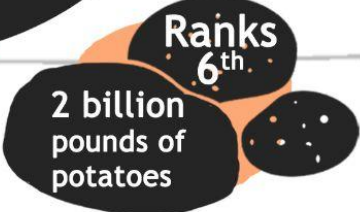


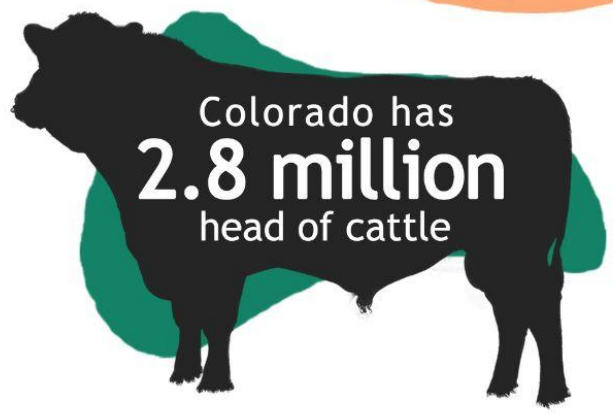
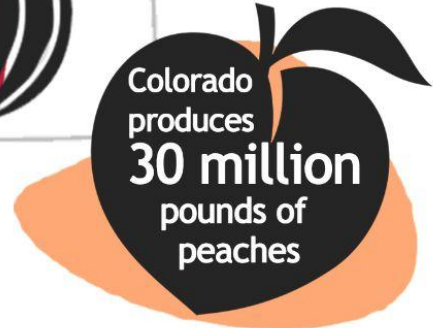
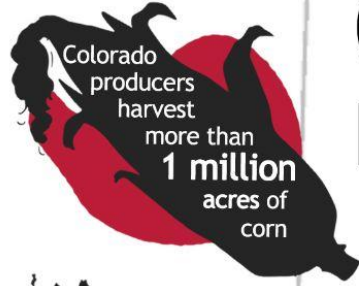


COLORADO
Department of Agriculture

2023-24 Performance Plan



COLORADO. FEEDING THE FUTURE.



Colorado agriculture is more than just food.

Farmers and ranchers help create products in construction, manufacturing, health care, education, transportation, and personal care, including X-ray film, paper, shoes, soaps, cosmetics, hydraulic brake fluid, ball bearings, bandages, piano keys, plastics, insulation, linoleum, crayons, footballs, tires, perfume, detergents and shaving cream.

Table of contents

Message from the
Commissioner

[page 4](#)

Agricultural Landscape

[page 5](#)

Strategic Priorities

[page 10](#)

Wildly Important Goals &
Strategies

[page 12](#)

About us

[page 22](#)

Previous FY Progress
Report

[page 42](#)

*Cover Photo, Table of Contents and Back Cover are
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*Table of Contents Photo by Tim Atkinson "Salida Milky
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[2022 Best in Show Photography Contest](#) entry*

Commissioner's Message

Over the past four years, Colorado has been leading the way toward a more resilient future. After the COVID-19 pandemic showed us where our food systems need to become more responsive to the needs of our communities, CDA worked to ensure our strategic areas of focus are responsive to what we've heard from the communities we serve. As we continue our efforts, we will also focus on driving water resilience in agriculture and fostering community food access where it's needed most.

In the past two years, CDA helped secure, administer, and distribute nearly \$100 million in recovery funding, most of which went directly to rural and agricultural communities. Whether that was to improve water or processing infrastructure, create new business opportunities, enhance drought response, mitigate the effects of climate change, or expand soil health practices, the funding has helped Colorado producers grow and raise healthy, nutritious food for the people of Colorado.

In 2022, CDA issued nearly \$20 million in beginning farmer and rancher loans with our lending partner First Southwest Bank. We launched the NextGen Scholarship program for rising leaders in ag; expanded our Ag Workforce Development Program for paid apprenticeships; continued advancing land access and succession tools for the next generation; and built an agricultural worker outreach effort to offer services to new communities.

We also encouraged voluntary adoption of healthy soil practices through our innovative STAR soil health program, which helps small and medium-sized producers build capacity to participate in their local and regional food markets and access emerging markets that pay a premium for climate-smart practices. We are also engaging restaurants in supporting Colorado's farmers and ranchers through our partnership with Zero Foodprint.

We also greatly expanded our work in advancing animal health and welfare. Last year, CDA created a new strategic plan for the Bureau of Animal Protection, hired our first full-time Agricultural Emergency Coordinator, and continued our monitoring of and response to foreign animal diseases, with more than a year spent responding to Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza.

CDA is committed to supporting Colorado's farmers, ranchers, ag workers, entrepreneurs and everyone in between as Colorado agriculture expands into new markets, adopts water-resilient practices, works to reduce food insecurity, and continues to bring the next generation into the fold. This performance plan outlines our goals for the next year and beyond as we continue to invest and support Colorado's vibrant and diverse agricultural communities.

Sincerely,



Kate Greenberg
Colorado Commissioner of Agriculture

Agricultural Landscape

All agricultural sectors are preparing to overcome the challenges brought on by rising production costs, global disruptions, changes in the consumer landscape, and extremes in weather due to climate change. Across the U.S., producers are looking for funding and technical assistance to implement solutions ranging from watershed resilience to economic and supply chain diversification.

Agriculture depends on many other industries to provide materials, tools, and services. These industries aid ag producers in creating the food, fiber, and fuel all Coloradans deserve access to. Disturbances in these industries impact producers and consumers, often devastating low-income families who can survive without many things but not without food.

Fortunately, Coloradans continue seeking locally grown, raised, and made products. According to CDA's 2022 Public Attitudes About Colorado Agriculture survey, 91% of Coloradans want to purchase food products that support the local economy. The survey shows near unanimous agreement that the presence of ranches, farms, and agriculture is vital to our quality of life and that we should maintain land and water in Colorado for agricultural purposes.

95%

of Coloradans believe food produced by the state's farmers and ranchers is safe

91%

of Coloradans support protecting agriculture lands through financial incentives, zoning, and regulation

Coloradans believe it is important to protect Colorado's agricultural land and water resources for purposes of...

- food security
- maintaining open space and wildlife habitat
- maintaining agriculture jobs and business
- food, fiber and fuel production

3 most important beneficial water uses

1 Agriculture and food processing

2 Instream flow for fish and wildlife

3 Recreation such as rafting, fishing, etc.

Agricultural Landscape

Economic Outlook

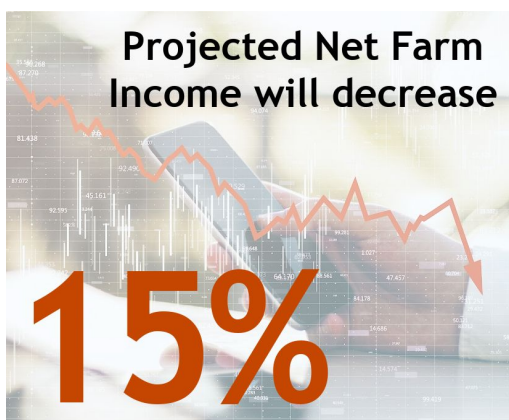
We continue to see complex global factors shaping agriculture's storylines, including extreme weather events, domestic and international economic concerns, and the ongoing rebound in consumption patterns from the COVID-19 pandemic.

We expect 2023 to be challenging for Colorado's farmers and ranchers due to the impacts of a drought-reduced cattle inventory and reductions in direct government payments. USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS) projects net farm income will decrease by 15% from the record highs of 2021 and 2022.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) reduced chicken and turkey flocks nationwide in 2022. As a result, egg prices soared 70%, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In 2021 and 2022, more than 6.3 million chickens were impacted by HPAI in Colorado, significantly affecting the state's poultry and egg operations.

Meanwhile, according to the April 2023 consumer price index, food costs increased 6.7% over the previous 12 months. While demand for meat remains strong, cattle numbers have declined due to drought and high production costs. As a result, ERS expects livestock prices to stay strong while other commodity prices soften.

Exports remain a bright spot for Colorado. In 2022, buyers from 123 countries imported more than \$2.4 billion of Colorado food and agricultural products. At more than \$1.6 billion, beef and beef variety meats are Colorado's #1 export, with five countries accounting for 88% of Colorado's food and agricultural exports: South Korea, Mexico, Canada, China, and Japan.



Beef was Colorado's #1 agriculture export in 2022 with \$1.6 billion

Livestock prices projected to stay strong in 2023.

Agricultural Landscape

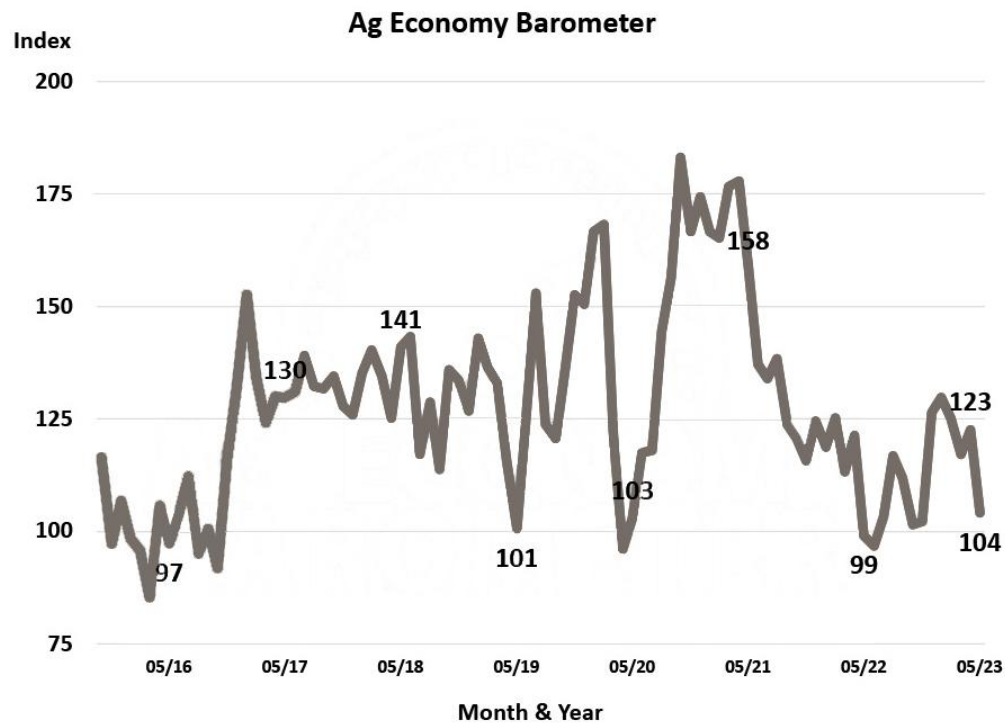
Producer Sentiment

Producer sentiment has weakened in recent months due to decreases in wheat and corn prices, and the expectation of lower net farm income for 2023.

