

CSU Extension Local Food Systems

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

Co-Editors: Nick Marconi and Martha Sullins



Dept of Ag and Resource Economics

TWENTIETH EDITION

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Welcome to the 20th 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 for us to include in the newsletter! (That includes partners outside of CSU as well).

Please forward this newsletter to anyone with an interest in local food systems and CSU's programs in this area, and tell them they are welcome to contact us so we can add them to our mailing list. We will be transitioning to a Food Systems work team in CSU Extension, but the distribution of this newsletter and focus of topics will remain consistent with past issues.

To assist our readers in finding information we may have presented in the past, you can find old issues at: www.ext.colostate.edu/cis/localfood.html.

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COLORADO MARKETMAKER

Colorado MarketMaker continues to serve as an online platform to connect Colorado producers, food enterprises, wineries, markets, agritourism operations, buyers and visitors who are seeking to find those products and businesses that match their desire to do more business in our great state. Last month we saw 20,000 visitors make 400,000 visits to the site. We hope that you continue to find ways to highlight this resource to your peers and partners.

The newest business spotlight on the Colorado MarketMaker website is the Triple M Bar Ranch. Triple M Bar Ranch sells naturally grown lamb meat and is a member of Colorado Proud. Their meat is lean and a good source of protein, vitamin B12, niacin, zinc, selenium, iron and riboflavin. Triple M Bar Ranch lamb meat has a unique, mild flavor due to the feed used to grow their lambs. They begin on grass pastures then go to melon and vegetable pastures.

Check out their [profile on Colorado MarketMaker](#) and, for more information, browse their website at www.triplembar.com.

NEW CSU FOOD SYSTEMS INITIATIVE ON IMPROVING THE PUBLIC DIALOGUE ON FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ISSUES

The CSU Food Systems Work Team has recently partnered with CSU's Center for Public Deliberation to help equip our organization with the skills to facilitate a more civil dialogue between different elements of the food system. You may have become aware of various national initiatives to do the same, including the U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance (USFRA: <http://usfraonline.org/>) and the Farm Foundation (<http://www.farmfoundation.org/>).

Currently, our plans for this team during 2011 include the following. Look for more information in October.

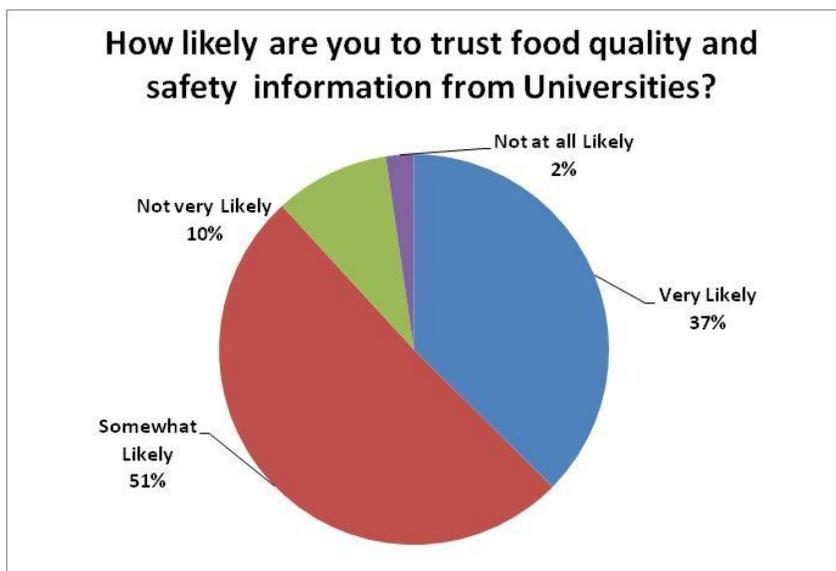
1. At the Annual Forum, we will hear from the Center for Public Deliberation on their approaches to engaging the public on difficult and divisive issues. We encourage everyone to use this as an opportunity to engage with our team.
2. On Monday October 24, 2011, Colorado State Extension in collaboration with the Center for Public Deliberation will host a Brown Bag Discussion on Food Choices entitled "What's for dinner: how do you decide?" The event will be held in The Grey Rock Room (Room 192) of the Lory Student Center. There will three -one hour sessions -beginning at 11 am, noon and 1 pm. Please try to attend one. Bring your lunch and your appetite for a stimulating discussion.
3. In November, we will host a more engaged Fort Collins Community Forum on these same Public Attitudes about Agriculture, but also begin to identify the divisive elements of the food system discussions that CSU may be able to play a role in informing and on which CSU Extension can learn to facilitate more civil discussions.

