

Rocky Mountain Conservation Times

USDA Service Center • 248 Dozier Ave. • Canon City, CO 81212
(719) 315-3417



FREMONT CONSERVATION DISTRICT

(719) 315-3417

Meeting Time:

7:00 p.m. 1st Wednesday of each month, USDA Service Center, Canon City

GARY RATKOVICH, President
TOM LINZA, Vice Pres.
TONY TELCK, Sec/Treas.
RICH GREEN, Member
JOHN DANIELS, Member
BART ADAMS, Alternate Member
DEBBIE MITCHELL, District Manager
MIA CORY, Farm Bill Tech
www.fremontcd.org / also on Facebook

LAKE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

(719) 486-0537

Meeting Time:

6:00 p.m. 3rd Tuesday of each month, at the Lake County Courthouse

MARY SMITH, President
PADRIC SMITH, Vice Pres.
EDWARD SHOBER, Sec/Treas.
ROBERT HOCKETT, Member
MARY SCHROEDER, Member
DAN TRUJILLO, Member
JOAN DAWSON, District Manager

CUSTER COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

(719) 371-0725

Meeting Time:

2:30 p.m. 2nd Thursday of each month, USDA Service Center, Silver Cliff, CO

ROBERT MILLER, President
SHERON BERRY, Vice Pres.
TRENT STAFFORD, Sec / Treas
DOROTHY NEPA, Member
VACANT, Member
VACANT, District Manager / ROBERT MILLER, Acting District Manager
custercountycd@gmail.com
www.custercountyconservationdistrict.org

UPPER ARKANSAS CONSERVATION DISTRICT

(719) 626-3169

Meeting Time:

6:00 p.m. 1st Monday of each month, U.S. Forest Service Building, Salida

upperarkansascd@gmail.com
Also on Facebook

DECEMBER 2021

USDA EMPLOYEES

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Canon City Service Center:

Greg Langer, District Conservationist
Josh Tashiro, Rangeland Mgt. Specialist
Victoria "Dixie" Crowe, Rangeland Mgt. Specialist
Kari Moore, Soil Conservationist
Rob Fontaine, Civil Engineering Tech
Cheryl Lawson, Program Support Specialist
Kara Harders, Regional Specialist, Small Acreage Mgmt
Kimberly Diller, Affiliate Rangeland Mgmt Specialist
Kaitlyn Nafziger, Private Lands Wildlife Biologist

Silver Cliff Service Center:

Beth Fortman, Soil Conservationist
Arthur Ellege, Soil Conservation Technician
Carol Kuisle-Franta, Program Support Specialist

Salida Service Center:

Joni Burr, Resource Conservationist

FARM SERVICE AGENCY

Megan Colletti, County Executive Director
Linda Myers, Program Technician

County FSA Committee

Lee Rooks, Chairman
Lance Tyler, Vice Chairman
Mannie Colon
Webb Smith
Theresa Springer

FSA Direct Extension

719-315-3416

FIELD OFFICES UPDATES

In mid-March 2020, our offices closed to the public due to the COVID-19 pandemic and Governor Polis' orders for businesses to temporarily shutdown to help stop the spread of this virus. During this time, the staff of the USDA Service Centers continued to serve the landowners in their respective counties via email, telephone, site visits and meeting outside the offices. The USDA Service Centers are following the plans for re-opening that the Federal Government has put in place. At this time, our offices are partially staffed and continue to serve the landowners via email, telephone, site visits and meeting with landowners outside the office. We are not open to the public except by appointment only, masks are required. To schedule an appointment with your Field Office personnel, please use the following telephone numbers:

Canon City Field Office: NRCS and Fremont Conservation District; 719-315-3417; (serving Fremont County)

Farm Service Agency; 719-315-3416
(serving Fremont, Custer, Chaffee, Lake, and other Counties)

Silver Cliff Field Office: NRCS; 719-783-2481 (serving Custer County)

Salida Field Office: NRCS; 719-626-3169 (serving Chaffee and Lake Counties)

As we all look forward to returning to "normal", we at the local Field Offices want to thank our landowners for their patience and understanding throughout this difficult time across our Country and world. We hope you all stay safe and healthy as we all do our part!!

Happy Holidays!!

