

2024 IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

Southern Region

Across Colorado's Southern Region, CSU Extension specialists are serving their communities and addressing local needs by sharing expertise and resources, delivering educational programming, strengthening partnerships, and engaging youth and volunteers.

Key impact areas for Southern Region specialists in 2024 spanned topics such as youth outreach, health promotion, food systems, natural resources, gardening, agriculture, volunteer engagement, and more.

Across the state, Extension is where Colorado State University meets community.



COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION



Southern Region

Extension in Your Region

For over 100 years, CSU Extension has strived to be your trusted partner connecting Coloradans to education and actionable, science-based solutions in your community.

COUNTY EXTENSION DIRECTORS

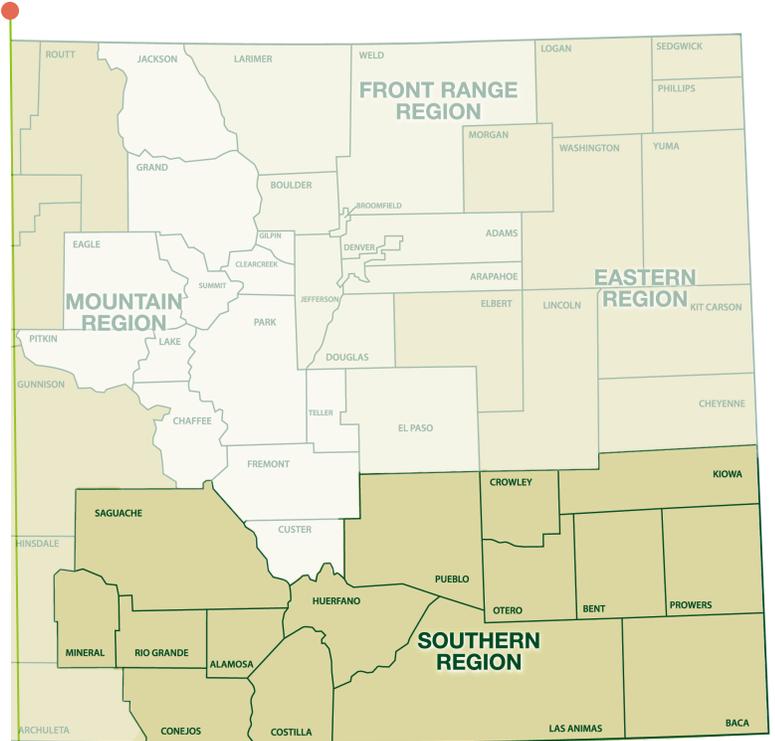
- **Huerfano County:** Marvin Reynolds
- **Las Animas County:** Lorri Arnhold
- **Pueblo County:** Sherie Shaffer
- **San Luis Valley Area:** Larry Brown
 - *Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Mineral, Rio Grande, Saguache*
- **Southeast Area:** Brooke Matthew
 - *Baca, Bent, Cheyenne, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero, Prowers*

REGIONAL SPECIALISTS

- **Renewable Resources:** Annie Overlin
- **Ag & Business Management:** Jeffrey Tranel
- **Accessible Education:** Sydney Wilkinson

RESEARCH & ENGAGEMENT CENTERS

- **San Luis Valley Research Center**
- **CSU Arkansas Valley Campus**



LEADERSHIP

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By The Numbers

STATEWIDE REACH & PROGRAMMING

242.5

CSU Extension Positions Statewide

Statewide Program Highlights:

4-H Youth Development

Agriculture

- AgrAbility
- Agricultural Business Management
- Annie's Project
- Climate Smart Agriculture
- Colorado Building Farmers and Ranchers
- Cropping Systems
- Livestock
- Pesticide Applicator
- Rangeland
- Total Ranch Analysis for Colorado

