Welcome to the 47th issue of the CSU Extension Local Food Systems newsletter, and the second edition of 2014. This newsletter is designed to give you up-to-date news and information from around the state and our own CSU Extension organization. Feel free to send in any events and news from your organization and from partners so that we may share them with our readers through this newsletter!

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. 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.

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

- Summit for Food System Coalitions
- Training: Tools for Improving On-Farm Food Safety
- Training: Certified Farm Succession Coordinator
- Training: Online Marketing Workshop
- Food Systems and the Farm Bill
- Farmer Chef Connection
- Beekeeping Seminar
- Wyoming Bee College Conference
- Colorado’s 2nd Annual Local Food Summit
- Growing Food Connections: A New Initiative
- Produce Prescription Program Resources
- Community Development Extension Institute
- Report: Expanding Fruit and Vegetable Access in Schools
- Webinars: Winter Series from Farm Commons
- Webinars: Finding, Buying and Serving Local Foods
SUMMIT FOR FOOD SYSTEM COALITIONS

The first Summit for Colorado Food System Coalitions was held in Denver in mid-February and had representatives from 18 regional coalitions/organizations, LiveWell Colorado, and members of the Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council. The session was facilitated by CSU Extension personnel under the leadership of Rusty Collins.

The participants had the opportunity to network, set priorities for state-level initiatives and brainstorm on how to coordinate as a state group in the future. Look for more information on how their plans come together in future newsletters, or ask your own food systems community members!

To learn more about regional and state policy organizations, visit: http://www.cofoodsystemsCouncil.org/local-food-coalitions.html.

TRAINING: TOOLS FOR IMPROVING ON-FARM FOOD SAFETY

CSU Extension, in collaboration with the Colorado Department of Agriculture and the Produce Safety Alliance, is offering two workshops for produce growers this spring:

- February 26, Adams County Fairgrounds
- March 12, Montrose County Fairgrounds

Agenda includes:

- Assessing worker practices & developing a training program for your workforce;
- Water sampling: how and when to take water samples, how to read water test results, & developing a management plan based on test results;
- Developing and implementing cleaning and sanitizing procedures for tools and equipment;
- Developing a product traceability, recall and communication plan for diverse supply chains; and
- Recordkeeping.

To register for the Adams County workshop, go to: http://larimer.org/extension/growers. To register for the Montrose workshop, contact Rhonda Follman at 970-244-1834 or Rhonda.follman@colostate.edu.

TRAINING: CERTIFIED FARM SUCCESSION COORDINATOR

Guidestone will host a Certified Farm Succession Coordinator Training (CFSCT) this Spring. The International Farming Transition Network (IFTN) is offering this training for individuals interested in becoming a Certified Farm Succession Coordinator. This new training is offered specifically for
agricultural professionals, service providers, and organizational leaders who work with retiring farmers and ranchers on farm transfer issues.

When: March 4-6, 2014
Where: Mount Princeton Hot Springs Resort

2nd Annual Colorado Land Link Forum

After the Farm Succession Coordinator Training, participants will have the opportunity to stay for the 2nd Annual Colorado Land Link Forum and network with potential clients, including retiring farmers, ranchers, and other landholders. More information, including registration for both events and forthcoming agendas, is available at www.guidestonecolorado.org.

TRAINING: ONLINE MARKETING WORKSHOP

Colorado State University is hosting a free online marketing workshop for farm businesses on Saturday, March 1st from 9:30am – 3:30pm at the Clark building on the Fort Collins campus. The workshop will include hands-on training for Facebook, websites, and Twitter. Computers and lunch will be provided!

A second workshop will be held on March 8 in Durango from 9:30am – 3:30pm at the LaPlata County Fairgrounds for those in the Western region (bring your laptop for this training).

Social media and online marketing represent an excellent opportunity for farmers and ranchers seeking to grow their market locally and even nationally. Dr. Katie Abrams, Assistant Professor in the Journalism and Technical Communication department will tell you about the latest research-based techniques in online marketing and help you get your online presence set up. This workshop will enable you to use online marketing tools to help you increase your customer base, communication with consumers, and sales!

Topics covered include:

- What can online marketing do for my farm business?
- Plugging online marketing into your business objectives (strategic planning)
- Effective website content for search engine optimization and current/potential customers of farm businesses
- Build a free or low cost website with optional blog in Wordpress
- Create a “wow” Facebook Page
- Create a “wow” Twitter Page
- Strategies and ideas for Facebook and Twitter posts
- Simple measurement of return on investment from online marketing

Participants should be fairly comfortable using a computer and an Internet browser. No previous experience with Facebook, Twitter, or Wordpress is necessary but it will be helpful!
Space is limited so register at [www.beyondthefarmgate.org](http://www.beyondthefarmgate.org). Preference will be given to those farm businesses in operation for less than 10 years under the current owner and those who have started or will start their business within the next couple of months.

