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CSU Food Systems Spotlight



Charlene Van Buiten, Assistant Professor

Charlene Van Buiten is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition at Colorado State University. Her research program combines basic and applied food chemistry with nutritional biochemistry to understand how food processing and nutrient interactions can be used to sustainably improve food quality with respect to nutrition, safety and consumer appeal. Her interest in nutrition and health centers specifically around gut health, leading to investigation of how interactions between proteins and phytochemicals affect the bioavailability and (anti-)inflammatory capacity

of each. She is also studying the potential utility of sourdough fermentation in the production of celiac-safe bread products based on degradation of gluten protein by wild bacteria and yeasts found in sourdough starter cultures. Alongside this aim, she is studying how these microorganisms can improve the nutritional quality of bread and prevent microbial and chemical spoilage, with the overarching aim of understanding how sourdough fermentation can be tuned to specific industrial and consumer desires, thus preventing overproduction and reducing food waste. Dr. Van Buiten completed a B.S. in Nutritional Sciences from the University of Connecticut and a Ph.D. in Food Science from Pennsylvania State University. Prior to joining CSU in 2019, she completed a postdoctoral fellowship in Plant Biology at Rutgers University.

Jordyn Gottlieb, Communications Director & Marketing Specialist, CSU Food Systems & Regional Food Business Center

Jordyn Gottlieb is the newest member of the Food Systems team at CSU as the new Communications Director and Marketing Specialist. She will work with the Food Systems Institute and the Regional Food Business Center. Jordyn has spent 15 years in the marketing, communications, and PR spaces, providing strategic and tactical counseling to top executives across CPGs, academic institutions, nonprofits, and agricultural companies. Her scientific knowledge in agriculture and nutrition uniquely positions her to contextualize and amplify information into an authentic, digestible, and compelling narrative for broad



audiences. She has worked on some of the world's largest brands and has extensive experience in product launches, building value-added content, sustainability messaging, gaining brand awareness, systems communications, and thought leadership strategy. In her spare time, she's deeply involved in her agricultural community as a farmer, an educator, and health equity advocate.



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 online 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 \$50; times are all in Mountain Standard or Daylight.

Courses will be offered online on the following dates. **Click each date below** to register and learn more about the program. For additional dates, check [here](#).

CSU Extension Cottage Food Safety Training Online:

- **February 26**, 10:30 am - 2:00 pm, online
- **March 2**, 9:00 am - 1:00 pm, online
- **March 12**, 10:30 am - 2 pm, in-person El Paso County
- **March 12**, 5:00 pm - 8:30 pm, online
- **March 20**, 1:00 pm - 4:30 pm, online
- **April 4**, 10:30 am - 2:00 pm, in-person El Paso County
- **April 5**, 12:00 pm - 3:30 pm, in-person Montrose County
- **April 12**, 9:00 am - 12:30 pm, online
- **April 18**, 10:30 am - 2 pm, online
- **April 22**, 1:00 pm - 4:30 pm, in-person Delta County
- **April 24**, 1:00 pm - 4:30 pm, online
- **April 25**, 12:00 pm - 3:30 pm, online
- **May 1**, 12:30 pm - 4:30 pm, online

4th Annual Sun Soil Water Ag Summit 2024

The Sun Soil Water Ag Summit will take place on **February 23rd and 24th** at Pueblo Community College.



This year's conference includes:

- **Propel: A Business Pitch Conversation | Friday, February 23rd - Afternoon** During this unique pitch competition, businesses will compete to walk away with the resources they need to get to the next level.
- **Pueblo Food Systems Leadership Awards | Friday, February 23rd - Evening** Join us for an evening of celebration as we honor leaders in the Pueblo Food System and announce our pitch competition winners. We will enjoy local food, drinks, and music. Sponsorship packages are available. Seating is limited.
- **Sun Soil Water Ag Community Led Summit | Saturday, February 24th - All-Day** This day-long conference will include key note presentations, panel discussions, hands-on breakouts, and delicious food to enjoy. All are welcome! Our focus of this year's conference will be People Power!
- **Makers' Market and Idea Fair | Saturday, February 24th - Afternoon/Evening** Conference participants will get to explore ideas, try products, and support local food business at the Maker's Market and Idea Fair. Share your products, and your ideas. **APPLY HERE!**

**Scholarships available for Awards and Summit. Dual translation offered for all events.*

Check [here](#) for more information and to register.

Colorado Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association Annual Conference

Registration is now open for the 10th Annual CFVGA Conference, the Colorado produce event of the year where growers and supporting companies and institutions gather for education, inspiration and networking!



Visit the conference [website](#) for agenda, speaker bios, exhibitors' virtual booths and much more.

Tuesday February 27-28, 2024 at the Westin in Westminster.