CHAFFEE COUNTY COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN

Emily Olsen, Rocky Mountain Regional Director—National Forest Foundation

Upper Arkansas Forest Fund awarded \$5.7M to reduce community wildfire risk in Chaffee County

Sept. 30, 2021 — The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will invest \$5.7 million in the implementation of Chaffee County's Community Wildfire Protection Plan, which maps where to treat forested lands to reduce risk at the highest cost efficiency and community benefit.

Funding awarded by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) flows into the National Forest Foundation (NFF) Upper Arkansas Forest Fund. The fund was created this year to aggregate finances and manage on-the-ground, cross-boundary projects designed by the Envision Forest Health Council to reduce risk as outlined in the community plan.

Forest treatments address the threat of wildfire by reducing high fuel loads that are the result of decades of fire suppression, insect infestations and drought. High-severity wildfire events increased from one in a century to five in the past decade, including the 2019 Decker Fire.

"Forests and watersheds are essential infrastructure that sustain our economy in Colorado. I'm thrilled USDA funding will support grassroots efforts in Chaffee County to reduce the risk of wildfires and protect this vital watershed that hundreds of thousands of Coloradans rely on," said Colorado U.S. Senator Michael Bennet. "I'm committed to continue working with state, local and national leaders to secure additional resources to improve forest health across our state."

The Forest Health Council is working to treat 30,000 priority acres of forest by 2030 to cut the risk wildfire poses to community assets in half in a decade. Chaffee County's wildfire plan prioritizes forest treatment areas and shows that cross-boundary work on public and private land are needed to meet this goal. One-third of Chaffee County's identified treatment priority areas are privately owned.

NFF's Upper Arkansas Forest Fund pools funds from federal programs, like the RCPP, and funds from the state, county, local governments, private companies, and citizens to accomplish cross-boundary work at landscape scale. Treatments include thinning trees, prescribed fire, and mastication — a patch-clearing method used in the piñon-juniper forest.

"Forest restoration treatments must be prioritized, accelerated and coordinated across boundaries to address the threat of wildfire effectively," said Marcus Selig, Vice President of Field Programs for the NFF. "With support from the NRCS, the Upper Arkansas Forest Fund allows the NFF and the Chaffee County community to do exactly that as we collaborate to restore the highest priority private and public lands."

Through the RCPP, NRCS works to implement projects that demonstrate innovative solutions to advance conservation priorities on the ground, the agency said in a press release announcing this year's awards. Chaffee County was among 15 recipients of nearly \$75 million in RCPP Alternative Funding Arrangements (AFA) for partner-led projects that address natural resource concerns on private lands.

"The AFA component of RCPP is designed for partners who are thinking outside of the box to address some of our most pressing natural resource challenges," said Terry Cosby, Chief of USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). "By combining local expertise, partner resources, federal assistance and a shared commitment to conservation we can advance critical priorities and innovative solutions that are key to addressing the climate crisis."

Envision Chaffee County identified wildfire threat as a top concern during its 2017-18 community visioning and planning effort. The initiative facilitated the wildfire plan update in 2020, and it continues to help the Forest Health Council's 35 partners design and fund a suite of programs and projects that implement the plan's goals.

"It has been tremendously inspiring to see the many forest health partners come together in the basin for a common purpose," said Chaffee County Commissioner Greg Felt, an Envision Co-lead and Forest Health Council member. "We are definitely achieving so much more together than we could as separate agencies. We are extremely grateful to the NRCS for recognizing our community as innovative."

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NRCS NEWS

NRCS PROGRAMS

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) helps agricultural producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resources concerns. Participants earn CSP payments for conservation performance—the higher the performance, the higher the payment.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers in order to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits such as improved water and air quality, conserved ground and surface water, reduced soil erosion and sedimentation or improved or created wildlife habitat.

Conservation Planning First are plans that are developed by technical experts, using state of the art technology and help landowners assess and inventory their resources and make decisions to enable them to reach their land-use, natural resource and often times bottom line goals through increased productivity of farms, ranches and forestlands.