**Questions?** Please contact Caitlin at [caitlin.evans@colostate.edu](mailto:caitlin.evans@colostate.edu) or 269-719-6250.

**FOOD SYSTEMS AND THE FARM BILL**

The recently passed Farm Bill provides Colorado’s farmers and ranchers with much-needed certainty and predictability, cuts red tape by consolidating and streamlining dozens of programs and ultimately reduces the deficit by $23 billion. The bill also includes a number of important measures to improve forest health and reduce the risk of wildfires.

The new five-year Farm Bill reflects shifting priorities over the past decade in which issues like local and organic food and healthy food access have become elevated in accord with growing consumer demand for agricultural products produced locally and strong growth in the development of local and regional food systems.

The final farm bill builds on the growing investment in local and regional food systems, organic agriculture, and healthy food access—providing greater opportunities for small and mid-sized farms, specialty crop farmers, and farmers looking to diversify. While the advances for rural economic development programs are not as great, the farm bill still makes minor improvements to certain programs that serve as starting points for further work in future farm bills.

In total, the new farm bill will invest $501 million over the next five years directly into the local food, rural development, organic agriculture, and healthy food access initiatives that NSAC works on and supports, representing a nearly 50 percent increase over the previous farm bill.


**FARMER CHEF CONNECTION**

When: February 22nd, 12:00-3:00pm, during the [2014 HOMEGROWN FOOD RETREAT](http://www.hometrained.org/)
Where: Fort Lewis College, Student Union Ballroom
What: A gathering of producers and buyers to foster collaboration and relationship-based, business-to-business, direct market opportunities amongst local producers and food buyers. *Its goal is to grow the supply and demand for locally produced food.*

[Register here.](http://www.hometrained.org/)

Schedule of Events:
12:00pm - All Local Lunch by Sodexo & Networking Time
1:00pm - New & Innovative Ways To Display Local Foods In Your Restaurant by Linda Illsey. Linda’s Local Foods Cafe
1:30pm - Producer Buyer Speed Dating
2:30pm - The “How-To’s” Of Successful Producer Buyer Relationships by Chris Crowl, Eolus Owner & Dave Banga, Banga’s Farms Owner.
3:00pm - Community Organizing for a Local Food Future by Gretchen Groenke

BEEKEEPING SEMINAR

Featuring: Michael Bush of “Bush Bees” & “The Practical Beekeeper”
Where: Fort Lewis College
When: Saturday, March 15th, 2014
Check-in begins at 8:30am Seminar 9:00am – 5:30pm
Cost: $25.00 for 4 Corners Beekeepers Association 2014 members
$25.00 for Fort Lewis College Students with valid ID; $30.00 for non-members
$7.00 for lunch at the College Cafeteria (pay at the cafeteria)

Payment can be made through PayPal, or by check.
Make your check out to:

4 Corners Beekeepers Association
Mail check to:
Sunny Rothove
213 Ball Lane
Durango, CO 81301

A number of club members are happy to host attendees and the General Palmer Hotel will be offering special rates (contact them at 970-247-4747). For more seminar information email, fourcornersbeeksassocliaison@gmail.com.

WYOMING BEE COLLEGE CONFERENCE

The University of Wyoming Laramie County Extension office is hosting the Wyoming Bee College Conference at Laramie County Community College, Cheyenne, Wyoming, over the weekend of March 22-23. This is two days of hands on workshops and lectures, offering two educational concurrent sessions. This conference is open to everyone and anyone wanting to learn more about bee health, beekeeping, native bees, bumble bees and value added bee products.

The conference cost of $50 for both days includes two lunches, snacks and a banquet dinner on Saturday night, or you can register for one day at $35/day.
Go to eventbrite.com Wyoming Bee College to register.

Speaker line up:
Keynote speaker and instructor Entomologist Dr. James Strange, from the USDA Agriculture Research Station at the Utah Bee Lab

Michael Jordan, Beekeeper, entrepreneur, world traveler, owner operator of A Bee Friendly Company, Cheyenne Wyoming

Brenna Marsicek, University of Wyoming, Berry Bio-Diversity Center

Cole Ehmke, Agriculture Economics and Extension Specialist, UW

Polly Cross, Wyoming Department of Agriculture, protecting your bees

Jeff Edwards, Pesticide Specialist at Wyoming Agricultural Experiment Station, Lingle, Wyoming. Owner operator of Wind Harvest Farms, a raspberry ranch east of Torrington, Wyoming.