The 2024 Colorado Ag Forum will be held on **February 29, 2024**, at the Westin in Westminster, Colorado. The theme this year is “AgriCULTURE: A Culture of Progress”.



Beyond just production and profit, what really drives agriculturists is possibility. The 2024 Colorado Ag Forum zeroes in on this innate quality, with a program full of dynamic speakers and presentations, featuring the latest in innovation, collaboration, and glimpses into what the possibilities of Colorado agriculture holds not just in the present, but the future.

Registered attendees of the Forum are also invited to a pre-Forum reception, taking place from 5:30-7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, February 28, 2024 at the Butterfly Pavilion, 6252 W 104th Ave., Westminster, CO 80020

Tickets can be purchased online at ColoradoAgForum.com for \$210. Students and Colorado Ag Leadership Program alumni have an opportunity to purchase at a discounted rate.

Register [here!](#)

2024 Ag Tax Update



AGRICULTURE AND
BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

Join ag business management specialist, Jeff Tranel, on **February 28, 2024 from 6:00pm-7:30pm** for a class on agricultural taxes.

Topics covered will include:

- Farm/Ranch (Schedule F) income & expenses
- Cost recovery (depreciation)
- Reporting on Schedule C versus Schedule F
- Tax management strategies
- Update for 2024

This class is free but you must [register](#) to attend.

Colorado Agritourism Association Annual Meeting



The Colorado Agritourism Association (CAA) will hold its annual meeting on March 1 at Sylvan Dale Ranch near Loveland. In conjunction with the Colorado Dude and Guest Ranch Association, CAA has a full day of information and interaction about local, regional and international markets and best practices for Colorado agritourism businesses.

Click [here](#) for more information.



COLORADO

Department of Agriculture

Colorado agricultural producers are encouraged to submit their listings for the 2024 Farm Fresh Directory, published annually by the Colorado Department of Agriculture. This year will be the 40th anniversary of publication. The directory, which will be released in June, promotes Colorado farmers' markets, roadside stands, u-picks, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) producers, agritourism activities, wineries, and farms and ranches that sell directly to the public.

More than 100,000 copies of the directory will be distributed to consumers through libraries, extension offices, farmers' markets, welcome centers, chambers of commerce, home milk delivery services and other businesses. Additionally, Farm Fresh is available online and can be accessed on any electronic device on the Colorado Department of Agriculture [website](#).

There is a \$25 fee to be included in the directory and the listing deadline is February 29, 2024. The listing form can be accessed [here](#).

For more information, contact [Loretta Lopez](#) in CDA's Markets Division at 303-869-9175.

USDA NIFA Grants Support Workshop



New to grant writing or management? Applied before and not been as successful? The USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA NIFA) is hosting a free 5-day virtual event with a 3-hour session each day from 11am to 2pm MST. Registration is required.

Topics Covered:

- **March 4:** Accessing NIFA Web Resources on Grants Development and Grants Management
- **March 5:** Overview of major NIFA programs
- **March 6:** Opportunities for selective NIFA applicants (groups)
- **March 7:** Learning moments from grants management
- **March 8:** Reporting and related topics

Click [here](#) for more information and to register.



COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

Pruning Workshop by CSU Extension

CSU Extension is offering a pruning workshop on **March 7 from 9am-3pm MST**. There is a \$15 fee payable at the door. This will take place at the Yellow Jacket SW Colorado

Research Station at 16898 County Rd. Z. Please bring your own chair, water, snacks, lunch, and dress in warm clothing. For more information, call 970-677-2283 or 970-565-3123.

Colorado Farmers Market Association Annual Conference



The Colorado Farmers Market Association (CFMA)'s **Annual Conference 2024** will be taking place on **March 8th-10th, 2024**. Early Bird ticket prices are available until February 8th.

CFMA 2023 members receive a promo code that gives access to discounted Early Bird tickets and will expire next week on Friday, January 19th at 11:59 pm MT. After Jan. 19th you'll just need to renew your 2024 membership to receive the same discount access!

Register for the conference!



The National Annie's Project offering new facilitator training dates

The National Annie's Project empowers women in agriculture.

Due to high demand, National Annie's Project is offering another virtual facilitator training on the following dates:

March 12 - 10 am - 12 pm and 2 pm - 4 pm (CST)
March 13 - 10 am - 12 pm and 2 pm - 4 pm (CST)

All 8 hours must be completed 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 become a trained facilitator. Registration link: <https://forms.gle/uMYCKNfLH6cYLeSd8>

Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training for Fruit and Vegetable Producers March 14-15, 2024



Colorado State University Extension, Fort Lewis College, and the Colorado Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association will be hosting an **online only** Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training Course in two parts, from 8am-1:00pm on both **March 14 and March 15, 2024**. This course provides a foundation on the FSMA Produce Safety

Rule requirements, Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) and co-management information, and details on how to develop a farm food safety plan. Registration fee is \$40 which includes PSA materials and a certificate of completion as required under FSMA.

