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September 2024 || Newsletter Edition 169

In this issue:

- CSU Food Systems Spotlight
- Mark Your Calendar
- Funding Opportunities
- News, Resources, and Reading
- From Our Communities
- About Us
- Stay Connected



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CSU Food Systems Spotlight



Coryn Davidson

MS Student, Colorado State University
Department of Ag and Resource Economics

Coryn Davidson is a second-year MS student in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics. She grew up in western Wisconsin and completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. Her primary research focus is on the economic impact of the Colorado potato sector. Coryn just finished a service term with AmeriCorps. While an AmeriCorps member, her most valued accomplishment was researching tools that producers could use to make more climate conscious decisions on their operations. From this research she created a suite of the tools and recorded tutorials for 11 of the most useful tools. This video was featured in an online class forum presented by Farmer Campus. She looks forward to diving deeper into the Colorado potato sector, its impacts on the local economy, and how specialized products add value to the sector.



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:

- **September 23**, 12:30 pm - 4:30 pm, online, includes 30-minute business training
- **October 9**, 10:00 am - 1:30 pm, in-person El Paso County
- **October 9**, 1:00 pm - 4:30 pm, online
- **October 17**, 9:00 am - 12:30 pm, online
- **November 1**, 9:00 am - 12:30 pm, online



CSU Ag Day

Mark your calendar for CSU's Ag Day on **September 7th** on campus in Fort Collins. Ag Day is a long-standing tradition and celebration of Colorado agriculture and CSU's College of Agricultural Sciences. We are proud to host the Nutrien Ag Day BBQ in partnership with Colorado agricultural partners from around the state. This tradition honors both the institution's roots and Colorado's rich agricultural history in a celebration that appeals to all ages.

For more information and tickets, visit: <https://agsci.colostate.edu/agday/>



2nd Annual Colorado Food Collision

Join us for an exciting and delicious event as we bring together food entrepreneurs from across the beautiful state of Colorado. With \$10,000 in cash prizes, and over \$10,000 worth of business support services, competition will be fierce.

When: **September 13th, 2024** from 4:00-7:30pm

Location: Sky Lounge and Terrace (4th Floor), Hydro Building: CSU Spur 4777 National Western Dr., Denver, CO 80216

Register here!



3rd Quarter of 2024 Ag Innovators of Colorado Meeting

The speaker this quarter at CSU Spur's Ag Innovators of Colorado meeting will be **Darin Lickfeldt from Nutrien Ag Solutions**.

This is a great opportunity to hear a major ag retailer's perspective on innovation.

When: **Wednesday, September 25, 5:30**

pm - 8:00 pm

Where: CSU Spur: Hydro Building:
4777 National Western Dr. Denver, CO

**Beverages and appetizers will be served!*

Click [here](#) to register.

Homesteading the Western Slope

September 21, 2024

Empower yourself with essential self-sufficiency skills at **Homesteading the Western Slope!**



This conference offers a wide range of hands-on workshops and presentations on topics like home food preservation, soil health, composting, gardening, livestock, mushroom foraging, and more. Whether you're working with a backyard garden or a large parcel, you'll find valuable information tailored to your needs.

Led by community members, local experts, and producers, these sessions will provide you with practical knowledge and insights to help you succeed in rural living. Come connect with others, expand your skills, and gain the confidence to manage your resources effectively.

For speaker spotlights, updates, and to view the full schedule and class descriptions, visit our [Facebook page](#) or our [Eventbrite page](#).

Registration closes September 18th!



COLLEGE OF
AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

"The New American Farmer" Guest Lecture at CSU

Professor Laura-Anne Minkoff-Zern, Ph.D, will be hosting a discussion titled "The New American Farmer" for a National Hispanic Heritage Month Guest Lecture at Colorado State University (CSU). This will be an engaging discussion on the hardships and inequalities faced by immigrant workers in the U.S., and the innovative farming techniques many of these farmers have adopted. Dr. Minkoff-Zern is an Associate Professor of Geography and the Environment at Syracuse University.

Friday, September 27 at 10:30am in Lory Student Center Room 387 at CSU. No registration is needed to attend.