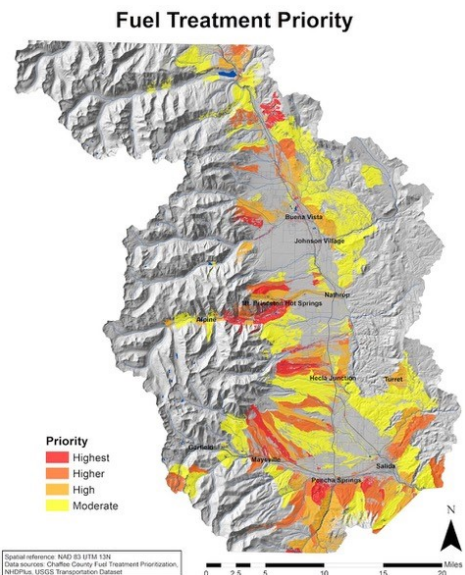
An NRCS conservation plan includes: 1. Operator/landowner objectives, 2. Aerial photographs or a diagram of the fields, 3. Soils map and soil descriptions, 4. Resources inventory data which can include forage or crop production potential or potential livestock carry capacity, 5. List of treatment decisions, 6. Location and schedule for applying conservation practices and systems, and 7. Plan of operation and maintenance of conservation practices and systems.

Farmers.gov is the website committed to delivering USDA services to America’s farmers and ranchers while taking safety measures in response to the pandemic. Some USDA offices are beginning to reopen to limited visitors by appointment only. Service Center staff also continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. Learn more at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

Upper Arkansas Forest Fund awarded \$5.7M to reduce community wildfire risk in Chaffee County CONTINUED

Council partners to-date have raised \$11 million for projects that include a strategically placed fuel break on Methodist Mountain to protect the Salida and Poncha Springs communities of 7,000 people. Programs include Chaffee Chips, a wood slash removal service, and Chaffee Treats, which develops a pipeline of projects that connect large-scale private and public land treatments to be supported by the Upper Arkansas Forest Fund.

“The investment by NRCS in our community is the result of four years of engagement and unprecedented collaboration that really began when citizens identified wildfire as a top concern,” Envision Co-lead Cindy Williams said. “The award is a key milestone in realizing the vision of a fire-ready future.”



FREMONT CONSERVATION DISTRICT

The Fremont Conservation District held their 75th Annual Landowner Banquet on October 8, 2021 at the Abbey Events Center. The District Board highlighted some of our projects—completed and on-going—over the past 75 years. Some of these projects are: Dry Creek Dam in Florence; Dinkle Ditch repairs in Coaldale; Little Sprouts Garden Education Program, planting gardens at some of our local preschools; and, Badger Creek Project in the Badger Creek Watershed in Chaffee, Fremont and Park Counties. Our guest speakers were Green Thumb Initiative who have programs in the local high schools teaching about agriculture and various life studies. We had 68 guests in attendance!! Thanks to all who attended!!

Mia Cory is the District Conservation Technician for the Fremont Conservation District. Mia has been assisting the NRCS staff with EQIP applications and site visits as well as providing technical assistance for the Fremont Conservation District (FCD) cost share applicants. If there are questions regarding the EQIP Program, FCD Cost Share Program or needing technical assistance, please give Mia a call at 719-315-3419.

Victoria “Dixie” Crowe—Rangeland Management Specialist

Victoria “Dixie” Crowe became interested in rangeland management during a presentation at a Colorado State University Collegiate Cattlewomen’s symposium in 2014. While earning a B.S. in Equine Sciences and a B.A. in Journalism and Media Communication from CSU in 2016, she wrote for the college newspaper on livestock topics, competed on the novice Quarter Horse and Arabian National judging teams, worked as a student media intern for the Range Beef Cow Symposium hosted by CSU in 2015, and worked as a student media coordinator producing four multi-media eBooks on equine reproduction with the Equine Reproduction Laboratory. She was a member of the 2015-2016 Seedstock Merchandising Team showing purebred Angus and Hereford bulls and heifers at the National Western Stock Show and co-producing the 40th Annual CSU Bull Sale Catalog.

Dixie continued at CSU for a Masters of Natural Resource Stewardship in rangeland ecology graduating in 2018. During her master’s she served as the Colorado Section of the Society for Range Management Secretary from 2017-2018. She was also a non-competing member of the CSU Soil Judging Team, a CSU Range Club member including the 2017 2nd place Rangeland Cup Team at the St. George SRM meeting, and an NRCS volunteer entering soil survey data from the 1980s in the Soil Pedon database. She also participated in two soil surveys at Dinosaur National Monument helping the National Park Service collect information to write their grazing management plan.