Registration closes on March 6, 2024. Learn more and **register here**.



Crop Wild Relatives and Wild Utilized Plants Symposium

Please join this symposium to assess progress toward conserving North American crop wild relatives and wild utilized plants. We invite the unique perspectives of botanic gardens, Indigenous groups, land managers, researchers, breeders, and seed and

gene banks as we discuss future conservation priorities for this important group of plants.

When: **September 17-19, 2024** at the Denver Botanic Gardens, Denver, Colorado

Interested in attending? Sign up to receive symposium notifications at <https://www.bgci.org/news-events/cwr2024/>



Funding Opportunities



COLORADO

Department of Agriculture

Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Grants (RFSI)

The goal of the RFSI grant program is to increase the value of Colorado producers' products via processing. This funding will support non-meat processing and value added opportunities, such as developing processing infrastructure for fruit, vegetables, grains, legumes, dairy, and other non-meat products.

RFSI grants will prioritize Infrastructure applications that benefit:

- Underserved farmers and ranchers;
- New and beginning farmers or ranchers;
- Veteran producers;

- Processors and other middle-of-the-supply businesses owned by socially disadvantaged individuals, as defined by the Small Business Administration (SBA).

Applicants may be producers or processors, and grants will focus on middle-of-the-supply-chain projects that benefit a number of Colorado producers. To apply, you can first submit a Phase 1 application (letter of intent) in this [Google Form](#). If you cannot access the Google Form, download an [MS Word](#) or [PDF](#) version of the application. These are due March 7.

Applicants may also directly submit Phase II applications which open March 15. Sign up for RFSI updates [here](#).

Find more information on the RFSI grant program [here](#).

The LOR Foundation's [Field Work Initiative](#) is in search of innovative water-related solutions from farmers and ranchers in the Mountain West!



FIELD WORK

The LOR foundation is accepting proposals for research projects between **March 20 and April 10, 2024**.

This year, the initiative will provide funding for approximately 10 farmers and ranchers to implement innovative approaches to using water in agriculture. Farmers and ranchers in rural parts of Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, and Wyoming are eligible for up to \$10,000.

Who can apply and what can be funded: LOR's Field Work initiative is open to farmers and ranchers in rural areas and on tribal lands in Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, and Wyoming. Applicants must have independent authority to make changes to water use on the land. Novel projects that improve outcomes in the following areas are eligible: water efficiency, water reliability, water quality, crop yield or crop diversification, and labor efficiency. Projects must be completed in 2024 and must include a commitment and plan for reporting learnings.

You can register for an informational webinar on [Thursday, March 14](#) at 11:00 a.m. or [Monday, March 18](#) at 10:00 a.m. (same content presented in both webinars).

You can also [schedule a meeting with LOR Foundation staff](#) to discuss your application or proposal.



Committed to the future of rural communities.

**Rural Development Food Supply Chain
Guaranteed Loans Available**

As part of the American Rescue Plan, the USDA **Rural Development Food Supply Chain Guaranteed Loan Program** is offering loans of up to \$40 million for qualified lenders to finance food systems projects.

These loans will be available to projects that are starting or expanding activities in the middle of the food supply chain. For example, the program will support new investments in infrastructure for food aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storage, transportation, wholesaling, and distribution. Applications will be accepted until funds are exhausted.

Colorado contact information for Rural Development and its regional offices can be found at:

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-page/colorado-contacts>.

Robert McElroy, the Rural Business & Cooperative Services Program Director with the Colorado State Office is eager to discuss this opportunity with anyone who has a potential project. His email is: robert.mcelroy@usda.gov.



News, Resources & Reading



USDA FNS launches Summer EBT Program in 2024

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (USDA FNS) will launch the Summer EBT Program for Children as a permanent program in summer 2024. This is part of an effort to enhance USDA's summer nutrition program. The Summer EBT program provides grocery buying benefits to low-income families with school aged children when schools are closed for the summer. More than 30 million children across America could benefit from Summer EBT. Click [here](#) for more information!

The 14th Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services Annual Meeting was recently held in Denver



Almost 200 leaders in agriculture and researchers in extension and rural advisory services attended the 14th Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS) Annual Meeting. Conference participants heralded from more than 40 countries across North America, South America, Asia, Africa, and Europe to attend the three-day event, and it was the first GFRAS meeting held in the United States.

For more information, or to watch videos from the conference, click [here](#).



From Our Communities



Colorado Agrivoltaics Survey Seeks Your Input!

