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CSU Food Systems Spotlight



Chelsea Bonser

Regional Food Business Center Marketing Specialist

Chelsea Bonser joined the USDA Northwest and Rocky Mountain Regional Food Business Center as the Marketing Specialist, where she leads regional communications strategy and storytelling efforts to support resilient food systems across six states. Chelsea brings a blend of corporate, academic, and grassroots experience to her role. She began her career in beef sales with JBS, managing retail and food service accounts before pursuing advanced research in agricultural communications at Colorado State University. There, she collaborated with USDA APHIS to develop science-based outreach tools for national livestock health studies and taught professional and technical writing courses.

Chelsea is also the founder of a homesteading brand and cottage food business. Through her blog, food and farm business, and hands-on workshops, she uplifts rural living, motherhood, and homemade traditions. Her work reflects a deep commitment to stewardship, community engagement, and values-driven service, all of which inform her approach to food system transformation and regional outreach.



Mark Your Calendar



What's on Your Label? A Bite-Sized Food Labeling Course for Small Food Businesses

Iowa State University Extension is offering a new hands-on workshop on **June 4th** from **9am-11am MT** designed to help businesses navigate the complexities of food labeling regulations. This workshop is ideal for small food businesses, processors, and entrepreneurs looking to better understand FDA requirements and improve their packaging. During the session, food scientist Troy Crowe will cover nutrition facts labels, health and marketing claims, and much more. To learn more check out [here](#).

The workshop registration is \$50. **Register here by June 2nd** to secure a spot. Email alexv@iastate.edu with any questions.



WEBINAR: How do Feeding America Food Banks source food, ensure quality and adapt to change? A deep dive with Food Bank of the Rockies

Curious about the ways food banks source and ensure continued access to quality foods in Colorado? Want to learn more about how food banks are adapting to changing funding and policy landscapes? Join the Food Insecurity working group of the CSU Food System PRU as we host Colleen Daszkiewicz and Sue Ellen Rodwick from the Food Bank of the Rockies on **June 3rd at 9am**. [Join the call here.](#)

This is the first in a series of quarterly webinars where we will be selecting food insecurity related topics and learning from academic and community experts.

Rodale Institute Central Plains Organic Field Walk and Buyer Tour



Organic farmers, organic buyers, and those transitioning to or interested in organic production are invited to the Rodale Institute Organic Field Walk and Buyer Tour in Eastern Colorado. Participants will engage with key players in organic supply chains as buyers are connected with transitioning and established organic farmers during an immersive field walk. This event will focus on scaling organic ingredient production and marketing the whole organic crop rotation on the Plains. Lunch, featuring Colorado-grown organic ingredients, will be served. The event takes place on **June 5th from 9:30am-1:00pm at GreenLeaf Acres in Hudson, CO**.

[Register here.](#)



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 time. Click each date below to register and learn more about the program. For additional dates and to learn more, [check here](#).

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

- June 19th, 9:00am-1:00pm, online, [register](#).

- June 12th, 12:00pm-3:30pm, online, **register**.
- June 27th, 9:00am-12:30pm, online, **register**.
- July 11th, 9:00am-12:30pm, online, **register**
- July 17th, 12:00pm-3:30pm, online, **register**.

2025 Colorado Auto Weeder Demos



Producers are encouraged to attend the 3rd annual demonstration of industry leading vegetable farm automated weeders at the CSU Arkansas Valley Research Center. Attendees will see machines in operation, learn more about leading automated weeders, and meet company representatives.

The event is on **June 12th from 8:00am-1:00pm** in Rocky Ford, CO. Registration is \$7 and includes lunch. To learn more, visit the webpage **here**.

Register here.



CO CEWL Annual Summit

Join for this year's Colorado Coalition to Enhance Working Lands summit! The annual summit offers a welcoming and creative space where to build relationships for collaboration, put words into action, and step into another year of adapting.

They are excited to host this year's summit on the Western Slope! Organizations, agencies, and producers will share their work to support local food systems, working lands, and land stewards across Colorado. You will hear from land trusts, soil and water conservation districts, farmers, and ranchers on the importance of relationship building in developing successful collaborative conservation projects. Some topics include: restoring riparian ecosystems, adapting gated pipes to drip to conserve water, and collaborations between land trusts and ranchers for restoration. There will also be plenty of facilitated activities to build relationships, capacity, and find opportunities for collaboration among participants.

The event is **June 13th from 9:00am to 4:00pm** at Wrich Ranches in Crawford, CO and is free. Lunch and refreshments will be provided. There are travel stipends for farmers and ranchers to help offset costs.

Find out more **here**.

