

Pueblo County Extension Agriculture Tribune



The Quarterly Pueblo County Extension Ag Newsletter



SZECHUAN BEEF STIR-FRY

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 beef Ranch Steaks, cut 3/4 inch thick (about 8 ounces each)
- 1 package (10 ounces) Fresh vegetable stir-fry blend
- 3 tablespoons water
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1/2 cup prepared sesame-ginger stir-fry sauce
- 1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 2 cups hot cooked white or brown rice, prepared without butter or salt
- 1/4 cup dry-roasted peanuts

COOKING:

1. Combine vegetables and water in large nonstick skillet; cover and cook over medium-high heat 4 minutes or until crisp-tender. Remove and drain vegetables. Set aside.
- Cook's Tip: Four cups assorted fresh vegetables, such as sugar snap peas, broccoli florets, bell pepper strips and shredded carrots, may be substituted for 1 package vegetable stir-fry blend.
2. Meanwhile cut beef Ranch Steaks into 1/4-inch thick strips.
3. Heat same skillet over medium-high heat until hot. Add 1/2 of beef and 1/2 of garlic; stir-fry 1 to 2 minutes or until outside surface of beef is no longer pink. Remove from skillet; keep warm. Repeat with remaining beef and garlic.
4. Return all beef and vegetables to skillet. Add stir-fry sauce and red pepper; cook and stir 1 to 2 minutes or until heated through. Spoon over rice. Sprinkle with peanuts.
- Cook's Tip: Your favorite stir-fry sauce flavor may be substituted for the sesame-ginger flavor.

Recipe source: Recipe as seen in The Healthy Beef Cookbook, published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt <https://www.beefitswhatsfordinner.com/recipes/recipe/1128/szechuan-beef-stir-fry>

Meet the Ag Team!

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Look inside
to view our
highlighted
community
partners!



Local Flavors, Familiar Faces: The Farmer's Market

By: Kristi Bartolo, Agronomy Agent, Pueblo County



Whether you have a roadside stand, sell hay to your neighbor, or run a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture), it would seem that getting your product to the greater public is at least one of your goals. One of the many ways to accomplish this is heading to the local farmers' market. There are a variety of community farmers markets to attend each growing season with most beginning sometime in June and ending in September or October.

The sheer number of markets can be overwhelming so take some time to look into what works best for your farm and the products you sell. Going to farmers' markets will take some effort and resources away from the farm and this thought should be considered when deciding what markets to participate in and how feasible it is to travel from the farm. A good starting place is the Colorado Farmers Market Association (CFMA). The CFMA has been supporting farmers' markets and direct-marketing farmers across Colorado for over 25 years. CFMA provides resources, technical assistance, peer info-sharing, and networking opportunities to farmers' market managers, and advocates on behalf of farmers' markets at the state and local level. The organization has provided these resources to farmers' markets and farmers and ranchers through the flexibility and dedication of part-time staff, a volunteer board, and member markets. <https://cofarmersmarkets.org/>

Once you get to the farmer's market, make it the best opportunity you can. Colorado State University Extension has some helpful tips for "Being successful at the Market". They suggest engaging with customers non-verbally first. Smiling with open arms posture will invite customers towards your booth. Keep containers stocked which shows customers the variety of options you have to sell and keep your table neat and tidy with an orderly flow for ease of movement around the booth. Make sure your farm or entity name is front and center, so customers know who you are and possibly consider having samples, they are always a hit. <https://extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/yard-garden/how-to-be-successful-at-a-farmers-market-4-008/> And just as importantly, follow all local market rules and requirements.

If you are looking for markets around Pueblo County, there are just a few. The Southern Colorado Farmers Market and Craft Fair will be held again at Mineral Palace Park beginning June and ending September. Another market located in the Minnequa neighborhood will be run by the Pueblo Food Project (the Backyard Growers).

Along with Farmer's Markets, you may also consider adding your farm or ranch name to other listing locations, which will help other folks make it to you. Colorado Department of Ag Marketing Division (Colorado Proud) releases a "Farm Fresh Directory" every year. They also provide an annual Hay Directory. Colorado Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association hosts a list of producers and their farms.

