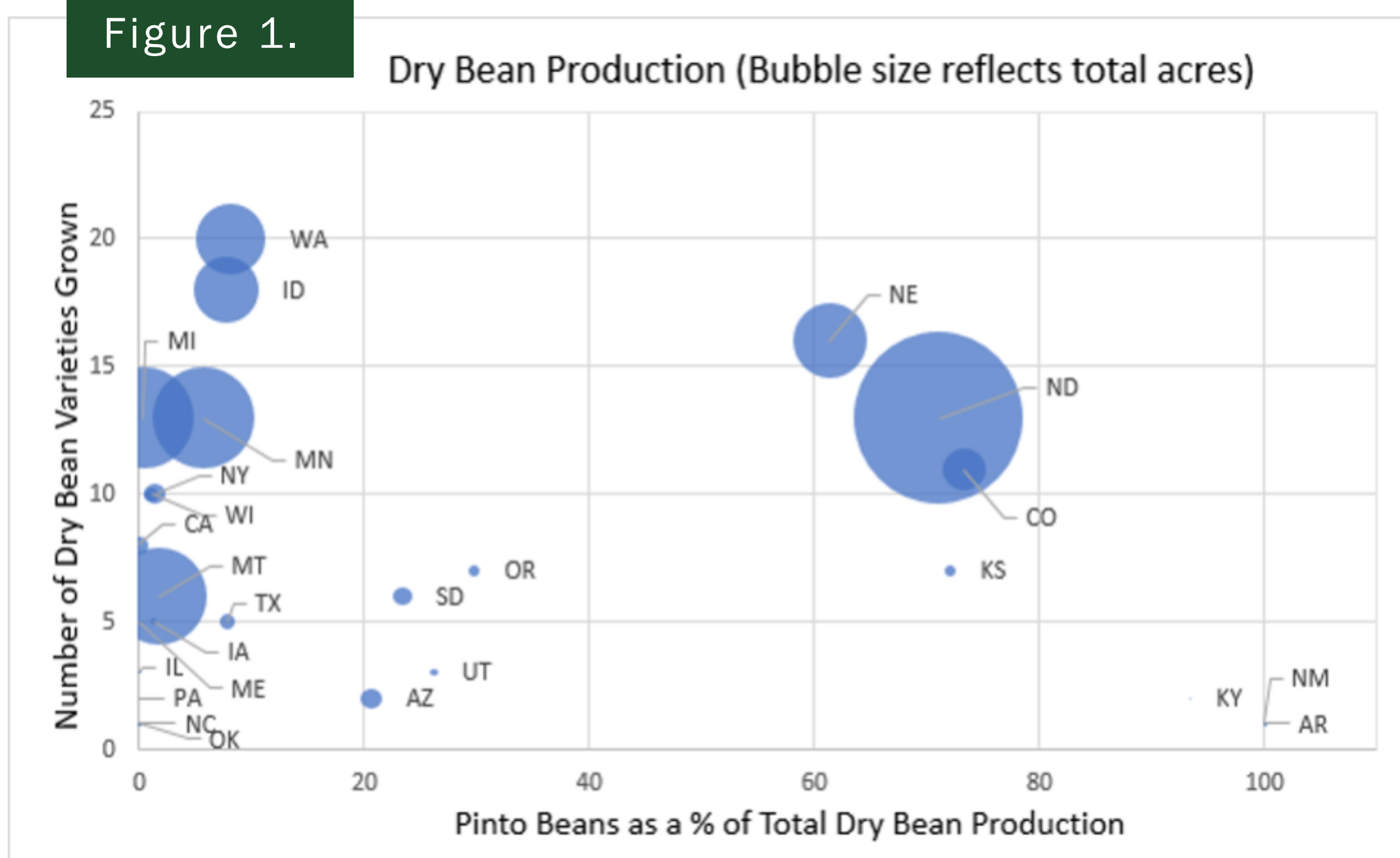


GROWING NEW MARKETS FOR COLORADO PULSE CROPS

PROJECT INTRODUCTION

Dry beans are an important food and rotational crop in Colorado. Around 70% of beans grown in Colorado are pinto beans. Colorado also produces 11 different bean classes including garbanzo, light red kidney, Anasazi and black beans. The primary bean production regions of Colorado are the in northeast and southwest.

