

COLLEGE AVENUE

Volume 17 | Issue 2 | Spring 2022
A Rocky Mountain Student Media Publication

Vindeket Foods

How One Fort Collins Market
is Tackling Food Waste

Café de Bangkok

Bringing Thai Cuisine to
Fort Collins

Urbanization of Farmland

The Challenges Local Farms
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From Your Editors

There's nothing like the sensation of eating your favorite food. The smell draws you in with interest, flavor floods across your tastebuds and delight rises inside of you. While this is an act we engage with on a daily basis, there is so much more to it than the feeling of consuming a yummy treat. Food can bring us together, help us experience new cultures and build community. The relationships, traditions and events based on food add new experiences and adventures to our lives.

There is a wonder in the power of food, which would not be attainable without the hard work of those who build a life around it, whether it be farming or owning a restaurant. Stories of food fill the Fort Collins community and allow us to share who we are. This edition shares stories of those who work with food to bring the community such amazing tastes and moments. Whether it's the taco trucks on the north side of Fort Collins, the farm growing the food or a local food co-op, stories of food surround us.

As this magazine places you in the stories of Fort Collins, I hope you can experience what food means to different people and in different contexts. These stories are filled with community adventures of which I hope will impact each of you who pick up this edition.

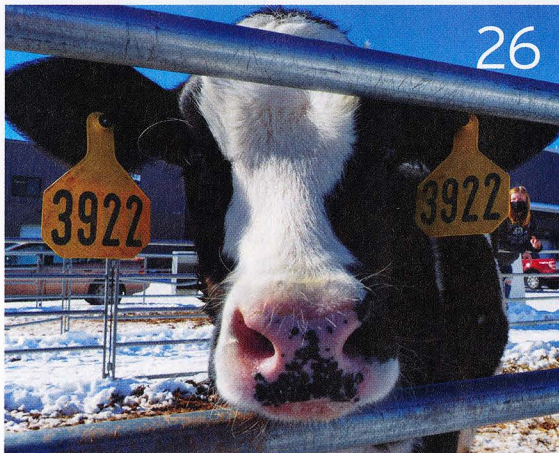
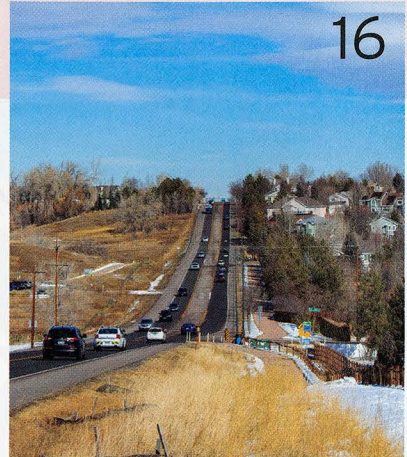
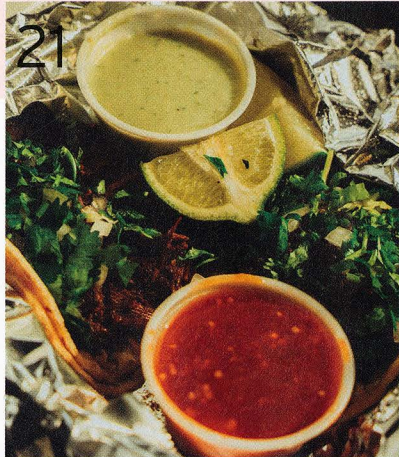
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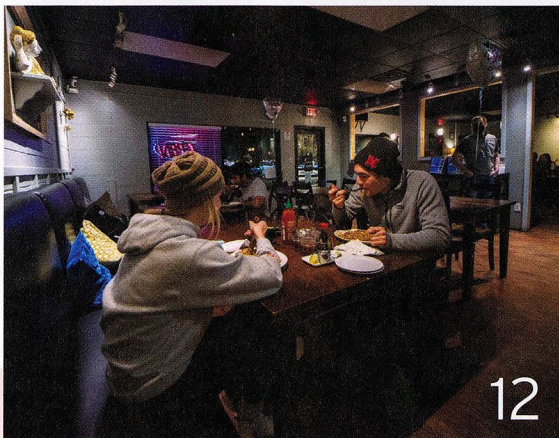
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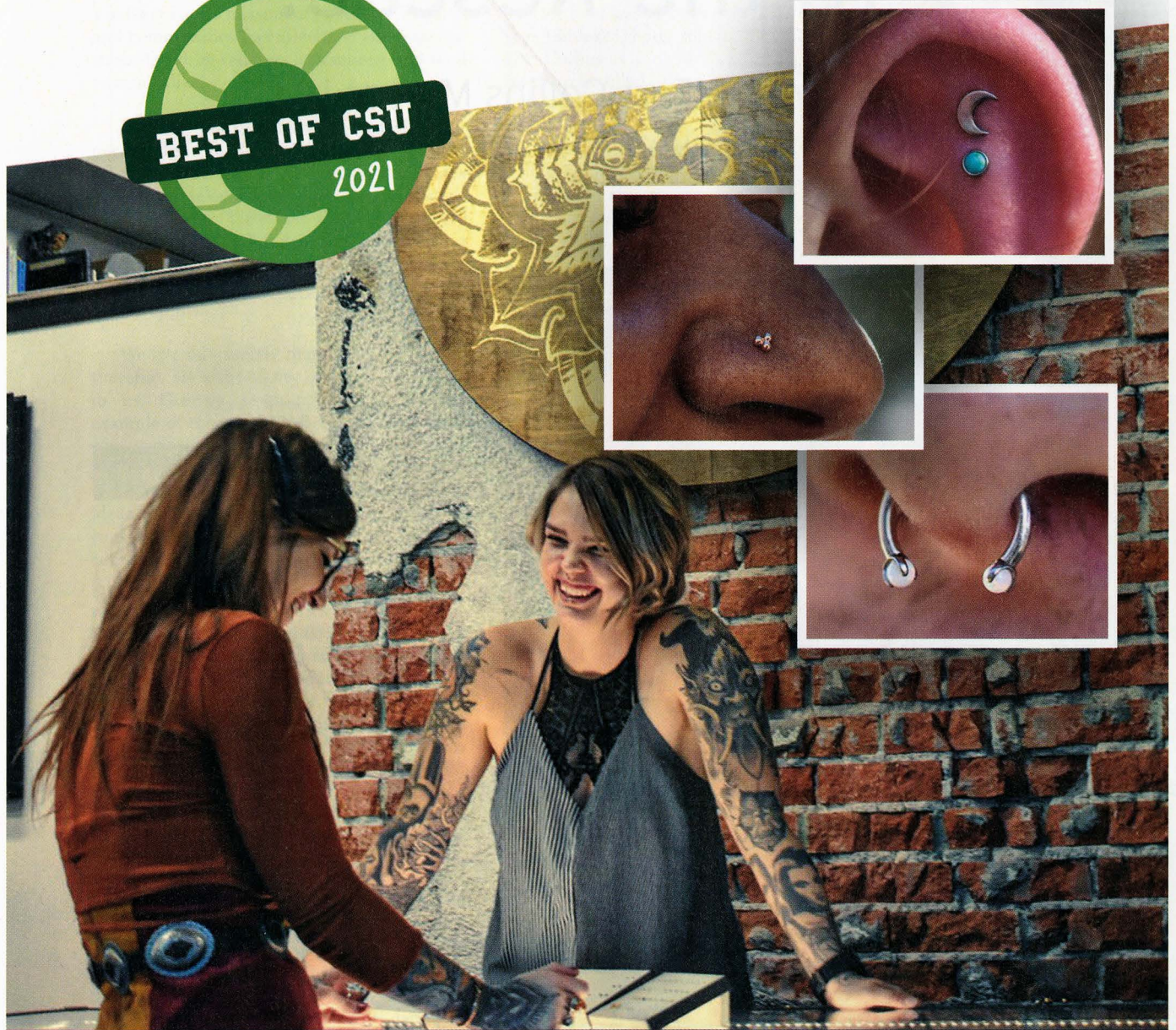