Farmers Markets allow you and your farm to reach another customer base and engage with other community partners and entities. Making these new connections or sustaining previous ones will help your farm or ranch business grow and gain the support and trust of the community. Hearing about what other farms are doing can bring forth ideas and opportunities that can benefit your farm. No matter what you are selling this season; honey, vegetables, flowers, cottage food items, or meat products consider heading to a farmers' market. Make it a great season!





Sun Soil Water Ag Summit

By: Beth De Lair, Ag & Natural Resources Coordinator



The 3rd annual Sun, Soil, Water Ag Summit was paired with a new agriculture track from the Pueblo County CSU Extension office and the Pueblo Food Project. This year's summit experience had a track for everyone involved in food systems, from producers, consumers and everyone in between. The event kicked off Friday, March 16th with an entrepreneurial pitch competition that allowed people from all around Colorado to submit ideas that could become potential successes for the Pueblo community in various food industry sectors such as farms, restaurants, warehouses, and many other ideas. This competition was coupled with an awards banquet for the participants plus outstanding members nominated in various categories from the Pueblo Food Project. Notable audience members of this Friday event included a video message from Senator Bennet, who had a large hand in creating the Pueblo Food Project, and Mayor Nick Gradisar.

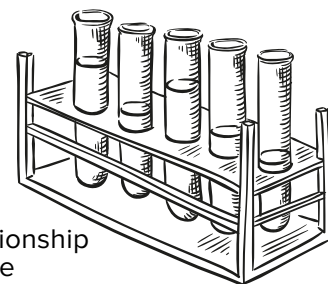
The full conference event then kicked off on Saturday, March 17th. The three tracks for the program were focused on agriculture, community food systems, and food for you. Each track had a total of three sessions along with various keynote speaker sessions that focused on topics such as Southern Colorado water, food sovereignty, and the new food hub creation taking place in Pueblo that is being done by Fuel and Iron. Session rooms were well attended with a diverse audience that asked questions regarding how we can help our community grow with increasing food deserts and rising grocery store prices. After some great educational sessions and amazing food from Soul Smile Health and Wellness, the happy hour and maker market was fully available to all participants. This created a wonderful atmosphere of networking opportunities and the chance for conference participants to walk through the various market tables that had items for purchase or community resources. The Pueblo County CSU Extension Ag Team had a wonderful experience pairing with the Pueblo Food Project for this event and we look forward to future ways we can help connect the dots for Pueblo agriculture. Be sure to keep an eye out for the 2024 event!





Ag in the Lab

By: Kristi Bartolo, Agronomy Agent, Pueblo County



The science lab and a farmer's field, or agriculture in general, do not appear to have any relationship or similarities to each other. These two places, however, can be quite connected. Labs provide various testing services to farmers and ranchers looking to gain a deeper understanding of certain elements on their farms or ranches. Agriculture producers in Colorado have a myriad of lab options to turn to for different testing. It may be of curious interest to know what on a farm can be tested in a lab. Labs can test soil, water, plant samples, livestock feed, and compost samples. These tests look for certain elements that will either benefit the farm or show the producer that some changes need to be made to improve the operation. Different tests look for different components, for example, in a soil test, a farmer may be wanting to know if certain heavy metals present or what amounts of Nitrogen, Phosphorus, and Potassium are present in the soil. This information will help the producer determine how much and what kind of fertilizer a field might need. In a water test, a farmer may be looking for pathogens that could contaminate a vegetable crop or harm a producer's livestock. Crop diseases can be determined in the lab, which can give the farmer an idea of how to alleviate the disease. Laboratory diagnostic examination of animals as well as the water supply may be necessary to evaluate the any health problems in livestock or poultry.