The [Purdue-CME Group Ag Barometer](#) reports a reading of 104 for May, the lowest reading since July 2022. Generally, any reading over 100 is a positive one. Factors likely affecting producer sentiment include:

- Current state of the U.S. economy
- Deliberations by Congress over a new Farm Bill
- Shortages and the increasing costs of agricultural labor
- Trade policy
- Concerns over climate change and its impact on western rivers such as the Colorado River

Producers must also consider the longer-term impacts of federal and state government investments. These investments bolster the middle of the supply chain processing capacity creating a more resilient local food system.



Source: Purdue University Center for Commercial Agriculture, Producer Survey, May 2023

Agricultural Landscape

Community and Environmental Resilience

The COVID-19 pandemic's lasting impact on the agricultural industry has been felt in both urban and rural communities. The disruptions in the food supply chain were widely felt and the aftershocks are still impacting producers, retailers and consumers. The impacts on low income areas and areas with limited access to fresh and affordable food were exacerbated as supply chain challenges forced many to close or raise prices.

The pandemic had a major impact on food hubs, which can provide small scale farmers with access to larger markets, assist with processing and packaging, and supply retailers and institutions with locally sourced products.

The past year has also seen the results of state and federal stimulus and recovery spending. Additionally, funding in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act have been earmarked for conservation and watershed resilience efforts. The USDA has also committed billions to promote conservation and regenerative agricultural practices across the country.

Both across the nation and in Colorado, soil health is a major tool to combat the effects of both drought and flood, as precipitation patterns leave many areas dry for lengthy amounts of time only to come back with extreme snowpack and spring melt. Best management practices that increase water holding capacity, nurture organic matter, and minimize disturbance are just a few of the ways that agriculture can mitigate the effects of climate change-driven weather events.



Agricultural Landscape

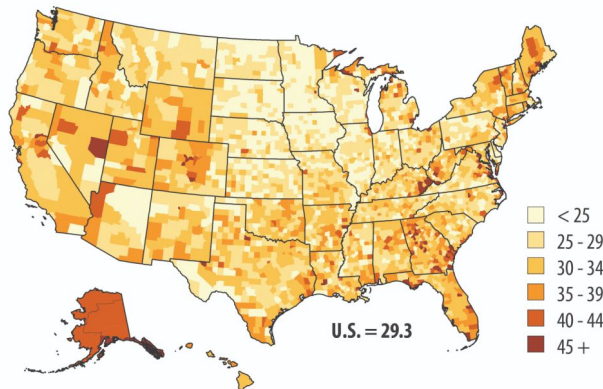
Building the Future

[The 2017 Census of Agriculture data](#) showed hope for the Centennial State's farming future. Colorado is one of the top 10 states in the country for new and beginning producers. New producer-operators with fewer than ten years of experience run nearly one-third of Colorado farms. While across the country, acres of farmland decreased by 2.5 percent in the last decade, in Colorado, that number remained stable.

According to the [2022 National Young Farmer Survey](#), finding affordable land is young farmers' top challenge. High farm income in 2021 and 2022 paralleled high cropland prices in Colorado. These increases in land values help strengthen the financial position of many farmers and ranchers but also present a significant barrier to entry for beginning farmers. Increased machine, input, and labor costs have also strained the tight margins prevalent among agricultural operations. Other challenges for young producers are access to capital, health care costs, housing, and student loan debt .

To ensure the success of agriculture and rural communities in the coming years, Colorado producers must embrace new and emerging technologies to grow more crops and raise healthier animals. Staying up-to-date on the latest compliance rules and market trends can not only allow farms to be more profitable and meet sustainability goals but improve the overall stability of the global food chain.

Farms with New and Beginning Producers as Percent of Total Farms, by County, 2017



Top States, Beginning Producer-Operated Farms, 2017 (as % of total state farms)

- Alaska (46%)
- Georgia (33%)
- Maine (33%)
- Hawaii (32%)
- Florida (31%)
- Rhode Island (31%)
- West Virginia (31%)
- New Hampshire (31%)
- Colorado (31%)

Strategic Priorities



Vision for the Future

CDA's strategic planning process creates a vision of our desired future. We then translate this into broad goals or objectives, which we then break down further into a series of steps that, if taken, will achieve our vision. The following four areas summarize CDA's focus for the next few years. We will work to align our budget, legislative, policy, and operations to move these efforts forward for the benefit of the agriculture community.



Market and Economic Productivity

We see challenges as opportunities and put our effort into achieving a future where everyone in agriculture can thrive and earn a profit. We know diversity is our strength - diversity in people, markets, practices, and biodiversity - and make decisions that lead toward more opportunity, and abundance amidst uncertainty and change.

People and Community

We work daily to ensure agriculture is a community where all are welcome and provided with equitable access. Our work is rooted in relationships with our ever-expanding communities, built on trust earned over time and nurtured by a shared commitment to the land, natural world, economic opportunity, and future generations.



Environment and Animal Health

We aim to create a more resilient agricultural community that anticipates and prepares for future challenges. This effort takes leadership today to mitigate and address the challenges of tomorrow. It recognizes that by being proactive, we can better the lives of all involved and the landscapes and ecosystems we help steward.

Operational Improvement

Improving operations is more than just a one-and-done initiative. It is a combined effort that calls on all to evaluate and optimize processes, people, and resources. We commit ourselves to increasing operational efficiency through consistent effort, continuous learning and a culture of constant innovation.

Wildly Important Goals and Strategies

This section is a subset of CDA's Strategic Plan. This section outlines CDA's wildly important goals (WIGs). A WIG is a goal that moves the needle for agriculture, supports the Governor's initiatives, and requires special attention from us in the next few years to accomplish.

Within each goal are outlined strategies and lead measures to move and measure the goal forward.

The goals identified for the next year reflect only a subset of high-priority Department goals. Day-to-day, we will continue to engage in our full range of work and operational priorities to support all Colorado agriculture.

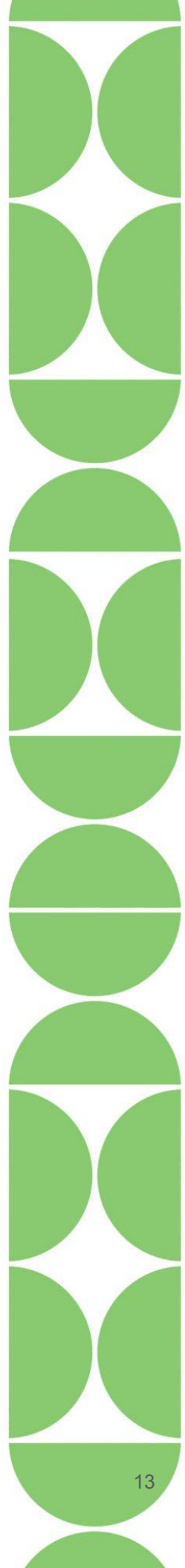
Reducing Food Insecurity

CDA is working to address food insecurity and support the development of local food networks by helping communities access fresh, healthy food from farms and ranches across Colorado.

The food system landscape has undergone significant changes, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID highlighted existing vulnerabilities in the food supply chain and disrupted production, distribution, and access to food, especially in low-income communities. In addition, these communities faced heightened challenges as they were disproportionately affected by job losses and economic hardships, which led to increased demand for food assistance programs and strained the capacity of traditional food distribution networks.

In response to these challenges, Colorado recognized the need for innovative solutions to ensure community food access and security. With the launch of the Community Food Access program in the Markets Division, CDA is working to increase the capacity of small farms to distribute food and helping small grocers and retailers absorb the costs of offering fresh, healthy food in their establishments. By focusing on increasing the capacity of both farmers and small retailers, the department aims to create more localized, resilient food systems. This program also helps farmers and retailers through grants and technical assistance.

To help new or underserved farmers secure access to land and capital, CDA launched the Colorado Agricultural Future Loan Program. In partnership with local lender First SouthWest Bank, those starting in agriculture or expanding their operations through innovative business planning can do so even if they lack access to traditional lending sources.



Reducing Food Insecurity

Increase access to healthy food in Colorado by increasing the capacity of farmers to distribute and small food retailers to purchase healthy food by \$1 Million in low-income, low-access communities.

Strategies

- Establish a consortium to provide technical assistance, connect small food retailers to help negotiate purchase agreements, and connect small food retailers to small family farms and food hubs supplying Colorado agricultural products.
- Distribute grants of up to \$50,000 to improve infrastructure and help with business operating costs to increase access to or lower prices for fresh food in underserved communities.
- Assess capacity at baseline and after grantees expend funds. Capacity includes healthy food purchasing, distribution, storage, and sales capacity for retailers and healthy food sales and distributing capacity for producers.
- Identify community-determined healthy foods and assess prices of healthy foods at baseline and after Grantees expend funds to understand if CDA helped lower healthy food prices with grant funding.
- Contract with local nonprofits in eight defined regions to provide education, outreach, and technical assistance to promote the grant program and consortium opportunities.

