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November 2025 || Newsletter Edition 182

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CSU Food Systems Spotlight



Mariah Foley

Agriculture Specialist, CSU Extension Garfield County

Mariah works with farmers and ranchers to apply research and resources to the nuanced realities of their agriculture productions. Prior to Extension, Mariah spent the first 12 years of her career working in the field: raising vegetables and livestock across diverse scales and production methods, gaining a broad understanding and a deep respect for the complex work of growing food.

Fundamentally, Mariah is driven by curiosity and building meaningful connections between people, landscapes, and information. She earned her BA in Geography with coursework studying agriculture as the point of interconnection between ecological and social systems, then contextualized her degree on farms in Colorado and Pennsylvania.



Mark Your Calendar

Food Safety Training for Colorado Cottage Foods Producers



Learn how to safely produce food from home as a cottage food business. This course covers a variety of topics, including: basic food safety, foods that are permissible under the updated Colorado Cottage Foods Act, ingredient labeling, special considerations for food preparation at high altitudes, and safe food sampling best practices.

Registration is \$55; times are all in mountain time. Click each date below to register and learn more about the program. For additional dates and to learn more, [check the website here](#).

The next CSU Extension Cottage Food Safety Trainings will take place on:

- November 5, 6:00pm-9:00pm, Rifle, CO, [register](#)
- November 7, 9:00am-12:30pm, online, [register](#)
- November 12, 9:00am-12:00pm, online (Spanish), [register](#)
- November 13, 12:00-3:30pm, online, [register](#)
- November 18, 5:30pm-9:30pm, online, [register](#)
- November 19, 1:00pm-4:30pm, online, [register](#)
- December 2, 12:30pm-4:30pm, online, [register](#)

- December 11, 8:00am-11:30am, online [register](#)



Bean Bootcamp

Bean Bootcamp is a 4-part grower education series designed to support resilient, profitable, and sustainable bean production in the San Luis Valley and beyond.

Where: Ski Hi, Monte Vista, CO

When: Wednesdays, 9am to 1pm, Oct 29th–Nov 19th (lunch included)

Each week features regional experts covering key topics:

- Varieties: drought tolerance, heirloom genetics, variety trials (Oct 29)
- Production: agronomics, equipment, budgets (Nov 5)
- Processing: facility FAQs, value-added products, labeling (Nov 12)
- Markets: logistics, regional + export markets (Nov 19)

Registration for the entire series costs \$50, or registering for each class individually costs \$17.85. Virtual option is also available. If you have any questions, email Madeline at madeline.wilson@colostate.edu.

[Register here.](#)

Idaho Food Business Foundations Workshop Series



Are you ready to launch your food business, grow your cottage food operation, or break into retail and wholesale? The Idaho Food Business Foundations workshop is a series covering everything from food safety to packaging, sourcing, and marketing—giving you the foundation to confidently produce, sell, and scale your product.

Workshop Schedule:

- November 4 – Sanitation 1: Cleaning & Sanitizing Basics
- November 18 – Sanitation 2: Deep Cleaning & Microbial Control
- December 2 – Sourcing Local: Regional Ingredients for Your Value-Added or Specialty Food Products
- December 16 - Marketing and Distribution – Reaching Your Customer
- January 6, 2026 - Packaging & Labeling: Getting Retail Ready

Cost: **\$50 per class** (Virtual and in-person options)

Bonus: Attend 5 or more classes and receive 4 hours of consulting FREE to help grow your business.

[Register here.](#)



2026 Colorado NextGen Leaders

We are excited to announce the launch of the Colorado NextGen Leaders in Food and Agriculture program and invite applications for our 2025–2026 cohort.

This premier leadership initiative is designed to equip the next generation of food and agriculture leaders with the knowledge, skills, and networks needed to shape the future of Colorado's food and agricultural policy.

This year, twelve leaders aged **18–24 years old** will be selected to represent Colorado's diverse regions.

Find out more **HERE**. Applications close November 20, 2025 @ 11:59PM MT.



National Annie's Project Facilitator Trainings

National Annie's Project is offering a virtual facilitator training on **November 18-19th** from 10am-12pm and 2pm-4pm (both days). **Register here**.

