

# CSU Extension Local Food Systems

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



**Co-Editors: Dawn Thilmany, Martha Sullins and Ashley Colpaart**  
Dept. of Ag and Resource Economics

62<sup>ND</sup> EDITION

JUNE 2015

Welcome to the **62<sup>nd</sup> edition** of the Colorado State University Extension Local Food Systems newsletter. As a key resource connecting our CSU team with local and state partners about events, news and opportunities, we are thrilled to see the momentum and growth happening in food systems across the state. As always, the Food Systems work team for CSU Extension is committed to building a stronger network of those who work on systems-based issues.

The distribution of this newsletter is one way to build that network. You can help us be better connected in three ways:

1. **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.
2. **Send us** any events and news from your organization and other partners so that we may share them with our growing readership!
3. **Consider writing** a regional update so we can begin featuring updates from Colorado regions in each newsletter. Contact us if you want to be a regional lead!

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

## CONTENTS

[Regional Update: News from Northwest Colorado](#)

[Colorado MarketMaker Market Research](#)

[Report: SNAP Benefit Redemptions through Farmers Markets](#)

[Conservation Client Gateway](#)

[Course: Whole Farm Management for Beginning Farmers](#)

[Grants: Western Sustainable Agriculture Research](#)

[Grants: Food and Agriculture Research](#)

[Guide: Farm to Early Childhood Programs](#)

[Case Studies: Growing Local Food Systems](#)

[Webinar: The Grocery Store Prescription](#)

[Colorado Lavender Festival](#)

[August is Celebrate Colorado Proud Month](#)

[AgriCULTURE Fest and Feast- Greeley](#)

[Resources and Additional Information](#)

## REGIONAL UPDATE: NEWS FROM NORTHWEST COLORADO

### **The Local Food Movement is Growing in NW Colorado!**

With an average 59-day growing season in the Steamboat Springs area, local food is challenging at best! The NW Colorado Food Coalition and the Community Agriculture Alliance (CAA), a local nonprofit organization, are working to support and promote local food. In August 2014, CAA was asked to manage an online coop offering limited local food. CAA has since developed a new website and more than doubled the number of producers and customers. The online marketplace offers direct-to-consumer weekly sales, with no minimum order required, and allows producers to list products as available while setting their own prices. Most recently CAA received a grant from the Colorado Department of Agriculture's Enrich CO Ag program providing funding for marketing and promotion efforts. The overall goal is to increase sales for local producers while offering support to expand their businesses.

The NW CO Food Coalition is also promoting a "Grow a Row" campaign encouraging local producers and backyard gardeners to grow extra produce and donate to Lift Up, the local food pantry. Another partnership developed via the NW CO Food Coalition will provide storage for local meat producers. Lift Up is expanding its space and received a donated walk-in freezer which is larger than they need. CAA is coordinating with local meat producers to use the freezer storage space to centralize their product distribution. Information on NW CO Food Coalition can be found at the CSU Routt County Extension site <http://rcextension.colostate.edu/>, and at Community Agriculture Alliance website <https://communityagalliance.org/>.

## COLORADO MARKETMAKER MARKET RESEARCH



The [MarketMaker research tool](#) is an interactive mapping resource for identifying target markets, developing customized census profiles and mapping food related businesses over demographic information. This resource is designed to help researchers, policy makers, marketing instructors, lenders and ag entrepreneurs develop business plans. The functionality of this tool will keep improving as well...so keep checking in!

The following are some of the things you can do with the [MarketMaker research tool](#):

- Identify and map regions with the highest per capita consumption of fruits and vegetables;
- Build a customized census profile for a target market area or region of interest;
- Find and map food deserts; and

- Find and map farmers markets serving ethnic neighborhoods.

## REPORT: SNAP BENEFIT REDEMPTIONS THROUGH FARMERS MARKETS

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants are spending more of their benefits to make purchases at roadside farm stands, farmers markets and directly from local farmers than ever before. SNAP redemptions at those outlets totaled \$18.8 million in FY14, a nearly six-fold increase since 2008.

Furthermore, since 2008 the number of SNAP-authorized farmers, roadside farm stands, and farmers markets increased dramatically—from 753 to over 6,400—a growth of more than eight times the number of these types of vendors accepting SNAP.

Through a partnership with the National Association of Farmers Market Nutrition Programs, USDA provides [free wireless equipment to qualifying farmers and farmers markets](#), enabling them to accept SNAP via electronic benefit transfers (EBT). Additionally, in May USDA announced the availability of \$3.3 million in competitive funding to help farmers markets serve SNAP participants. These [Farmers Market SNAP Support Grants](#) are the latest example of USDA's ongoing commitment to improving the diet and health of all Americans, but with particular concern for low-income families. Those awards will be announced in September.