Baseline	FY 23-24 Goal	FY 24-25 Goal	FY 25-26 Goal
0	\$1M	\$2M	\$6M

Completing this goal will decrease food insecurities by increasing opportunities to purchase healthy food in low-income and low-access communities in Colorado and creating more market access for local farmers and ranchers.



Expanding Water-Resilient Agriculture

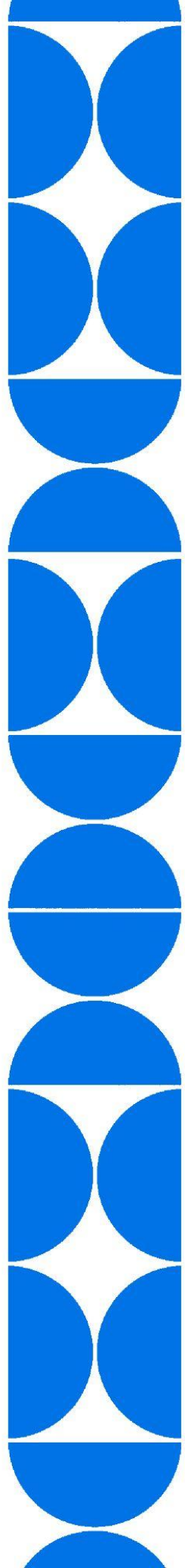
Recognizing the critical role water plays in agricultural production and the increasing challenges posed by climate change, the Department aims to support producers and water conservation leaders in adopting effective water resilience practices. Through a comprehensive approach that includes technical assistance, grant funding, marketing assistance, advocacy, and partnerships, the Department seeks to maintain robust agricultural production while ensuring the sustainable use of water resources.

Water scarcity and variability have become pressing concerns in agricultural operations across Colorado, and the Department has focused on investing in proactive measures to address these challenges. Helping guide our efforts is the [Colorado Water Conservation Board's Water Plan](#). This framework is a multi-year grassroots effort, including an intensive scoping phase, events in Colorado's 64 counties, and extensive public comment. The plan outlined agency actions CDA will undertake to help Colorado meet the challenges ahead.

Through partnerships of local conservation district leaders and grower groups, CDA launched a voluntary [Soil Health \(STAR Plus\)](#) to help agricultural producers approach soil quality improvements in ways that complement their operations. The goal is to reduce the risks of transitioning to regenerative practices and reward progress toward building more resilient soils. Grant funding is available to Colorado farmers and ranchers to help absorb some financial risk as ag producers adopt these practices. These grants enable farmers to experiment with new cropping techniques, invest in more efficient irrigation systems and technology, and try different conservation measures to see what works for them.

In addition, through marketing programs that emphasize regenerative practices, like water conservation or soil health, the Department wants to encourage consumers to support farmers who prioritize water conservation and resilience.

CDA is also actively engaging with policymakers, ag producers, water conservation leaders, and other stakeholders to help shape policies that promote voluntary, incentive-based programs. By collaborating with ag organizations, research institutions, conservation groups, and other stakeholders, we are fostering knowledge exchange, innovation, and the adoption of best practices across Colorado and the West.



Expanding Water-Resilient Agriculture

CDA will help 1,000 producers and water conservation leaders incorporate effective water resilience practices to maintain robust agricultural production.

Strategies

- Advance the CDA the Colorado Water Conservation Board's Water Plan, addressing at least 6 of 10 defined agency actions in the next year.
- Develop a Climate Preparedness Roadmap with the Governor's Office and partnering agencies that define a broad, diverse, and mature toolkit specifically for water resilience.
- Capitalize on federal funding opportunities for CDA, other state agencies, producers, associations, conservation districts, and nonprofits to drive more federal resources to Colorado that benefit producers.
- Increase grant and technical assistance to producers directly or indirectly through third parties, including soil health initiatives through the STAR program.
- Develop a new climate-smart marketing program to generate more business for producers committed to advancing water and climate resilience and to promote the economic, ecological, and social benefits of adopting water and climate-smart practices.

Baseline	FY 23-24 Goal	FY 24-25 Goal	FY 25-26 Goal
0	1000	2000	2500

Completing this goal will strengthen farmer- and rancher-led natural resource management and improve agricultural resilience.



Building Future Generations

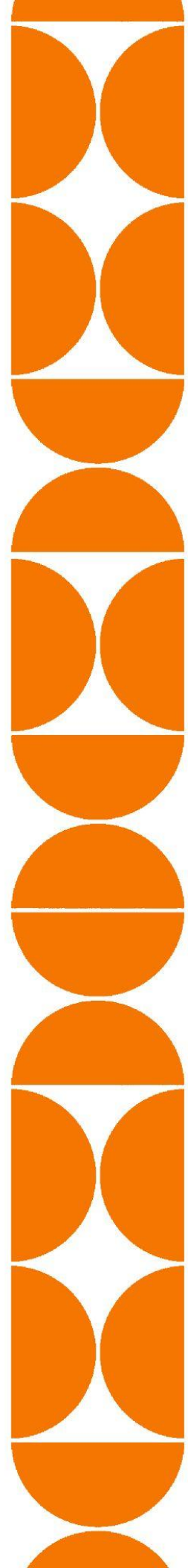
Ensuring a vibrant agricultural workforce whose leaders are ready to tackle future challenges is critical to Colorado's resilient food and farming system. Over the past several years, CDA has focused on providing financial support to young and beginning farmers and funding programs that provide education and training for future ag leaders.

Knowledge of working the land and the ag industry and hands-on experience are fundamental to a successful career in agriculture. CDA's investment in programs that help aspiring ag producers or those in the many fields related to agriculture, such as food science, veterinary science, agronomy, engineering, logistics, and more.

Through initiatives such as the [Ag Workforce Development Program](#), we help fund intern positions at ag businesses interested in training a new set of hands in their daily work. Meanwhile, the [NextGen Ag Leadership Program](#) provides grants to organizations and institutions providing leadership training and development in various agriculture-related fields. By connecting aspiring agriculturalists with experienced professionals and exposing them to different aspects of the industry, CDA aims to nurture their passion and develop their expertise as they enter the agricultural sector.

Many financial barriers can hinder people from pursuing a career in agriculture. CDA is working to help young and beginner farmers who may not qualify for traditional loans through the [Colorado Agricultural Future Loan Program](#), which works to set up borrowers for success by providing not just capital but also technical assistance and guidance with business plans and other parts of running a successful agricultural business.

For those following in their families' footsteps, the [Family Farm Transition](#) program helps generations of families plan for passing on their land and business in a fair and structured way, while our brand new Ag Worker Services program is reaching out directly to ag worker communities to provide resources and technical assistance.



Building Future Generations

Reduce barriers young people face in building a career in agriculture by providing training, education, and financial opportunities to 1500 of the next generation of agricultural leaders and producers.

Strategies

- Help beginning farmers secure low-interest capital through the Colorado Agricultural Future Loan Program and emerging partnerships.
- Incentivize agricultural businesses to create internships through the Agricultural Workforce Development Program.
- Support leadership development opportunities with grants to agricultural organizations through the NextGen Ag Leadership Grant Program.
- Provide opportunities for youth to learn about career pathways in agriculture focused on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM).
- Provide training and technical assistance to producers through the Family Farm Transition Initiative.
- Support growth and development in agriculture worker communities through the Agricultural Worker Services program.
- Grow first-time exhibitors' entries for General Entry at the Colorado State Fair.

Baseline	FY 23-24 Goal	FY 24-25 Goal	FY 25-26 Goal
214	1500	2000	3000

Completing this goal increases the number of young and beginning farmers, ranchers, and food and agriculture professionals from all backgrounds entering agriculture careers and creating future leaders.



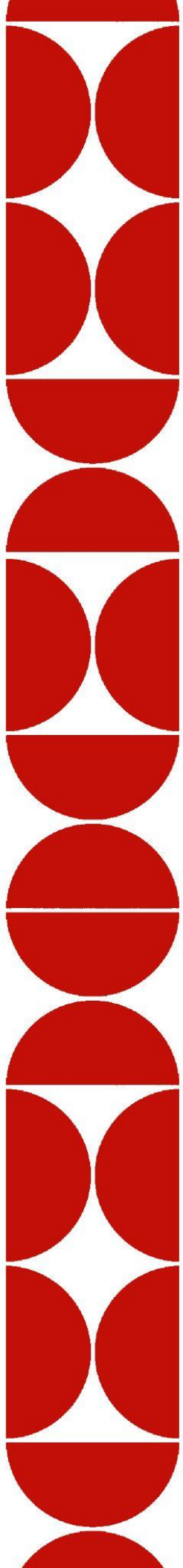
Advancing Animal Health and Welfare

Coloradans care deeply about the health and welfare of all animals in the state, including livestock and companion animals. CDA is working to ensure animal well-being by preparing for foreign animal diseases, helping enforce Colorado's animal welfare laws, and helping provide educational resources to prevent animal neglect and mistreatment.

The global nature of agriculture means Colorado must take proactive measures to prevent the introduction and spread of foreign animal diseases. By enhancing response systems, conducting risk assessments, and collaborating with producers and other regulatory agencies, CDA's Animal Health team works to safeguard the livestock industry from potentially devastating outbreaks.

Livestock plays a vital role in Colorado's economy, and ensuring the health and productivity of the state's herd is crucial. CDA's Division of Laboratory Services works closely with the Division of Animal Health to run comprehensive testing programs to monitor the health of Colorado's livestock. Additionally, we work closely with farmers and veterinarians to educate them on animal disease threats, biosecurity protocols, and diagnostics.