Registration is free but limited to the first 20 participants. All 8 hours must be completed for registrants to be certified as an Annie's Project facilitator. If you are interested in hosting Annie's Project in your county, the first step is to take this course. Contact **karisha@anniesproject.org** with questions or for more information.

Cultivating Connections, Sowing Success

Join the Colorado Department of Education, Colorado School Nutrition Association, Nourish Colorado, and Greeley-Evans School District for *Cultivating Connections, Sowing Successes*.



This will be a day for K-12 food service operators, Colorado's agricultural producers, and strategic partners to gather, learn, and connect around Farm to School in Colorado. You'll meet producers, learn strategies from peers, get connected with resources, and attend hands-on, informative sessions! You can plan to spend most of the day at this completely free event.

The event will take place in two regions: **Friday, November 14th in Brighton** and **Friday, December 12th in Grand Junction**. Choose which one works best for you – or join for both! Be sure to get registered:

- Brighton: **<https://bit.ly/FrontRange-FtS-Event>**

- Grand Junction: <https://bit.ly/WesternSlope-FtS-Event>

2025 Soil Revolution Conference

Farmers and ranchers of all scales and production systems are invited to register for the *2025 Soil Revolution Conference*. Topics will cover on-the-ground solutions from producers spanning a variety of climate and soil conditions across the country. Both in-person and livestream options are available.



When: Thursday, December 11th, 8am - 5pm

Where: Boulder Jewish Community Center

Language assistance is available upon request in the registration form. For more information about the speakers and the conference, visit the soilrev.org or contact Trent Kischer at tkischer@bouldercounty.gov.

Register here. Prices go up November 13th!



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New Online Course for Aspiring Farmers, Ranchers, and Food System Workers: Exploring Your Farm Dream

Exploring Your Farm Dream is a new online course offered by the CSU and the Colorado Building Farmers Program for people looking to equip themselves with the knowledge, skills, and business strategies for a future in agricultural production. This self-paced course is designed for learners who have limited experience in agriculture. Visit the course website [here](#) for more information.

Participants can expect to:

- Learn from CSU Extension faculty instructors with expertise in agricultural business management
- Get access to strategic personal and business planning insights, tools, and resources
- Assess preparedness for starting a farm-based business aligned with your resources, skills, and goals
- Explore a variety of different pathways and business models in ranching, agriculture, and food systems

The course consists of 10 modules, which learners will have access to for a full year. Registration costs \$150. **Register for the course here.**



Pre-Registration Now Open: Colorado Building Farmers and Ranchers Business Development Course Jan 20 - March 10, 2026

The CSU Extension Principles of Business Planning and Management program is a series of evening classes designed to help New Farmers and Ranchers build a farm business and provide Intermediate and Experienced Farmers and Ranchers with tools and ideas to refine and enhance their business management, production, and marketing skills. This class is intended for new and intermediate level farmers and ranchers in Colorado, and will be offered in English/Spanish via live simultaneous interpretation. All class materials will be provided in English and Spanish. Learn more & preregister here:

<https://col.st/2vg7i>;

El programa de Extensión de CSU (Universidad Estatal de Colorado) de Principios de Planificación y Gestión Empresarial es una serie de clases por la tarde diseñadas para ayudar a los Nuevos Agricultores/as y Ganaderos/as a construir un negocio agrícola y proveer a Agricultores/as y Ganaderos/as Intermedios/as herramientas e ideas para refinar y mejorar sus habilidades de gestión empresarial, producción y marketing. Esta clase es para agricultores/as y ganaderos/as nuevos e intermedios en Colorado. Clases estarán ofrecidos verbalmente en inglés/español a través de interpretación simultánea en vivo y todos los materiales del curso estarán proporcionadas en inglés y español. Aprender más y preinscribirse aquí: <https://col.st/e1e02>

Save the Date: Colorado Grain Summit March 7, 2026

Join us on March 7, 2025, at the SteamPlant in Salida, Colorado, for the Colorado Grain Summit! The Colorado Grain Summit aims to inspire businesses using local grains to envision pathways for sustainable growth and increased market impact. This single-day conference will feature curated networking sessions, expert panels, and keynotes highlighting innovative success stories across the grain supply chain. Our goal is to create an environment that fosters partnerships, provides pathways to market expansion, and connects grain producers with businesses across Colorado. Mark your calendars and stay tuned for updates!