Community Film Showing in Fort Collins: "Legacy" and "Join or Die"

The CSU Office of Engagement and Extension, AgrAbility, and Rocky Mountain Farmers Union are sponsoring a night of engaging cinema and conversation, showing two films:

- **Legacy:** An impactful film offering a glimpse into the beautiful and sometimes painful stories of agriculture.
- **Join or Die:** A film about the importance of social connection and community collaboration across difference.

This is a free event with a reception before the films begin, including heavy appetizers and a cash bar. The film showings and panel discussions for each film will follow the reception at 6:30pm.

Note: Due to time constraints, attendees will be able to select and watch only one of the films, which you can choose in the registration below.

Monday, September 30 5:00-8:30PM at The Lyric in Fort Collins, CO

Click here to RSVP by Friday, 9/13/24



Farm Resilience Online Course (Free Before October 1st!)

Asynchronous, self-paced course now open for enrollment!

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.

Free enrollment for a limited time only - **sign up before Oct 1st!** We have grant funds to subsidize the costs of farmers and ranchers to take this asynchronous course for free if you **enroll** before October 1st (with more time to complete the course after enrollment). After that, we will offer the course on a sliding scale.

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



Regenerative Food Systems Investment Forum October 9-10, 2024

The RFSI Forum is the gathering for learning the why, how and where to invest capital in agriculture and food for financial and impact returns. Whether you have been engaged in the regenerative space for decades, are ready to dig in to this

emerging opportunity, or are just a little curious, this event offers unparalleled insight and networking opportunities.

Who should attend?

- Impact investors, family offices, pension funds, fund managers, foundations, and banks
- Financial advisors and other investment services
- Entrepreneurs
- Farmers, ranchers, and producers
- Corporate food companies, emerging brands, agricultural and food service providers
- Advocates for healthy food systems

Apply [here](#) for a Farmer Scholarship. Click [here](#) to register.



Save the Date!
**Artisan Grains Marketing
Solutions Roundtable**
November 6, 2024

Growing markets for climate-resilient artisan grains requires working together — growers, processors, distributors, buyers. It can also mean building support and investment in processing, infrastructure, product development, marketing, and other things that could involve other partners—financial institutions, individual investors, economic developers, nonprofits, community groups, local governments and others.

The Marketing Solutions Roundtable is designed to help explore what is possible across Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington and Wyoming by exchanging ideas, learning together and cultivating new connections for creating, expanding and diversifying markets for these crops, looking at what is working across the region and elsewhere that could be implemented, adapted and innovated to expand markets locally and regionally.

The Marketing Solutions Roundtable will include:

- A keynote by Dan Hobbs, long-time cooperative development specialist, organic farmer and entrepreneur, collaborative leader and ag innovator from Montezuma County, Colorado.
- A slate of firsthand “solution stories” from our region and across the country, highlighting successful efforts involving different partners and market-building approaches.
- Breakout rooms for peer exchange and networking, deeper dives into how to implement or adapt different approaches, and opportunities to connect with others in your state.

Wednesday, November 6, 2024

8am-11:30 am PT/9am-12:30 pm MT
Live via Zoom.

Register [here](#). For more information contact Tayler Reinman at treinman@uidaho.edu.



Funding Opportunities



Western SARE offering grants for projects that communicate local issues related to adoption of sustainable agricultural practices

Western SARE is replacing its Research to Grassroots grants program with a newly-developed Local Education and Demonstration (LED) grants program.

The LED grant program is founded on the understanding that adopting sustainable agricultural practices entails change and managing potential financial, environmental, and social risks. The implementation of demonstration and/or education events can address local issues related to adopting 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.

Proposals are due **November 6, 2024**

[Download](#) the call for proposals.



Ongoing Assistance via Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops Program is Available

USDA's Farm Service Agency is offering the **Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops Program (FSCSC)** again this year. The FSCSC program provides financial assistance for specialty crop operations that incur eligible on-farm food safety program expenses related to obtaining or renewing a food safety certification.

For calendar year 2024 this assistance starts July 1st and goes through the end of the year. This will also be available for calendar year 2025.



