



Connecting to Communities: 2000 Annual Report Colorado State University Extension

Colorado State University Extension is a dynamic, flexible organization dedicated to delivering quality, relevant programs most needed by people throughout the state. We have a responsive network of citizens, scientists and educators who can anticipate and address critical needs. We focus on programs in the areas in which we have a research base and can make significant contributions.

Extension's role and connection within the higher education system provides the public with access to knowledge that can improve their daily lives. Extension faculty facilitate outreach partnerships across the institution to respond to local needs, assist in the translation and application of research, make connections between communities and resources, and deliver programs to support lifelong learning and problem-solving at the community level. This powerful partnership makes a connection between the intellectual knowledge of the University and the people of Colorado.

The profiles in this report are but a sample of the program impacts Extension is making throughout the state. Many counties have similar program efforts and outcomes. The comparative budget information at the end of this report shows that Extension efforts clearly multiply public funding and provide a solid return on money invested.

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From the Director

This 2000 Annual Report highlights some of the educational programs of Colorado State University Extension during the past year. As an integral part of Colorado State University, Extension is committed to implementing the University's land-grant mission of offering accessible higher education, conducting research, and providing public service to citizens of the state. Extension was created by national legislation in 1914 to meet clearly defined needs and objectives. Since then, Extension in Colorado has continued to achieve success as the primary outreach arm of Colorado State University delivering research-based information and educational programs to address many of the state's critical social, environmental and economic issues.



An ongoing process of Extension across the nation is to continually reexamination its focus, role and mission. In Colorado, our recent initiative, "Building a New Foundation, Extension 2000 Implementation Plan," is guiding our immediate future. Nationally, a Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities released several reports including "Returning to Our Roots: The Engaged Institution" that challenges institutions of higher education to become "more sympathetically and productively involved with their communities."

That report outlines seven guiding characteristics that define an engaged institution: responsiveness, respect for partners, academic neutrality, accessibility, integration, coordination, and resource partnerships. These characteristics are fundamental to the success of Colorado State University Extension.

One of the hallmarks of Extension's outreach efforts is its responsiveness to unique needs and problems of Colorado citizens. A primary objective of the CE2000 Initiative was to focus on high priority issues of Coloradans and to develop and strengthen our community connections. When Extension was initiated in 1914, and for many years thereafter, it was in effect a sole provider of information and education to address critical local issues. Today people are deluged with information from all kinds of sources. The key ingredient that people are looking for is **information they can trust**--the essential element of Extension education. Our connection to communities; our link to the research base of the nation's land-grant university system; our network of local, state and national governments, organizations and citizens; our commitment to building partnerships; our trustworthy information-- these are the reasons behind our success in delivering relevant educational programs.

In his 2000 address to the university--"A Call for Advocacy"--President Albert Yates said: "For more than a decade, we have been willing to dream and plan together, to think strategically and invest wisely, and to rely always on quality and the pursuit of excellence

as the basis for all we do. As a result, we have much to boast about."

That quote also applies to Extension's outreach efforts on behalf of Colorado State University. This annual report to our stakeholders--"Connecting to Communities" - showcases examples of locally-based educational programs that we can boast about. I hope you enjoy reviewing these educational successes that address high priority issues in Colorado. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss the programs and focus of Extension with you as we continue our powerful partnerships with the citizens of Colorado.

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Who's Minding Your Food?

The typical American household spends an average of \$2,030 on food away from home each year. Coincidentally last year in the United States, the National Center for Disease Control reported 76 million illnesses, 325,000 hospitalizations and 5,000 deaths related to food-borne illnesses.

These figures conjure nightmares for food service establishments who worry about the hazards of food-borne illness, especially for food served to older people, young children or individuals with compromised immune systems.

Colorado State University Extension has met the challenge of improving food safety practices through ServSafe™, a food safety certification program developed by the National Restaurant Association.