Click [here](#) to learn more; Sign up [here](#) for event updates

Interested in sponsoring this event? Click [here](#).



2025 National Sorghum Producers Yield Contest



NATIONAL SORGHUM PRODUCERS
the voice of the sorghum industry

Growers are invited to enter the 2025 National Sorghum Yield Contest. State and national winners will be selected from contestants in East and West regions across the Irrigated, Dryland No-Till, and Dryland Tillage divisions, with one overall winner chosen in the Food Grade category.

Sorghum growers can choose between two protocol options for yield verification, [read here to learn more](#).

The entry deadline for the 2025 contest is November 26th. All completed forms must be received by the NSP office no later than December 3rd. [Click here to complete the entry form](#).



2026 Roots of Renewal Conference

The Western Colorado Soil Health, Food and Farm Forum has a new name! You'll still find inspiring speakers, practical tools, and meaningful connections, we've just grown into a name that better reflects the future we're building together.

Roots of Renewal is for anyone with an interest in the future of agriculture. Whether you're looking to improve on or innovate existing practices, there are resources and networking opportunities for you.

The event will be held on January 23-24, 2026 at the Montrose Pavilion.

Tickets on sale on [HERE](#) November 10, 2026..



ORGANIC FARMING
RESEARCH FOUNDATION

2026 Researcher & Extension Meetup and Organic Conference

The Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) invites you to save the date for a special Researcher & Extension Meetup on **Monday, February 9, 2026**, in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

This event will bring together organic-focused researchers, Extension professionals, and educators to connect, share knowledge, and lay the groundwork for future collaboration across the region. This event is free to attend. Registration details are coming soon.

Following the meet-up, the **High Plains Organic Conference** will take place on **February 10th and 11th**. Conference registration is \$45 with meals included. If you're interested in presenting research or helping shape a research-focused track, email communications@ofrf.org.

2026 Sun Soil Water Summit

Join Pueblo Food Project, CSU Pueblo County Extension, and partners to gather, learn, and share delicious food at the Sun Soil Water Summit. This weekend-long gathering at Pueblo Community College is focused on bringing the community closer to the food system. With several events celebrating local leaders, educating our peers, and uplifting local entrepreneurs, there is something for everyone at the summit.



PUEBLO
FOOD
PROJECT

- **Pueblo Food Systems Awards and Gala - March 20th, 6:00pm-8:30pm:** An evening of celebration as we honor leaders in the Pueblo Food System. We will enjoy local food, drinks, music, and an inaugural silent auction.
- **Community Led Summit - March 21st, 8:00am-4:30pm:** A gathering to learn, share, inspire, and catalyze community food systems change. This day-long conference will include keynote presentations, panel discussions, hands-on breakout sessions, and delicious food. This summit will help community members, organizations, and producers gain knowledge to better engage with our food system.
- **Makers' Market and Happy Hour - March 21st, 4:30pm-7:00pm:** Conference participants can explore ideas, try products, and support local food businesses while enjoying local beer and wine at the Makers' Market and Happy Hour. Makers and community organizations interested in a table are welcome to share their products and ideas.

Registration will open soon. If you are interested in volunteering, complete [this form](#).

Center for Sorghum Improvement Seminar Series

The **Center for Sorghum Improvement (CSI)** at Kansas State University is hosting a monthly seminar series to engage researchers, industry leaders, and agricultural professional in meaningful discussions about sorghum research, from genetics to production practices to marketing opportunities.



View the seminar schedule and subscribe to the mailing list [here](#).

For more information or to directly receive seminar notifications, contact Sarah Sexton-Bowser, managing director, at sarahann@ksu.edu.



Farm Resilience Online Course

Learn practical strategies and tools to boost your farm's resilience amidst the challenges of climate change. This self-paced, online course is designed specifically for farmers and ranchers in the West, focusing on real-world solutions and hands-on techniques.