Figure 1.



In Colorado, and in most of the U.S., dry beans are sold through dealers who buy harvested beans from growers, clean and package the beans, and sell them into established markets. This project sought to identify new markets to complement sales to dealers, and expand market opportunities for dealers and growers alike.

INTERNSHIP GOALS

- Understand primary production areas for dry beans across Colorado, for both irrigated and non-irrigated varieties, by county.
- Map the infrastructure for dry bean production and processing throughout Colorado.
- Investigate new market opportunities for Colorado dry beans.

HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO YOUR EDUCATION

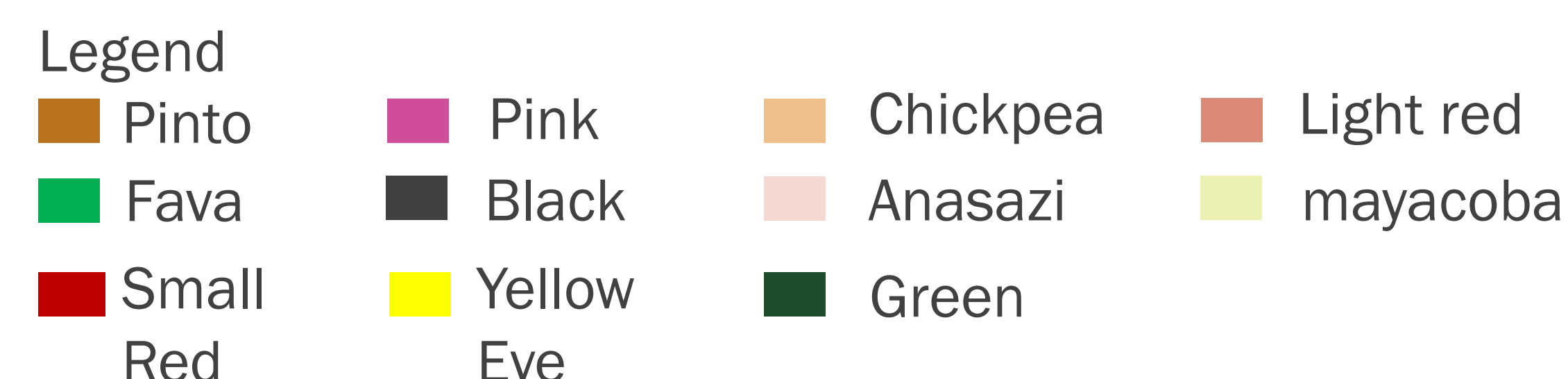
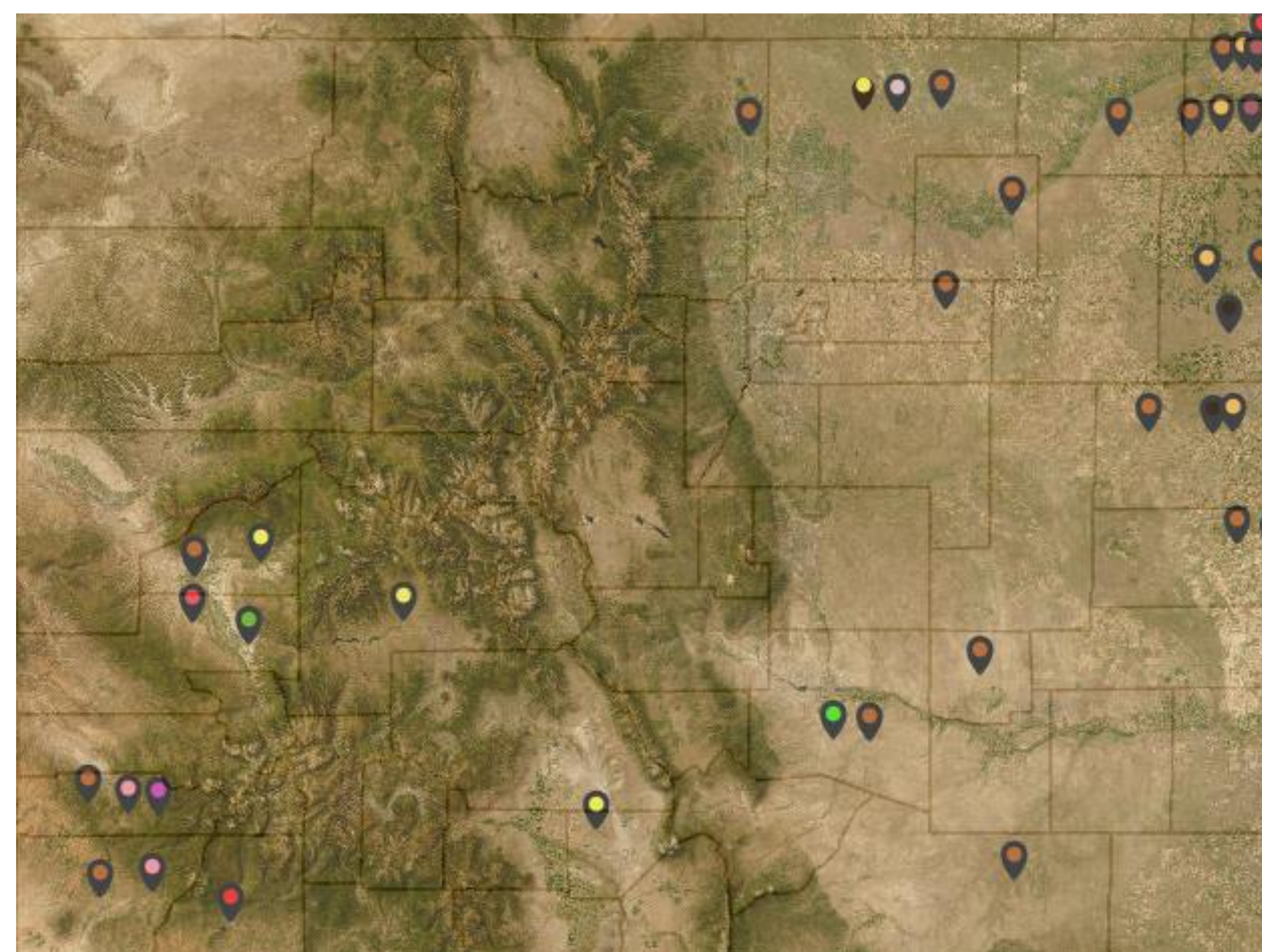
In my major, most horticultural classes focus on production and physiology. This internship allowed me to explore the post-farmgate activities associated with the production of a Colorado crop.