Community & Economic Development

- Family Leadership Training Institute (FLTI)
- Workforce Development

Emergency Management

Food Systems

Health and Wellbeing

- Behavioral Health & Resilience
- Cooking Matters
- Cottage Food Safety
- CSU Produce Network
- Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)
- Financial Health
- Food Safety, Preservation, Preparation
- Healthy Aging
- Master Food Safety Advisor
- Nutrition, Disease Prevention and Management

Horticulture

- Beekeeping
- Colorado Master Gardener
- Grow & Give
- Landscape for Life
- Seed Saving/Free Seeds

Natural Resources

- Native Bee Watch
- Native Plant Master
- Rocky Mountain Naturalist

SOUTHERN REGION

31 CSU Positions
28 Positions Fully or Partially Funded by CSU

13 County Positions
Hired/Funded

REGIONAL YOUTH & VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT



1,956

4-H Youth Reached

1,450

4-H Volunteers

~600

Youth reached through San Luis Valley Area Ag Fest and in-school programming

Colorado Master Gardener

67

Volunteers

3,976.3

Volunteer Hours

CSU IN THE SOUTHERN REGION - 2024

34,022

Contacts reached through consultations and presentations

3

CSU Extension Summer Internship projects connected to research and programs in the Southern Region.



2024 Impact Highlights

Huerfano County

Addressing Large-Animal Veterinary Shortages

Huerfano County is home to a number of cattle ranches and livestock operations, yet faces challenges with a lack of veterinarians in the county that serve large animals. As a result, ranchers and livestock producers have limited access to reliable treatment and care for animals, or to ensure animals are inspected and certified as being free of disease before transportation out of state.

To help address the need for large-animal veterinary services in the county, CSU Extension County Director Marvin Reynolds has been working alongside representatives from Huerfano County Farm Bureau and other organizations to identify potential solutions and pathways, such as partnering with CSU's College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. The group is also advocating for Huerfano to pursue designation as an 'underserved' county in Colorado; a key step that, if successful, would make the county eligible to pursue state and federal veterinary assistance programs, such as grant funding to help offset costs associated with medical equipment and operations of new facilities and clinics, or through the Veterinarian Loan Repayment Program which incentivizes recently graduated veterinarians who agree to set up and operate a practice within an underserved county.

Las Animas County

Small Acreage Management Workshop & Site Visits

In 2024, CSU Extension Small Acreage Management specialists provided a combined 145 hours of support to land owners and small acreage managers through site visits, workshops, and consultations. These resources and outreach efforts focused on addressing the unique challenges of managing small acreage and featured information about local food production, wildfire safety and prevention, local ecosystems and wildlife, weed and pasture management, and more.

During site visits, Extension specialists conducted assessments of overall property health and developed custom reports tailored to the site, including management strategies and considerations based on the intended use of the property, along with additional tools and resources to help support the long-term health and productivity of the property.

San Luis Valley Area

(Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Mineral, Rio Grande, Saguache Counties)

Strengthening Families - Communications Series

Families are becoming more connected and resilient in the San Luis Valley thanks to the Strengthening Families / Familias Fuertes program offered through CSU Extension. The program features structured workshops focused on positive parenting, effective communication, emotional regulation, and conflict resolution.

In 2024, the program reached 80 families, with 90% of participating parents reporting improved communication with their children. Additionally, 80% of youth participants felt more supported by their parents, which translated into a 20% decrease in reported behavioral challenges at home and school.

Southern Rocky Mountain Agriculture Conference

The SRMAC provides production and management strategies for potato, small grain, and alfalfa growers and sheep and cattle producers of the San Luis Valley. With a focus on supporting sustainable and profitable farming and ranching, San Luis Valley Extension sponsors the three-day SRMAC and Agricultural Trade Fair each year, and provides updates on the projected Rio Grande River water availability and the water sub-districts in the San Luis Valley for the upcoming year.

This partnership including San Luis Valley Extension, SLV Research Center, and Monte Vista Chamber of Commerce ensures conference attendees are equipped with the latest local and regional research and information critical for producers and agricultural businesses to improve operations, implement solutions to issues and challenges, and effectively manage crops, land, and resources.

