



Colorado State University  
Extension

BUILDING  
**Capacity...**  
BUILDING  
**Community!**

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## Colorado Building Farmers

The Colorado Building Farmers program is a comprehensive program, coordinated through Colorado State University Extension, that teaches beginning farmers and ranchers how to start and maintain a new farm or ranch operation or expand and improve an existing one. Participants learn critical business planning and management skills, while gaining access to producer networks for agricultural inputs, financing, technical support, marketing insights, as well as land, water resources, and food safety issues. CBF is an important incubator for Colorado's local and regional food production and marketing systems. We offer the program in Boulder, Chaffee, Delta, Denver, La Plata, Larimer, Pueblo, and San Miguel counties.





## A Curriculum that Builds Success

The Colorado Building Farmers program combines classroom learning, networking opportunities, coaching, mentoring, internships, and technical assistance. It's a hands-on learning experience that will prepare you for success. There are three levels to our curriculum:

### 1. Principles of Business Planning and Management

*(Beginning farmers and ranchers with 0-2 years of experience)*

This is a series of eight evening classes designed to help new farmers and ranchers explore farming and ranching as a business and provide intermediate and more experienced farmers and ranchers with tools and ideas to refine and enhance their business management, production and marketing skills.

Class sessions begin with a shared meal and peer-to-peer networking, followed by a presentation from one or more guest speakers, area experts including farmers, ranchers, agricultural professionals, and business professionals. Importantly, we will cover specialty subjects that reflect the business and enterprise interests of area participants. The three core subject areas we will cover in depth are:

- Strategic Business Planning
- Marketing Planning
- Financial Planning and Record Keeping

Participants will develop and present a business plan. Graduates receive a certificate of completion.

*“Creating a business plan helped me learn what size and type of operation I could realistically run.”*

In addition to the classroom sessions, for graduates of the “Principles” course we offer internship opportunities to work on another farm or ranch and also, the ability to participate in a coaching group – which provides one-on-one training in a specific area.



*“Getting to s  
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a really skew*







The number of small farms  
and ranches is growing  
throughout Colorado  
with many producers  
selling their products  
directly to consumers,  
retail, and wholesale  
customers.

Many of these  
producers have  
limited agricultural  
business experience  
or may have  
training in  
general business  
topics only.



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## 2. Advanced Classes

*(Advanced beginner farmers and ranchers with 2+ years of experience)*

Participants who have completed Level 1, "Principles of Business Planning and Management" may enroll in advanced classes that will accelerate your planning and management skills. And, if you have your own farm or ranch we also offer mentorships that will pair you with experienced farmers and ranchers for one season.

Some examples of the topics we will cover:

- Legal considerations for farm risk management
- Managing ag labor in complex enterprises

*ual numbers and hearing real methods and stories was great. and all the other folks (just being at the farm I'm at) I would have ion of farming. Exposure and encouragement was key."*

## 3. Developing Yourself as a Business Leader

*(Proficient farmers and ranchers with 3 or more years of experience)*

As a capstone for motivated "Principles" graduates, we offer this advanced class for our most experienced program participants.

Success of today's farm and ranch businesses relies as much on managing "soft" assets – people and relationships – as hard assets. Effective adaptive leaders find the right combination of directing and mentoring to enable employees and stakeholders to reach order business goals. This class provides a foundational approach to adaptive leadership emphasizing personality-based communication and conflict management skills. Participants leave the course with a set of tools to apply to their own leadership dilemmas.

We also offer mentorships, technical assistance and mini grants to class participants who own their own farm or ranch.

*"The Building Farmers course was just what I needed to help me go from being a serious 'hobby' gardener to actually starting a business. The information presented and contacts I made have been invaluable."*

## Practical, Life-Long Benefits

**Colorado Building Farmers is truly a "farmers teaching farmers, ranchers teaching ranchers" experience.**

There are numerous benefits of the Colorado Building Farmers program including:

- A low risk opportunity to see if agriculture is right for you
- The ability to learn the ins-and-outs of farming and ranching before investing in your operations
- A deeper knowledge of what's needed to run a successful farming and ranching operation: business planning and management, inputs, processing and handling, marketing outlets and much more...
- Real-world learning from farmers, ranchers, experts and specialists
- Hands-on learning on a working farm or ranch. Coaching from experts.
- Follow-up mentoring and technical assistance when needed
- Potential mini grants to assist you develop and market your products
- Valuable networking opportunities, contacts, and friendships

*"Colorado Building Farmers is an excellent program that has given me the tools needed to have my own farm and run my own business."*

### Learn More About Us:

[www.buildingfarmers.colostate.edu](http://www.buildingfarmers.colostate.edu)

[www.facebook.com/ColoBuildingFarmers](https://www.facebook.com/ColoBuildingFarmers)

### For more information about

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**CSU Extension programs are available to all without discrimination.**



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