Join a community of like-minded individuals and gain the knowledge you need to secure your farm's future. CSU was fortunate to partner with this program to develop some of the content and decision tools.

Enroll today and deepen your journey towards climate resilience and sustainability.



Funding Opportunities

Get Ready to Apply for the Upcoming Agricultural Stewardship Tax Credit!

In 2026, Colorado farmers and ranchers can receive a tax credit for managing their land in ways that improve soil health, boost water efficiency, and/or create diverse ecosystems by choosing



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from 17 different qualified stewardship practices. Learn more about the qualified practices by referring to our guide sheets for each practice on our website. The application window for the upcoming Agricultural Stewardship Tax Credit opens on **November 10th, 2025**.

Webinars

CDA hosted an informational webinar to walk-through the application process. To learn more, access a recording of the webinar [here](#).

Online Resources

On the [Ag Stewardship Tax Credit Website](#), interested producers can learn more about the program through:

- Guide sheets for each of the 17 qualified stewardship practices that are eligible for the tax credit
- An overview presentation about the program
- A tax credit calculator that estimates credit payments based on acreage and practices



Western SARE Announces Five Open Calls for Proposals

Western SARE has announced open Calls for Proposals for five grant programs, listed below. All program deadlines are in November. [Visit the program website here](#) to learn more and to submit an application. *Please note that awards provided under these Calls are contingent upon USDA-NIFA authorizing the funding to the Host Institution, Montana State University.*

Western SARE is hosting drop-in Q&A office areas on **Thursday, November 13th from 10am-11am MDT**. Access the webinar at with [this zoom link](#).

Farmer/Rancher Grant

Due November 20th, 2025 at 12pm

The Farmer/Rancher Research & Education Grant Program focuses on advancing on-farm sustainability solutions by funding innovative producer-driven research and outreach. This grant program involves agricultural producers (main applicants) and technical advisor(s) implementing projects to address identified needs in sustainable agriculture. Producers may apply for up to \$35,000.

Professional Development Grant

Due November 20th, 2025 at 12pm

Professional Development Program grants focus on educating and training agricultural professionals to increase their understanding and proficiency in sustainable agriculture so they, in turn, can educate and train other agricultural professionals. Professional Development projects must improve the ability of agricultural professionals to conduct educational programs and activities in

sustainable agriculture and to respond to inquiries on the subject from farmers, ranchers, and the public. In a “train the trainer” fashion, this program focuses on increasing knowledge and capacity for agricultural stakeholders to provide further training and information to other agricultural professionals and producers.

Professional and Producer Grant

Due November 20th, 2025 at 12pm

This grant program involves agricultural technical advisor (main applicant) and producers implementing projects to address identified needs in sustainable agriculture. With the collaboration of at least three producers, projects must integrate research and education aiming to advance the three components of sustainable agriculture- environmental, economic, and social- and use innovative educational outreach to disseminate new knowledge to producers and other agricultural stakeholders. It is expected that outcomes of funded projects will result in quantifiable benefits for producers, increase the preservation of the natural and social resources upon which agriculture relies, and be shared with other producers. \$85,000 limit/one-three years in scope.

Research and Education Pre-Proposal

Due November 10th, 2025 at 5pm

This grant program involves scientists, agricultural producers, and others using interdisciplinary approaches to advance sustainable agriculture at local and regional levels. With the collaboration of producers, projects must integrate rigorous research and education aiming to advance the three components of sustainable agriculture- environmental, economic, and social- and use innovative educational outreach to disseminate new knowledge to students, producers, and other agricultural stakeholders. Submission of Research and Education proposals is limited to applicants who submitted a successful pre-Proposal. Projects must incorporate research and education, and bring together a team of researchers, students, ag professionals, and producers. Project budget is \$350,000 maximum, with project length 1-3 years.

Local Education and Demonstration Grant

Due November 20th, 2025 at 12pm

The Local Education and Demonstration grant program is founded on the understanding that adopting sustainable agricultural practice(s) entails change and managing potential financial, environmental, and social risks. The implementation of demonstration and/or education events can address local issues related to the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices, bolstering confidence in adoption, and reducing risks. Successful proposals are required to integrate findings from previously-funded SARE research projects, translate those results into practical demonstrations of application, and bring those results into the field through demonstration and/or educational activities for agricultural professionals and producers.

