

# Colorado Building Farmers: observations and recommendations for further impacts

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# Situation Then

- Local food
- Entry into ag
- BFR Readiness
- Access to resources
- Risks
- Established BFR programs
- BFRDP launch in 2009



# CBF inception and history

## 2007 – present

- “Building Capacity, Building Community”
- Scope: Business planning and management plus experiential learning
- County/area based
- Advanced classes
- Partners
- Funding
- <http://buildingfarmers.com>



# CBF Strengths and Weaknesses

## Strengths

- Low cost to participants
- Exposure to business realities
- Community/ network building
- Space and help to complete business plan
- Advanced classes for graduates
- Mentorships
- Offered in key direct market areas

## Weaknesses

- Teaching production skills
- Follow up with graduates
- Mapping of area business resources
- In-depth mentorship
- Shifting from grant funded
- Statewide administration
- Limited staff time

# CBF Impacts

- 400+ grads in 10 years in 12 Counties
- Mixed successes
- Catalyzed direct markets
- Community/ network building
- Fostered Colorado Land Link via Guidestone
- Increased staff knowledge



# Situation Now

- Local food demand has increased
- Maturation of direct markets
- Population growth
- Rising land and water values
- Rising housing cost
- Boomer generation moves toward retirement





# Colorado BFR Challenges

- Access to resources
  - Financing
  - Land and water
  - Labor
  - Viable direct markets
- Scaling up to sustain business
  - Readiness for wholesale markets
- Rising land and water values



# More Colorado BFR Challenges

- How do we fund and coordinate statewide?
- Guiding to readiness
- Production skills – experiential learning
- How do we serve rural Colorado better?
- Farm and ranch transition
- Labor saving tech





# Solutions to foster BFR successes



# Colorado BFR Center

- Supports collective Colorado BFR effort
- Elevates BFR issues in Colorado
- POC for BFR clients
- Leverages grant dollars
- Supports ag transition efforts and experiential learning
- Fosters scale appropriate solutions
- Admin support for existing programs
- Granting to Colo NGOs
- Integration of BFR incubator programs
- Iowa's Beginning Farmer Center
- <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/bfc/>
- NWSS?

# Thank you

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