2025 Soil Health Demo Day



Farmers and ranchers looking to incorporate soil health practices are invited to the 2025 Soil Health Demo Day at Olander's Farm, a 5th generation family farm and malthouse in Berthoud, CO. Todd Olander will give a tour of three different plots of land, all with different tilling and soil health practices, including

intercropping, cover cropping, grazing cover crops, adding organic matter, and more. The event will also include a producer panel and discussion on the success and challenges of soil health, interactive demonstrations, and a free breakfast and lunch.

This event will take place on **June 17th from 8:30am-2:30pm**. Registration is free; register by June 10th. Learn more and register for the event [here](#).



Agrivoltaics Webinar and Farm Tours: How to Plan Your Agrivoltaics Project

Webinar

Join the Colorado Agrivoltaic Learning Center for a discussion on how to plan your agrivoltaics project. The webinar will include a panel highlighting various professionals engaged in or close to the field of agrivoltaics with discussions centered on the outlook for agrivoltaics specifically in Colorado. The webinar will take place on **June 26th from 1:00pm-2:30pm**.

[Register for the webinar here.](#)

Farm Tours

The Learning Center is hosting a series of public tours of agrivoltaics farms in CO. The tours will take place at Jack's Solar Garden in Longmont between June 12th and October 18th. Attendees will be introduced to agrivoltaics and learn about its potential benefits to farmers, biodiversity, and communities. Registration costs \$17.50.

[Register for a tour here.](#)

Research Field Day and Pledge Drive at PFZ Farms

Learn about the impacts of research in agriculture, water, carbon, and food on **June 26th from 8am-5pm** at Pfaltzgraff Farms in Haxtun, CO. Researchers, farmers, and community leaders will gather to discuss regenerative farming practices, cutting-edge research, and real-world solutions that can be implemented on farms and ranches. The event features presentations from

industry leaders, hands-on demonstrations, and collaborations with experts across the world. Additionally, Chef Pablo Aya with the Hispanic Restaurant Association will be preparing food for the day.



Registration for the Field Day is \$70. To learn more and register, visit the webpage [here](#). Sponsors play a key role in helping bring this event to life: learn how to become a sponsor [here](#).

Pledge Drive

Heart of a Building and Paul Kreisher are hosting a Pledge Drive following the Research Field Day from 5-8pm. At this event, people designing, financing, and constructing the buildings of tomorrow will share their stories. Chef Pablo Aya will cook an intimate meal for those ready to enjoy a night learning about the program Heart of a Building.

Registration for the Pledge Drive is \$97. To learn more and register, visit the webpage [here](#).



CENTER FOR
SORGHUM
IMPROVEMENT

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.

Cottage Foods Business Training: Passion Into Profits



COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

Join CSU Extension for a training to successfully build a cottage foods business and turn your culinary passion into profit! CSU Extension is offering a short course with tools to ensure success for cottage food producers. The training provides easy-to-use resources for ensuring producers account for their costs of production and product-market-fit.

Upcoming Training Sessions:

- July 7th, 10:00am-12:00pm, online, [register](#).

- September 18th, 2:00pm-4:00pm, online, **register**.



Experiential Short Courses with Pueblo Seed & Food Co.

Come join Pueblo Seed & Food Co. in the Canyon of the Ancients! Throughout the year, they are offering 4 courses and 1 field day in southwest Colorado.

Upcoming courses:

- The Whole Grain Experience - July 18-20th, 2025
- Soil, Seed, and Human Health - August 15-17th, 2025
- The Great Chile and Garlic Experience - September 26-28th, 2025
- Maize & Millets - October 31st-November 2nd, 2025

The cost without lodging for **all courses** (except the field day) is \$100. For questions, contact info@puebloseed.com.



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



Local Agriculture Market Program

USDA's Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP) provides grants to help local and regional food entities develop, coordinate, and expand producer to consumer marketing, local and regional food markets, and local food enterprises.

Since 2021, \$220 million has been invested in 597 projects.

USDA Local Agriculture Market Program Funding

Applications are open for the USDA's Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP). This funding supports the development, coordination, and expansion of direct producer-to-consumer marketing, local and regional food markets and enterprises, and value-added agricultural projects. There are three funding opportunities (click on each title to learn more):

- **Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP)**
- **Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP)**
- **Regional Food System Partnerships Program (RFSP)**

Applications are due **June 27, 2025**. USDA offers a streamlined grant process for LFPP and FMPP applicants applying for marketing and promotion projects. For more information and to view the Request for Applications, **visit the website**.