Nancy Loomis owner operator of Antique Central in Cheyenne, Wyoming where she developed an amazing rain garden during the severe drought of 2012, which flourished and supports a wide range of good insects

For more information contact Catherine Wissner at 307-633-4383.

COLORADO’S 2ND ANNUAL LOCAL FOOD SUMMIT

Join the Mile High Business Alliance on Monday, March 3rd for their 2nd Annual Local Food Summit -- Denver’s largest gathering of local food producers, manufacturers, growers, retailers, and restaurateurs. This conference-style event will provide industry-specific opportunities for engagement, community-building, education, and problem-solving.

When: March 3, 2014
Where: McNichols Building, 144 W Colfax Ave, Denver, CO


GROWING FOOD CONNECTIONS: A NEW INITIATIVE

Growing Food Connections, a research, planning and outreach initiative to strengthen community food systems across the United States, has launched www.GrowingFoodConnections.org as a resource repository for communities looking to broaden access to healthy food and sustain their local farms and food producers through public policy.

Led by the Food Systems Planning and Healthy Communities Lab at the University at Buffalo in partnership with Cultivating Healthy Places, Ohio State University and American Farmland Trust, Growing Food Connections (GFC) will target 10 “Communities of Opportunity”—communities poised to tackle their food access challenges and agricultural viability—with an intensive program of education, training, technical assistance and extension activities.

The five-year, $3.96 million initiative is funded by the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The American Planning Association is a key project partner along with a National Advisory Committee of leaders in agriculture, food systems and public health.
PRODUCE PRESCRIPTION PROGRAM RESOURCES

**FVRx**
With support from the [Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund](https://www.tischfund.org), Wholesome Wave will partner with the [NYC Health and Hospitals Corporation](https://www1.nyc.gov/site/nyc-hhc/default/html) (HHC) which launched its first hospital-based [Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program (FVRx)](https://www.fvrx.com) pilot in the spring of 2013. As part of the Illumination Fund’s Healthy Food & Community Change initiative, the foundation’s grant enables Wholesome Wave to adapt its FVRx program from community clinics to work in much larger hospital settings.

The new FVRx pilot with HHC focuses on patients at-risk of diet-related diseases and who live in underserved communities. In addition to receiving prescriptions for fruits and vegetables, which are redeemable at participating local farmers markets, patients meet regularly with their doctor to discuss the benefits of healthy eating and receive nutrition counseling from a trained professional. [Wholesome Wave 2011 pilot results](https://www.fvrx.com/resources/2011-pilot-results) from communities where similar pilot FVRx programs were launched indicated that 38 percent of patients decreased their body mass index (BMI), 94 percent increased fruit and vegetable consumption, and new and repeat market customers drove significant sales for farmers.

**VeggieRx**
The VeggieRx program gives low-income families in weight management and diabetes clinics “prescriptions” to purchase fruits and vegetables at local farmers’ markets. Vouchers are distributed to families at community-based clinics to be redeemed exclusively for fresh fruits and vegetables at local farmers’ markets. At each visit, program participants receive nutrition education and have health indicators measured such as height, weight, blood pressure, and BMI. By tracking these health indicators, participants and program staff can witness the positive health changes associated with a healthier diet.

Fresh Approach has been operating VeggieRx since 2011 in the Bay Area, tracking results along the way. See the [VeggieRx Report](https://www.fvrx.com/resources/veggierx) to find out more. In 2013, VeggieRx was made possible through support from the California Department of Food and Agriculture’s Specialty Crop Block Grant program and the San Francisco Foundation’s Community Health program.

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT EXTENSION INSTITUTE**
The Western Rural Development Center is excited to present the Community Development Extension Institute in Boise, designed for practitioners in not-for-profit organizations, private consulting firms, cooperative extension, and state, regional, and local governments throughout the western U.S. who have a community development component to their work.