In addition, this internship allowed me to learn ARC GIS and improve my Excel software skills.

WHAT YOU DID

- Compiled 2022 data for Colorado's bean-growing areas:
 - Used Farm Service Agency acreage data by class and county to map dry beans grown by location.
 - Mapped the location of all bean dealers in Colorado.
- Investigated the potential for new market development for Colorado dry beans:
 - Interviewed farm-to-table restaurants and food hubs in Colorado to ascertain their pulse sourcing, volumes and varieties typically purchased, and new products which they were interested in sourcing.
 - Mapped production, processing and some emerging market opportunities for dry beans in Colorado.

Figure 2. Dry Bean Production Class by Colorado County



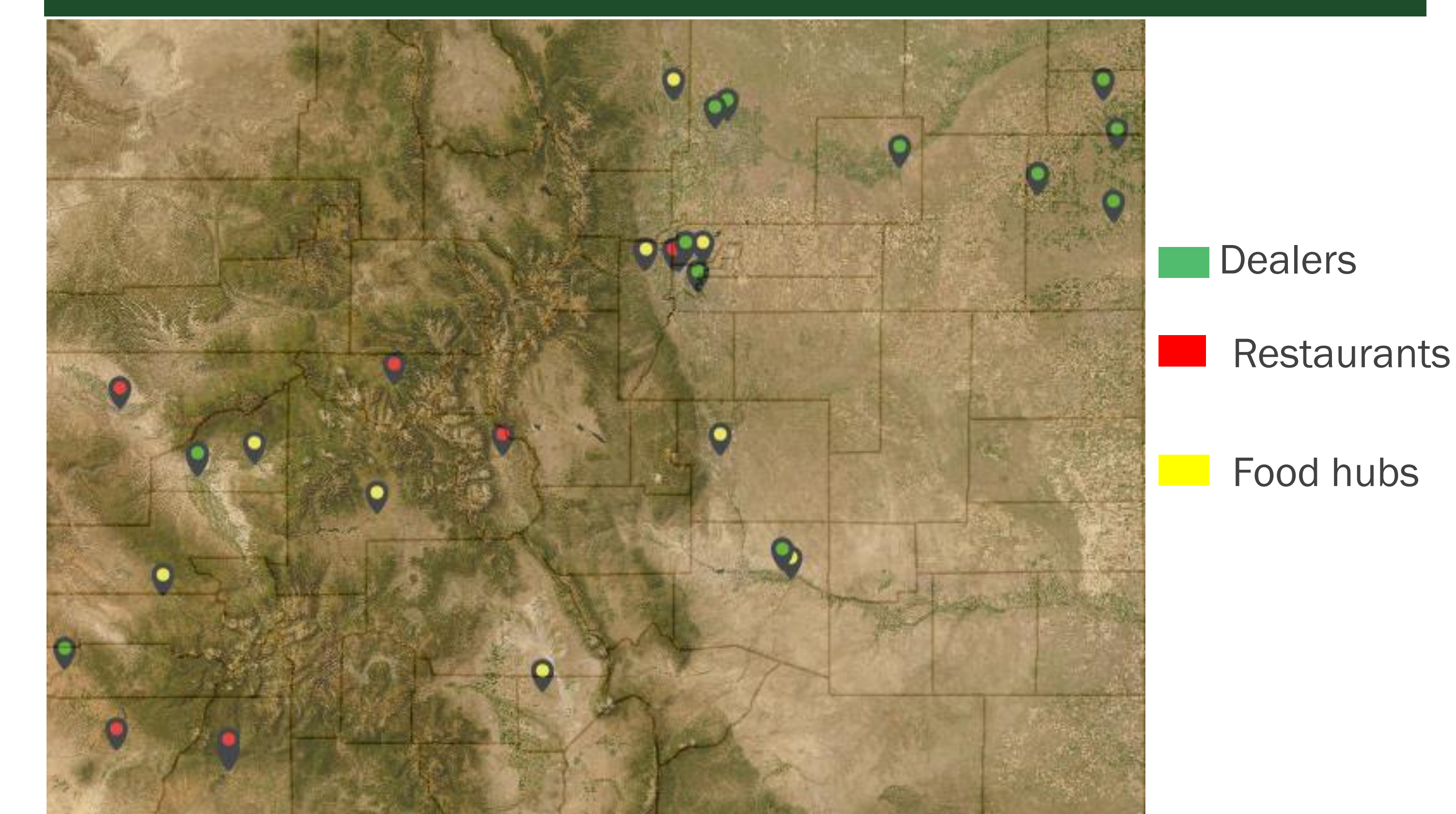
WHAT YOU LEARNED

From a list of 61 Colorado **restaurants** throughout the state, which included independent, chain and resort-affiliated entities, I reached out to each locale with a short questionnaire on their use of beans, especially Colorado-sourced beans, on their restaurant menus.

7 restaurants said they regularly sourced Colorado beans, while 10 said they were interested in purchasing beans from Colorado. 11 restaurants indicated they were interested in learning more about Colorado beans. Those who regularly sourced Colorado beans said that price, the specific source (knowing that the product is locally produced); cleanliness; quality; and organic only or regeneratively produced were the most important factors.

Pintos and black beans were the most commonly used beans, and usage varied from 500 pounds per year to 1,000 pounds per week of Colorado-sourced beans.

Figure 3. Direct Purchasers of Colorado Dry Beans



NEXT STEPS

There is clearly potential to grow high-volume sales to other buyers such as food hubs and restaurants. The primary constraint to building these markets will be effort involved in developing the relationships with buyers.

However, looking at the local purchasing activity already occurring in a few areas of the state, i.e., southwestern Colorado and the San Luis Valley, a focused effort on value chain coordination in key areas could yield some significant new direct to consumer purchasing opportunities for dry bean growers in Colorado.