After studying soil science and doing graduate research on soil health for two and a half years at the University of Wyoming, Dixie is thrilled to be back in Colorado as a new Rangeland Management Specialist for National Resource Conservation Service partnering with rangeland producers in the Southeast Region. Dixie is located in the USDA Canon City Field Office.



"YES, WE DO HAVE A SMALL TRACTOR THAT YOU DON'T HAVE TO PAY A BIG-TRACTOR PRICE FOR."

**15.8 TONS...12.1 METRES LONG...
4.3 METRES HIGH...6.2 METRES WIDE**

BUT DESPITE THIS....



**STILL REQUIRED TO HAVE AN ORANGE
REVOLVING LIGHT...
"SO OTHER DRIVERS CAN SEE YOU"**

FALL AND WINTER WATERING

by J.E. Klett and R. Cox*

Quick Facts....

- Water trees, shrubs, lawns, and perennials during prolonged dry fall and winter periods to prevent root damage that affects the health of the entire plant.
- Water only when air and soil temperatures are above 40 degrees F with no snow cover.
- Established large trees have a root spread equal to or greater than the height of the tree. Apply water to the most critical part of the root zone within the dripline.

Dry air, low precipitation, little soil moisture, and fluctuating temperatures are characteristics of fall and winter in many areas of Colorado. Often there is little or no snow cover to provide soil moisture from October through March. Trees, shrubs, perennials and lawns under these conditions may be damaged if they do not receive supplemental water.

The result of long, dry periods during fall and winter is injury or death to parts of plant root systems. Affected plants may appear perfectly normal and resume growth in the spring using stored food energy. Plants may be weakened and all or parts may die in late spring or summer when temperatures rise. Weakened plants also may be subject to insect and disease problems.

Plants Sensitive to Drought Injury

Woody plants with shallow root systems require supplemental watering during extended dry fall and winter periods. These include European white and paper birches; Norway, silver, red, Rocky Mountain and hybrid maples; lindens, alders, hornbeams, dogwoods, willows, and mountain ashes. Evergreen plants that benefit include spruce, fir, arborvitae, yew, Oregon grape-holly, boxwood, and Manhattan euonymus. Woody plants also benefit from mulch to conserve soil moisture.

Herbaceous perennials and ground covers in exposed sites are more subject to winter freezing and thawing. This opens cracks in soil that expose roots to cold and drying. Winter watering combined with mulching can prevent this damage (See fact sheet [7.214, *Mulches for Home Grounds.*](#))

Lawns also are prone to winter damage. Newly established lawns, whether seeded or sodded, are especially susceptible. Susceptibility increases for lawns with south or west exposures.

Watering Guidelines

Water only when air temperatures are above 40 degrees F. Apply water at mid-day so it will have time to soak in before possible freezing at night. A solid layer (persisting for more than a month) of ice on lawns can cause suffocation or result in matting of the grass.

Plants receiving reflected heat from buildings, walls and fences are more subject to damage. The low angle of winter sun makes this more likely on south or west exposures. Windy sites result in faster drying of sod and plants and require additional water. Lawns in warm exposures are prone to late winter mite damage. Water is the best treatment to prevent turf injury (see fact sheet [5.505, *Clover and Other Mites of Turfgrass.*](#))

Monitor weather conditions and water during extended dry periods without snow cover – one to two times per month.

Newly Planted vs. Established Plants

Newly planted trees are most susceptible to winter drought injury. Trees generally take one year to establish for each inch of trunk diameter. For example, a two inch diameter (caliper) tree takes a minimum of two years to establish under normal conditions.