The Department's Bureau of Animal Protection (BAP) supports law enforcement responding to animal neglect or mistreatment. Part of the BAP's focus has been to provide comprehensive support to law enforcement through workshops, training, and seminars that enhance their understanding of animal welfare laws providing technical and logistical support in conducting investigations. Law enforcement agencies can also sign up for workshops that include hands-on demonstrations of how to score the body condition of farm animals.



Advancing Animal Health and Welfare

Provide education and outreach to 3500 veterinarians, animal owners, and stakeholders to advance animal health and welfare.

Strategies

- Develop and distribute animal welfare resources, including those pertaining to animal care, animal husbandry, and humane treatment.
- Lead training and education to expand overall knowledge and resources to target communities in order to prevent animal abuse and neglect.
- Implement and update as necessary the [BAP 3-year strategic plan](#).
- Implement new funding from FY23-24 requests to grow outreach, investigative, and support capacity.
- Reduce endemic and zoonotic diseases through better biosecurity, training resources, emergency preparedness and response, and veterinary services (rabies, African swine fever, avian influenza, etc.).
- Increase the availability of veterinary resources and education, including large-animal care, in agricultural and rural communities.
- Establish a network of rural veterinarians to assist law enforcement in animal neglect and mistreatment cases.

Baseline	FY 23-24 Goal	FY 24-25 Goal	FY 25-26 Goal
3041	3500	4000	4500

Completing this goal results in the increased ability of animal owners, veterinarians, and other professionals to identify better, mitigate, and prevent threats to the health and welfare of Colorado's livestock and companion animals.



Who we are



About CDA

Colorado's diverse agricultural and food industry contributes significantly to the state's economy, generating \$47 billion annually in economic activity. Farms and ranches comprise nearly half of the state's 66 million acres and utilize additional public lands.

Colorado agriculture supports more than 195,000 jobs and is home to some of the nation's leading processed foods companies. Colorado ranks first in the country for producing proso millet and in the top ten in approximately 20 other commodities, including cattle and calves, winter wheat, market sheep and lambs, wool production, alfalfa, potatoes, onions, apples, peaches, grapes, and melons.

The Colorado Department of Agriculture strives to better the lives of those involved in agriculture, but you needn't be a farmer or rancher to benefit from the resources this Department provides. If you've ever bought groceries, adopted a dog, or fertilized your lawn, the Colorado Department of Agriculture has served you.

CDA performs hundreds of regulatory and support functions, including but not limited to:

- The regulation and certification of the livestock industry, including brand inspection.
- Certification of organic crop and livestock production.
- Regulation of the use of pesticides and pesticide applicators.
- Administration of inspection and consumer services programs.
- Protection of animals and pet care facilities.
- Provision of conservation stewardship services across the state.
- Regulation of industrial hemp.
- Promotion of Colorado's agricultural industries.
- Administration of the State Fair and fairgrounds.

Our mission is to strengthen and advance Colorado agriculture; promote a safe and high-quality food supply; protect consumers; and foster responsible stewardship of the environment and natural resources.

Our vision is that Colorado agriculture be strong and vibrant, a key driver of the state's economy, and recognized world-wide for its safe and abundant supply of high-quality food and agriculture products.

Core Values

CDA's mission describes WHAT we do.
WHY we do what we do is embedded in our vision.
CDA's core values describe HOW we achieve the Department's mission and vision.

The values will help us make decisions for our programs and day-to-day operations, including how we collaborate on projects and treat our customers and our coworkers. They will help make decisions easier by giving us a better way to understand our purpose and priorities.

Every Division will have a chance to consciously incorporate the values into their work in a way that fits their team goals. The values are broad, but their defining statements help us understand how they apply to our daily work of advancing CDA's mission and vision. CDA's Five Core Values Are:

Partnership

We bring people together and use our collective knowledge to continually achieve better results.

Service

We care about each other and our customers and strive for every interaction to be a positive one.

Professionalism

We represent the Department proudly and hold ourselves and each other accountable.

Proactivity

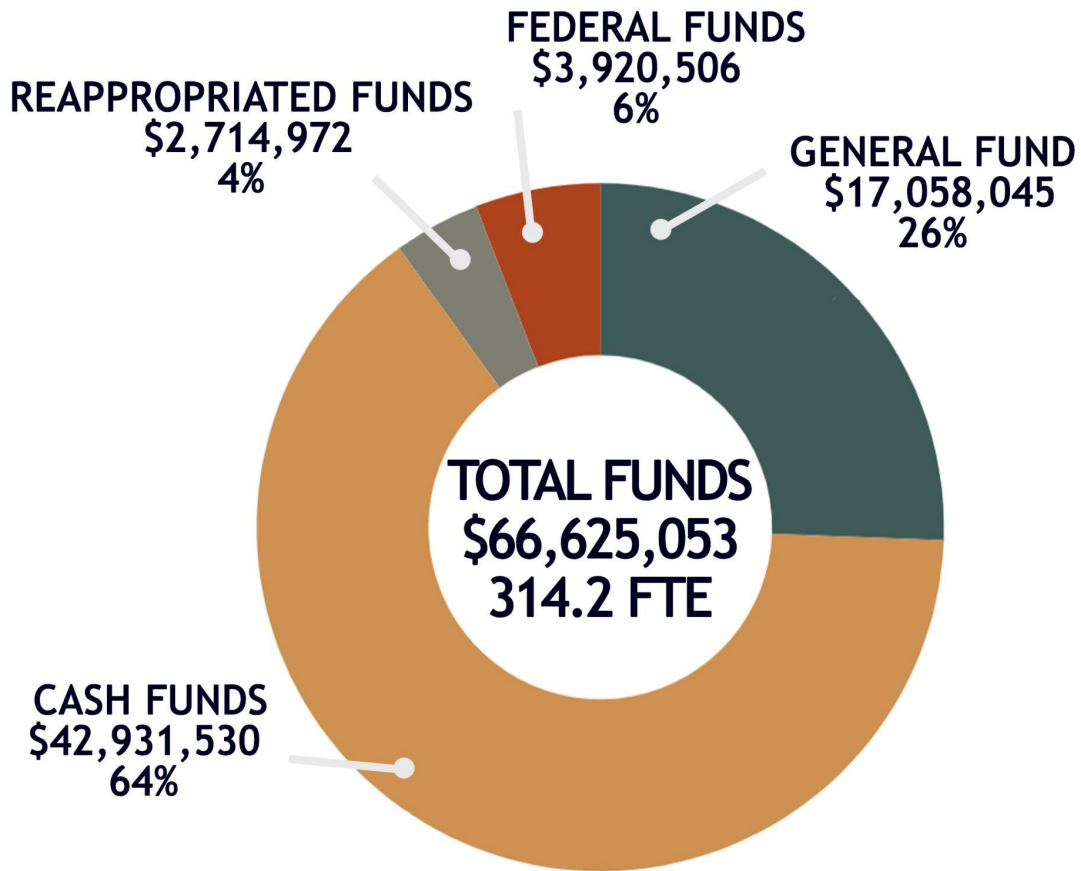
We are forward-thinking in our work and take early action to address emerging needs.

Respect

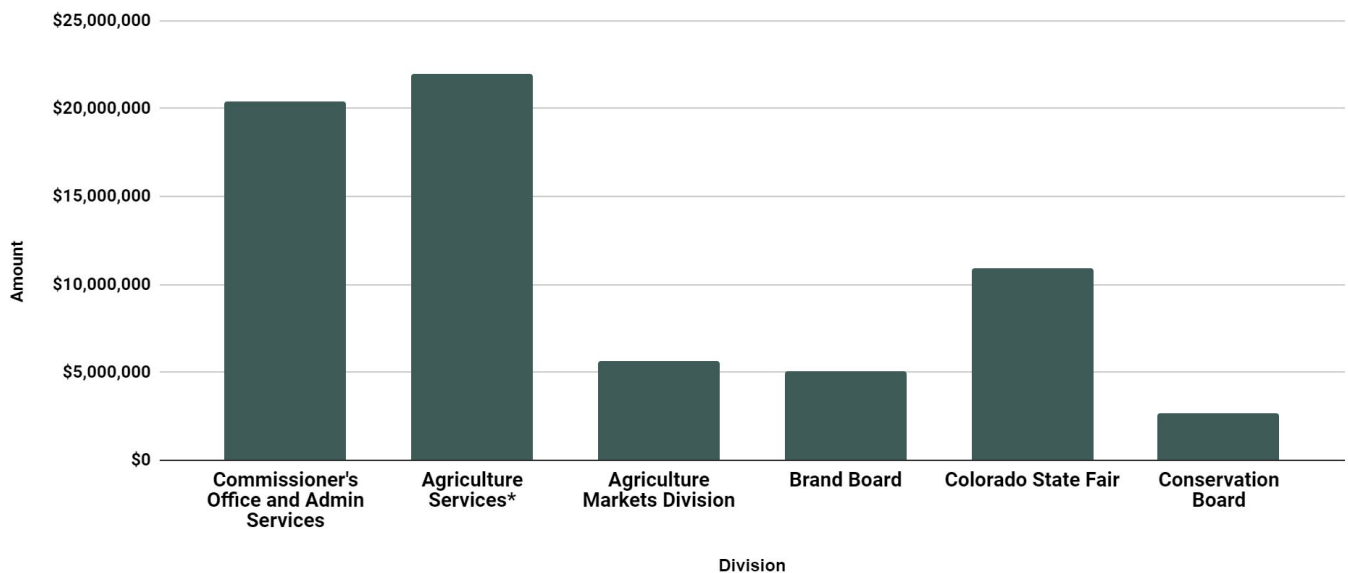
We recognize differences in people and communities touched by our work and treat all with dignity.