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

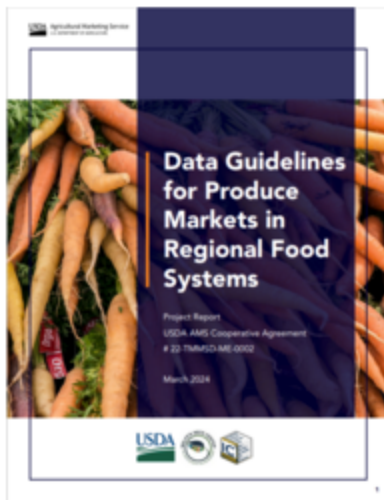


Promise of Urban Agriculture Courses Now Available

USDAAMS, 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 educating both growers and planners on urban agriculture and the impact of city plans and policies.

The Promise of Urban Agriculture courses are available online and are free to those who register for the courses **by January 31, 2025**.

Click [here](#) to access the courses.



New Data Guidelines for Produce Markets in Regional Food Systems

The USDA AMS and the International Center for Food Ontology Operability Data and Semantics (**IC-FOODS**) developed a template for utilizing data guidelines that will increase the consistency of fresh produce product data across the local foods sector.

Through this project a collaborative group of growers, aggregators, and buyers identified a "voluntary consensus data standard" for fresh fruits and vegetables.

Click [here](#) to learn more.



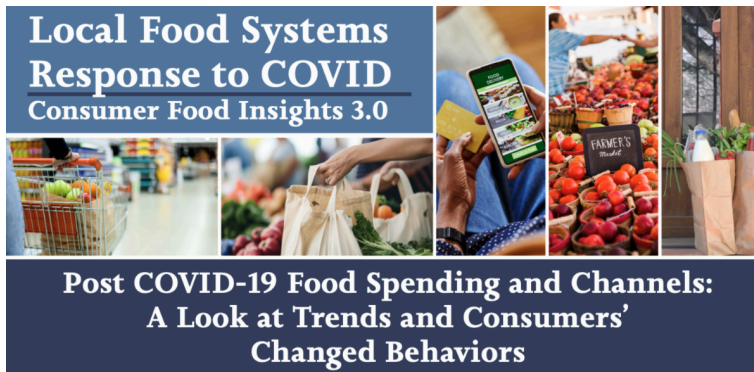
From Our Communities

New Consumer Food Insights Series Available

A new series of **Consumer Food Insights is now available**. A research team, led by Dawn Thilmany at Colorado State University, has been collaborating with the USDA AMS on a project that aims to support resiliency of local food systems in the post-pandemic food environment. As part of that project, the Consumer Food Insights series details results from the third iteration of a US Consumer Survey. 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.

The new insights explore consumer dynamics including who is exploring new markets, online shopping behavior, food security, and changes in consumer food spending and market channels across different sized communities.

Click [here](#) to access the new series.



**Post COVID-19 Food Spending and Channels:
A Look at Trends and Consumers'
Changed Behaviors**



CSU Spur Requesting Western Fashion Pieces for the 2025 Offal Fashion Show

In January 2025, the Offal Party will be a fashion show showcasing how offal can be used to make leather in a less wasteful way. The Ag Innovation Center is partnering with CSU's world-renowned Design and Merchandising Department to design Western wear looks to walk our runway that incorporate leather accent pieces.

We're looking for beautiful pieces of leather that showcase Western tradition. This can include saddles, chaps, boots, belts, bags, jackets, and more. Hair on and hair off, tooled or untooled; all are welcome. Our focus is incorporating character-filled pieces that will inspire our fashion designers.

If you have a piece you would like to loan to the Offal Party, send an email to Rachel and Latifah at:

rachel.sears@colostate.edu

latifah.hirchi-vogl@colostate.edu

*Include a description of the item, your full contact information and pictures of the piece. Pieces are needed from Oct 15 2024 - Feb 1 2025.



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.

In Fall 2024, the Business Builder grant program will be offered in Colorado, and you can learn more about how these grants will be made available at the [website](#).

Recent updates from the Center include:

- sponsoring the **Mountain Meat Summit** in Bozeman MT and the **Carolina Meat Conference** in Boone, NC to help improve meat value chain connections and profitability;
- sending emerging food businesses to the Summer Fancy Food Show in New York to grow markets for their products--see our Food Corridor team postings on LinkedIn and Facebook
 - <https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-food-corridor/posts/>
 - <https://www.facebook.com/thefoodcorridor/>;
- **news and events** from across the region; and
- updates on the Business Builder **grant** programs (coming in Fall 2024).

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.





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