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Vindeket Foods to the Rescue:

How One Fort Collins Market is
Tackling Food Waste

By Kelsie Korinek

Picture your weekly trip to the grocery store, a trip that will provide you with all your needs for the upcoming days. When you walk in, there are rows of produce and packaged goods waiting to be sifted through. Hundreds of blemish-free apples glisten below the fluorescent lighting of the store, shelves are carefully stocked with an influx of fresh, wilt-free, leafy greens and shiny vegetables are placed in rows with utmost care. While this overwhelming display of food may appear to accommodate your every need, 40% of it will go to waste.

Every day, local grocery stores like Sprouts, Natural Grocers, Whole Foods, Costco and Trader Joe's throw away undamaged food that they are unable to sell. This is nutritional food that would ordinarily go to a landfill to perish. With the help of Vindeket Foods, however, this food is given a second chance.

Vindeket Foods is a community-run, nonprofit, donation-based grocery store in Fort Collins that saves food before it is thrown away. Every week volunteers pick up boxes upon boxes of food from grocery stores and place it in the market for community members to shop.

Thirty percent of the food sold in American grocery stores will be sent to a landfill. This is equivalent to growing 16 billion pounds of food with the intention of throwing it all away. Such waste requires grocery stores to pay landfills a fee of \$22 per truckload of the waste in need of disposal. Vindeket Foods' mission of restoring the earth and communities has alleviated the financial strain faced by retailers, consumers and food systems alike.

"It's interesting how the desire for perfect food and perfect looking bounty actually creates a lot of food waste," Alex Schaff, Vindeket Foods volunteer and board member, says. "When we go to the grocery store, we really look for the perfect apple and we'd like to see excess food. You don't want to see one apple left on the shelf, you want to see 50 apples."

We live in a society that values excess and therefore we want plenty of options available to us. Grocery shopping is just another example of this concept. Breaking away from consumerist excess is pivotal to the goals of Vindeket Foods, where preservation and sustainability are key. When discussing these ideas, Schaff says that this need for perfection causes excess consumption, perpetuating the community's struggles with food waste.

Not only does Vindeket Foods provide consumers with a more sustainable alternative to traditional grocery shopping, but it also offers them a more financially feasible option. Another volunteer, Wyatt Farwell, says that Vindeket Foods has given him easy access to ethically-sourced food, which had not been available to him prior. "I used to dumpster dive," Farwell says. "Vindeket has helped me skip a step when accessing good food for low costs."

Vindeket Foods has been able to rescue 2 million pounds of food, which has proven to be a community-driven endeavor that has empowered people to take control in the fight against food waste. This mission has also provided nutritious food for many demographics of residents within the Fort Collins community, defying the barriers of class and age.

Because Vindeket Foods is a nonprofit entity, they rely on volunteers and donations to keep their mission alive. Schaff describes the need for volunteers as a factor of limited growth for Vindeket Foods. "We're always looking for more help: more volunteers, more patrons, people with skills, experts in any and every field," Schaff says. "We're trying to prevent food waste, and it's a fun time. The community is great. The food is great. And anyone who can should come by and check it out."

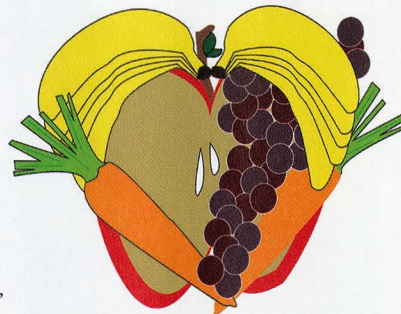
What does the future look like for food waste? Alex Schaff sees Vindeket Foods' role in Fort Collins as a "niche that needs to be filled." Food needs to be rescued in other cities, outside of Fort Collins, making sustainable grocery shopping a necessity. "I can only imagine [that sustainable grocery stores] will be in every city in 50 years," Schaff says.

Vindeket Foods is located at 1317 Webster Ave., Fort Collins, CO, 80524. They are open on Sundays from 12pm-3pm, Tuesdays from 2pm-7pm, and Thursdays from 11am-1pm.

Photos by
Anna von Pechmann

Illustration by John Califf

Vindeket Foods part-time employee Carole Rice works with volunteer David Fairbanks to move food and drinks out of the truck and into the building to sell at Vindeket Foods Feb. 1.





Customers Michael Norwesh and Adaline Lee shop at Vindeket Foods located at 1317 Webster Ave. on Tuesday, Feb. 1.

Eva Eccles, age two, helps her mom Nicola with grocery shopping at Vindeket Foods, Feb. 1.



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Café de Bangkok: A Taste of Thailand



By S. C. Pedroza

As soon as you walk in, you smell the steaming scent of jasmine rice, curry, exotic vegetables and tender meats and noodles, foreshadowing not only a meal but an experience as a whole. Your plate is brought to you by kind and merry servers and your palate delights with the smell of your food. Suddenly, you are not in Fort Collins anymore. You are in Thailand!

Because of a diverse and growing international population, numerous restaurants with cuisines from all over the world strive to cater not only to foreign students but also to the locals, who wish to try something different every now and then. Located at 1232 W. Elizabeth St. Unit C7, Café de Bangkok is one such restaurant, representing authentic Thai cuisine cooked by chefs from Thailand.

Nattatida Dumrongpalasit, the co-owner of Café de Bangkok, describes how she and her husband are able to transport patrons to Thailand through its cuisine. "We try to keep the food as authentic as we can," Dumrongpalasit explains. "The [kitchen] crew and the servers are all from Thailand because they will be able to explain, in detail, what each dish is like, and they are more knowledgeable about Thai cuisine than anybody else."

Café de Bangkok offers a wide range of dishes, from noodles to rice-based plates. Most of them can also have vegan, dual-vegan and gluten-free variations for those unable to consume certain ingredients in the recipes. Sky Kalavity, a server at the restaurant since 2021, said that the most common plate order among locals and newcomers alike is the Panang Curry, a type of peanut-based curry with shredded kaffir lime leaves, bell pepper and basil in coconut milk.

Kalavity also said that Café de Bangkok caters not only to Thai customers, but also serves as an eating stop for travelers, especially Californians, passing through Fort Collins. These oncoming customers like the restaurant so much they also eat there on their way back. "The public loves it [the restaurant]," Kalavity says. We have an award for Best Thai Food 2021 Reader's Choice Award by The Fort Collins Coloradoan"

This award comes as a result of many reasons. Dumrongpalasit explains that it is crucial to keep the cuisine as authentic as possible and therefore buys ingredients from local small vendors. She even imports some ingredients, like holy basil, from Florida. However, the COVID-19 restrictions imposed on cargo have made it difficult to obtain more of these niche ingredients.