Agency Budget FY 23-24

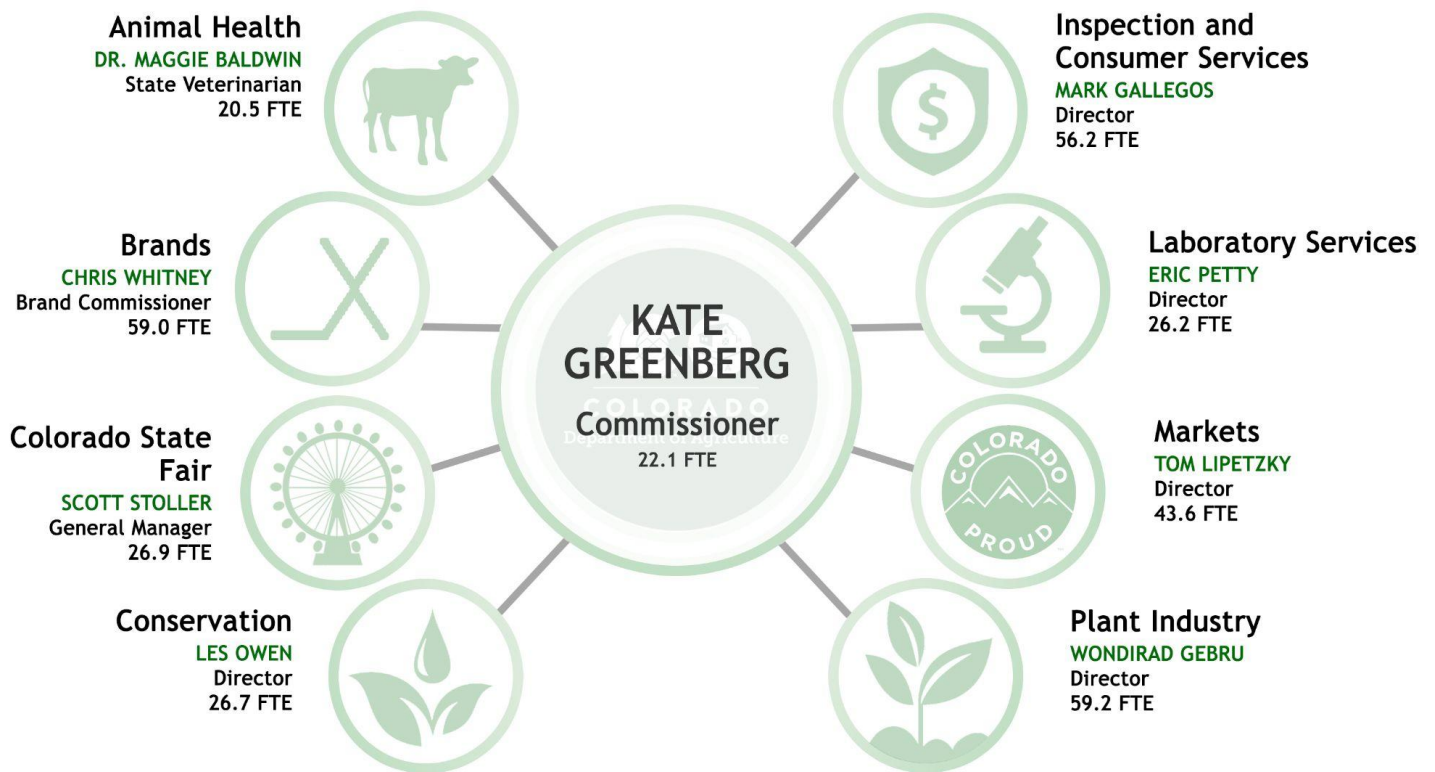


Amount vs. Division



*Agriculture Services includes Animal Industry, Plant Industry, Inspection and Consumers Services, and Conservation Divisions

Agency Structure



Commissioner's Office Division

The Commissioner's Office is home to the agency's financial management, legislative, human resources, communications, process excellence, continuity of operations plan, and information technology teams. In addition, we work together to provide leadership and operational support to CDA's divisions of Animal Health, Brand Inspection, Inspection and Consumer Services, Colorado State Fair, Conservation Services, Laboratory Services, Markets, and Plant Industry.

The Commissioner's office supports Colorado's entire agriculture industry by working with local, state, and federal agencies and partners and providing assistance, support, and information to and about the agricultural community. We lead CDA's Rural Mental Health Initiative, work with schools and youth ag educational organizations to support their ag-related activities, and promote public awareness of agriculture through CDA's website, newsletter, events, sponsorships, and collaboration with diverse media across all regions of the state.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

CDA prioritizes equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) across our agency and industry. We are working to address inequities and discrimination wherever we find it. CDA's EDI Action Plan for FY 22-23 drove implementation forward. This plan includes reconsidering and, where necessary, rebuilding how we do business. This plan considers everything from hiring, recruitment, and retention to stakeholder engagement and program administration. We are also educating ourselves on how to advance this work.

We plan to continue this work through various strategies, including investing in the next generation of agriculturalists, distributing stimulus dollars to serve underserved and underrepresented communities, and building and strengthening relationships.

[CDA's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Plan](#)

CDA focused internally and externally on making the department more diverse, equitable, and inclusive. Internally, we have examined trends and data in our workforce around our applicants, interviewees, and new hires. As a result, CDA has made strides toward our goal of having our workforce more closely mirror the makeup of the State workforce in terms of ethnicity.

EDI Major Achievements

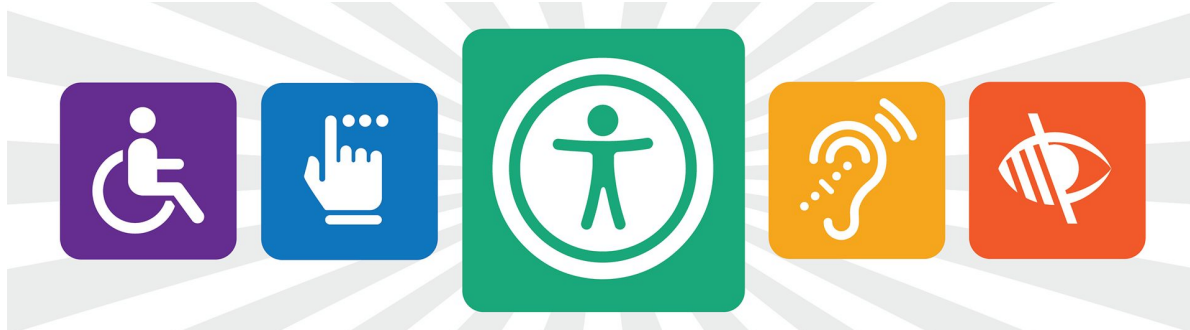
- In addition to the Department of Personnel & Administration (DPA) training for current employees, CDA created a year-long Inclusive Leadership Program. Ninety-three leaders and aspiring leaders are enrolled in the program.
- CDA's external efforts include Workforce Development, 44% of which were minority applicants.
- Our Loan program distributed 26% of awards to underserved communities resulting in an investment of more than \$4.5 million. Additionally, 39% of grant awards went to those communities who have previously been systematically excluded from agriculture, including technical assistance from current agriculturalists with similar lived experiences.
- CDA implemented an Agricultural Worker Resource program to provide information about pay and available services to ag workers and their employers.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

EDI Major Achievements

- CDA took on the Community Food Access program to connect small retailers with family farms to increase the availability of healthy foods in underserved populations of the state.
- CDA increased its outreach to Spanish-speaking constituents by hiring a bilingual communications specialist and distributing press releases in Spanish and English. In 2022, CDA published the annual Farm Fresh Directory in Spanish for the first time. CDA has also contracted with a translation service with the ability to interpret into more than 100 other languages.
- CDA is also working to make our facilities safe and accessible to all. For example we're working on renovations for the Colorado State Fair in Pueblo and the Insectary in Palisade, The current projects at the State Fair include measures to make facilities ADA-compliant.

Digital Accessibility Efforts



Accessibility means providing access to services and information that's equal to the access that is available to an individual without a disability. For CDA that means that our customers can better understand, navigate, and interact with our services, forms, applications, and websites.

More than 864,000 adult Coloradans have a disability. Making CDA more accessible is essential for some, useful for all. Right now, we're working on

- making our websites and forms more accessible and easier to use for all Coloradans,
- writing in plain language so our forms and information are easier to read and understand,
- creating more accessible public meetings, and
- creating a large-print library of our most useful guides.

Divisions

Animal Health Division

The Animal Health Division works closely with livestock producers, private practicing veterinarians, industry associations, and other state and federal agencies to promote Colorado livestock's health, welfare, and marketability. They provide livestock disease prevention and control, animal disease traceability, coordination of livestock emergency incident preparedness and response, disease surveillance, collaboration toward wildlife damage management services, licensing of aquaculture facilities, and overseeing the Bureau of Animal Protection.

[Animal Health FY 23-24 Operation Plan](#)

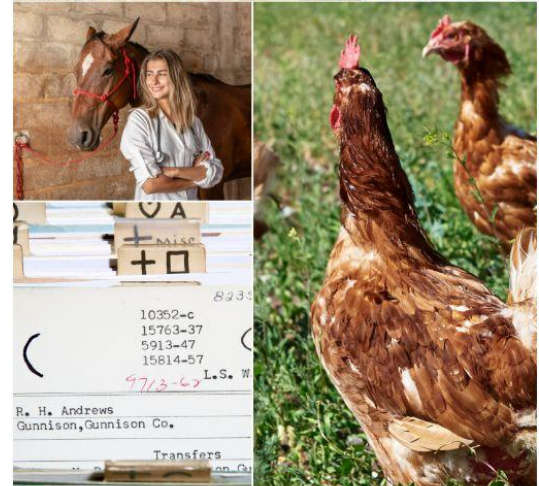
Brands Division

The Brand Inspection Division inspects and verifies ownership of approximately four and one-half million heads of livestock annually, investigates cases of stolen or missing livestock and assists in their recovery and return, and assists in criminal prosecutions as necessary.