Trees obtain water best when it is allowed to soak into the soil slowly to a depth of 12 inches. Methods of watering trees include: sprinklers, deep-root fork or needle, soaker hose or soft spray wand. Apply water to many locations

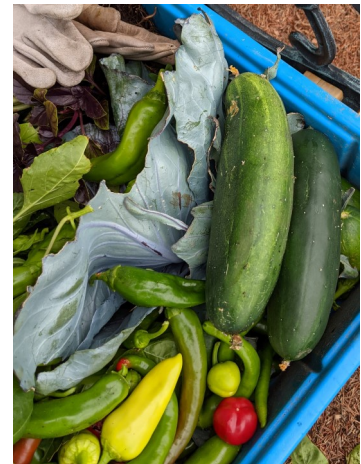
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NOXIOUS WEEDS

Upper Ark Cooperative Weed Management Area Annual Meeting

The Upper Ark Cooperative Weed Management Area will be having their Annual Meeting at the Abbey Events Center on February 10, 2022. Some of the topics that will be covered will be Land Management, Weeds and Weed ID, Laws and Regulations, Herbicide labels, Environmental protection, calibration of equipment, applicator safety and use of pesticides. More information will be forthcoming in January 2022—check for it on our website <https://upperarkcwma.weebly.com>. We look forward to seeing everyone in person!!

For assistance with noxious weeds, contact Fremont County Weed Management, 719-276-7317, for Fremont and Custer counties. For Chaffee and Lake counties, contact Chaffee County Weed Department, 719-539-3455. For more information on noxious weeds in the State of Colorado, check the Colorado Weed Management Association website at www.cwma.org.



Pre-School Gardens Harvests
The Ark Childcare, Starpoint on Elm
And Rocky Mountain Children's Discovery
Center

Fall and Winter Watering continued

under the dripline and beyond if possible. If using a deep-root fork or needle, insert no deeper than 8 inches into the soil. As a general survival rule, apply 10 gallons of water for each diameter inch of the tree. For example, a two-inch diameter tree needs 20 gallons per watering. Use a ruler to measure your tree's diameter at 6" above ground level.

Newly planted shrubs require more water than established shrubs that have been planted for at least one year. The following recommendations assume shrubs are mulched to retain moisture. In dry winters, all shrubs benefit from winter watering from October through March. Apply 5 gallons two times per month for a newly planted shrub. Small established shrubs (less than 3 feet tall) should receive 5 gallons monthly. Large established shrubs (more than 6 feet) require 18 gallons on a monthly basis. Decrease amounts to account for precipitation. Water within the dripline of the shrub and around the base.

Herbaceous perennial establishment periods vary. Bare root plants require longer to establish than container plants. Perennials transplanted late in the fall will not establish as quickly as those planted in spring. Winter watering is advisable with late planted perennials, bare root plants, and perennials located in windy or southwest exposures.

For more information, see the following Planttalk ColoradoTM script [1751, Fall and Winter Watering: during drought](#).

*J.E. Klett, Colorado State University Extension horticulture specialist and professor, horticulture and landscape architecture; and R. Cox, Extension horticulture agent, Arapahoe County. 1/04. Revised 3/13.

RURAL MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

COLORADO CRISIS SERVICES

Crisis can take many forms for many different people. Don't know where to start? If you need help, call 1-844-494-TALK (8255) or text TALK to 38255 or <https://coloradocrisiservices.org>. Nearest in-person center is Health Solutions located at 1310 Chinook Lane in Pueblo, Colorado.

When a farmer and rancher is facing a crisis, it can create an emotional toll on every aspect of life. From paying bills, to feeding their children, caring for the livestock and crops, retirement options, and even what they will be able to leave their heirs, the worry and anxiety can be overwhelming. The agricultural community has always come together to help our neighbors in a time of need and that is what this effort is all about: pulling together to help others through this stressful time. Please reach out to the Colorado Crisis Services if you, or someone you love, is struggling.