"As far as I know, a lot of our customers know about Thai food [and have been to Thailand]," Dumrongpalasit states. "It is pretty easy for us to present what we are doing since they can tell about the authenticity of the plate"

Despite the cargo restrictions, Café de Bangkok's menu continues to offer most, if not all, of its dishes. Chef Wirote, a Thai cook from northeast Thailand who works at Café de Bangkok, said that all of the plates from the menu come from original recipes from Thailand. His specialties include the Northern Styled Curry Noodle, or Kai Soi and Noodle on the menu, which derives inspiration from his hometown in northern Thailand. Wirote also perfected the Chinese broccoli with crispy pork, which is Eo1 on the menu and the first to offer authentic Chinese broccoli in Fort Collins.



Photos by Pratyosh Kashyap

Illustration by Kaylee Congdon

People sit for dinner at Café de Bangkok, located at 1232 W Elizabeth St, on Sunday, Feb. 6.

AUTHENTIC

Due to its close proximity to campus, many Colorado State University students are already regulars at the restaurant and commit to try new things every time they go. Brayden Jonswold, a Colorado Springs native who was raised in Indonesia, shares his experience with Café de Bangkok's food. "I've always grown up loving Thai food and all its spices," Jonswold says. "So I definitely missed having it [when I came back]. So I started looking around Fort Collins and Café de Bangkok came up as one of the top rated ones. We wanted to make a commitment to having a regular schedule with an international restaurant. They have all different kinds of spice levels. They have hot and Thai hot if you're really feeling brave, so if you want to sweat a little bit, you can definitely get Thai hot. They also have great vegetarian options, tofu options and gluten-free options."

Like many other international restaurants, Café de Bangkok brings authentic cuisine from its home country, Thailand, with high quality standards and affordable prices. For those who have yet to visit the country or want to change their eating routines, it is the perfect place to experiment and even take on a challenge.

"Hopefully you guys will come and try the food," Dumrongpalasit says. "For those who have never been to Thailand, you will get a sense of what Thailand is. It's an easy going kind of vibe. We try to keep the price low as much as we can for the students to spend and for us to survive."

Crispy Pork Pad Prik Khing

- PORK
- LONG BEANS
- GREEN BELL PEPPER
- KAFFIR LIME LEAVES
- PRIKHING CURRY



 **Café de Bangkok**
Authentic Thai Cuisine



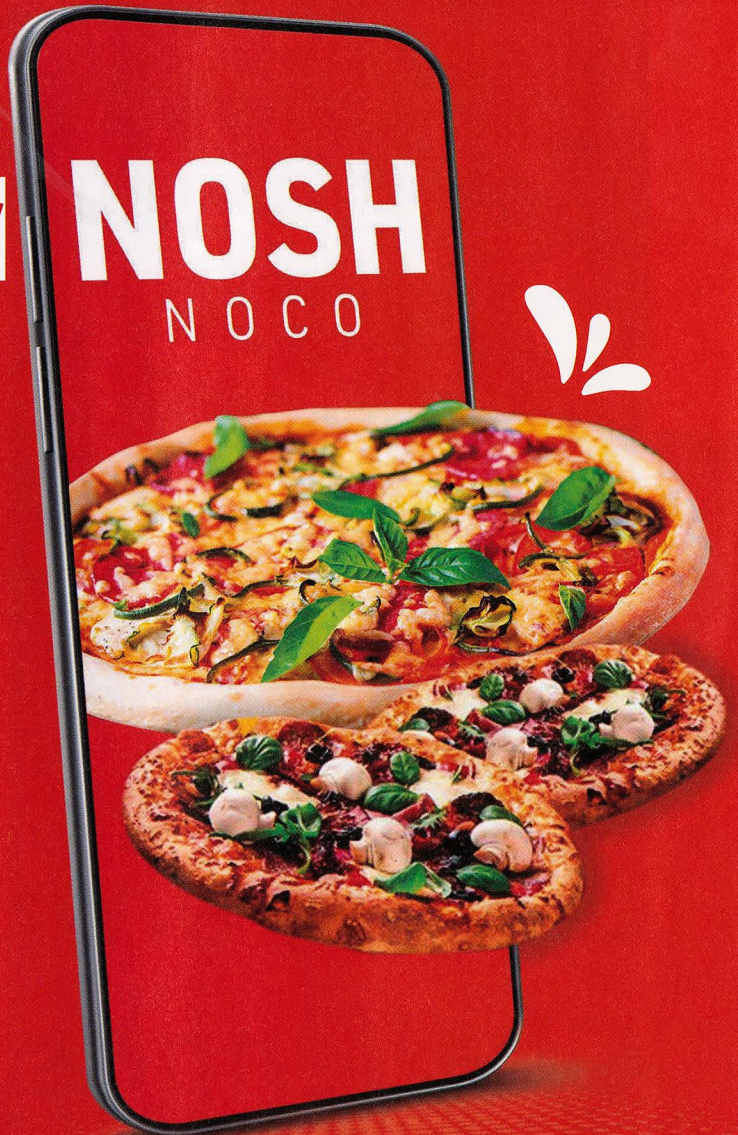
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Local Farms Face Challenges Due to Urbanization



“ The encroachment of homes in the Brighton area basically took us out of the feedlot business there, and moved my family, my wife and kids, to Brush. ”

By Harper Wines

The world grows and changes constantly, but no amount of urban growth on the environment will change the fact that food is essential to survival. However, the development that accompanies this change and growth is beginning to overthrow the agricultural opportunities and resources that are vital to natural food production. This pushes farms and ranches into more rural areas and limits the options for more sustainable, locally-sourced produce and meats.

“Over my lifetime I’ve seen a lot of our neighbors who were farmers and ranchers that had to sell their cattle and had to sell their land, and where all the agriculture used to be is [now] housing developments,” Michelle Vanhosen says, who currently works on Miller Farms. She has been immersed in agriculture her whole life and will eventually run the farm with her husband and children. Agriculture being replaced by homes has distanced food from communities in a time where the demand for local produce has increased in popularity significantly.

“Within the last five years buying locally has come back into style,” Vanhosen says. “Whereas 10-15 years ago when I was in high school doing markets you really had to push what you sold and drop the prices way below anything you could actually make a profit on in order to sell your stuff because people didn’t want to visit farmers markets.”

Now people have a higher desire to support local, and small farms such as Vanhosens are able to sell their product at an affordable and profitable price, which allows them to put money back into improving their farm.

The market for local produce may have increased, but it is becoming less accessible with growth in urban communities. The expanding population leads to growth in both housing and commercial developments. In Colorado, where the environment contains prime conditions and soil for bountiful crop production, these developments are often built over prime farming land. The Front

Range of Colorado houses part of the most fertile soil in the United States.

"Our sandy soil really is the difference, it makes stuff taste better, and it keeps the nutrients in it," Vanhosen says.

When developers build over this land, it decreases the amount of farm space available and limits natural food production. Single-construction companies are able to build fast and cover acres of land quickly.

Hartford Homes, a local Fort Collins construction company that specializes in housing developments, has built more than 4,000 homes since 1988. This is just one example of the fast mass developments that are occurring on farmland in the local area.

