

Pueblo County Extension Agriculture Tribune



The Quarterly Pueblo County Extension Ag Newsletter



Using Drones on the Farm

By: Kristi Bartolo, Agronomy Agent, Pueblo County



Agricultural producers are very creative when it comes to solving problems and fixing issues on the farm or range. Their innovativeness can be complimented by technology that is being introduced to the agricultural world. The various forms and advances in technology can improve a farmer's success as they become more accessible and manageable.

Drones have been flying in the sky for years and this technological tool is beginning to be incorporated into the agriculture world. Drones can be used for surveying and mapping the farm or pasture, monitoring livestock and even applying fertilizers and pesticides...all with the touch of a button. Learn more about the use of drones and other technologies by contacting CSU Extension/Pueblo County.

Meet the Ag Team!

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highlighted
community
partners!





Planning & Prepping for Success

By: Kristi Bartolo, Agronomy Agent, Pueblo County



As spring approaches, the winter “vacation” of the farmer ends, and the time to be thinking about the next growing season begins. Whether farming 10 acres or 1000 acres, planning and preparing before planting a single seed or firing up a tractor can save time and money as the season goes on. There are many components to consider when preparing and planning on the farm including aspects that can be controlled by the farmer and situations that are out of their control. The following are thoughts to consider.

• Look to the “end” to begin.

- Decipher what the end goals of the farm should be; increase profit and yield, expansion, decreased inputs, labor, and water use.
- Gear the farming plans toward those goals by determining some parameters that success can be measured by; increasing by 20%, expanding to 200 acres from 100 acres, planting drought-tolerant crops.
- Crop markets are constantly changing.
- Fluctuating market prices can create confusion when trying to decide what will be the most profitable crop to plant; look at previous years to guide decision making.

• Fickle weather and a cranky climate.

- Keep in mind that weather is unpredictable and so the farming plan should be adaptable; some crops have a larger planting window than others.
- Plan for extreme weather events due to changing climate patterns; plant one type of crop in multiple different areas of the farm. One portion may succumb to weather while the other portion is spared.

• Major inputs: seed and transplants, fertilizer, and pesticide.

- What crops will be grown this season and who will seed or transplants be purchased from?
- Will a certain crop require a specific pesticide or extra fertilizer to have a good yield?

• Labor on the farm.

- Often hired laborers (agricultural employees) are necessary for successful production and so a farmer must determine how much help will be needed and for how long.
- Senate Bill 87 may impact the cost of having agricultural employees.

• Thoughts on irrigation.

- Observe snowpack through the winter to have a better idea of how much irrigation water will be available; lack of water may mean fields are left fallow.

• Soil is the basis for [farming] life.

- Conducting a soil test can reveal what and how much fertilizer may be needed for a productive crop.
- Take time to physically look at the soil for a better understanding of the starting conditions; poor soil may require larger inputs.

• What about equipment?

- Farming equipment should be inspected and maintained.
- Consider if the type of equipment is appropriate for the crops being planted and the practices being implemented.

• A review of the budget.

- Review last season’s financial obligations and outputs along with yields and profit; aim for a more profitable crop or a less labor-intensive management practice if that suits a better financial situation.

After a rigorous planning process has been conducted, “preparing” is the next step farmers can think about. Once a farmer has a good idea of what is to be planted, where, and how much, then field preparation must begin. Often fields will have been previously tilled in the fall which can help to reduce some initial labor in the spring. The soil must be tilled appropriately so that vegetable seeds and transplants have the greatest chance at germination and establishment.

Though every year brings new challenges and disappointments, there is also the joy to look forward to when crops sprout, and life is abundant on the farm. Good luck to all farmers and agricultural producers beginning to plan and prepare their fields for the 2022 growing season.



Marketing Lambs & Goats by the 2022 Ethnic Holiday Calendar



By: MJ Fisher, County Extension Director, Pueblo County

A new year will soon arrive. Around this time each year, I try to look at the ethnic holiday calendar for that year. As you already know, many holidays are celebrated with a traditional holiday feast. However, it is important to realize that a lot of cultures like to celebrate their holidays with lamb or goat meat as part of the feast. If you are a lamb or goat producer, you may be able to market your product at a premium; if you know when these holidays occur and what is desired for the various ethnic holiday feasts. Here is a sampling of some of the 2022 holidays and what consumers may be looking for. (It is important to realize that the date of some of the holidays change on a yearly basis; so in future years you would need to look up the new date.)