There are a number of reputable labs that farmers and ranchers can turn to. Colorado State University (CSU) Spur campus has recently opened and can do a variety of agricultural testing in their lab: <https://agsci.colostate.edu/soiltestinglab/> Other labs include Weld Labs <https://weldlabs.com/>, Ward Labs in Nebraska <https://www.wardlab.com/>, the local water testing lab at the Pueblo Department of Public Health and Environment (PDPHE) and the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment (CDPHE) (can test for E. Coli, coliforms, and other water pathogens and contaminants) <https://county.pueblo.org/public-health-department/laboratory>, and the Plant Diagnostic Clinic at CSU Spur <https://agsci.colostate.edu/agbio/plantclinic/>. Pricing does vary between labs, and each lab may preform different types of testing. Lab testing is a great tool and resource available to all commercial producers and community members and can be very helpful in improving agricultural productions and operations.



Spring Weeds

By: Beth De Lair, Ag & Natural Resources Coordinator



With warmer weather comes a whole new host of concerns for Pueblo County including the management of your unwanted plants or weeds. Pueblo has a variety of troublesome plants such as Kochia, Canadian & Russian Thistle, Bindweed, Puncturevine, Cheatgrass, Russian Olive, Tamarisk, and so many more. Each plant requires a specific management plan that is rotated through each year to lower the resistance buildup that can occur from using the same method over and over again. The biggest tool you have to combat weeds is simple. It is all about timing! If you can catch the plant early on in its life cycle you can severely limit it's productivity throughout the season. You most likely won't be able to eradicate it the problem but you can lower the expansion of the weeds and allow native plants that you do want like grasses, forbs or trees to outcompete the weeds. Using the plants you want to outcompete the weeds with selective timing of livestock grazing, mowing/hand pulling and if needed chemical usage will greatly increase your chances of lowering your weed pressure.



For Kochia which in the fall turns into our famous Pueblo tumbleweeds, a simply way to avoid using chemicals is to allow livestock animals to eat the plant when it's young. This same principle can also be applied to Russian Thistle as well because the young plant is still palatable due to the lack of spike-like flowers that emerge later on in the plant life cycle. Mowing or cutting are time limited options as doing this at the wrong time can help spread the seeds of these two plants causing your problem to get worse. Kochia is also well known for producing seed on branches that sit below mowing levels.

Bindweed is a noxious perennial weed that is difficult to kill because of its extensive root system. Hand-pulling well established plants do nothing as the root system will persistence underground and regrow the above ground foliage. Letting livestock animals such as sheep, cattle and chickens consume the early growth of the plant is fairly effective for maintaining early growth. Horses and swine can consume this plant but can be sensitive to the alkaloids in the shoots and roots. To learn about additional management practices for bindweed, click here for our CSU Extension Fact Sheet:

<https://adams.extension.colostate.edu/ag-acreage/field-bindweed/>

There are chemical options as well and even organic herbicides. For example, organic herbicides containing acetic acid or clove oil can be used to control kochia. They are corrosive to the skin and respiratory systems so be sure to wear appropriate clothing when using them and to read the label for the product you are using. To learn more about chemical management for Kochia and Russian Thistle check out our helpful CSU Extension fact sheet here:

<https://extension.colostate.edu/docs/pubs/natres/06314.pdf>

Spring Chickens: Do's & Dont's

By: Beth De Lair, Ag & Natural Resources Coordinator



Spring is finally here and with the warmer temperatures comes the influx of new animals on your farm or ranch. Many people buy new chicks during this early springtime but often run into common issues when they dive headfirst into their care. This article is designed to give recommendations for your backyard folk in Pueblo County. These restrictions are area specific and you need to be aware of what your property is zoned for. To find out what your zoning requirements are click here: <http://www.co.pueblo.co.us/cgi-bin/webatallbroker.wsc/ackatr.p>

Laws & Regulations

• Pueblo City Limits

- Allowed 10 standard chicken hens or 10 bantam chickens over the age of 4 months old. A bantam chicken is one which weighs less than 30 ounces at maturity. A standard chicken is any chicken other than a defined bantam. Sourced from Pueblo Code of Ordinances Sec. 11-4-32 section C.
- No roosters allowed

• Pueblo West

- On March 13th, 2023 the Pueblo West Metro District Board of Directors passed a resolution allowing residents living in agricultural zones in Pueblo West to raise as many as 20 hens on their property. The previous limit of chickens allowed was 12.
- In Pueblo West, no roosters are allowed as they are considered nuisance animals
- Most of the northside of Pueblo West and properties on the boundaries of the Metro District are zoned as agricultural. You'll want to check your property zoning for being in A-1, A-2, A-3 or A-4. To check the latest Pueblo West zoning map, you can call the Pueblo West Community Development office at 719-547-2000

• Other areas

- On land zoned for agriculture in the county sections of Pueblo, residents are allowed up to 12 chickens.