They have been part of Colorado's history in one form or another since 1865. Brand inspection serves several essential purposes, including deterring theft, facilitating commerce, protecting livestock producers and lenders, providing accurate tracking of livestock movements for disease traceability, facilitating the return of stolen or stray livestock, and helping keep the livestock industry healthy and viable. Our main job is to protect Colorado's more than \$4 billion livestock industry from loss by theft or straying.

We also record and administer approximately 30,000 livestock brands, license public livestock markets and certified feedlots, inspect and verify ownership of alternative livestock (i.e., domestic elk and fallow deer), and review and approve approximately 50 alternative livestock facilities.

[Brand Division FY 23-24 Operation Plan](#)





Colorado State Fair

The Colorado State Fair Authority's mission is to celebrate Colorado's vibrant and diverse industries, emphasizing agriculture. Our three highest priorities are:

1. Coloradans participate in a premier annual celebration of Colorado's diverse cultures, communities, and traditions. We aim to provide a wholesome, informative family entertainment event that expands knowledge of agriculture, Colorado Proud food products, and Colorado's industries. This event will engage and connect with other cultures and groups and will be the preferred platform for 4-H/FFA to showcase their achievements.
2. Showcase and celebrate Colorado's Agricultural Industry through a year-round/permanent agriculture education exhibit.
3. Create a "Gathering Place" for the Pueblo and Southern Colorado communities through year-round targeted utilization of venues for public and private events. We want to accomplish this by creating various activities/attractions for the enjoyment and education of the Southern Colorado public.

[CO State Fair FY 23-24 Operation Plan](#)

Conservation Division

The Conservation Services Division provides leadership on land and resource management issues, including federal lands. We're composed of ten programs - Agricultural Water Quality Program, Agricultural Energy, Biological Pest Control, Chemigation, the Colorado State Conservation Board (CSCB), Natural Resource Policy and Planning, Noxious Weed Management, Pesticide Data Program, Soil Health Program, and Weed Free Forage. Together, these programs provide voluntary technical and financial support and incentives, leadership and coordination, and regulatory oversight to public/private landowners and agricultural businesses statewide on various natural resource management challenges.

[Conservation FY 23-24 Operation Plan](#)

Inspection and Consumer Services Division

The Division of Inspection and Consumer Services (ICS) conducts regulatory inspections, product sampling and complaint investigations that are designed to protect agricultural producers and provide confidence to Colorado consumers. The ICS mission is to promote good health and safety by confirming agricultural products and services are safe, fair and transparent. ICS regulates livestock feed, pet food, commercial fertilizer, anhydrous ammonia tanks, farm products dealers, commodity handlers/grain warehouses, pet animal care facilities, commercial scales and other measuring devices, egg dealers, custom meat processors and produce farmers.

In any given year, ICS inspectors conduct over 21,000 inspections across Colorado. This includes inspecting more than 25,000 commercial scales; ranging from large cattle and truck scales, to airport baggage scales and deli scales at your local grocery stores. Our team also collects feed samples that are tested to confirm accurate nutritional guarantees, or the presence of harmful pathogens and other adulterants.

In addition, ICS's Pet Animal Care Facility Act (PACFA) program routinely inspects pet shelters, rescues, breeders, retail stores and other pet facility types. When needed, the PACFA program will take the necessary regulatory action to immediately address instances in which Colorado pets' health and safety are at risk.

In addition to inspections, ICS provides free mediation and dispute resolution services to farmers and ranchers who are in need of resolving certain types of conflict. This is done through the Colorado Agricultural Mediation (CAMP) program. The CAMP program will assist a farming or ranching family in developing a transition plan that can be used as an estate planning tool to help pass the operation to other family members. In 2021, the CAMP program helped resolve 10 disputes and initiated over 30 family farm transition plans.

[ICS FY 23-24 Operation Plan](#)





Division of Laboratory Services

Our mission - The Division of Laboratory Services (DLS) supports consumer protection by providing valuable services and consistent, reliable results with integrity, professionalism and impartiality.

The Colorado Department of Agriculture laboratory facility is located on the CDA campus in Broomfield and comprises three laboratory operations: Animal Health (AHL), BioChemistry (BCL) and Metrology (MTL). The 26 Division staff have scientific education and experience in the fields of Biology, Microbiology, Epidemiology, Chemistry, and Physics.

Our testing supports CDA internal regulatory programs within the Animal Health, Conservation, Inspection and Consumer Services, and Plant Industry Divisions as well as external veterinarians, law enforcement and device service providers.

The laboratory conducts approximately 160,000 individual analyses annually on a unique variety of sample matrices including; artifacts for weight or volume calibration, laser speed devices, bodily fluids for regulated animal disease detection, surface and groundwater, cannabis and environmental samples such as soil or vegetation for pesticide residues, commercial fertilizers and animal feed analysis of minerals, nutrients and pathogens to ensure label guarantee and product safety.

All three of the laboratory units maintain individual ISO/IEC 17025:2017 accreditation and additionally, DLS was the first Government Laboratory to achieve My Green Lab certification in recognition of the efforts made to reduce the environmental impact of the laboratory space.

DLS is in the third year of two five-year federal cooperative agreements by the United States Food and Drug Administration and the United States Department of Agriculture related to surveillance and testing of human and animal food for toxins and pathogens.

[DLS FY 23-24 Operation Plan](#)

Markets Division

We help increase marketing opportunities for Colorado's farmers, ranchers, and food and beverage producers, champion the advancement of value-added business ventures, and support the development of the next generation of agriculturalists and leaders.

To deliver on our mission, Division staff manage nearly a dozen programs. The most public-facing of these is the Colorado Proud program which helps consumers and other buyers to identify and purchase food, beverage, and agricultural products grown, raised, or processed in Colorado. We also assist producers and companies in developing and finding new markets and sales beyond Colorado, domestic and globally, by facilitating business-to-business meetings with buyers, and through trade shows and outbound and inbound missions.

Markets staff also have a crucial role in developing Colorado's emerging hemp industry, leading product development efforts, and creating new sales channels and opportunities. Additionally, we provide size and grade inspection services and Good Agricultural Practices verification audits through the Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Section in Monte Vista.

Additionally, we provide administrative oversight for eight market order programs; fund viticulture research and promote Colorado wines through the Colorado Wine Industry Development Board; and administer the state's Specialty Crop Block Grant Program to benefit Colorado's fruit, vegetable, and green industry producers. The Markets Division also supports the next generation of agricultural producers in Colorado by providing valuable training opportunities, including helping businesses to hire interns through the Agricultural Workforce Development Program and providing leadership training through partnerships with organizations such as the Colorado Farmers Market Association, CSU, Guidestone, STEAD School, and others.

Markets Division programming now also includes the Colorado Agriculture Future Loan Program and the Community Food Access Program, expanding the diversity, scope, and breadth of the Division's role in support of Colorado's food and agriculture industry.

[Markets FY 23-24 Operation Plan](#)





Division of Plant Industry

The Division of Plant Industry provides a broad range of programs that offer services related to consumer protection, protection of environmental and public health, and protection of Colorado's plant industry from damaging diseases and insect pests.

Our programs provide

- Certification for the states' organic industry
- Export of Colorado's agricultural commodities
- Registration and administration of industrial hemp cultivation
- Registering and regulating the seed, and nursery industries
- Testing and licensing of commercial and private pesticide applicators
- Licensing of restricted use pesticide dealers
- registration of pesticide products
- Maintain and update list of pesticide sensitive persons
- Monitoring of invasive pest species
- Inspections and enforcement necessary to support those programs.

We register hemp producers and regulate the Hemp program in the state which is one of the leaders in the nation.

[Plant Industry FY 23-24 Operation Plan](#)

Process Improvement Efforts

CDA's focus on innovating to deliver the most value has resulted in the following improvements over the past year. Please share the following improvement highlight.