Passover: In the Jewish religion, Passover (also known as Pesach) observes the exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt. The holiday continues for eight days from the 14th of Nisan. A 30 to 55 pound lamb that has been milk fed and is fat is the preferred product for this holiday. In 2022 Passover will be recognized from sunset on April 15th to nightfall on April 23rd.

Easter: This is a Christian holiday memorializing the resurrection of Jesus following his crucifixion. Easter is calculated differently by various cultures so you may hear it referred to as Western Easter, Roman Easter, Greek Easter, or Orthodox Easter. In many years, the various calculations may cause the numerous Easter celebrations to fall on different dates. In 2022 Western Easter and Roman Easter are calculated to April 17th. The Western/Roman Easter is celebrated with a 30 to 45 pound, fat, milk fed lamb. It can also be celebrated with a goat weighing between 20 and 50 pounds, 30 pounds being optimal. The goat should be fleshy and under 3 months of age. The consumer wants them to have been milk fed and they should have been gaining at least ½ pound per day. April 24, 2022 is when the Greek and Orthodox Easter celebrations will occur.

The Greek/Orthodox culture likes similar lambs and goat kids, except slightly heavier. The lamb should be 40 to 55 pounds and goat kids are optimal at 35 pounds.

Ramadan: This is the Islamic month of fasting and is meant to teach the Muslim people patience, modesty, and spirituality. During this period, participants are expected to fast from sunrise to sunset. They may only eat during the night hours. In 2022, the start of Ramadan will be April 2nd and continue through May 1st. Weaned market lambs from 60 to 80 pounds and goats less than 12 months of age (still possessing their milk teeth), weighing between 45 and 120 pounds (60 pounds is optimal), are preferred during this period.

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Eid al Fitr: Eid al Fitr is the breaking of Ramadan and the fasting period. It is celebrated with a feast of lamb or goat similar to those preferred during Ramadan. In 2022, the Eid al Fitr celebration is from sundown on May 2nd to sundown on May 3rd due to the Islamic calendar being a lunar calendar and its days beginning at sunset. The date is based on the first day following the new moon.

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By: MJ Fisher, County Extension Director, Pueblo County

Eid al Adha: This is the Islamic festival of sacrifice. It commemorates Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son. It is a three-day celebration. It will be celebrated by many from sunset on July 9, 2022 to sunset on July 10th, 2022 due to the Islamic calendar being a lunar calendar and its days beginning at sunset. Lambs and goats marketed for this holiday should not be castrated and the tails of lambs should not be docked. A lamb of 60 to 80 pounds is preferred but heavier lambs may also be utilized. Yearling goats with one set of adult teeth are preferred on the caprine side but 60 to 100 pound kids may also be marketable.

Muharram: Muharram is the Islamic New Year and will be July 29, 2022 thru August 28, 2022. Celebration of the holiday will begin at sunset on July 29, 2022.

Rosh Hashanah: This holiday marks the Jewish New Year and will begin with sunset on September 25, 2022 and run through nightfall on September 27, 2022. The forequarters from a weaned lamb, 60 to 110 pounds in size, are preferred for Rosh Hashanah.

Navadurgara (also known as Navratra, Navratri, Dashara, & Dassai): This is a ten day/nine night long Hindu holiday that honors the goddess Durga. The final four days of the celebration include elaborate family feasts for which goats are slaughtered. The demand is for weaned, market kids and yearling wethers. It is unacceptable to use a female goat for this holiday feast. In 2022, it will occur September 26th through October 4th.

Mawlid al-Nabi: The prophet Muhammad was the founder of the Islam faith and this holiday celebrates his birthday. It will occur on October 7, 2022. The holiday begins on the sunset of the previous day due to the Islamic calendar being a lunar calendar and its days beginning at sunset.