These fast, large-scale developments have negative effects on the agriculture around them. Extending east from the Rocky Mountains and the Front Range is luscious farm ground with rich, delectable soil and land level enough to see for miles.

Spence Rule, the manager of Wool Feeders, has been surrounded and working with agriculture his entire life. "I would say probably some of the biggest changes I've seen is the encroachment of the cities on prime farm ground," Rule says.

Rule says his family had to leave Brighton, Colorado, where they were running a feedlot, because of the urbanization and inundation of homes. The increase in people and the characteristics that accompany an urban setting were not favorable to effectively running a feedlot.

"The encroachment of homes in the Brighton area basically took us out of the feedlot business there, and moved my family, my wife and kids, to Brush," Rule says. The move left Rule's family about 20 miles out of town working without the complaints that being surrounded by homes brings.

Land is not the only resource being consumed by homes. Rights to water are the equivalent of gold in an area like the Front Range. That fresh Rocky Mountain spring water is desired by more than just those in agriculture, and with water being an essential piece of the industry, if that resource is not accessible then agriculture is not possible.

According to Vanhosen, in about 2002 farmers lost the rights to use water wells to

irrigate and water their crops, making it difficult for many farms to find water to work with.

"The more houses that go in, the more water is taken away, and so eventually it's going to be interesting to see how it all plays out and how water is going to be able to come down the flat," Vanhosen says.

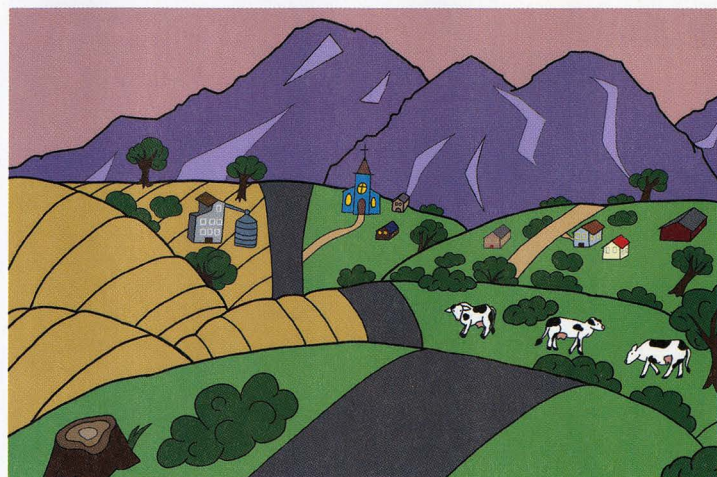
Urbanization causes an increase in water needs and turns into another reason that an influx in people forces agriculture to move, "and water mainly has been extremely difficult on the water side of these farms and ranches that are along the Front Range," Rule says. While running both a sheep feedlot, a dairy and producing crops while in the Brighton area, Rule had to sell his water rights.

"Westminster wanted the water, we didn't want to sell, but they basically forced us into selling the water because they got voting rights on the ditch and decided we would either sell them the water or we would concrete the ditch over," Rule says. They chose to sell, turning down the option to pay over a million dollars to concrete their share of the ditch.

Sharing resources is bound to get complicated when multiple aspects of human life rely on them. When it comes to land and water, the earth only has so much and it's not something agriculture and urban living are able to share. Agriculture is moving further away from communities in order to successfully run their businesses, however this makes food less local and less sustainable at a time when people are more aware of the benefits locally sustainably sourced food brings.

Photo by
Anna von Pechmann

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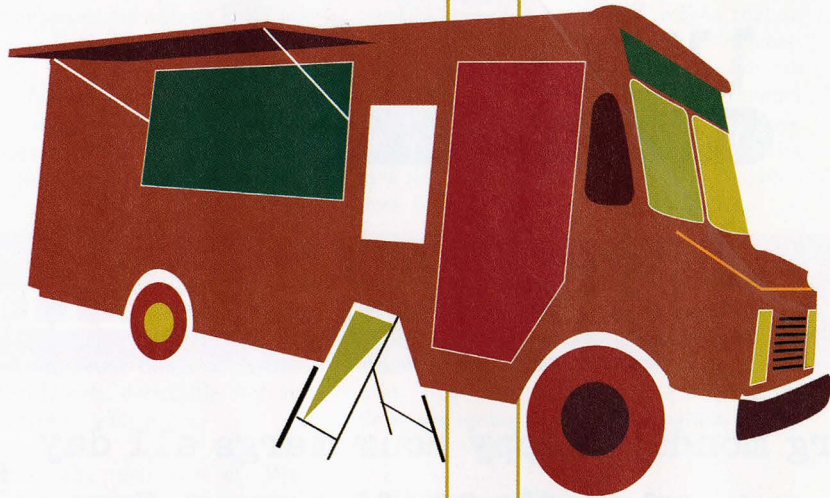
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THE TACO TRUCKS NORTH OF TOWN



HOW A COMMUNITY SHAPES BUSINESS

By Aspen Flores

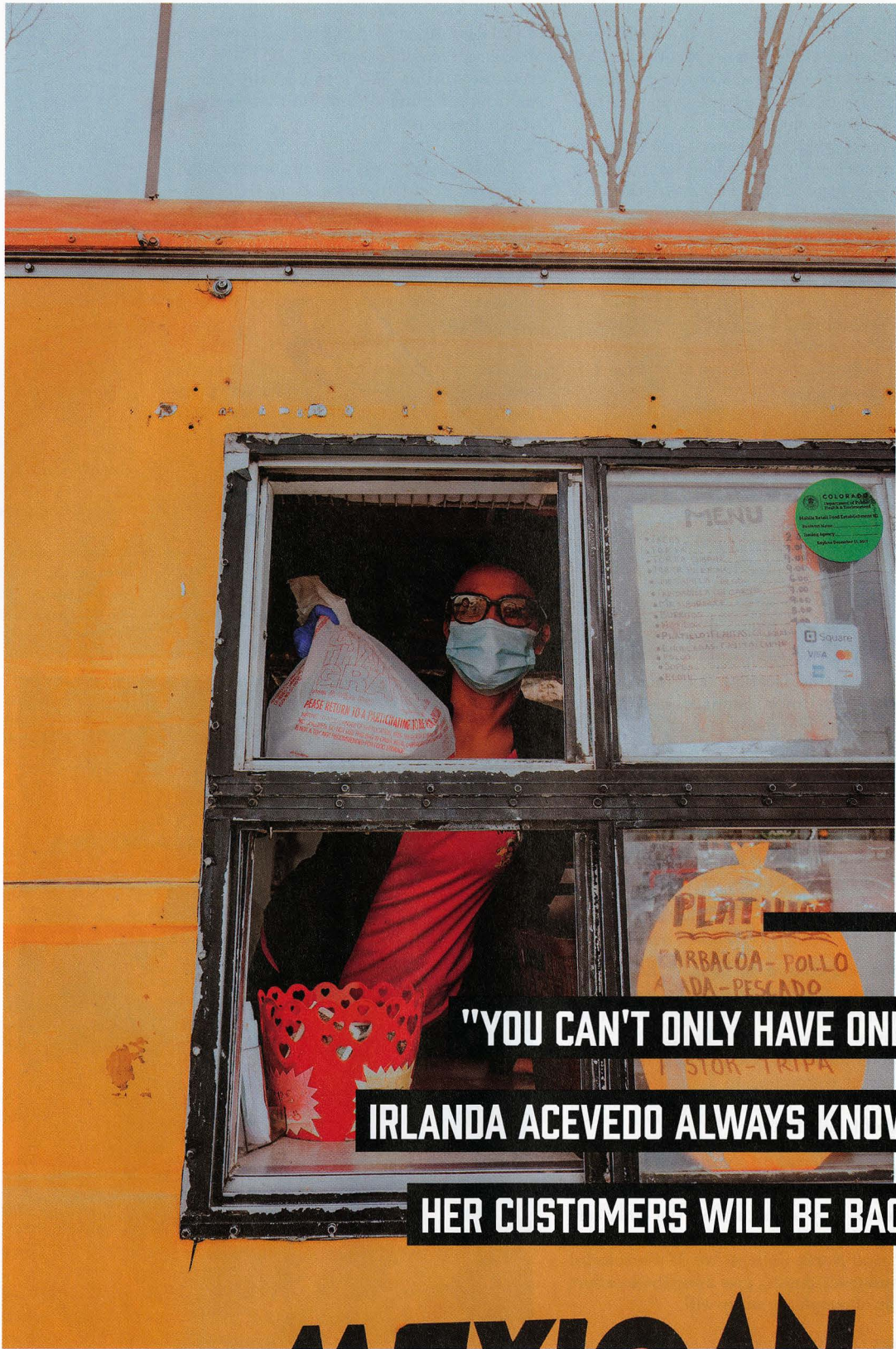
Between June and September, food trucks dot the landscape at City Park for the Fort Collins Food Truck Rally. On Tuesdays from 5:30 p.m. to dusk, there is plenty of food and live music to go around. The rotating food trucks have something for everyone, whether you want something sweet or savory, or need something vegan, vegetarian or gluten-free.

