

CSU Extension Local Food Systems

Dawn Thilmany, Martha Sullins, Adrian Card and Marisa Bunning, Team Leads

Co-Editors: Sarah Powell, Allison Gunter and Martha Sullins,

Dept of Ag and Resource Economics



FOURTH EDITION

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Welcome to the 4th edition of the CSU Extension Local Food Systems newsletter. This newsletter is meant to give you up-to-date news and information from around the state and our own CSU Extension organization. If you know of any new information that would be relevant to the rest of the group, send it to the newsletter! We are on the lookout for exciting new programs and information to share on the subject of local food systems, and would like information from all regions of Colorado. As we get our mailing list and local foods network established, please forward this newsletter to anyone with an interest in local food systems and CSU's programs in this area.

CONTENTS

Farm-to-School.....	
Marketmaker	
Mesa Verde Guide to Food and Fiber Online	
Foodies, Farms and Festivals	
Food Safety.....	
LiveWell Colorado School Food Culinary Boot Camp.....	
Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council.....	
Resources and Additional Information.....	

FARM-TO-SCHOOL

The Farm-to-School Healthy Kids act was recently passed into law by the State of Colorado. This act helps Colorado implement successful farm-to-school programs by creating an interagency farm-to-school task force. This task force will include coordination of resources and targeted technical expertise, as well as collaboration among state agencies such as: Colorado Department of Education, Colorado Department of Agriculture, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, and relevant stakeholders in school districts.

The goal of the task force is to study, develop and recommend policies and methods to best implement farm-to-school programs. Following are some examples of what the task force will provide: 1) create or expand pilot programs for farm-to-school and food focus education; 2)

identify funding sources and grants to allow school districts to recover increased costs associated with the program; 3) identify, design and make available training programs to help farmers and ranchers market their products to school districts; 4) advise school districts on ways to improve facilities to allow for the purchase and use of locally produced foods; and 5) provide assistance to school food services to establish internal processes that accommodate the use of locally grown foods in public schools through more streamlined bidding and ordering steps.

This information is taken directly from the [Farm to School Healthy Kids Act](#).

For more information check out the [Farm to School website](#).

MARKETMAKER

CMM feature of the month – Upload photos to your Colorado MarketMaker profile

Producers, processors and retailers can upload up to 5 photos to their Colorado MarketMaker profiles to show buyers what is for sale (each photo can be up to 1 megabyte in size). Businesses can also link directly to Twitter and Facebook to provide multiple avenues for consumers to find their agricultural business.

For more information on Colorado MarketMaker, see the [May newsletter](#) or contact Dawn Velasquez at Dawn.Velasquez@ag.state.co.us.

MESA VERDE GUIDE TO FOOD AND FIBER ON-LINE

[Healthy Community Food Systems](#), in partnership with [Healthy Lifestyle La Plata](#) and Fort Lewis College Office of Community Service, have created a new website to help strengthen connections between local agricultural producers and buyers in southwest Colorado. The Mesa Verde Guide to Local, Sustainable Food and Fiber (MVG) started as a paper document eight years ago, and was primarily distributed as a local food directory to consumers at regional farmers' markets. In 2008, in response to chef, retail and producer feedback to have a real-time listing of local food, Jim Dyer and Katy Pepinsky of Healthy Lifestyle La Plata and Bill Ball with Fort Lewis College embarked on the process of turning the paper directory into a web-based, interactive tool for producers, buyers and consumers to source local food.

The site, www.mesaverdefood.org, launched this May and creates new resources for the area's local food networks. Some of features include a listing of buyers (restaurant and retail) and the local foods they use; a list (one can search by category) of over 60 local farmers, ranchers and processors and the products they sell; a combined [product availability list](#) that allows producers to input the products at the prices they set in a real-time format which buyers can view as current price list of local food at the touch of a button; and links to great local, sustainable food information.

FOODIES, FARMS AND FESTIVALS

Ouray, Montrose and Delta Counties have just launched a new website that is a resource for locating local foods, beverages and related events in the Uncompahgre Valley of Western

Colorado. Listings include dairies, farmers markets and stands, farms and ranches, breweries, wineries and distilleries, and events. Follow this new site at www.mountaintovalleysfood.com.

FOOD SAFETY

Five faculty members from the Departments of Food Science and Human Nutrition and Horticulture and Landscape Architecture recently received two grants through the Colorado Agricultural Experiment Station to fund projects dealing with leafy greens and colored potatoes. Their goal is to continue CSU's role as a leader in specialty crop research and provide outreach information about specific vegetables to local producers and consumers.

The leafy greens project is a follow-up to a salad greens project but will extend to greens that are cooked, like kale and collards. It is entitled Increasing the Availability, Safety, and Acceptance of Diverse Leafy Green Vegetables and this project focuses on expanding the production and promoting the safe consumption of under-utilized leafy greens in Colorado. The outreach plan includes the development and promotion of child-friendly leafy vegetable preparation methods targeted at parents of pre-school age children as well as recommended preservation methods for leafy greens aimed at CSA participants. Please contact [Marisa Bunning](#) for more information.

The potato project involves identifying bioactive components of colored potato varieties and determining the effects of various processing methods. There is also a consumer study to explore acceptability and willingness to pay for differentiated potato products. Please contact [Jairam Vanamala](#) for more information.

LIVE WELL COLORADO SCHOOL FOOD CULINARY BOOT CAMP

LiveWell Colorado and The Colorado Health Foundation are putting on a culinary boot camp. School food service directors are invited to participate in a **FREE** five-day, hands-on training focusing on the fundamentals of scratch-cooking food service preparation.

The training will focus on creating healthy and delicious school meals, an essential ingredient in the fight against childhood obesity. Food service directors will also have the option to invite one staff member to participate in the training.

Please check out the most recent [LiveWell Colorado eLetter](#) for more information. Note that school districts with 40% or more students eligible for free and reduced lunch will have registration priority. School districts with less than 40% of students eligible for free and reduced lunch will be accepted on a space-available basis.

COLORADO FOOD SYSTEMS ADVISORY COUNCIL

A new 13-member organization to guide activities and programs that affect agriculture, food and related issues will now be established in Colorado. This Bill and its passage came to fruition with leadership from LiveWell Colorado and sponsorship from Senator Bob Bacon (D-

Fort Collins) and Representative Marsha Looper (R-Calhan).

The council will convene later this year and include representatives from four agencies (Departments of Health and Human Services, Public Health and Environment, Agriculture and Education) and nine gubernatorial designees with experience in Nutrition and Health (2 members), Agricultural Production (3 members), Food Wholesalers/Retailers (2 members), Anti-Hunger and Food Assistance (1 member), and Economic Development (1 member). Although CSU Extension will not have a direct role in the council, involvement from several CSU staff guided the development of the council, with intentions to be a significant technical assistance partner for the new organization.

RESOURCES AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Don't forget! Colorado State University Extension Food Systems and Agricultural Policy Resources:

- [Consumer Resources](#)
- [Producer Resources](#)
- [Linking Producers to Restaurants, Workplaces and Other Institutions](#)
- [Linking Producers to Schools - Networks, Directories and Guides](#)
- [Community Assessments and Toolkits](#)
- [Calculators and Databases](#)
- [Policy Articles, Resources and Case Studies](#)
- [Research and Other Resources](#)

To add your ideas and news, contact [Allie Gunter](#).

To subscribe and unsubscribe to this newsletter, contact [Martha Sullins](#).