Extension first introduced ServSafe™ in Colorado in 1998 with three, train-the-trainer workshops for Extension agents, environmental health specialists and retail food industry personnel, taught by Pat Kendall and Melissa Bardsley, Extension food science and nutrition specialists. The workshops were funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Food Safety and Quality Initiative. The ServSafe certification program consists of a seven-hour course for food service managers and a four-hour training for food handlers. Each participating manager must pass the course with a score of 75 percent or better to be certified.



ServSafe training teams are typically responsible for a class of 30 food handlers, who in turn can be responsible for serving or preparing as many as 7,000 to 10,000 meals per day. The potential health impact of this program alone reinforces the need not only for certified food handlers but also for qualified ServSafe instructors.

By the end of 2000, Extension established eight training teams who serve Northeast Colorado (Kit Carson, Logan, Morgan, Phillips, Sedgwick, Washington and Yuma counties), as well as Delta, Denver, Eagle, El Paso, Gunnison, Huerfano, Las Animas, Mesa, Montrose, Pueblo, Rio Blanco, Routt and Summit counties. In three years, these teams trained 1,157 restaurant managers or owners, and thousands of food handlers from nursing homes, grocery stores, jails and prisons, catering businesses, Elks lodges, senior meal sites, and even 4-H leaders who work concession stands at county fairs.

The multi-agency-team approach to ServSafe not only helps organizations with limited resources train large numbers of food handlers, but also fosters partnerships between local health departments and businesses.

Carmen Vandebark, environmental health representative for the Northeast Colorado Health Department was certified in ServSafe in 1998 and teaches on a team with Extension family and consumer science agents Joy Akey, Luann Boyer and Colleen Simon, and other health department employees.

"ServSafe has been good for the food service establishments in our area because it's easier for us to provide the education locally--we can protect the public health," said Vandebark. "The team approach works well for us. Extension brings education about food safety to the training and our department presents the regulation side of food safety.

"This is the first time I'd ever worked with Extension on a project and I can't say enough good about it or our teaching team," Vandebark said.

The Northeast Colorado teaching team also trains cooks and assistant cooks responsible for 11 senior meal sites in the seven-county area.

"We prepare 450 meals a day in our kitchen and require that all of our cooks and assistant cooks take this training," said Sherry Jones, nutrition director for the Northeast Area Agency on Aging. "Since we serve one of the highest risk populations in the United States, we have to make sure that the meals we serve are sanitary and that the procedures and temperatures we use keep food safe."

Many states currently require all food service establishments to participate in some kind of food safety certification program. Although Colorado does not require food safety certification, its retail food industry faces the same challenges as other states. Rapid employee turnover, employees switching from one food establishment to another, language and literacy barriers make it increasingly obvious that food service establishments must find a universal method to train employees in safe food practices.

McDonalds is one corporate chain that requires all managers and food handlers to pass ServSafe certification within the first 30 days of employment. In Northeast Colorado, McDonald's food handlers are sent to ServSafe classes presented by Extension agents and agency partners. Rob Whitney, store manager for McDonalds in Brush became a certified ServSafe trainer and noted that ServSafe's training emphasizes proper holding temperatures and personal hygiene, two of the most commonly reported violations in food preparation practices.

"Hand washing is required of every employee," said Whitney. "A timer goes off every hour and employees are required to wash their hands and initial their names on a clip board. We also check all food for proper temperatures with a pyrometer and are required to take temperatures of all the meat patties on the grill before we sell any product."

What kind of impact does proper food handling have on the health of Coloradans? In one year, hospitalizations in Colorado due to food-borne illnesses were estimated to cost more than \$43 million. Colorado State University Extension has done the math and is working hard to position the food industry as a safer place to eat and work.

--*Debby Weitzel*

Food safety risk factors identified by the Center for Disease Control:

1. Poor personal hygiene*
2. Improper holding temperatures*
3. Inadequate cooking
4. Contaminated equipment
5. Food from an unsafe source

*The most common food preparation practices contributing to food-borne disease

reported from 1988- 1992.

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Kids Learn That Science Sprouts From Seeds

Tom Fey is an Extension agent with a mission.

He wants youngsters to get excited about learning! And there is no better audience for excitement than second graders. He's developed two notable programs that school teachers repeatedly request--"Earth Gardens" and the "Mini-Greenhouse" program. Both consist of a series of science lessons targeted at kids, so they can learn things while they grow things.