Chanukah/Hanukkah: This is the Jewish festival of rededication and is celebrated for eight days from December 18, 2022 thru December 26, 2022.

Christmas: This Christian holiday, celebrating the birth of Jesus, annually falls on December 25th. It can be difficult to market for this holiday because the preference is for young milk fed kids and lambs. This requires October births, May breedings, to hit this out of season market.

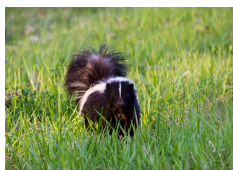
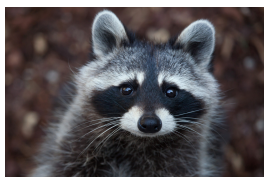
There are several other special markets for goat that do not have the religious ties of the previously mentioned holidays. Much of the Hispanic culture enjoys goat meat for barbeques. Two popular items are 15 to 30 pound, suckling kids for cabrito and large weaned market kids for seco de chivo. This is especially popular at Cinco de Mayo celebrations. (May 5th)

The Chinese culture can be a strong market for 60 to 80- pound market goats. This is especially true in the colder months. The 4th of July is another good opportunity to market goats. Once again, the smaller weight kids for small celebrations, while yearling bucks, wethers, and does are good for large barbeques. The month of August is filled with a variety of Caribbean holidays for which goat meat is desired. Some of these include Carnival, Carifest, and the Jamaican Independence Day. The optimal goats for this group of consumers are young, 60 to 80- pound bucks in their prime. However, economics may drive some consumers to purchase older goats of either sex.

I hope that this helps you better understand some of the niche marketing opportunities that exist for lamb and goat producers. And please remember that many of the holidays discussed here have moving dates from year to year. Therefore, it is important that you check each year to see when those holidays are, if you plan to market to those cultural groups.

Pueblo County Year-Round Pests

By: Beth De Lair, Agriculture & Natural Resource Coordinator, Pueblo County



One of the many benefits of the winter season is that insect pests are severely limited, but what about all the other pests that don't take a break during the cold months? In Pueblo County, you can encounter a wide range of year-round pests such as raccoons, skunks, squirrels and in some areas, prairie dogs. These critters affect both our urban and rural communities in a variety of ways. If you have a problem with any of these pests, you do have some options. Co-existing can be tricky and if you need some help relocating these pests, Pueblo has the right people for the job. For any of the wildlife mentioned in the article below please reach out to either of USDA/APHIS representatives that work in Pueblo. You can contact Jeremiah New at 719-355-9629 or Clinton Wilson at 719-569-1906.

The first pest we will discuss is raccoons. They don't hibernate during the winter but do slow down their activities. This means they will be looking for places to shelter so be sure to be careful around decks, attics, chimneys and fireplace flues. Raccoons are known carriers of diseases such as rabies and distemper, so be vigilant about them being around your family and pets. If you are looking to simply deter or repel them from your yard or home, use scents such as hot pepper, garlic, peppermint oil, onion and Epsom salt. You'll also want to make sure your trash is well secured as raccoons look for easy meals and an open garbage can is hard for them to pass up.

Skunks need no introduction as most people avoid them at all costs for both their smell and their ability to spread diseases such as rabies. They are nocturnal animals and can make a home under decks, sheds, cabins or storage buildings. Besides removing these animals, the representatives at the USDA APHIS division will also work with the homeowner to manage further skunk interactions between people and these wild animals.

Squirrels, from a distance, seem cute and cuddly until they decide to make your property their area of habitation. If left unchecked, they can cause severe damage to landscaping, and cause damage to internal structures of homes and buildings. Once inside your home, they can chew the wiring and tear up insulation potentially causing a fire hazard. If you have a squirrel issue on your property, you will want to contact the above listed USDA APHIS representatives. However, if your squirrel issue is within a building, you will want to contact a private company that can be found online by simply googling "squirrel control in Pueblo Colorado". Both community resources treat the animals humanely and look to help prevent further issues in the future.

