



CSU Extension Advisory Board Meeting  
February 1, 2022

**Attendees:** Commissioner Geitner, Don Bunce, Cheryl Nunnali, Jonathan Vrabec, Joan Jahelka, Rebecca Keltie, Rose Lyda

**New:**

**Recorder:** Mercedes Glenn

Program Area Up-Dates

- **Family and Consumer Science: Michael Lucero**
  - Currently holding a 4-week class series on called "Eating Healthy, Living Healthy" at the Colorado Springs Senior Center. Have had a sold-out class and great attendance. Plan on having another on in the spring.
  - Planned Dining with Diabetes 4-week Class Series in February in partnership with the Colorado Community Health Alliance.
  - Multiple Mediterranean Diet Workshops planned and taught at the Extension Office and Libraries.
  - Working on development of statewide curriculum/program - Grow Smart Eat Smart. El Paso County will be one of the pilot counties for this program. FCS agent and Hort Agent is developing program. Currently developing relationship with RISE Colorado for our target audience of low-income families. Grow Smart Eat Smart focuses on food insecurity (through growing food in containers), limiting food waste with food preservation, eating healthy on a budget, and nutrition.
  - Continuing Cottage Foods Food Safety Certifications for those looking to develop their own small businesses. El Paso County was the leader in certifying 259 small business cottage food producers in Colorado in 2021.
- **Local Foods/Agriculture: Michele Ritchie**
  - **Colorado Building Farmers and Ranchers-** 13 people from 10 farms (62% of the entire state-wide class) are taking Colorado Building Farmers and Ranchers through El Paso County's online class. This is an 8-week class ending with students presenting a business plan for their farm or ranch to a panel for feedback.
  - **Farm Tax Class** is taking registrations for the March 31<sup>st</sup> class. A class for farmers and ranchers giving guidance and tips on how to file a schedule F with the IRS.
  - **Sheep and Goats** class for farmers/ranchers will be in early April (date TBD). We will educate farmers/ranchers regarding raising their sheep and goats for dairy, meat, and fiber.
  - I will be teaming up with CSU Extension Small Acreage and Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Agents to hold **quarterly classes and workshops**. We are planning grass ID and weed ID workshops, and other classes, TBD, but may include farming with pollinators, living windbreaks and snow fences, and the ever-popular cover cropping.
  - I will be co-designing and holding a **Cold-Chain Management workshop** for produce farmers with the Colorado Produce Safety Collaborative in alignment with the FDA's Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), Produce Safety Rule (PSR) on May 13<sup>th</sup>.
  - I have taught sections of the FSMA PSR grower training as a member of the Colorado Produce Safety Collaborative this fall/winter (Oct and Dec), and I have 2 more classes this spring Feb 8 & 9 and March 15 & 16.
  - I have helped Michael Lucero (FCS) with the **Cottage Food Certification Class** at least monthly, garnering the distinction of being #1 in the state for number of people we have certified.

- Partnering with El Paso County Health Department, University of Colorado-Colorado Springs, and a Food Systems Consultant to write a USDA Regional Food System Partnership grant.
- Collaborating with CSU Extension colleagues to write a grant to start a volunteer-led Master Naturalist Program (similar to the Master Gardening and Master Food Safety Advisor Programs).
- Professional development
  - Enrolled in Graduate Studies at CSU
    - Expecting a graduate certificate in the concentrated study of Urban Agriculture December 2022, and a certificate in Horticulture (Agriculture) and Human Health and Wellbeing by December 2023.
    - Range School—A four-class series offered by CSU Extension
- **4-H Program Updates:**
  - Leadership Development Conference provides workshops and seminars along with State 4-H Day at the capital that allows youth to interact with state policy makers and develop leadership skills.
  - Cloverbud training for adults on how to engage our 5–7-year-old audience.
  - 4-H Project Saturday’s bring together several project meetings to one facility to provide consistent educational programming.
  - Horse-Safety/Levels Testing, First Aid Seminar and Showmanship clinics were held this last month.
  - Livestock-Beef exercising dates were announced. Beef tag-ins and slots were filled for a beef clinic in May.
  - Small Animal- Planning fundraising and education opportunities for the youth.
  - Working with club leaders on moving 4-H Meetings to public spaces for safety and protection of both families and volunteers.
- **Horticulture Associate: Irene Shonle**
  - We have accepted 8 new apprentices into the Master Gardener Program
  - We will be kicking off a 3-month Lunch and Learn weekly webinar series in February. April will be devoted to the drought situation.
  - We began a monthly newsletter that contains upcoming classes, horticulture tips, a plant of the month and hot topics to people on our email mailing list.
  - I am collaborating with Michael Lucero/FCS on the Eat Smart, Grow Smart project. The aim of this project is to provide beginner/novice Colorado gardeners tools to confidently, safely, and successfully: 1) Grow some of their own produce on a limited budget with limited outdoor space; 2) Prepare and enjoy self-grown, quality produce and; 3) Reduce food waste at home through techniques to improve accessibility, affordability, and consumption of local, quality produce as part of a healthy diet.
  - Collaborating with Duckwood Community Garden again to help keep the garden doing while they transition to a community-led group.
  - Pleased to announce there will be a part-time assistant from Feb-July to provide assistant.
  - Developing a list of plants for the City of Fountain to give to landscapers and developers.
  - Planning to have one Native Plant Master Course in the County this spring.
- **Director/ SAM/AG/Community Development/4-H: Jonathan Vrabec**

## Reports

- Fiscal Changes/Budgets:  
\$27, 000 was allocated in CSU Extension budget for the Horticulture position. CSU Extension will still cover her fringe benefits via soft funds/non-appropriated account. Loss of county print shop has had a negative impact on CSU Extension budget. Soft generated (non-appropriated) funds will have to cover the print overages.
- Western National Roundup Results:

Covered the results from Wester National Roundup and National Western Stock Show Cheryl and Jonathan represented El Paso County 4-H at the NWSS 4-H Day. Toured the CSU Spur Ag Adventures and were announced during the rodeo performance.

- 2022 Fair:  
Schedule has been approved by the Fairboard, will be published in the February 4-H Newsletter
- Purchases:  
Chairs, tables, TV in the CSU Extension Teaching Kitchen were purchased with remaining funds from the 2021 County Budget
- COVID:  
No new updates

### **Unfinished Business**

- Advisory Board Members:  
Cheryl, Steve, Joan, Rebecca, and Lori were all approved by BOCC. We have a new application to submit for Christine Herman. She was recommended by Michael Lucero to be the FCS representative.
- County Plan of Work  
Will provide the results of our Community Needs Assessment

### **New Business**

- Staffing  
Rain Gray is our new 4-H Admin as of January 10, 2022. Also hiring a non-student hourly Horticulture Program Assistant. Jan Berry will begin February 7, 2022 and work 15 hours a week from February to June.
- Soft Funded Position Support/Future Funding  
Please see above in Fiscal/Budget updates.

Other: Needing input and advice on the ads for the FOX Garden Tour brochure. Mercedes will email these to the board members.

Next Meeting: April 5, 2022, at 5:30 p.m.

*Colorado State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture and El Paso County*

*Extension Programs are available to all without discrimination.*