However, if you journey farther north, past Old Town and toward The Lyric, you'll find even more food trucks serving customers throughout all seasons of the year. If you haven't strayed too far from the CSU campus, you might not know about these trucks, but they have been here for years shaping the food truck scene in Fort Collins and, in turn, being shaped by the community surrounding them.

Before the Fort Collins Food Truck Rally began, Taqueria Los Pepe's found its home at 1180 North College Ave. in the Autozone parking lot. Jesus Santiago, the current owner of Taqueria Los Pepe's, takes pride in his business and wants to show the people of Fort Collins that food trucks are something of wonder.

"The truck has been at that spot for about 10 years, and it's definitely one of the pioneers for the food truck business in Fort Collins," Santiago says.

The lasting impacts of food trucks are still felt in Fort Collins. The impacts these small businesses have on their communities is just as significant as the complexity of the industry itself.



**"YOU CAN'T ONLY HAVE ONE,"
IRLANDA ACEVEDO ALWAYS KNOWS
HER CUSTOMERS WILL BE BACK.**

AMERICAN

Each food truck has its intricacies and different spins on the same types of food. That is what ultimately attracts repeat customers. However, even with a unique food style that draws people in, customers still might choose a different truck for cheaper prices. Despite these challenges, Santiago believes in making the food at Taqueria Los Pepe's with the same love and care as they have over the years. The food speaks for itself.

"I feel just because our food truck was one of the original trucks, people know us, where we are, and what we have," Santiago says. "So even with competitors and [food truck] rallies happening we still get a fair share of customers."

For Santiago and many others, food is much more than a business. With their food truck, everyone has the chance to enjoy real Mexican food, and the truck's location has its community in mind. Santiago says they decided on that spot because of the Latino community and their familiarity with Mexican food.

Now, as Fort Collins expands northward, there is a variety of people who visit the trucks, and this location does not feel as excluded from town. Santiago says it feels good to know everybody gets to enjoy their food, not just Latinos.

"In Mexico, food is like the holy grail to everyone and the culture itself," Santiago says. "I grew up with street food my whole childhood while living in Mexico. We in our culture take pride in how we make our food. It's an honor to share that flavor with the city of Fort Collins."

Food and culture go hand in hand. It is inseparable, and many people do not realize how culture shapes the food everyone knows and loves. For some, food brings back fond childhood memories, for others making food is a way of connecting to a culture. For the family that owns Maggie's Tacos, food holds a record of family history.

Next door to Taqueria Los Pepe's sits the bright yellow truck of Maggie's Tacos. The business is easy to spot among the other cars in the JAX Fort Collins Outdoor Gear parking lot at 1200 North College Ave. If the colorful sign and truck doesn't give away the location, the line of people certainly will.

This family-owned business is another example of how food, culture and family intersect.

Maggie Acevedo helps with marketing at Maggie's Tacos, her mother's food truck. Over recent years they have seen both the business and the community grow, but their story has much deeper roots.

"When money was tight my mother would sell tacos to our friends and family in order to get extra cash, and everyone loved them," Acevedo says. "My mother always talked about opening up a business, but was terrified because she was not from here, and every time she asked, someone told her it simply was not possible."

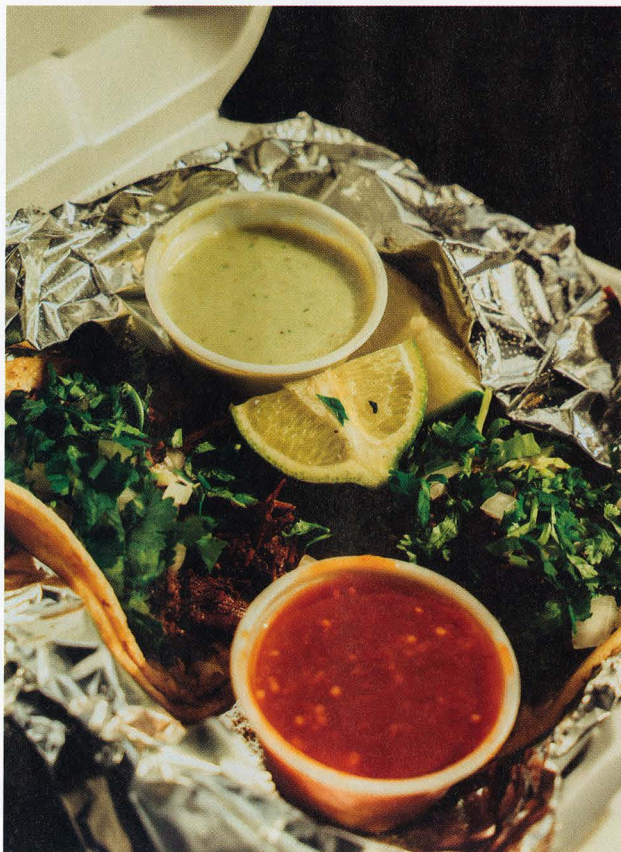
Around three years ago, Acevedo's mother took a risk and received a loan for a food truck. Now, after a slightly rough start, Maggie's Tacos has become a staple of Fort Collins. Although they do not travel like other food trucks, that does not hinder their business. Maggie's Tacos does not need to find customers; the customers find them.

Like any business, success could not come without the support of the community, and on the north side of town, the surrounding area plays an extra special role.

Photos by
Skyler Pradhan

Illustration by John Califf

Barbacoa tacos from
Maggie's Tacos food truck
on Wednesday, Feb. 9 in
the Jax parking lot just
North of Old Town.





Maggie's Tacos food truck located in the Jax parking lot just North of Old Town on Wednesday, Feb 9.