Climate Resilience Grant Program

The Colorado Dept of Agriculture Drought and Climate Resilience Office (ADCRO) is offering a new grant opportunity to support Climate Resilience projects within the state. This grant program is designed to provide crucial financial assistance to farmers and ranchers who have experienced adverse effects due to climate change induced disasters and are seeking to enhance their resilience against future climate-related challenges.



Apply for the grant [here](#) by November 24, 2025 at 11:59pm.

For more information, visit the website [here](#) and reach out to rosie.skovron@state.co.us with any questions and concerns.



News, Resources & Reading



Wallace Center
AT WINROCK INTERNATIONAL

The Wallace Center at Winrock International's Agriculture and Food Systems Strategy

The Wallace Center at Winrock International is proud to announce its new **Agriculture and Food Systems Strategy**, a bold vision and plan for the years to come.

As a national program of Winrock International, the Center's work is grounded in Winrock's mission "to empower the disadvantaged, increase economic opportunity, and sustain natural resources." Building on decades of leadership and trusted relationships, the Wallace Center is strengthening its role in this time of rapid change. With strong regional roots and national reach, they are deepening their impact by scaling innovation, channeling resources, and supporting lasting change through collaboration. This strategy ensures they remain grounded in their vision and values moving forward.

Through this strategy, the Wallace Center will support:

- Just economic opportunities by strengthening value chains, unlocking resources, and supporting fair markets
- Healthy agricultural ecosystems through regenerative practices that improve soil, water, and farm profitability

- Effective cross-sectoral collaboration to align investment, policy, and innovation for greater impact
- Resilient communities by uplifting local leadership, creating good jobs, and building long-term wealth

Cultivation Station: A Colorado Proud Podcast

Cultivation Station is a business development podcast from the CO Department of Agriculture's Colorado Proud program. The podcast dives into the rich and diverse world of food and agricultural businesses. Whether you are just beginning to think about starting a food or ag business in Colorado, or your operation is up and running, there are many expert insights and insider tips to help you be successful.



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[Find the full list of podcast episodes here.](#)



Colorado Regional Food Summit Reports and Share Out

In early 2025, Colorado's Regional Food Summit Event Series brought together over 1,000 community members from across the state to envision a more equitable, connected, and resilient food system. Hosted by local leaders at 15 different events, these convenings elevated local expertise and sparked collaboration across the food system. From farm tours to grower showcases, each gathering helped identify shared priorities, amplify regional perspectives, and strengthen the voices of food and farm practitioners in shaping statewide strategy.

The events were a key step in building momentum toward the next Colorado Food Summit and served as a reminder of the powerful work already happening on the ground. Together, we are cultivating change—rooted in community and growing statewide. Each month we will feature one region's report. **All the reports can be found here.**

Regional Highlight: San Luis Valley

The San Luis Valley's efforts reflect work started in the Valley in 2022 under the SLV Community Food and Agricultural Assessment. Their work has brought together farmers, educators, food advocates, and community organizations from across the six-county region to strengthen local food connections and celebrate the Valley's agricultural heritage. Participants identified priorities such as expanding farm-to-school and youth gardening programs, launching regional marketing campaigns to highlight SLV-grown products, and investing in shared-use infrastructure like value-added processing and commissary kitchens to support small producers.

Despite the region's strong agricultural identity, persistent challenges remain — including limited access to land and water for new producers, high rates of food insecurity, and low public awareness of existing food system resources. Still, momentum is building through initiatives like the San Luis People's Market, the Rye Resurgence Project, and the community-led Local Food Access Group. Together, these efforts are cultivating a more connected, resilient, and visible food system in the San Luis Valley — one that nourishes both the land and the people who call it home.

Additional resources including a 2-page summary and [the full SLV regional report can be found here](#).

Share Out Webinar

In this webinar, speakers share what they have learned and outline what is ahead for the Colorado Food Summit. The recording covers highlights from regional events, data and reports from across the state, feedback on a statewide report, and more. [Watch the recording here](#).