Feed

- Be sure to buy age-appropriate complete feeds to keep your poultry animals happy and healthy
- To read more about proper poultry nutrition check out our CSU Extension Fact Sheet <https://extension.colostate.edu/docs/pubs/livestk/02503.pdf>

Housing

Creating adequate space for your birds is critical for the health of the animals. Each light breed bird needs from 2.5-3 square feet of floor space with heavier breeds needing 3-3.5 square feet per layer. To read further housing instructions check out the CSU Extension factsheet on keeping layers for the family egg supply. <https://extension.colostate.edu/docs/pubs/livestk/02510.pdf>

Egg Collection & Storage

Eggs that spend more time in the nest have an increased chance of becoming broken, contaminated with manure, or lower in quality. To find out ways to properly clean and store eggs check out our Home Produced Chicken Eggs <https://extension.colostate.edu/docs/pubs/foodnut/09377.pdf>

Biosecurity

HPAI or the "Bird Flu" is still a threat to all poultry species in Colorado. The best way to protect your poultry birds is to keep their interactions as closed off as possible from wild bird populations. Keep all poultry feed and water sources secure from wild bird use. Lastly, keep your flock closed. Don't let loads of people come in and out of your poultry areas as humans can act as a disease spreader from one area to the next. To report any cases of infected or deceased domestic birds that maybe potential HPAI cases please use this form here:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdUUFsL1oVpjJKwxT6ATxHCZxcmw7iedpQdD-qlBavxZIUc_Q/viewform

Or call the Colorado State Vet's office at 303-869-9130. To read more about the HPAI cases in Colorado visit the Colorado Department of Agriculture's website:

<https://ag.colorado.gov/animals/reportable-diseases/avian-influenza>

Community Partner Highlights

Natural Resources Conservation Service NRCS

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) helps private landowners care and make healthy choices for soil, water, air, plants, and animal habitats. Much of the Agency's work is accomplished through partnerships, providing technical assistance and financial assistance through conservation programs within the Farm Bill. For more than 80 years, NRCS has helped people make investments in their operations and local communities to keep working lands working, boost rural economies, increase the competitiveness of American agriculture, and improve the quality of our air, water, soil, and habitat. They work one-on-one with producers to find the best solutions to meet their unique conservation and business goals which helps ensure the health of Colorado's natural resources and long-term sustainability of Agriculture. Pueblo County Extension has partnered in many ways with the local Pueblo County NRCS Office.

Website:

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>



Farm Service Agency FSA

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) equitably serves all farmers, ranchers, and agricultural partners through the delivery of effective, efficient agricultural programs for all Americans. It is a customer-driven agency with a diverse and multi-talented work force, dedicated to achieving an economically and environmentally sound future for American Agriculture. FSA makes direct and guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans to family-size farmers and ranchers who cannot obtain commercial credit from a bank, Farm Credit System institution, or other lender. FSA loans can be used to purchase land, livestock, equipment, feed, seed, and supplies. The local Pueblo County FSA Office and team members have continually supported the Pueblo County Extension Office by speaking at workshops and attending conferences for local producers.

Website:

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/>



Upcoming Events

April Dates

- April 21, 2023
 - Community Resource Fair
- April 22, 2023
 - Earth Day at El Pueblo
- April 25-26, 2023
 - Arkansas River Basin Water Forum

May Dates

- May 5, 2023
 - Pueblo Food Advocacy Day
- May 6, 2023
 - Family Fun Fest
- May 6, 2023
 - Shed Plant Sale
- May 20, 2023
- Beulah Community Preparedness

June Dates

- June 1, 2023
 - Wheat Field Day
- June 15, 2023
 - Drought Meeting
- June 16, 2023
 - Ag Tech Demo Day
- June 21, 2023
 - Liquid Lecture

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