The Institute offers two days of training, best practices, three keynote sessions, a Resource Fair, and networking opportunities. Registration is $275.
REPORT: EXPANDING FRUIT AND VEGETABLE ACCESS IN SCHOOLS

School Food FOCUS, a national collaborative of 36 of the country’s largest school districts released a new report called EATING OUR PEAS & CARROTS: Strategies for Expanding K-12 Access to Fruits and Vegetables Through Supply Chain Innovation and Investment, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The report explores:

- key trends in the US produce industry;
- how fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables are used in K-12 settings and related supply chain pathways;
- market dynamics around cosmetically imperfect “seconds” for fruits and vegetables;
- results of our market research for fresh and frozen produce grown in the Upper Midwest; and
- gaps and opportunities for financing food enterprises and building infrastructure for fruits and vegetables that are regionally grown and processed.

WEBINARS: WINTER SERIES FROM FARM COMMONS

The nonprofit organization, Farm Commons, is hosting a series of free webinars this winter on a variety of legal issues faced by farmers who sell direct to consumers. Registration is now open for all webinars at (www.farmcommons.org/webinars). Webinars are offered through a platform that does not require any additional software or downloads, and those without an internet connection will be able to listen to the presentation over the phone.

Starting a Farm- February 25, 2014, 6pm CST
A beginning farmer has to find financing, lease or buy land, coordinate equipment, establish a website, and so much more, all while growing crops or raising livestock. The legal issues abound, but this webinar will help beginning farmers understand the fundamental issues that should demand attention while the farm gets started.

Adding Value to Farm Products- March 10, 2014, 6pm CDT
Although starting a processing operation, improving packaging, and developing new products are great ways to make the farm more profitable, these activities have a huge legal impact. Employment laws, liability potential, state/federal regulations, and tax factors all change when a farm begins to process product. Farms relying on cottage food laws should make sure to attend- we’ll talk about what these laws do not do to protect farms.

Food Safety Liability and Regulations- March 25, 6pm CDT
We’ve been hearing all about the upcoming regulations under the Food Safety Modernization Act. But, as important as it is, farm liability for food safety goes beyond this new law. Learn all the latest on how farms can comply with the FSMA as it goes into effect and how they can protect their operations from liability in general.

WEBINARS: FINDING, BUYING AND SERVING LOCAL FOODS

The USDA Farm to School Program is hosting two webinars each month to showcase the variety of ways school districts can purchase local foods. The webinars will be held at 12:00 p.m. MST on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month.

- Using the Informal Procurement Method – February 27
- Using Specifications to Target Local Products – March 13
- Working with Distributors – March 27
- Using a Forward Contract – April 10
- Introduction to Geographic Preference – April 24
- Using Geographic Preference – May 8
- Using USDA Foods as a Resource to Purchase Local – May 22
- Using DoD Fresh to Purchase Local – June 12
- Tying It All Together and Digging In – June 26

To register click [here](#). All webinars will be recorded and available on the USDA Farm to School website within 1-2 weeks of initial viewing.

GRANTS: COLORADO AGRICULTURE

The Colorado Department of Agriculture is accepting applications for funding through its new “Enrich Colorado Ag Grant Program.” Grant funds will help Colorado companies conduct research and develop new uses and markets for food and agricultural products that are grown, raised or processed in Colorado.

Projects eligible for funding include, but are not limited to, feasibility studies and technical projects such as assessing the potential of establishing an agricultural value-added business project; and marketing and sales promotion projects such as first-time participation in trade shows, new product launches and promotions supporting the development of new sales channels. The maximum award per project is $17,000.

A matching contribution of cash and/or in-kind resources equal to at least 50 percent of the total project budget is required. Applications are due by 3:30 p.m. on February 28, 2014.

For more information including an application and program guidelines, contact the Colorado Department of Agriculture Markets Division at (303) 239-4371 or visit [www.coloradoagriculture.com](http://www.coloradoagriculture.com).
The **Value-Added Producer Grant** program from USDA is available to help agricultural producers create new products, expand marketing opportunities, support further processing of existing products or goods, or to develop specialty and niche products. They may be used for working capital and planning activities. The maximum working capital grant is $200,000; the maximum planning grant is $75,000.

Eligible applicants include independent producers, farmer and rancher cooperatives, and agricultural producer groups. Funding priority is given to socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers or ranchers, and to small- to medium-size family farms, or farmer/rancher cooperatives.

The Value-Added Producer Grant program is one of many USDA programs that support the development of strong local and regional food systems as part of the *Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food* initiative. Launched in 2009, the initiative strengthens ties between agricultural producers and their local communities, helping meet growing consumer demand and creating opportunities for small business development.

*Grant applications are due by February 24, 2014.* More information about how to apply is available on page 70260 of the *November 25 Federal Register*, or by contacting any USDA Rural Development office.

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