Prairie dogs are most commonly seen out in the Pueblo West community but can be spotted in other areas of the county. Prairie dogs are infamous for creating giant holes that create dangerous areas for pets or livestock animals. They are also known carriers of rabies, Sylvatic plague and Tularemia. They are a low risk of spreading the plague to humans as they often die too quickly to spread the disease, but they are still considered an environmental disease vector. If a prairie dog colony becomes a problem on your property, make sure you will not be harming any other wildlife such as Burrowing Owls who often hide in prairie dog burrows. One clue you can look for is scattered animal dung around the burrow entrance. Owls do this to lure insects that they feed on. These owls are federally protected, and landowners can face legal charges for destroying these birds. If you'd like to proceed with mitigation, contact the USDA APHIS staff mentioned at the top of this article.

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By: Beth De Lair, Agriculture & Natural Resource Coordinator, Pueblo County

The Colorado Division of Wildlife is not involved in the mitigation of prairie dogs due to ongoing projects in Pueblo County concerning prairie dog populations and their place in our ecosystems. If you see a sick prairie dog on your property and it poses a threat to your family, pets or livestock, please contact the Pueblo Wildlife Division office at 719-561-5300 immediately and don't interact with the sick animal. Interaction with a sick or deceased animal could potentially lead to the spread of life-threatening diseases. For further information on how to manage your property with prairie dogs check out the Colorado State University Extension Factsheet titled "Managing Prairie Dogs". Link available here:

<https://extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/natural-resources/managing-prairie-dogs-6-506/>

The goal with all wildlife is to find a balance of coexistence. However, if you can't find that balance, the resources listed in this article are a great place to start. For further assistance you can also contact the Pueblo County Extension office at 719-583-6566. We can help you gain access to other community resources or give you tips on how to help deter wildlife from entering your home and property.

Community Partner Highlights

Did you know that Pueblo has three Farm Bureau offices? Need help with your insurance needs or to connect with other agriculture centered operations? Then be sure to reach out any of the local offices and chat about what programs they have for you! For insurance needs contact any of the four wonderful Pueblo insurance agents and be sure to check out their website!

Website:

<https://cfbinsurance.com/find-an-agent/county/Pueblo/>



Are you a current Pueblo beekeeper or possibly an aspiring beekeeper? Then be sure to reach out to the Pueblo County Beekeeper's Association. In partnership with the Pueblo County Extension office the Beekeeper's Association hosts their annual Bee School in February along with other community events to help educate the community about these wonderful pollinators.




Have a bee issue? You can give them a call at the swarm hotline number (719) 250-3441. Be sure to check out their website to stay in touch with them and follow their Facebook page!

Website:

<https://pueblountybeekeepersassociation.com/>





LIVESTOCK AND RANGE
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How many livestock does your land support? For how long?
How much does this change in a drought?

Our app streamlines calculating carrying capacity through an interactive map and publicly available data.

Rangeland Carrying Capacity App

<https://csurange.shinyapps.io/RangeCC/>



PUEBLO AG EXPO

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Save The Date

When: Thursday, March 10, 2022
Where: Colorado State Fairgrounds



PUEBLO COUNTY
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
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Come join us for an afternoon all about agriculture with a keynote speaker, four breakout sessions and a catered meal! This event is open to all Colorado agriculture producers. Additional information including cost & registration will be announced soon.

Upcoming Events

January Dates

- **January 11th, 2022**
 - Ranch to Plate Presentation by the Colorado Dpt. of Agriculture
- **January 18th, 2022**
 - Water Issues Presentation - Kristi Bartolo

February Dates

- **February 1st-3rd, 2022**
 - Southern Rocky Mountain Agriculture Conference
- **February 15th, 2022**
 - Farm Food Safety Presentation - Kristi Bartolo
- **February 18th, 2022**
 - Pueblo County Bee School
- **February 28th-March 1st, 2022**
 - Colorado Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference

March Dates

- **March 10th, 2022**
 - Pueblo Ag Expo
- **March 22nd, 2022**
 - Farming Finances Presentation - Kristi Bartolo

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<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCi0dsYcfX1glbHQWPit8WDQ>



<https://pueblo.extension.colostate.edu/>



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