A little further east sits Alta Vista, Buckingham and Andersonville, the historic Latino neighborhoods of Fort Collins. Although these taco trucks are a little outside of those specific areas, this part of town is separated from the hub of Old Town by train tracks. It may feel isolating to own a business here, but the community found here makes up for it.

"My mother loves to cook – it's how she shows her love, I think," Acevedo says. "We are proud immigrants. We are so proud of our culture and we love to share it through food with those who come around. We have lived [on] the north side of town for about 10-plus years, and no, we don't feel isolated. The best memories we have, have been [on] this side of town."

As Old Town continues to develop and breweries push further north, the historically Latino neighborhoods endure these growing pains and feel the beginning effects of gentrification.

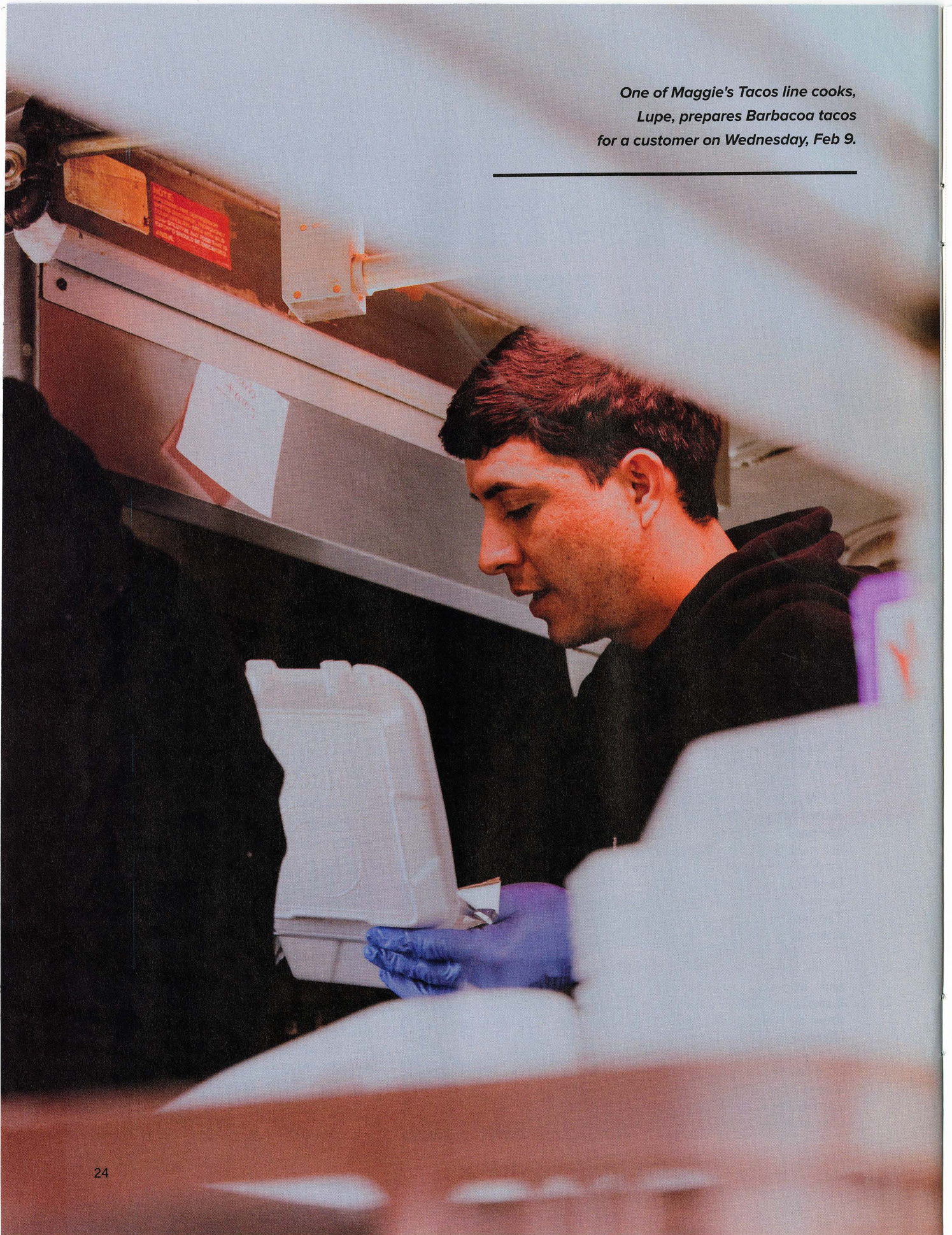
Acevedo says most people who live on that side of town have already felt the impact of gentrification. Everything is more expensive now, and neighborhoods are changing. New

development makes it harder and more competitive to keep a business, but like every taco truck on the north side of town, everyone has the same goals — providing for their family.

This community of business owners, customers and all-around food lovers create a supportive environment of everyone's hard work, and even when it becomes rough, the work is still meaningful. There are always ways to give back to a community that provides so much support.

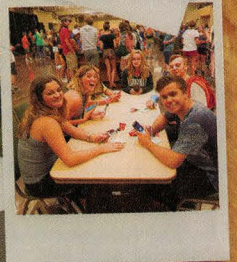
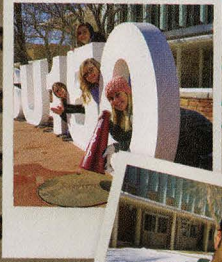
"My mother's day starts at 5 a.m. and ends often at 1 a.m.," Acevedo says. "But she loves her business and loves her customers. We are proud to happily serve the community and often try to give back by driving around town and handing out burritos to the homeless, or having them take out our trash and giving them a warm plate of food. We know what it's like to not have anything, so we try to help out as much as we can."

One of Maggie's Tacos line cooks, Lupe, prepares Barbacoa tacos for a customer on Wednesday, Feb 9.





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The Past, Present and Future of Morning Fresh Dairy Farm

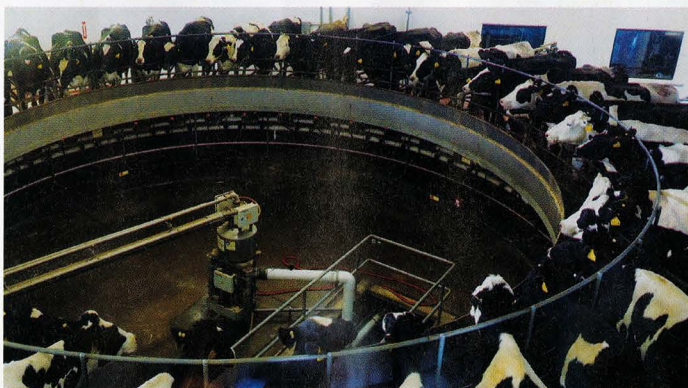
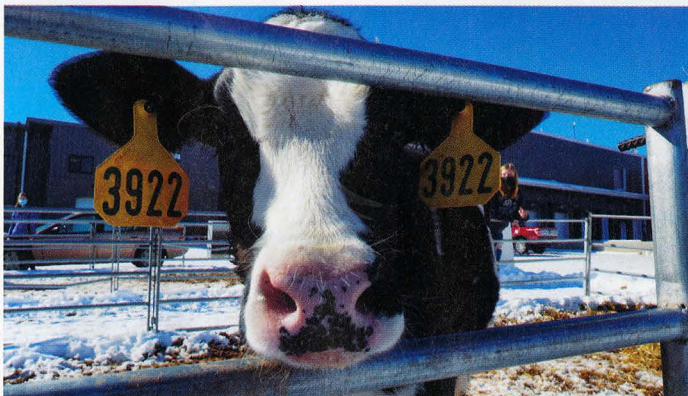
Photo Story by Greg James