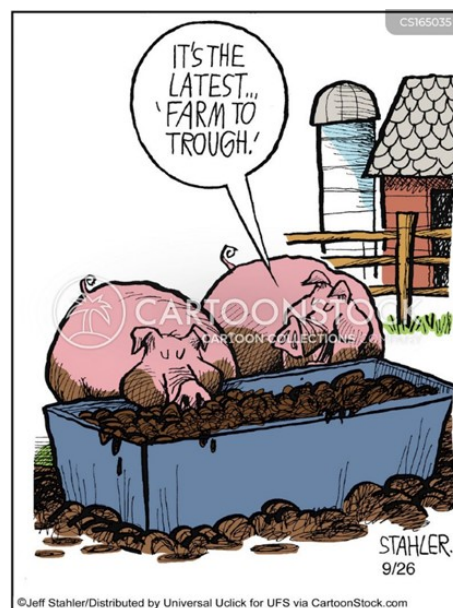
COLORADO AGRICULTURAL ADDICTION AND MENTAL HEALTH

Organizations from the agriculture and behavioral health industries partnered together to create the Colorado Agricultural Addiction and Mental Health Program (CAAMHP). The shared goal of all of these organizations was to care well for farmers and ranchers who have been most deeply impacted by severe and persistent drought, instability in the commodities market, misinformation targeting consumers and rapidly changing political climates. Depression and anxiety are heavy burdens to carry alone and CAAMHP is designed to come alongside members of our community that are hurting by providing tangible services that offer the necessary tools to combat these realities.

In our commitment to agriculture and rural communities, we have worked diligently to mitigate consistent barriers to care identified by members of the farming and ranching community. In order to do this, we have contracted with licensed providers with a contextual understanding of agriculture in ways that would support sympathetic care. We have also asked that they support and create opportunities for telehealth services where preferred by program participants.

One of the most significant program components is assurance of anonymity for participants. In all reporting and service requests, emphasis on privacy has been protected to ensure farmers and ranchers can access care without fear of undesired attention.

For more information check these websites: <https://ag.colorado.gov/home/rural-mental-health> or <https://www.caamhpforhealth.org>. CAAMHP provides vouchers for SIX FREE sessions with a licensed behavioral health professional. Vouchers can be requested at www.CAAMHPforHealth.org.



THE BIRD CONSERVANCY OF THE ROCKIES'

By Kaitlyn Nafziger, Private Lands Wildlife Biologist

Turkey Time

As Thanksgiving is right around the corner, it seems an appropriate time to reflect on Wild Turkeys, the native habitats they call home, and how we can help improve their habitat. Did you know that there are five subspecies in North America? Two of the subspecies, the Merriam's and the Rio Grande Turkeys can be found here in Colorado. Wild Turkeys can be found in each of the lower 48 states, however in the early 1900's this was not the case. Turkey populations across the country were nearly depleted due to poaching and habitat loss. They were viewed as an unlimited resource and people took advantage of this, until conservationists began to take note of the birds declining populations and stepped into rescue them from the brink of extinction. Hunting regulations such as a limited hunting season and bag limits were put in place and enforced, and protected areas were created. Much of their habitat had been lost due to logging, but after all of the merchantable trees had been harvested and the loggers moved on, the forests began to regrow and the turkeys returned. In Colorado, as in several other states with still dwindling populations, they began to trap birds in areas with larger, more robust populations, and relocate them to areas where the birds had been lost but the habitat had since been restored. The reversal of declining Wild Turkey populations across the country is one of North America's greatest conservation success stories.

Unfortunately, we are beginning to see a slight decline in Wild Turkey populations again today. Scientists are conducting studies to determine the exact extent of the decline and its causes. One of their theories is that a decline in available habitat, especially brood habitat (areas where turkeys successfully nest and raise their young) is a leading cause. Unfortunately, many of Colorado's forest have departed from their historic conditions due to fire suppression. Ponderosa pine forests were historically less dense, with canopy gaps of varying sizes, allowing for a diversity of understory vegetation including native grasses, forbs, and shrubs. Wild Turkeys depend on these open forest conditions and meadow edges to safely forage for food. Riparian habitats have also become degraded by invading Tamarisk which grows in dense patches that decrease forage diversity and availability, as well as visibility for foraging turkeys.

The Bird Conservancy of the Rockies' Private Lands Wildlife Biologists (PLWBs) are working with private landowners to improve habitat for Wild Turkeys as well as other forest obligate birds through forest restoration projects. By recreating those historic forest conditions, we can improve the amount and quality of forage for turkeys as well as allowing them to keep better watch of their surroundings for potential predators. Brush piles can also be constructed around the base of a tree which can increase available nesting habitat when placed within a half mile of a water source. Biologists on the plains are also working with landowners to improve riparian habitat by removing invasive species to encourage native species such as willows and cottonwoods to regrow.

This Thanksgiving we are thankful for all of the private landowners who have worked with us to improve wildlife habitat on their properties for not only their benefit, but the benefit of their local communities and everyone who enjoys wildlife viewing!