For more information, read [this press release](#) from USDA.

## CONSERVATION CLIENT GATEWAY

The new [Conservation Client Gateway](#) is a streamlined online approach to be used by farmers, ranchers, and private landowners who have secured or are looking to secure NRCS funding for conservation programs. This Client Gateway is a secure and efficient way for farmers, ranchers, and other producers to work with NRCS planners online and acquire assistance.



Photo from NRCS Client Gateway.

What is possible on the Conservation Client Gateway?

- Request NRCS technical and financial assistance;
- Track payments for a requested conservation program;

- Track conservation progress and request documentation of completed practices; and
- Obtain and store financial and technical documents and files.

For more information, access the [Conservation Client Gateway](#) here.

## **COURSE: WHOLE FARM MANAGEMENT FOR BEGINNING FARMERS**

*Growing Farms: Successful Whole Farm Management* is now available nationally as an online, self-paced course. Registration is open through June 30<sup>th</sup> at [Growing Farms](#). The course was developed by the Oregon State University Small Farms Program in partnership with Oregon Tilth, the organic certification non-profit. Although the course has an Oregon focus, it is relevant to farmers nationwide.

The course has an organic/sustainable agriculture focus and provides farmers with the tools and knowledge needed to develop and manage a successful farm business. The course is intended for people who are considering starting a farm business, those within their first five years of farming and others who may be considering major changes to their farm business.

The core of the Growing Farms course is a series of six online modules covering a variety of topics related to farm management. The course is presented in an interactive and graphically rich format and features six farmers who share their experience and insights about farming in more than four hours of video.

Access the [course here](#) and email any questions to: [growingfarms@oregonstate.edu](mailto:growingfarms@oregonstate.edu).

## **GRANTS: WESTERN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE RESEARCH**

The 2016 Calls for Proposals for Western Sustainable Agriculture and Education (SARE) grant programs have been released. Descriptions of each program and links to the full Call can be found at [westernsare.org/Grants/Types-of-Grants](http://westernsare.org/Grants/Types-of-Grants). Colorado State University has had great success with these programs, and encourages our colleagues to apply...and ask if they have questions on how to frame their proposals.

The grant programs include:

- Professional Development (Due October 28<sup>th</sup>)
- Farmer/Rancher (Due December 2<sup>nd</sup>)
- Professional + Producer (Due December 2<sup>nd</sup>)

The Western SARE Administrative Council will select reviewed proposals that are innovative, diverse in content, subject matter, and geography; demonstrate tangible outcomes; and provide readily adaptable technologies and information suitable to the adoption of sustainable farming and ranching systems by producers in the western region.

## **GRANTS: FOOD AND AGRICULTURE RESEARCH**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) announced the availability of more than \$160 million in funding for research, education, and extension projects that address key challenges affecting U.S. agriculture production. NIFA will fund the awards

through the [Agriculture and Food Research Initiative](#) (AFRI).

NIFA released six separate requests for applications (RFAs) through the AFRI program. Five RFAs will support AFRI's challenge areas: food security, water, childhood obesity prevention, food safety, and climate. The challenge areas fund integrated, applied science that seek to find solutions to societal challenges that impact our ability to feed, clothe, and shelter a rising global population. An additional RFA for the AFRI Foundational program will address the six Farm Bill priority areas:

- 1) plant health and production and plant products;
- 2) animal health and production and animal products;
- 3) food safety, nutrition and health;
- 4) bioenergy, natural resources and environment;
- 5) agriculture systems and technology; and
- 6) agricultural economics and rural communities.

These programs are geared more for traditional academic research, but often can be collaboratively submitted with institutions such as Colorado State University (or the other higher education organizations in Colorado). See the [request for applications and deadlines](#) at this site.

## GUIDE: FARM TO EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

This [Farm to Early Childhood Program guide](#) provides tools and resources to help early childhood program providers of all types and sizes purchase and use local foods in their meals and snacks.

Farm to Early Childhood Programs have evolved from the strong national Farm to School movement as a way of providing fresh, local foods in meal programs that serve the youngest children. Farm to Early Childcare and Farm to Preschool programs focus on purchasing and using fresh, local foods at program sites to promote the development of healthy eating patterns in children from birth to age six. These programs also involve children's gardens, educational activities related to local food and agriculture, and opportunities for building community partnerships.

## CASE STUDIES: GROWING LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS

The [Center for Regional Food Systems](#) at Michigan State University has published a series of case studies focused on growing local food systems. This Center has been a great asset to advancing food system work, and Colorado State will begin partnering with them even more closely on metrics for food system assessment.

Funding for the case study project was provided by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's Food & Community program.