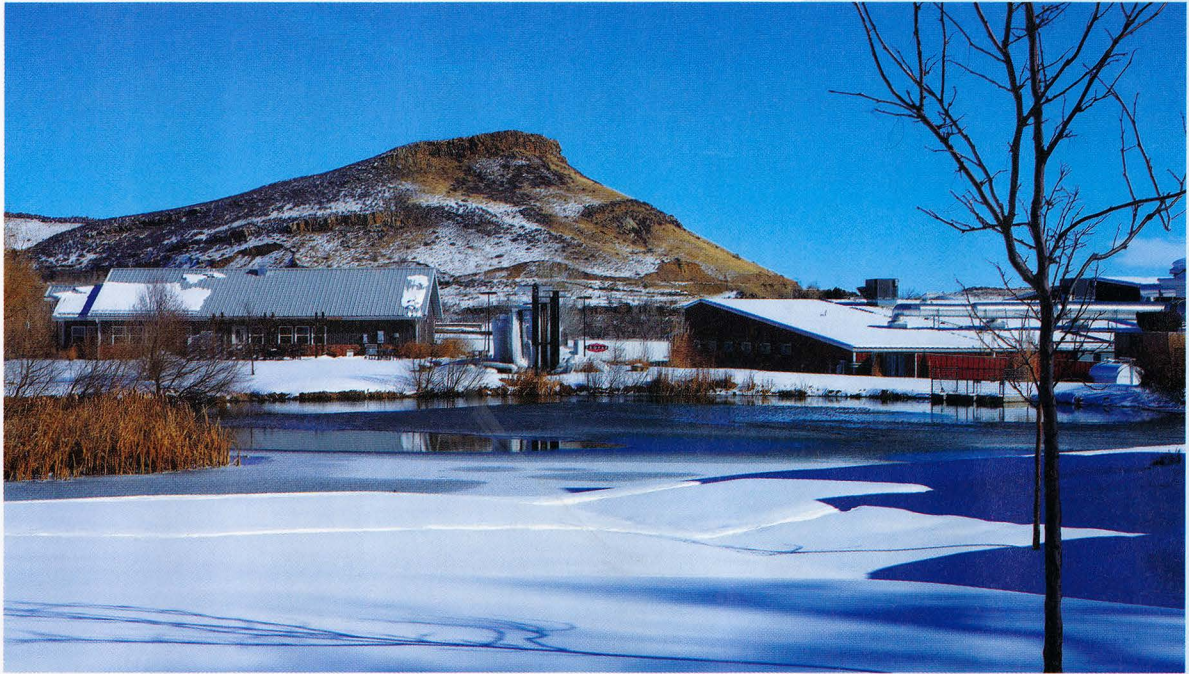
For the Graves family, dairy farming has been a way of life for over a century. Since 1894, Bellevue's Morning Fresh Dairy Farms has been producing milk for the greater Northern Colorado area. To this day, the farm has continued to keep tradition alive, bottling the majority of their milk and cream products in glass bottles on site and hiring a fleet of milkmen to hand deliver milk to customers.

It all started when founders William C. and Arista Graves moved from Illinois to Denver in the early 1890s by train to escape the sweeping epidemic of tuberculosis. For the next few years they traveled all around Colorado in a rented covered wagon. One place stood above the rest in the eyes of William C. Graves, the Poudre Canyon. He purchased 294 acres in Bellevue, the very same land that the dairy farm sits on today.

The family has remained here ever since and has strong ties to the community with many family members graduating from Colorado State University. Helen Whiting Graves graduated from Colorado A&M and became a school teacher. Her son, Dr. Robert Graves, also got his veterinary degree from CSU.

The current Graves generation has brought vast improvements to the property and business; increasing the number of cattle on the property as well as renovating the Pleasant Valley Schoolhouse. They have partnered with Australian-based yogurt company Noosa, allowing them to build a factory on site that produces 200,000 pounds of yogurt each day. They also added a new rotary system of milking their cows aptly named the "Moo-Go-Round" which allows Morning Fresh to milk each of their cows 2-3 times per day, producing 10 gallons of milk per day from one cow. From its adventurous beginning, Morning Fresh Dairy Farms has gone above and beyond the otherwise normal profile of a dairy farm, creating a healthy environment for the many cows that reside there, and an opportunity for the community to come together over locally sourced dairy products.





A Holstein calf at Morning Fresh Dairy Farm poses for a shot Feb. 4.

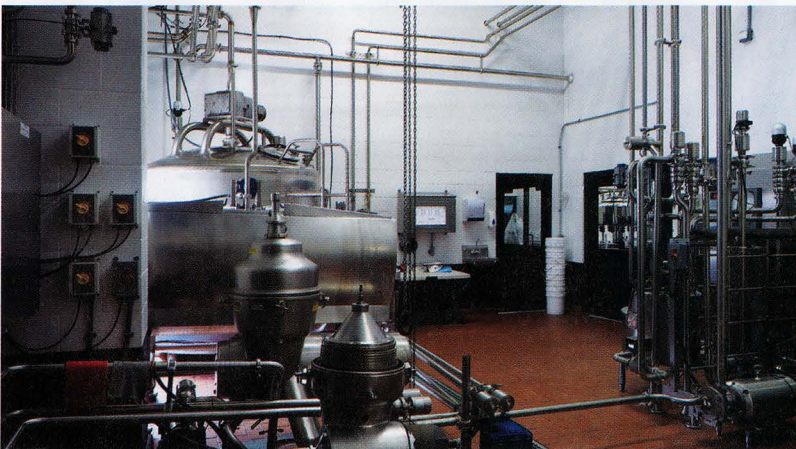


Cows at Morning Fresh Dairy ride around the 'Moo-Go-Round', an apparatus which allows for the cows to be milked in a time efficient manner, Feb. 4.

