

# CSU Extension Local Food Systems

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FIFTH EDITION

JUNE 2010

Welcome to the 5th 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! Please forward this newsletter to anyone with an interest in local food systems and CSU's programs in this area.

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## SMALL MEAT PROCESSORS AND NEW REGULATORY COSTS

“Small and independent meat processors are at significant economic risk due to increased regulatory costs included in a preliminary draft guidance document issued by the Food Safety and Inspection Service,” according to the American Farm Bureau Federation. That document spells out new and costly requirements for local meat processors under the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) Systems Validation proposal.

Many small producers have voiced concern as they could see their compliance costs increase from anywhere between \$65,000 and \$640,000 per year. The American Farm Bureau has encouraged the Food Safety and Inspection Service to ensure that the new regulations address concerns about exorbitant new expenses as well as flexibility in addressing the regulatory requirements and costs. “It may make the difference between a plant remaining in operation or being forced out of business.”

[Click here](#) to read the entire article.

## COLORADO MARKETMAKER

In May, we saw over 200,000 visits to Colorado MarketMaker (by 20,000 unique users), which demonstrates that word is getting out on this resource and more people may be using it to find Colorado products.

Right now, there are over 128 farmers markets listed, and with the market season switching into high gear, it may be a good time to highlight these markets to your community members and organizations, using the Market Maker listings with information on location and hours

To keep up to date with listings and news, you can go to:

<http://national.marketmaker.uiuc.edu/whatsnew.php>

For more information on Colorado MarketMaker, see the [June 2010 newsletter](#) or contact Dawn Velasquez at [Dawn.Velasquez@ag.state.co.us](mailto:Dawn.Velasquez@ag.state.co.us).

## PRESERVING FRESH PRODUCE FROM CSU EXTENSION

Homemade strawberry rhubarb jam on freshly baked bread. Colorado peach butter on sourdough biscuits - in January. Even if you have never attempted to create these culinary pleasures, help is available to remedy that situation. From June to October, a bounty of fresh fruits and vegetables will be appearing at Colorado farmers' markets. To enjoy that flavorful local produce even during the off-season, a variety of information on canning, freezing, and drying fresh produce is available from CSU Extension (along with information on baking at high altitude). To safely preserve food, steps need to be followed to adequately heat, acidify, or reduce available moisture in order to destroy and prevent the growth of microorganisms. Many years of experience and testing have contributed to the establishment of guidelines, recommendations, and recipes that can help consumers preserve foods safely at home. At Colorado's altitude, canning recipes have to be adjusted for appropriate processing time and pressure to counter the fact that the temperature at which water boils declines as elevation increases. Sources of tested canning recipes include Extension fact sheets, the University of Georgia's [So Easy to Preserve](#), Ball Canning Books, and [USDA's Complete Guide to Home Canning](#).

Food preservation fact sheets and canning books are often available from county Extension offices and Extension booths at farmers' markets. Fact sheets on the topics listed below are available on-line at: <http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/pubs.html#nutrition>.

Canning Fruits	Freezing Fruits
Canning Tomatoes and Tomato Products	Freezing Vegetables
Canning Vegetables	Leathers and Jerkies
Cost of Preserving and Storing Food	Making Jellies
Drying Fruits	Making Pickled Peppers
Drying Vegetables	Making Pickles
Food Preservation Without Sugar or Salt	Processing Chile Peppers
Salsa Recipes for Canning	

For questions or more information on food preservation, please contact your county Extension office or Extension food safety specialists in the Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition at CSU.

## COW TOWN RANCH TOURS, A NEW COMMUNITY GARDEN

CSU Extension in Routt County and the Community Ag Alliance are launching their 2010 Cow Town Ranch Tours — fun and educational tours of the area's working ranches. Tours are open to locals and guests and will showcase the rich ranching heritage of Routt County with hands-on experiences. Each tour is different and led by local guides, and may include stops at cattle, sheep, horse, bison and elk ranches throughout the County. For more information or to register for a July tour, call 970-879-0825.

Also in Routt County, Leadership Steamboat 2010, in conjunction with CSU Extension and the Master Gardeners' Program has built Steamboat's first community garden, named Community Roots. The County wants the community garden to be a public garden and gathering place for all people, fulfilling the County's mission by creating an environment to educate the public on gardening and healthy living. The garden is divided into individual plots that local residents can reserve and manage themselves, or with friends and family, to produce vegetables for personal consumption. A third of the garden's production will go to the local food bank. To reserve a garden, contact the CSU Extension Office at 970-879-0825 or visit <http://rcextension.colostate.edu/Hort/communityroots.html> for an application and other details.