Enterprise Budgets for Alternative Crops

CSU Extension intern Bekzat Nurmakhanov, a student of Agricultural Business, worked with Agricultural Production Systems Specialist Madeline Wilson to develop enterprise budgets for different alternative crops under various production scenarios.

Nurmakhanov conducted a series of interviews with producers to determine an average cost of production for organic and conventional dry beans and proso millet. Additionally, the intern developed relationships with buyers to generate a range of market prices for organic and conventional dry beans and proso millet. This research was then shared with San Luis Valley area growers during fall workshops.

Pueblo County

Ag Fest

Inspiring future leaders to understand the critical importance of agriculture, Ag Fest helps young people appreciate the farm-to-table connection. Students rotate through eight stations during the day and gain knowledge on topics such as: beef, soils, dairy, fibers, embryology, wind and pollination through interactive and hands-on learning experiences. In 2024, the Ag Fest team educated 419 5th grade students in Pueblo and Fremont counties.

Oak Ridge Fire CART Deployment

When a lightning strike sparked a large wildfire in Beulah, CSU Extension's Community Animal Response Team (CART) deployed to help impacted community members by taking in evacuated animals and treating injuries. The team, consisting of 55 trained Extension volunteers, tended to 156 animals during the week-long response effort. In addition, the team provided resources and recovery information for evacuated property owners and community members impacted by the wildfire.

Agricultural History: Cataloging Pueblo's Local Landmarks

CSU Extension intern and history student in the College of Liberal Arts, Aubree Vecellio, centered her summer internship project around a continuation of her agricultural history and archival work from prior internships. In summer 2024, Vecellio focused on her hometown of Pueblo during her internship project, "Cataloging and Promoting Pueblo's Local Landmarks." During the course of her project, Vecellio collected archival materials, photographs, and other documents and records as part of this effort to capture and preserve the history of local landmarks and the stories behind them. Vecellio's project is part of an ongoing effort by the CSU Libraries to archive 150 years of agricultural history from across Colorado.

Southeast Area

(Baca, Bent, Cheyenne, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero, Prowers Counties)

Summer Reading Program - Kiowa County Public Library

CSU Extension offered a four-week program in partnership with the Kiowa County Public Library for local elementary students in first through third grade. The Summer Reading Program focused on a different book each week along with a related craft, providing a unique and fun way to engage with local youth and families while also highlighting the value of libraries as community gathering and education spaces.

Automated Weeder Demonstration for Ag Producers

As agriculture technology advances, demonstrations of new equipment can help Colorado's producers identify potential solutions to operational challenges. The first Automated Weeder Demonstration was held in 2023 at the CSU Arkansas Valley Research Center in Rocky Ford, where agricultural producers and business operators from across the region were able to explore how new and emerging technologies - from laser weeders to robotic harvesters - could help address challenges related to labor, worker safety, operational efficiency, pest and weed management, and crop productivity. Participants in the ag tech demonstrations and workshops learned about research and case studies from farms using these technologies, how to evaluate different weeding automation solutions, common producers challenges and barriers to adopting new equipment and technology, and more. In 2024, the demonstration was held again in Fruita, followed by the event's return to Rocky Ford in June 2025.

- **Learn More:** View video highlights from the 2023 Automated Weeder Demonstration in Rocky Ford, CO: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DhlaqowHiiQ>

STATEWIDE SPOTLIGHT: YOUTH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



Colorado 4-H Youth Development

4-H is delivered by Colorado State University Extension and reaches over 110,000 youth in Colorado annually, helping them to become confident, independent, resilient and compassionate leaders. Colorado 4-H engages with youth across the state through hands-on projects in areas including health, science, agriculture and citizenship.

Across the state, more than 10,000 volunteers and almost 100 4-H professionals and staff members provide support and mentorships to 4-H youth through locally based clubs, programs, and activities.

Colorado 4-H reached **1,946 youth** and engaged **1,450 volunteers** across Colorado's Southern Region in 2024.