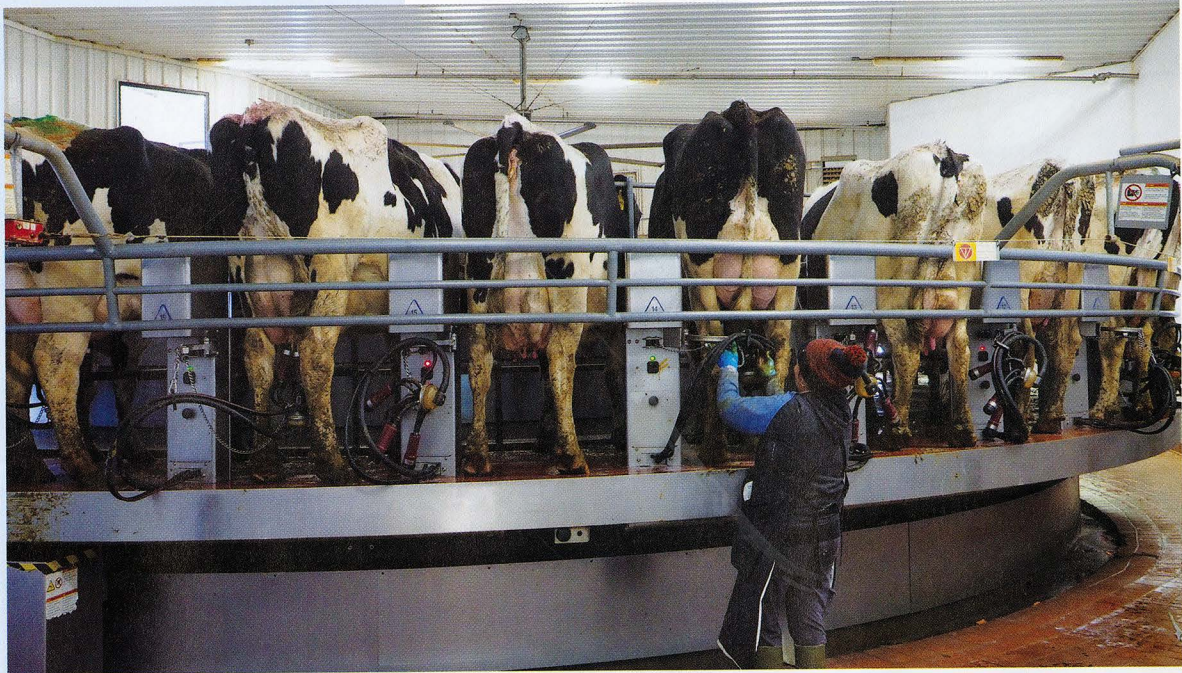
Taylor Geslinger accepts a kiss from a Holstein calf at Morning Fresh Dairy Farms Feb. 4.

The facilities of Morning Fresh Dairy and Noosa Yogurt sit underneath the foothills of the Poudre Canyon, Feb. 4.

A young Holstein scratches itself at the Morning Fresh Dairy Farm Feb. 4.

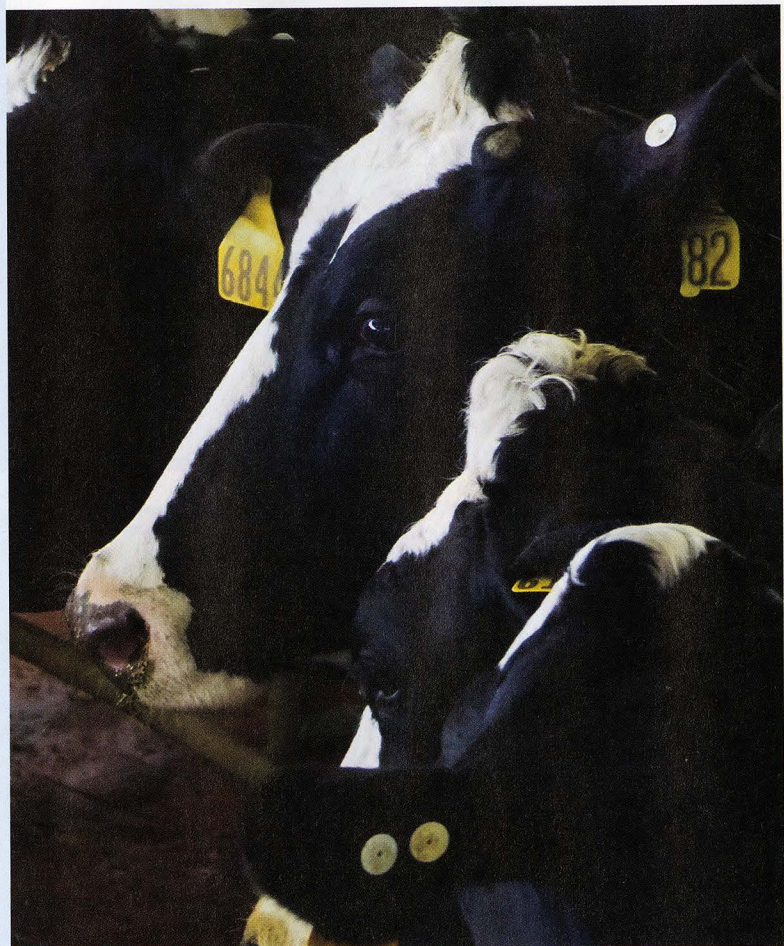
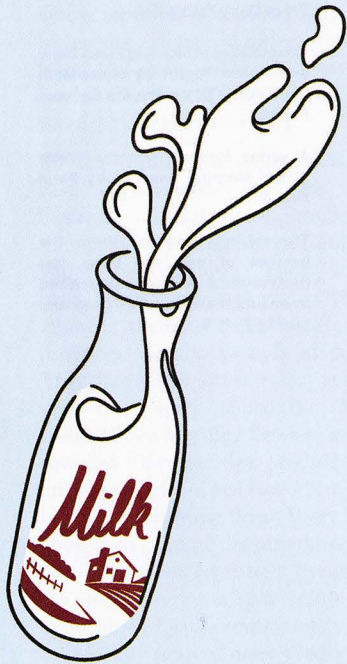


The mixing room is where the batches of milk are ultra- fast pasteurized as well as homogenized to ensure maximum freshness and quality, Feb. 4.



A Morning Fresh Dairy Farm employee adjusts the milking apparatus on one of the nearly 1500 Holstein cattle at the company's Bellvue dairy farm Feb. 4.

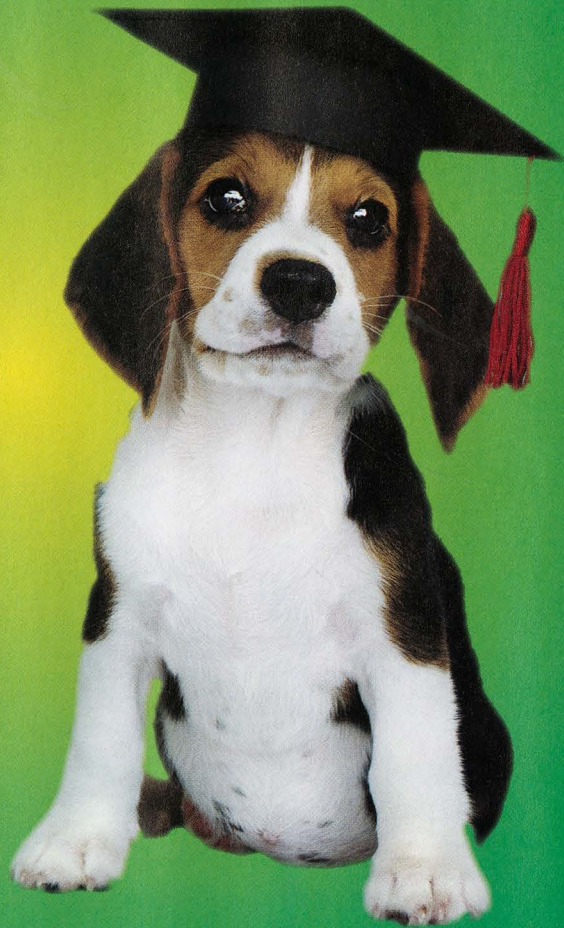
The cattle at Morning Fresh Dairy Farm stand in the stalls of their milking machine on Feb. 4. The milking machine process takes 5-10 minutes for each cow.



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