Nursery and Seed Program Rapid Improvement Event

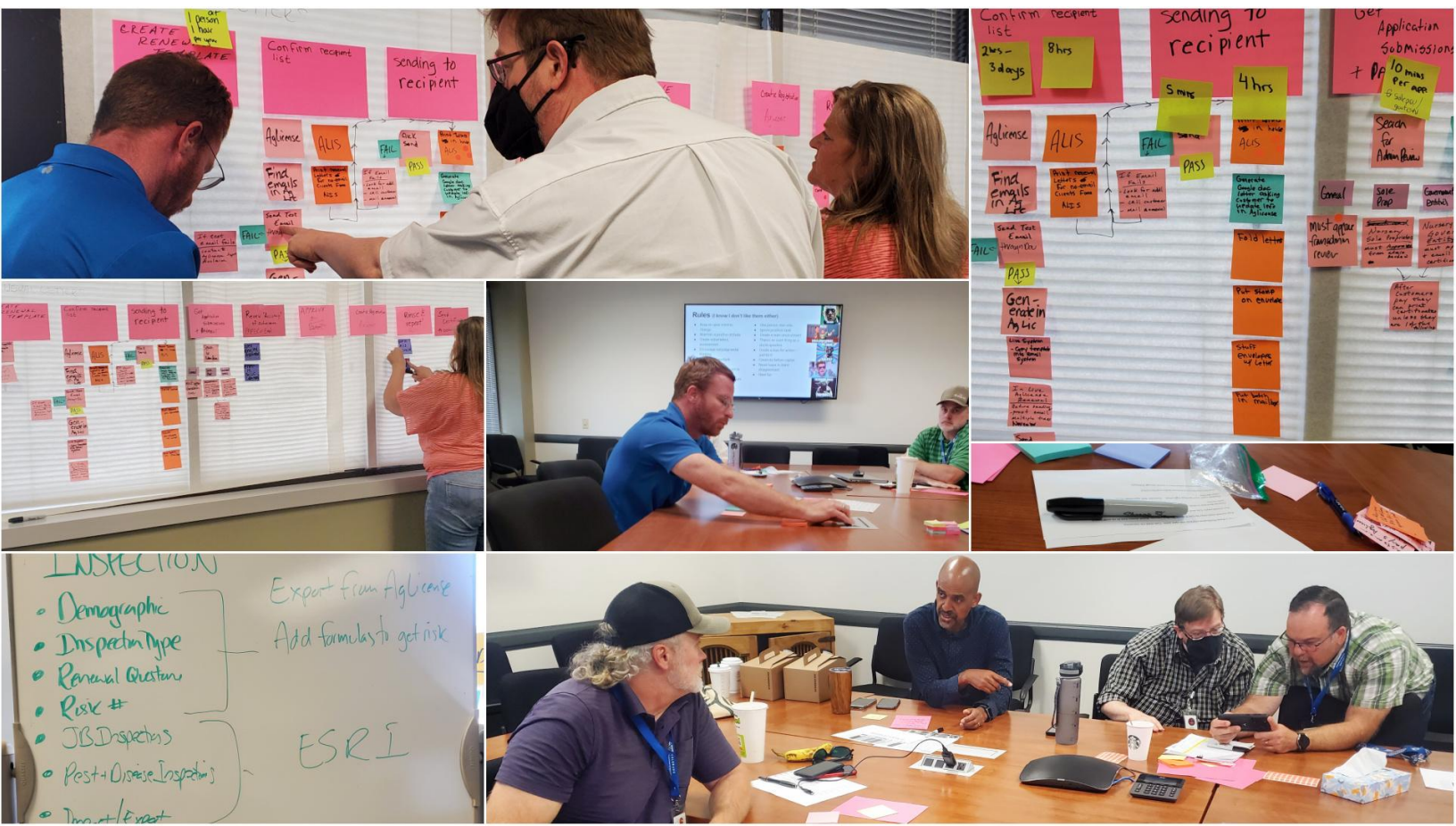
The assembled team of seven people for this event focused on issuing customer license certifications more quickly. Previously it took from 2 weeks to 6 months to issue licenses. The team's goal is to ensure complete nursery registrations within two weeks.

Biggest Changes

- No mailing or printing paper applications. Instead, they sent out emails to renew with detailed instructions.
- Send reminders to those unrenewed every two weeks.
- 100% applications processed online using existing technology.
- Supporting customers to pay online through the AgLicense system. Customers made payments online, reducing the amount of time typically spent to process paper checks.

Results

- The team met their goal. Renewals issued within 24 hours.
- There were no costs associated with the changes made.
- The team reduced an 8-step process down to 3 steps.



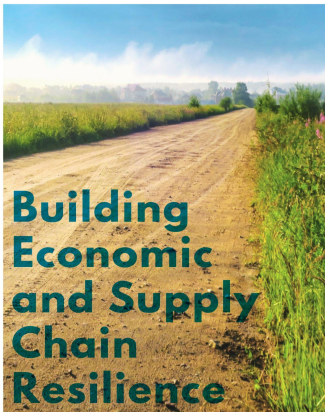
Performance Plan Summary



Performance Plan Summary

For FY 2022-2023 we chose to committing our efforts to these Wildly Important Goals.

- Economic and Supply Chain Resilience
- Advancing Voluntary Stewardship
- Supporting Future Generation in Agriculture
- Animal Health and Welfare



Thanks to our team’s dedication and commitment, [we’ve already met 2 of our 4 WIGs](#) as of April 2023. We’ve also made significant progress on the other two. We’re on track to meet all of our WIGs this year as future reporting will show.

Additionally, we are meeting or about to meet 61% of our lead measures. Since we set stretch goals for ourselves, this performance review also reflects a few goals that fell short of our high expectations.

We are proud of our efforts to overcome obstacles and adapt to challenges. Through it all, we successfully advocated for agriculture every step of the way and recognized the accomplishments, partnerships, programs, services, and improved customer experiences we advanced during this year.

Please read on and share in our successes and progress through Q3 of this fiscal year. Final data will be available in November 2023.

WIG #1: Support economic and supply chain resilience in the agriculture industry by creating or supporting 100 new business opportunities.

Economic and Supply Chain Resilience

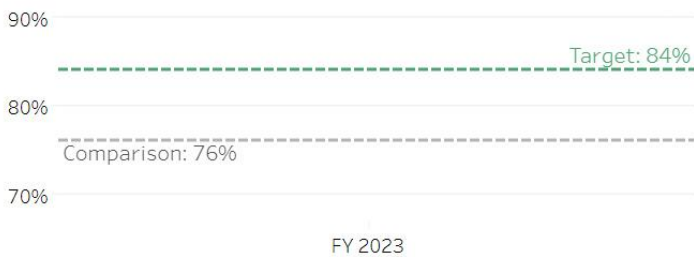
Wildly Important Goal:

Support economic and supply chain resilience in the agriculture industry by creating or supporting 100 new business opportunities by June 30, 2023.

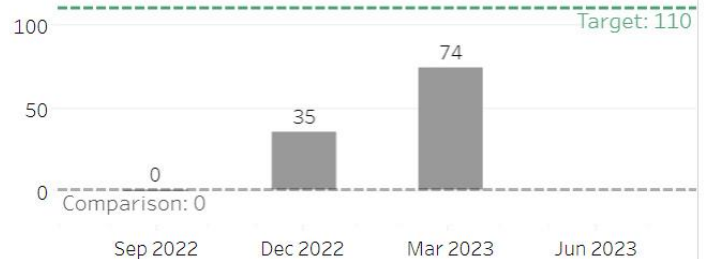


The Department of Agriculture will achieve this goal through the following leading indicators:

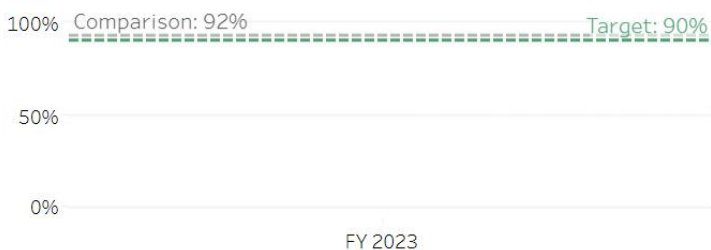
Strengthen market opportunities by increasing the percentage of consumers buying Colorado products from 76% to 84% by June 30, 2023.



Award applications that are estimated to create at least 110 new jobs, as reported on applications approved for CDA grant or loan funding, by June 30, 2023.



Sustain the percentage of CDA international marketing program companies that increase sales at 90% or higher through June 30, 2023.



Award \$22M through the Colorado Agricultural Future Loan and Grant programs by June 30, 2023.



WIG #2: Enhance agricultural resilience, productivity, and economic opportunity through increased participation in CDA's voluntary conservation programs, reducing atmospheric CO2 by an additional 5000 tons per year by June 30, 2023.

Advancing Voluntary Stewardship

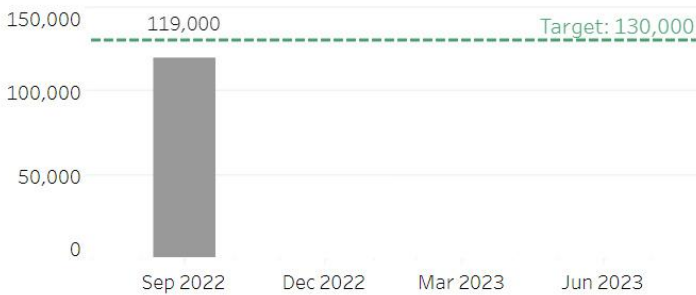
Wildly Important Goal:

Enhance agricultural resilience, productivity, and economic opportunity through increased participation in CDA's voluntary conservation programs, reducing CO2 emissions by an additional 5,000 tons per year by June 30, 2023.

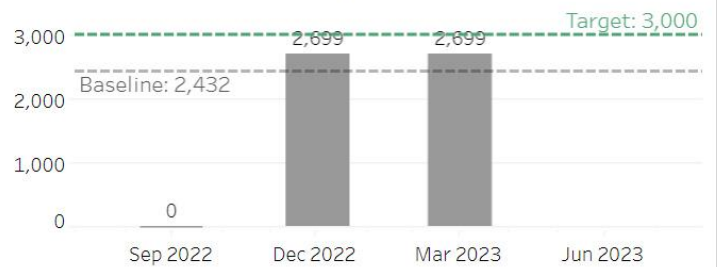


The Department of Agriculture will achieve this goal through the following leading indicators:

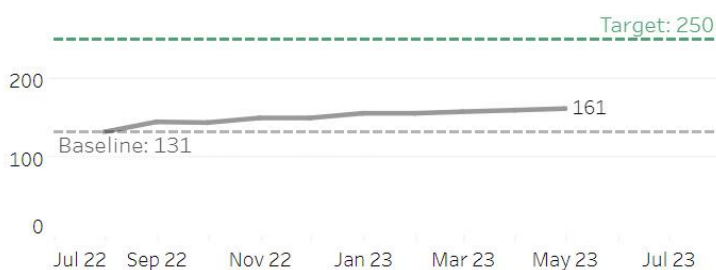
Facilitate and complete projects to improve the drought resiliency of at least 130,000 acres by June 30, 2023.



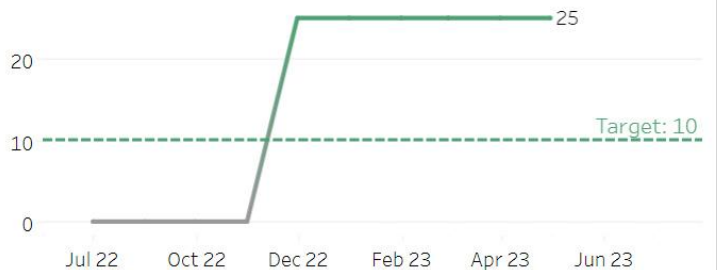
Help 3,000 agriculture producers, up from 2,432, to mitigate, adapt to, and build resilience in the face of drought intensification, aridification, and climate change by June 30, 2023.