Introducing the Poudre Valley Community Farms Land Access Bulletin

Poudre Valley Community Farms is launching a bulletin designed to connect producers with land and water access opportunities across the Front Range. Each issue will feature current listings and announcements that support long-term access and stewardship, intended for producers seeking land and landowners looking to connect with growers.



[Sign up for the bulletin here](#).



Read the Report on Farmers Market Organizations

The USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) partnered with Emory University and Arizona State

University to research the varied structures of farmers market organizations to identify benefits, challenges, and services associated with externally managed farmers markets. The goal of the "Analyzing the Impacts of Farmers Markets Managed by Organizations" cooperative research agreement was to increase the general public's understanding of the diverse forms that farmers markets in the United States take and the breadth of their activities.

The project was conducted over two years (October 2022 to September 2024) and used mixed methods (an online environmental scan, listening sessions,

focus groups, and semi-structured interviews) to explore the structures, activities, impacts and trends shaping farmers market organizations.

[Read the report here.](#)



List Your Business in USDA AMS Local Foods Directories

The USDA **Local Foods Directories** allow you to market your local food business to a wider nationwide audience. In particular, make sure your fall-season agritourism venture is featured on the USDA Local Food Directories! To create a new listing, answer quick and easy questions about the status of your business so consumers can learn more about you.

[Click here to sign up for the directory.](#)



From Our Communities



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Take the Agrivoltaics Knowledge and Interest Assessment Survey

To build a network of expertise in agrivoltaics that meets the needs of Colorado's producers, the interests and concerns of CSU Extension and Agricultural Experiment Station staff must be shared. If you interact directly with the producer community, take this survey to share your input on issues that producers face in decision-making about solar.

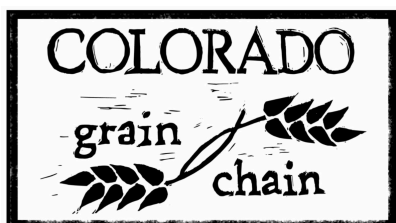
The survey takes less than 10 minutes and will directly inform:

1. The curriculum of the "Train-the-specialists: Colorado Agrivoltaics Workshop"
2. The goals of the Colorado Research-Extension (CORE) Working Group for Agrivoltaics
3. Future needs and opportunities for the state

All survey responses are anonymous and voluntary, and will not be shared outside of the project team. The deadline for completion is **November 14th, 2025**. If you fill out the survey and add your email at the end, your name will be added into a drawing with two \$50 visa gift cards!

Take the survey here!

More information about this Colorado Department of Agriculture-funded project can be found [here](#). For any questions, please contact Jess Callen, callenje@co.larimer.co.us or Alexis Pascaris, admin@agrisolarconsulting.com.



Join the Colorado Grain Chain

Consumers and businesses are encouraged to join the Colorado Grain Chain (CGC). Heritage and heirloom grains are a great way to diversify, build soil, and add value to Colorado's agricultural abundance. Through the Colorado Grown Grains

Co-Brand strategy, the Colorado Grain Chain supports producers and makers with co-branded marketing materials, grain chain business access, and networking opportunities.

For more information, contact Audrey Paugh at connect@coloradograinchain.com or apply to become a member [here](#).



Connect with the Northwest and Rocky Mountain USDA Regional Food Business Center

Although USDA terminated funding to the Northwest Rocky Mountain Regional Food Business Center, we are continuing to support our 131 Business Builder grant awardees in 6 states. Learn more about these grants [here](#).

Stay tuned for other Center updates here:

<https://nwrockymountainregionalfoodbusiness.com/>

as we adapt our programming and outreach to this new environment through continued collaborations with Center partners.



ABOUT FOOD SYSTEMS

at Colorado State University

Food systems are the connections between natural resources, the agricultural and food industries, and the buyers, consumers, and communities to which they contribute. Research, extension and education identify and inform opportunities to bridge how production, supply chains, and eaters respond to changing markets, policy, and the environment. At CSU, we focus on these key areas to train, influence, and communicate ways to connect food-related roles and foster healthy communities, economies, and individuals.



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Find us on social media, get farm or food systems related questions answered via email, forward to a friend, or submit your contributions to our newsletter!



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