- [Growing Local Food Systems: A Case Study on Decatur, GA](#)
- [Growing Local Food Systems: A Case Study on Catawba County, NC](#)
- [Growing Local Food Systems: A Case Study on Topsham, ME](#)
- [Growing Local Food Systems: A Case Study on Washtenaw County-Ann Arbor, MI](#)
- [Growing Local Food Systems: A Case Study Series on Local Governments](#)

## WEBINAR: THE GROCERY STORE PRESCRIPTION

Supermarkets are responding to the obesity crisis by changing their product offerings, in-store environments, and marketing practices to make healthy choices more accessible, affordable, and appealing.

This webinar will summarize the factors that influence low-income consumers' food choices and describe culturally appropriate interventions that promote healthier shopping and eating. Explore effective nutrition education programs and come away with practical tips on how to work with grocery retailers in your community to make the healthy choice the easy choice. Speakers include:

- Cathy Califano, Associate Director, TRF Policy Solutions
- Anne Harrison, RD, LDN, Brown's ShopRite
- Ellen Damaschino, Training Manager, Share our Strength's Cooking Matters™
- Teresa Blanco, Wellness Program Manager, Northgate Gonzales Market

The webinar will be held on July 9, 2015 from 12:00pm -1:15pm MDT. Register for the [webinar here](#).

## COLORADO LAVENDER FESTIVAL

The 5<sup>th</sup> annual Lavender Festival takes place Friday through Sunday, on July 10-12, 2015 in downtown Palisade and around Western Colorado with events all weekend long. Hosted by the Lavender Association of Western Colorado, it is Colorado's ONLY lavender festival. For more information and to purchase tickets, go to: <http://www.coloradolavender.org>.

The event also includes a lavender-themed art show at the Blue Pig Gallery, 101 W. 3rd St in Palisade throughout the month of July. Voting on the People's Choice will take place during the festival. Call the gallery for more information at 970-464-4819. See more at [Visit Grand Junction](#).

## AUGUST IS CELEBRATE COLORADO PROUD MONTH



August is Colorado Proud Month and the perfect time to find a bounty of Colorado produce available at grocery stores, farmers markets, roadside stands and u-picks. Join fellow Coloradans on a fun [Choose Colorado Tour](#) or a Pop-Up Picnic in August and celebrate Colorado agriculture.

July Pop-Up Picnics include:

July 18: Train/The Fray Concert, Fiddler's Green, 5:30pm-11pm

July 19: City Park Jazz, Denver, 6pm-8pm

July 22: Bands on the Bricks, Boulder, 3pm-9pm

July 26: Highlands Square Farmers' Market, 9am-1pm

## AGRICULTURE FEST AND FEAST- GREELEY



Date: August 22, 2015

Location: 8th Street Plaza, Downtown Greeley

Fest: Free community event 11am

Feast: Greeley Creative District Fundraiser. Limited ticketed event starts at 6pm

### FEST

An afternoon of delicious discovery, delight & community spirit.

Friends, families & neighbors will share a late summer day celebrating the good life in Weld County.

Fest activities are growing & evolving every day! Experiences include:

- Foods
- Merchants
- Petting Zoo
- Tractor Show
- History Display of Weld Agriculture
- Demonstrations & Education
- Live Music
- Beer & Spirit Garden

### FEAST

An evening showcase of visual, music & culinary arts. Experience local foods crafted into delicious meals by local professional chefs, served family style under the stars. Feast proceeds benefit the Greeley Creative District. Seating is limited. Tickets [available online](#) or by calling the DDA at 970-356-6775.

Access more information [here](#).

## FARMERS' MARKET FOOD SAFETY TRAINING

Iowa State University has designed [four online modules](#) to provide science-based information on safe food production and handling specific to farmers' markets, with a focus on specialty foods and good agricultural practices (GAPs). The intended audience is farmers market managers and farmers market vendors. Webinars include:

1. Pre-Harvest (40 minutes)—GAPs implementation prior to harvest that will mitigate food safety risks that can devastate a farm business.
2. Post-Harvest (39 minutes)—GAPs from harvest to sales of your product.

3. Marketing and Best Practices at the Market (35 minutes)—Promotion and communication of your food safety efforts, including sampling methods, will increase profits and best practices at the market.
4. Value-Added Products (69 minutes)—Best food safety practices for value-added products to meet regulatory requirements.

What to Expect:

- No cost (FREE)
- Take one or all four modules
- Learn at your own pace (do not need to complete a module in one sitting)
- Convenient online training, 24 hours/7 days a week, without leaving the farm
- On-farm food safety and marketing training by Iowa State University
- Identification of resources to help ensure safe sale of foods
- Internet connection is required

At the conclusion of all four courses, participants receive a *Certificate of Completion* suitable to display at their vendor's booth or market stall.

## 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 [Ashley Colpaart](#).

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