Build voluntary participation in the Saving Tomorrow's Agricultural Resources (STAR) program from 131 to 250 participants by June 30, 2023.



Reduce the pressure on the environment by establishing 10 new biocontrol demonstration sites for noxious weed mitigation by June 30, 2023.

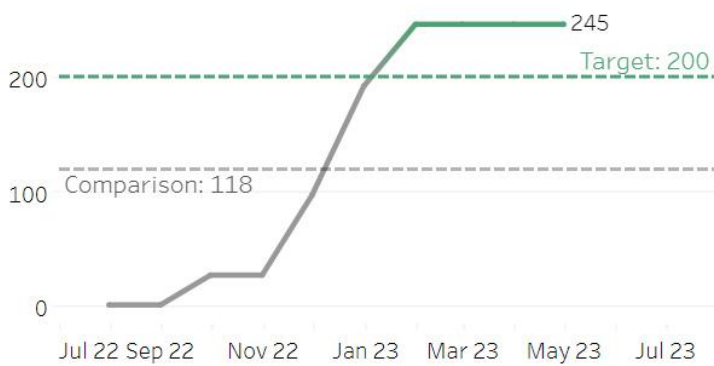


WIG #3: Provide training and financial opportunities to 200 next-generation agricultural leaders and producers to enhance their skills or provide them access to farmland, equipment, and new technologies by June 30, 2023.

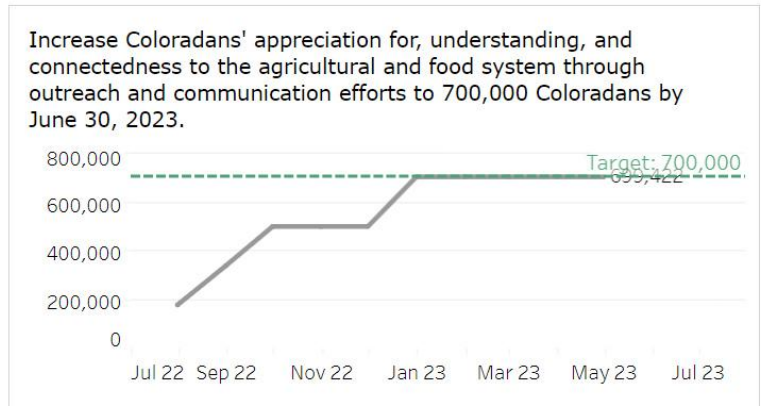
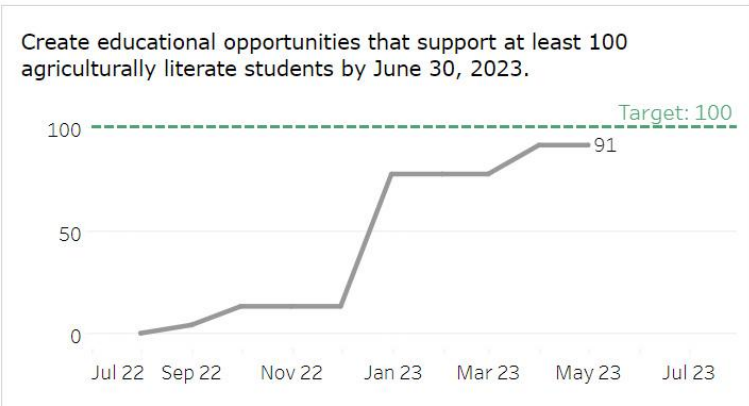
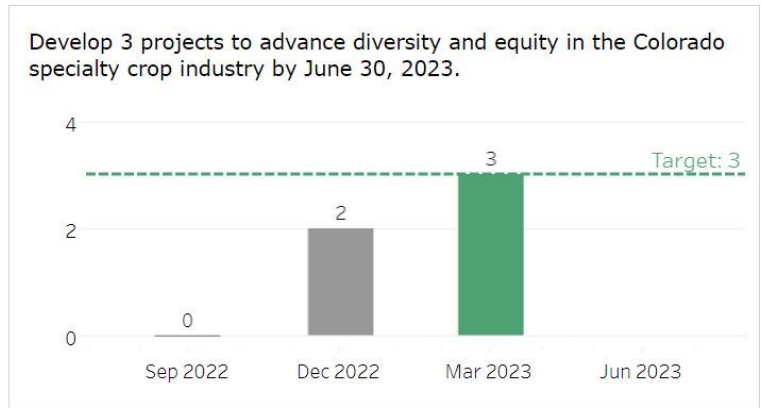
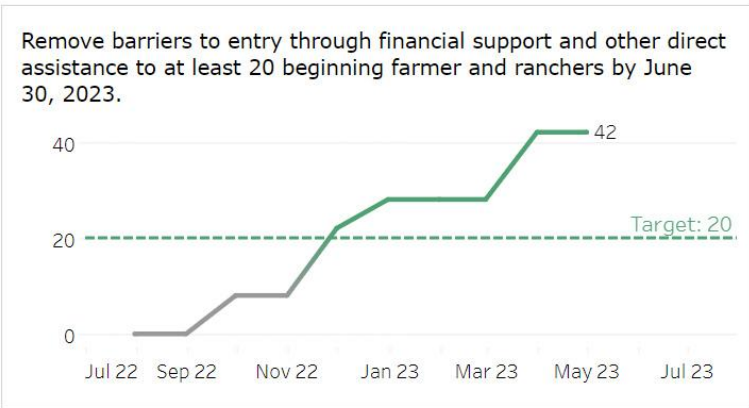
Supporting Future Generations in Agriculture

Wildly Important Goal:

Provide training and financial opportunities to 200 next-generation agricultural leaders and producers to enhance their skills or provide them access to farmland, equipment, and new technologies by June 30, 2023.



The Department of Agriculture will achieve this goal through the following leading indicators:



WIG #4: Provide direct assistance and education to 3,000 veterinarians, shelters, rescues, law enforcement agencies, and ranchers to advance animal health and welfare by June 30, 2023.

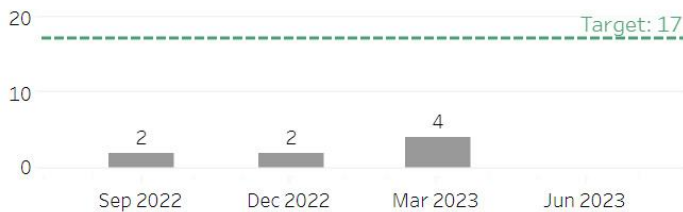
Animal Health and Welfare

Wildly Important Goal:

Provide direct assistance and education to 3,000 veterinarians, shelters, rescues, law enforcement agencies, and ranchers to advance animal health and welfare by June 30, 2023.



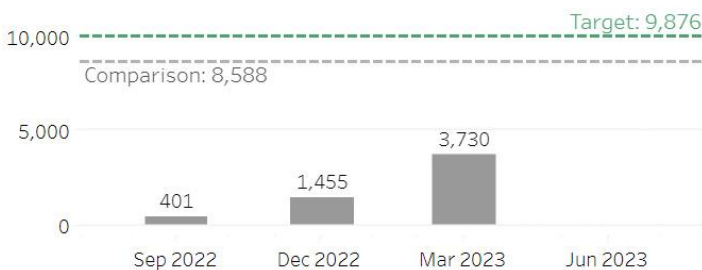
Advance animal welfare by conducting 12 educational events and providing 5 new veterinarian resources to prevent livestock and companion animals from contracting and spreading diseases in Colorado and to prevent instances of animal neglect and mistreatment by June 30, 2023.



Establish and distribute importation standards to support disease control and treatment of companion animals to 100% of DCAT standard-eligible PACFA facilities by June 30, 2023.



Increase *T. foetus* testing by 15%, from 8,588 to 9,876, to help increase reproductive performance in Colorado's cattle herds by June 30, 2023.



Reduce potential health threats to companion animals and livestock by analyzing and testing 240 samples for the presence of multiple mycotoxins by June 30, 2023.





“

I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A ROCK, BUT INSIDE I WAS CRUMBLING.

When I reached out, I was seconds away from ending my life. Financially, things on our ranch were falling apart—and I felt like a failure. I didn't want my problems to burden anyone else, so I buried 'em inside. And that's what almost buried me. Thankfully, I picked up my phone and called Colorado Crisis Services. I was able to finally get out everything I'd been holding inside, and I realized that trying to be a rock of strength for everyone else had actually caused me to start crumbling inside.

No matter what you're going through, you don't have to go through it alone.



COLORADO
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OR TEXT TALK TO 38255

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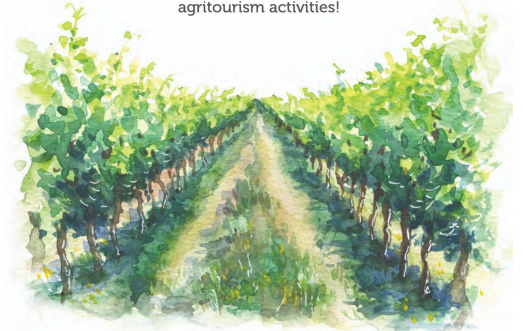
Food Access for All



— 2023 —

COLORADO FARM FRESH DIRECTORY

Your guide to farmers' markets,
roadside stands, u-picks, restaurants and
agritourism activities!



**COLORADO STATE
CONSERVATION BOARD**
2022 ANNUAL REPORT



CULTIVATION STATION



2022 SOIL HEALTH PROGRAM INAUGURAL REPORT

Protecting Mother soil, food and people

Thank you for supporting
Colorado agriculture



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