A raft of turkeys feeding under a group of Gambel Oaks, within a few yards of a healthy riparian area along a creek. Photo credit: Kaitlyn Nafziger



A Merriam's Turkey which has more white than black barring on the wings and lighter/white tips on the tail feathers. Photo credit: Bill Schmoker

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

RANCH TO PLATE ACT (SB21-079)

During the 2021 Legislative Session, SB21-079, the “Ranch to Plate Act” passed and was signed into law. This act promotes increased access for consumers to directly purchase meat and meat products from local ranchers through the use of live-animal share agreements. Primarily, this act clarifies that the sale of animals, animal shares, or meat is exempt from state licensure and inspection by a public health agency, provided proper requirements are met. The Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) has provided this guide to help ranchers, livestock owners, and processors understand the applicability of this new legislation and, most importantly, how it interacts with existing state and federal laws governing processing requirements for meat sold in the marketplace.

Summary of the Ranch to Plate Act

The Ranch to Plate Act provides three distinct benefits for individuals looking to increase direct sales to consumers:

Establishes requirements to be exempted from state public health inspection to sell processed meat to end consumers directly.

The Ranch to Plate Act allows a person to sell meat, animals, or shares of cattle, calves, sheep, bison, goats, hogs, and rabbits to an informed end consumer for future delivery without regulation or inspection by a public health agency, if the following conditions are met:

The end consumer must be informed. This means the person making the sale either gives the purchaser a document or conspicuously displays a placard, sign or card at the point of sale, with the following disclaimer: *“The seller of this meat is not subject to licensure, and the sale of animals or meat from this seller is not subject to state regulation or inspection by a public health agency. Animals or meat purchased from this seller are not intended for resale.”*

The animal or animal share (of at least one percent) and meat being sold are delivered directly from the seller to the informed end consumer does not resell the product; and,

The meat is sold only in Colorado.

Additionally, the seller of the live animal is not liable in a civil action for damages caused by inadequate cooking or improper preparation for consumption. The Ranch to Plate Act does not reduce the regulatory authority of CDA to regulate the custom processing of meat animals through licensing and inspection, nor impact the regulations established in the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA), which the USDA administers. CDA is not considered a public health agency, as defined in the act. Defines “animal share” or community shared agriculture to be at a minimum of one percent ownership. The Ranch to Plate Act clarifies an animal share as an ownership interest of at least one percent in the meat of a live animal. However, ownership must be established while the animal is alive if processed by a custom-exempt processor.

Ranchers commonly sell ownership interest, or shares, in live meat animals to others to consume for themselves, their family, and non-paying guests. The live animals are usually sold and processed as whole, half or quarters, by a licensed custom exempt processor. The Ranch to Plate Act allows for distribution of an animal share as low as one percent, which would result in smaller volumes of meat for each animal share-owner.

Animal share agreement and the transfer of ownership interest must be completed and documented while the animal is alive to comply with state and federal regulations. Animal shares may be processed by a custom-exempt operator or USDA inspected facility.

Meat sold or donated to end consumers who do not have ownership interest must still be processed at a USDA-inspected facility.

Clarifies only one brand inspection is required for animals with multiple owners. Livestock remains subject to brand inspection. However, an authorized Colorado brand inspector only needs to inspect the animal once before slaughter regardless of the multiple owners.

To learn more visit: <https://cofarmtomarket.com/value-added-products/ranch-to-plate>

FARM SERVICE AGENCY NEWS

Is the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program Right for You?

Farmers and ranchers rely on crop insurance to protect themselves from disasters and unforeseen events, but not all crops are insurable through the USDA's Risk Management Agency. The Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) provides producers another option to obtain coverage against disaster for these crops. NAP provides financial assistance to producers of non-insured crops impacted by natural disasters that result in lower yields, crop losses, or prevents crop planting.

Commercially produced crops and agricultural commodities for which crop insurance is not available are generally eligible for NAP. Eligible crops include those grown specifically for food, fiber, livestock consumption, biofuel or biobased products, or be commodities such as value loss crops like Christmas trees and ornamental nursery, honey, maple sap, and many others. Contact your FSA office to see which crops are eligible in your state and county. Eligible causes of loss include drought, freeze, hail, excessive moisture, excessive wind or hurricanes, earthquake, flood. These events must occur during the NAP policy coverage period, before or during harvest, and the disaster must directly affect the eligible crop. For guidance on causes of loss not listed, contact your local FSA county office.