## COLORADO FARM TO SCHOOL

A new statewide Farm to School program is now in place, funded by a Colorado Department of Agriculture Specialty Crops Grant (see [www.coloradofarmtoschool.org](http://www.coloradofarmtoschool.org)). Over the next three years, this project will connect producers and school districts across the state, starting with preliminary work in 6 school districts:

- ◆ [Adams 14](#);
- ◆ [Garfield RE-2](#)
- ◆ [Greeley-Evans \(Weld County SD 6\)](#)
- ◆ [Montezuma-Cortez RE-1](#)
- ◆ [North Conejos](#)
- ◆ [St Vrain Valley](#)

Project leaders (headed by the Center for Systems Integration, in collaboration with Healthy Community Food Systems, and WPM Consulting) are currently meeting with district stakeholders, and developing tools that include a step-by step self-assessment tool for starting a Farm to School (FtS) program, comprehensive crop calendars, tips on finding farmers, regional inventories of FtS stakeholders, marketing materials, case studies highlighting how districts are already making this happen around the state, and much more. For more information, to be listed in a regional inventory of FtS stakeholders, or to share ideas about Farm to School, contact:

Lyn Kathlene, Center for Systems Integration, [lyn@csi-policy.org](mailto:lyn@csi-policy.org)  
Jim Dyer, Healthy Community Food Systems, [jadyer@frontier.net](mailto:jadyer@frontier.net)

Wendy Peters Moschetti, WPM Consulting, [wendy@wpmconsulting.net](mailto:wendy@wpmconsulting.net)

## FARMERS MARKETS

As of August 2009, the total number of farmers markets in the nation had reached 5,274, a 42 percent increase from just five years earlier (<http://www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/>). The Colorado MarketMaker database (<http://co.marketmaker.uiuc.edu/>) shows 128 farmers markets listed for the state as of June 2010.

Colorado has seen a dramatic increase in farms that are marketing directly. Between 2002 and 2007, 434 farms began direct marketing (2,777 up from 2,343) so that 7.5% of all farms now do some direct marketing (compared to 6.2% for the US as a whole). Average sales per farm increased from \$7,429 to \$8,133. These revenues include channels outside of farmers markets (roadside stands, CSAs and pick-your-own) but still illustrate the significant shift in marketing strategies by Colorado producers.

There are a few new Farmers Markets in the Front Range and they are looking for vendors:

- The City of Loveland, Sundays 11-3;  
<http://www.ci.loveland.co.us/parksrec/FarmersMarket.htm>
- The City of Idaho Springs, Fridays 1-5 PM; contact Belita Nelson  
[broncolady8707@gmail.com](mailto:broncolady8707@gmail.com)

For information on Farmers Markets around the state, don't forget to check out the 2010 Farm Fresh Directory. The directory features more than 200 farms, ranches, roadside stands, u-picks and agritourism operations as well as 110 farmers' markets across the state.

Find the directory online at [www.coloradoagriculture.com/farmfresh](http://www.coloradoagriculture.com/farmfresh)  
Find farmers' markets across the state at [www.coloradoagriculture.com](http://www.coloradoagriculture.com)

## NORTHERN COLORADO FOOD ASSESSMENT

Larimer, Weld and Boulder Counties are hosting a set of public meetings to present initial findings from the Northern Colorado Regional Food System Assessment Project. Information on the project can be found at: <http://larimer.org/foodassessment/participants.cfm>

The schedule of public meetings (attend whichever you want if you are unable to attend the meeting on your County's date):

### **Public Meeting Schedule**

Boulder County, Thursday, July 8th 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.  
Boulder County Parks & Open Space Building, 5201 St. Vrain Road, Longmont

Larimer County, Wednesday, July 14th 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.  
Loveland Police & Courts Building, 810 East 10th Street, Loveland

Weld County, Thursday, July 15th 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.  
Island Grove Regional Park, 4-H Building, 501 N. 14th Ave, Greeley

These meetings will be followed up with meetings on various food system issues in August

and September.

The open houses are scheduled for the following dates at the Weld County Southwest Service Complex, at Del Camino and I-25, exit 240 in the big conference room in the South wing. They will all be held from 4:00-7:00 p.m.

<http://www.co.weld.co.us/departments/AboutWeld/Maps.html>

August 12--Inputs to Production (land, water, labor, financing)  
August 19--Agricultural Production  
August 26--Processing, Distribution, Marketing  
September 2--Consumer Choices, Food Security, Nutrition, Obesity

The Northern Colorado Regional Food System Assessment Project is a collaboration of three counties. Larimer County is the lead agency on the project, Boulder and Weld Counties, the Fort Collins Downtown Development Authority and Colorado State University also have leading roles.

## GRAIN FED VS. GRASS FED BEEF

A recent USDA Dairy, Livestock and Poultry report compares grain and grass fed beef production systems. Beef from non-grain finished production systems such as grass fed, organic, and natural make up about 3% of the beef market and have been growing at about 20% per year for the past several years, according to a market note published by the industry group, Bord Bia (Irish Food Board).

Grass fed beef provides an economically viable alternative to traditional grain finished beef production. But at some point, the growth in the niche beef market could necessitate some tradeoffs. The article states that some of these tradeoffs could include higher costs of production and reduced beef supplies. One example could be the reallocation of cropland to provide high quality forage land.

“As in most cases, consumers drive production decisions and, as consumer preferences continue to shift toward products from more forage-based production systems, solutions will need to be found to many actual or anticipated short-term constraints on producing the desired final beef products,” according to the report.

[Click here](#) to read the entire article.

## 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](#).