Please share with us what you are doing in your own communities and how we can begin planning for trainings and team activities that would help you work with your own community partners.

PUBLIC ATTITUDES ABOUT COLORADO AGRICULTURE

In early 2011, the Colorado Department of Agriculture engaged CSU Extension to help update their ongoing project to track public attitudes about Colorado agriculture among the state's residents. This survey (of about 500 residents) was recently completed, and over the coming months we will highlight findings from that study. Given the recent and unfortunate food safety events in Rocky Ford, we decided to highlight the fact that Coloradans do have great confidence in the safety of their food, and this event should not overshadow that confidence.

In short, 41% of respondents felt Colorado food was almost always safe, and another 45% felt it was usually safe. These are strong indicators of confidence, but CSU will need to continue to play a role in outreach during the current crisis, so that producer practices and consumer handling practices improve based on what we learn.



It seems CSU is well positioned to play that role, as the same survey shows that CSU (as the state's University) is one of the most trusted sources of information, and among all other stakeholders (food industry, media, government), CSU scored the highest (alongside the Colorado Department of Agriculture itself).

So, look for opportunities to engage with Specialists

in this area and conduct outreach that will keep consumer confidence high and help to guard against future events.

UPDATE ON RECENT LISTERIA OUTBREAK IN MELONS

Melons are a popular fruit for all ages, and Colorado is home to one of the best melon growing regions in the country. Although it is not commonly known, melons have often been associated with foodborne illnesses. A study by Bowen and colleagues in 2006 reported 28 documented outbreaks associated with cantaloupes and muskmelons between 1984 and 2003, and there have been several more outbreaks since that time. Prior to 2011, the foodborne agents implicated in the outbreaks included *Salmonella enterica*, *Campylobacter jejuni*, *Escherichia coli* O157:H7, and norovirus. The first known outbreak involving *Listeria monocytogenes* occurred in Colorado this year.

There is a strong collaborative network among the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, the Colorado Department of Agriculture, Colorado State University, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This collaboration helped

facilitate the investigation, determine the production source, and generate a rapid response that resulted in the recall of melons.

Recent melon-related disease outbreaks indicate the immediate need to increase the safety of fresh melons, and extend more information to both melon producers and consumers. Because cantaloupe has a rough surface, is grown close to the ground, and consumed raw, preventing contamination is a challenge that requires a farm-to-table approach. The same state and federal agencies that joined forces in the investigation will work together to find methods of improving the safe production, distribution, and handling of melons.

Here is a link to CSU's Farm to Table website with melon resources for producers and consumers: <http://farmtotable.colostate.edu/melons.aspx>.

The research referenced above is from: Bowen A., A. Fry, G. Richards, L. Beuchat. 2006. Infections associated with cantaloupe consumption: a public health concern. *Epidemiol. Infect.* 134:675-685.

CONNECT WITH FARMERS THROUGH "EAT LOCAL DAY"



On June 23rd, California state legislators passed a resolution that urges Californians to eat only local foods once a week on Sundays. California is the largest producer of agricultural products in the U.S. and the top exporting state, producing over 400 commodities. In our state, Colorado Proud has declared targeted months and a Colorado Proud day in schools, but this may be an example of how to make a more year-round promotional effort for our food businesses.

The resolution's supporters hope that by encouraging California residents to dedicate one day a week to eating only local products, the state will be able to retain critical dollars to support an already highly distressed local economy. Buying food from local producers means strengthening local communities and businesses, and generating increased tax revenues to help the state's economy.

The resolution is still young, and retailers have a great opportunity to help spread the word by informing their customers of the resolution and offering Sunday promotions on locally grown foods.

COLORADO STUDY SHOWS RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNITY GARDENING AND FRUIT AND VEGETABLE CONSUMPTION

A recent study, published in the *American Journal of Public Health*, revealed the correlation between community garden participation and residents' fruit and vegetable consumption levels. After surveying 436 residents across 58 block groups in Denver, Colo., study authors found neighborhood aesthetics, social involvement and community garden participation were directly tied to fruit and vegetable consumption.