Interested producers must apply for coverage using FSA form CCC-471, "Application for Coverage," and pay the applicable service fee at the FSA office where their farm records are maintained. These must be filed by the application closing date. Closing dates vary by crop, so it is important to contact your local FSA office as soon as possible to ensure you don't miss an application closing date. At the time of application, each producer will be provided a copy of the NAP Basic Provisions, which describes how NAP works and all the requirements you must follow to maintain NAP coverage. NAP participants must provide accurate annual reports of their production in non-loss years to ensure their NAP coverage is beneficial to their individual operation.

Producers are required to pay service fees which vary depending on the number of crops and number of counties your operation is located in. The NAP service fee is the lesser of \$325 per crop or \$825 per producer per administrative county, not to exceed a total of \$1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties. Premiums also apply when producers elect higher levels of coverage with a maximum premium of \$15,750 per person or legal entity depending on the maximum payment limitation that may apply to the NAP covered producer. The service fee can be waived for beginning, qualifying veteran, and limited resource farmers and rancher., These farmers and ranchers can also receive a 50 percent reduction in the premium.

For more detailed information on NAP, download the NAP Fact Sheet. To get started with NAP, we recommend you contact your local USDA service center.

Linkage Requirements for Payments Received Under WHIP+ and/or QLA

If you received a payment under the Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program+ (WHIP+) or the Quality Loss Adjustment Program (QLA) for crop production and/or quality losses occurring in 2018, 2019, or 2020 crop years, you are required to meet linkage requirements by obtaining federal crop insurance or Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage at the 60/100 level, or higher, for both the 2022 and 2023 crop years.

When applying for WHIP+ or QLA, form FSA-895 (Crop Insurance and/or NAP Coverage Agreement) was submitted acknowledging the requirement to obtain federal crop insurance, if available, or NAP coverage if federal crop insurance is not available. The coverage requirement is applicable to the physical location county of the crop that received WHIP+ and/or QLA benefits.

Producers should not delay contacting their federal crop insurance agent or local county FSA Office to inquire about coverage options, as failure to obtain the applicable coverage by the sales/application closing date will result in the required refund of WHIP+ benefits received on the applicable crop, plus interest. You can determine if crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP by visiting the RMA website.

For more information on documentation requirements, contact your Fremont County USDA Service Center at 719-315-3416 or visit fsa.usda.gov.

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The office for assistance to Custer, Chaffee and Fremont Counties is located in Alamosa, Colorado. Their phone number is 719-589-5661, extension 4. The office for assistance to Lake County is in Delta, Colorado. Their phone number is 970-874-5735, extension 4. There is also a toll free number, 1-800-670-6553, that can be called for assistance.

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**CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARDS**

**U.S.D.A Service Center**  
248 Dozier Ave.  
Canon City, CO 81212  
(719) 315-3417 Phone

Each local Conservation District encourages landowners who have an interest in agriculture, conservation, and education and would like to serve on a local board to contact their Conservation District—information on the front of the newsletter. Landowners are also encouraged to participate in meetings and workshops being held by the Conservation Districts. Most of these workshops and meetings are free to attend and loaded with information on conservation practices and concerns.

**Silver Cliff Field Office**  
P.O. Box 389  
10 Hermit Lane  
Silver Cliff, CO 81252  
(719) 783-2481 Phone

**No-Till Drill for Rent in Fremont County**

**U.S.D.A Service Center**  
5575 Cleora Road  
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(719) 626-3169 Phone

Have you ever been interested in no-till seeding or would like to rent one locally? **Fremont Conservation District** now owns and rents out Great Plains No-Till Drill for anyone interested and within Fremont Conservation District boundaries (Fremont County only). The No-Till Drill offers 3 different seed boxes for different variety of seed mixes and can be calibrated to preference. It can be towed behind most pickup trucks and can operate with a minimum 40 HP tractor. Rental can be a minimum of one day and a maximum of five days. For information on how to rent the No-Till Drill or more about the implement, please call the Fremont Conservation District at 719-315-3417. Call today to reserve your dates!

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