With grant funding from the Colorado Department of Agriculture, American Farmland Trust, Colorado Open Lands, AgriSolar Consulting, and Colorado State University are partnering to engage Colorado farmers and ranchers on agriculturally compatible solar development, a key strategy for and accelerating Colorado's renewable energy transition and implementing Colorado's Greenhouse Gas Pollution Reduction Road Map.

If you are a Colorado farmer, rancher, or landowner, please fill out this **15-minute Colorado Agrivoltaics Survey** for a chance to win one of five **\$100 Visa gift cards**. This is intended for Colorado's agricultural community and is designed to identify opportunities and challenges for integrating solar energy with farming practices in Colorado. The survey consists of 33 questions across 5 sections: 1) Intro & Verification; 2) Solar on Agricultural Land; 3) Solar on Your Agricultural Land; 4) Solar & Agriculture Information; and 5) About Your Operation.

Take the survey today! Responses will be accepted through April 15, 2024. If you'd like to learn more about the project, please read the **press release announcing funding received from CDA**.

CSU Survey on Factors Impacting Labor for Colorado Farms, Ranches, and Green Industry Businesses



Recruiting, retaining, and affording a qualified agricultural labor is an ongoing concern for many Colorado Farmers, Ranchers, and Green Industry Businesses. Lack of accurate data from agricultural employers is one of the factors impeding stakeholder understanding of the situation and thus ability to explore viable solutions. Please help us recruit producers to respond!

This survey will ask the producer to reflect on 2023 (retrospective) and look forward to the 2024 production season (prospective).

We intend for this to be an annual survey so that we can capture a time trend of survey findings. Below is information on the past survey for context on this project.

Here is a [dashboard](#) to view the 2023 survey results and a [slide presentation](#) of those same findings. [Click here](#) for research paper Dr. Ali Hill published to explain the impacts of California overtime wage laws on ag employees in that state.

Many of the questions are required but none of the text fields are required, allowing the producer to proceed more quickly if you should choose to do so.

[Click here to respond to the survey.](#)

Responses are due no later than March 30, 2024

On the go? The survey is also smartphone compatible.

We'll use your feedback to create educational programs and resources, inform influencers and decision makers regarding the ag labor conditions in Colorado, and hopefully find creative solutions to current challenges.



**COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION**

CSU Survey on Land Rental and Custom Rates

What is the Land Rental and Custom Rates Survey?

Colorado State University Extension conducts an annual survey of custom rates charged for various crop and livestock operations and lease arrangements in Colorado in the preceding year. Results of the survey are used by producers, ag lenders, county assessors, the Colorado Department of Agriculture, land appraisers, and more. Land Rental and Custom Rates in Colorado is one of the most widely used publications available from the CSU Agriculture and Business Management Team.

Why should you or producers you work with complete the survey?

- The Land Rental and Custom Rates Report will allow you to advertise custom services or locate and hire custom service operators in your area.
- More responses ensure more accurate data and a more complete list of rates for today's practices. These determined rates influence land appraisal values, your property taxes, and more.
- Information about Land Rental and Custom Rates is used by elected officials to inform federal, state, and local policy, including crop insurance.
- Your responses are safe and anonymous.

What if I have questions about the survey?

Your [CSU Extension Agriculture and Business Management Team](#) is here to answer your questions!

The survey will take around 10 minutes.

[Complete the Survey](#)

CSU Survey on Estate Planning for Service Providers and Producers



COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

Colorado State University is conducting a research study on the critical issue of estate planning and succession (transition) planning. The title of the project is "Demographics and Educational Needs of Colorado Farm and Ranch Families about Estate and Succession Planning". Last year's report and other outputs are available on the web site <https://ABM.extension.colostate.edu>.

CSU is looking for service providers and producers to complete the survey. Participation will take approximately ten (10) minutes. Your participation in this research is voluntary, but essential. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participation at any time without penalty.

If you share this with your producer network, please share this invitation:

To indicate your willingness to participate in this research and to continue to the survey, click here: https://colostate.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_aeEfD4Xrgcn4AuO.

If you have any questions about the research, please contact Jeffrey Tranel, CSU Agricultural and Business Management Economist, at jtranel@colostate.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the CSU IRB at: CSU_IRB@mail.colostate.edu; 970-491-1553.

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

The Northwest and Rocky Mountain USDA Regional Food Business Center (RFBC) is one of 12 Regional Food Business Centers funded by USDA, with the goal of improving local and regional food systems and better serving underinvested farm and food businesses. The Northwest and Rocky Mountain RFBC serves Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, Oregon and Washington. Recent updates include:

- our January/February **newsletter**
- **news and events** from across the region
- new **grant** programs



- Sign up for direct updates from the Center [here](#)

Learn more about the Center's educational and technical support programs for small- and mid-sized food and farm businesses, and sign up for updates here: <https://nwrockymountainregionalfoodbusiness.com/>.



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.



Stay Connected

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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