Click on the following resources to learn more about LAMP applications:

- **AMS Grant Toolkit:** RFA and Application Process Information
- **The LAMP Navigator:** Past Award Data
- **Food & Agricultural Mapper and Explorer:** Local Food Data
- **Seeds of Success:** Data on previous LAMP projects



AMS Seeks Peer Reviewers for Grant Applications

The USDA Ag Marketing Service is seeking subject matter experts to serve as peer reviewers to evaluate applications for the LAMP and other AMS programs for the FY2025 grant cycle. The current programs seeking reviewers are:

- Acer Access and Development Program (Acer)
- Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP)
- Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP)
- Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP)
- Regional Food System Partnerships (RFSP)

AMS grant peer reviewers should have knowledge or experience in agricultural systems. Producers and those with first-hand experience in food and farm businesses are encouraged to participate. Reviewing applications takes approximately 6 weeks. For more information, view the **How to Become an Application Reviewer** webpage.

Register [here](#).



News, Resources & Reading



USDA Survey: Farmer's 2025 Planting Intentions

As the 2025 crop production season begins, the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) contacted producers nationwide to determine their plans for the upcoming season.

The USDA compiles the survey results into a report which provides the first estimates of U.S. farmers' growing plans for 2025. The survey results are published in the annual *Prospective Plantings* and quarterly *Grain Stocks* reports.

[Find the reports here.](#)

Values-Based, Equity Centered Farm to Food Assistance Report



Wallace Center
AT WINROCK INTERNATIONAL

The Wallace Center's Food Leadership Network has announced 4 years of research, peer learning, and field building in the report "**Farm to Food Assistance: A Model for Values-Based, Equity-Centered Approaches to Transforming the Food System**". This report makes the case for how farms can transform food systems through food assistance programs. The Food Leadership Network highlights the most pressing challenges and offers recommendations for people looking to advance Farm to Food Assistance efforts across the country.



We Invite you to Explore Native Grown + Gathered

Native Grown + Gathered is an online platform supporting indigenous food sovereignty across the Northwest and Rocky Mountain regions. This platform brings together Native food producers, traditional food gatherers, and those committed to revitalizing traditional indigenous foodways to strengthen

communities.

Through Native Grown + Gathered, you can explore

- A directory of Native-owned food businesses and producers

- Information on the upcoming Native Foods Expo
- Funding opportunities and educational resources to support Indigenous-led food systems

Visit the Native Grown + Gathered platform [here!](#)



Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council (COFSAC) is seeking New Council Members

COFSAC is seeking nominations for our seats with terms expiring in October, 2025. These seats include:

- Member with expertise in federal food and nutrition service programs (General Assembly Appointed). [APPLY HERE](#)
- Representative of food wholesalers or food retailers (Appointed by the Governor's Office). [APPLY HERE](#)
- Representative of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Appointed by the Governor's Office). [APPLY HERE](#)
- Representative of a food distributor or a food hub (General Assembly Appointed). [APPLY HERE](#)

Applications

The council will request to review all applications submitted by October 18th, 2025, and provide recommendations to the appropriate office. The General Assembly or the Governor will then make the final decision (over which they have full discretionary power) and inform those appointed as Council members. The Council will follow up with those not appointed to explore other opportunities for participation such as committee and working group initiatives.

More information is available on [our website](#).



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 spring-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.](#)



Promise of Urban Agriculture Courses Now Available

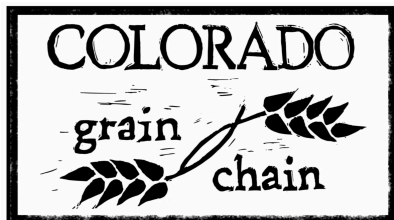
USDA AMS, in partnership with the Cornell Small Farms Program and Rooted, is offering the Promise of Urban Agriculture courses. The courses represent an innovative and holistic approach to support urban farming businesses and communities.

This project is informed by **The Promise of Urban Agriculture**, a 2019 national study of commercial farming in urban areas conducted by AMS and the **Cornell Small Farms Program**. With information from this study, the project team created The Promise of Urban Agriculture courses designed to educate both growers and planners on urban agriculture and the impact of city plans and policies.

The Promise of Urban Agriculture courses are available online. Click [here](#) to access the courses.



From Our Communities



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](#).

New Consumer Food Insights Series Available

A series of **Consumer Food Insights** was published in late 2024. The survey, conducted in Winter 2023, captured current food shopping trends as well as changes in U.S. consumer food behaviors since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

Click [here](#) to access the series providing regional data on market usage, including the Rocky Mountain Northwest region.



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 our region's farm and food businesses. The Northwest and Rocky Mountain RFBC serves Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, Oregon and Washington.

- Learn about Center Impacts from our first 2 years of programming [here](#).
- Read our latest newsletter [here](#).
- Learn about open funding opportunities through our [Biz Builder grant programs](#).
- Find an event to launch or expand your business on our [calendar](#).

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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