Interestingly, researchers also found that gardeners are more likely to grow food if they have previous experiences gardening and, in particular, gardening as children. Nearly 80 percent of community gardeners listed their first experiences gardening as having occurred during childhood. This early experience was echoed across the 67 in-depth interviews conducted with community gardeners across the city. Scores of gardeners described early positive memories growing food with family members, particularly with grandparents at family gardens and farms.

The study's results highlight the benefits a community garden can have on the community and its residents. For example:

- Community gardeners consume fruits and vegetables 5.7 times per day.
- 56 percent of community gardeners meet the national recommendations to eat fruits and vegetables at least five times per day.

To read the research article and more about the study, visit the *American Journal of Public Health's* [website](#).

STUDY SHOWS NO NEED TO 'REINVENT WHEEL' TO INCREASE ACCESS TO LOCAL PRODUCE

A report by Ohio State University Extension shows that supporters of local foods should work within the current food distribution system to increase its availability instead of trying to start from scratch. The report, "Scaling-up Connections between Regional Ohio Specialty Crop Producers and Local Markets: Distribution as the Missing Link" is based on one-on-one interviews of retailers and a survey of Ohio fruit and vegetable distributors. Among its findings:

- Existing small and mid-sized distributors are eager to work more directly with farmers to get local foods into the marketplace. Smaller distributors work more with single, independently owned stores and rely mostly on farmers for sourcing products. Large and mid-sized distributors primarily rely on grower-shippers.
- Distributors tend not to use farmer directories to source new products, although one-third have used [Ohio MarketMaker](#)—an indication that sources such as Colorado MarketMaker can promote successful expansion of local foods operations.
- Agencies and organizations interested in promoting local foods can assist by helping develop relationships between farmers, distributors and retailers. In addition, expanding the availability of aggregation centers with cooling facilities can help foster the availability of locally grown produce.

More information from the authors of the report can be found at [OSU Extension](#), as can the [full report](#).

COLORADO FOOD SYSTEM ADVISORY COUNCIL LOGO DESIGN COMPETITION

Are you..... An experienced designer? Just starting out and looking for some motivation? Need a focus for a fabulous class project? Submit your design to our logo competition, win fame and glory (or at least our sincere appreciation!) and have some fun in the process!

Deadline: October 31, 2011

Recognition: the winner(s) will

- be recognized on website
- be cited on brochures, posters, and other materials where the logo is used
- may receive contracts for additional design work OR student winners may be able to work with final professional designers

About the Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council:

- www.cofoodsystemscouncil.org
- www.livewellcolorado.org/fsac

2ND ANNUAL AGRI-FUTURE CONFERENCE

The 2nd Annual Agri-Future Conference will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn in Laramie, WY from October 12-14. Topics discussed will include:

- What is the future of agriculture?
- What are the challenges facing agriculture?
- What are the innovative ways to meet those challenges?

Registration is \$100 and is due by October 5. More information as well as scholarship applications can be found at agriculture.wy.gov.

CALL FOR PAPERS: HIGHER EDUCATION AND FOOD SYSTEMS

Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development (JAFSCD) released a call for papers, with a deadline for manuscripts of December 1st, 2011.

In this special topic call for papers, the Editor encourages researchers, administrators, graduate students, NGO staff members, and others to submit manuscripts featuring results of surveys, case studies, policy analyses, review articles, reflective essays, and commentaries in which they examine the ways colleges and universities are pursuing their food system sustainability goals and the extent

to which they are finding success.

Examples might include:

- Survey of campus sustainability coordinators related to best practices in food system–related activities
- Focus group of food service directors
- Census of student farms and gardens
- Survey of student organizations to inventory and assess student-led programs and activities
- Comparative analysis of food system curriculum within and across disciplines or institutions
- Innovations in programming by institutions of higher education, including private and community colleges in addition to land grant colleges
- Comparison of institutional use of local food
- Employment prospects for graduates of food system sustainability programs
- Analysis of trends in tenure track positions and funded research
- Analysis of food systems education and the liberal arts
- The role of higher education social networks related to food and agriculture
- Case study of university-based local food system projects or community-university partnerships
- Analysis of food system education curricula and course syllabi

For more information on JAFSCD, visit www.AgDevJournal.com. Dawn Thilmany, one of the team leaders, is a member of the Editor’s Advisory Board and would like to encourage more partners from Colorado to showcase their work.

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 [Nick Marconi](#).

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