For each of the past eight years, Fey, Colorado State University Extension 4-H agent in Adams County, has worked with area elementary schools to interest kids in gardening and the learning that goes hand in hand with digging in the dirt, planting seeds and watching plants spring to life.

And, learn they do. Last year, 3,200 students, most of them in Adams County, 'oohed' and 'aahed' and watched with wonder as seeds sprouted--almost before their eyes--and grew in the kids' personal pint-sized 'greenhouses.' The kid-size greenhouses are the work of a creative mind. Crediting his predecessor, Extension agent Bill Huntley, with the concept, Fey has refined the greenhouses to an art. Using nothing more than clear plastic deli containers and saucer-shaped lids, Fey melts a small ventilation hole in the center of each container and, in a demonstration of the process, turns it upside down and snaps a lid on the bottom. Resting on the lid are three peat pellets, and in the center of each pellet is a different seed--Anasazi bean, Indian corn and sunflower. The children follow the steps of placing the peat pellets, planting the seeds, and adding water, then watching the peat pellets--and the seeds--spring to life.

And the teachers also like watching the kids grow.

"Seeing the kids' reaction when the seeds started to grow was the best part of the mini-greenhouse program," one teacher said in her evaluation comments about the program.

"I loved it, and so did the children. I plan to use it again," were another's comments.

A third teacher said, "The children were really excited to watch their plants each day. It's a great learning experience."

Because second graders have short attention spans, teachers praise the project as "action-packed." In the mini-greenhouses, the seeds don't take long to germinate. With water, the peat pellets swell almost before the children's eyes and the seed sprouts are not long behind.

"Within three to four days, the kids can see the seeds begin to swell and germinate and that's exciting for them," said Fey. Just two or three days after that, the seeds actually sprout and the project is on its way.

And the price of this education? "At 75 cents per greenhouse, it's a rare bargain," Fey said. Teachers agree. "It's the best thing going," one teacher wrote about the program. "You can't get anything for 75 cents these days."

Fey orders all materials from local distributors. And, in this almost-one-man-show, he spends up to a week each spring assembling the kits-adding the ventilation holes, counting out the peat pellets and the seeds and bagging up the supplies. Fey notifies school principals and second grade teachers that the kits are ready, the schools place their orders, and in April, Fey delivers the goods.

The "Mini-Greenhouse" program has an advantage because it is an indoor gardening activity, but Fey's other popular elementary-school-age gardening program, "Earth Gardens" allows kids to get outside in late spring for a "dig-in-the-dirt adventure." Each year, approximately 3,500 youngsters in Adams County schools clean up their school yards and design and plant a school landscape while they learn math and science concepts. The curriculum, co-created by Deryl Waldren, Extension 4-H agent in Boulder County, is also designed to teach workforce skills including thinking, using information and resources, working with technology, communication skills and career exploration.

Both 4-H programs include "Teacher's Guides" that provides step-by-step directions to conduct these science programs. The guides walk teachers through the process from beginning to end. They feature such lessons as "What is a Seed?", "Stages in Plant Growth" and "What Plants Need to Grow."

If program growth is any indication, both projects are here to stay. Eight years ago, Fey enlisted a few teachers and a "few hundred" students in the Mini-Greenhouse program; then, for a few years, between 1,200 and 1,700 kids took part. Last year, the number jumped to 3,200, and in 2001, Fey plans to distribute at least 4,000 kits. Teachers give the program top marks and they tell others about the kid-centered gardening program. "It's a word-of-mouth thing," Fey said.

As he said, "I want to grow life-long learners and gardeners. When kids work with plants at an early age, they develop an interesting outlook on life. I believe they grow up to be better citizens. And for some children this is a start in a career in horticulture. They learn by doing. That's the 4-H motto and that's the 4-H way."

-Mary Hartman

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The "Wild Side" of Conflict Resolution

By day, Wildlife Master volunteer Dick Andrews does conflict resolution with humans in his work for the federal government's U.S. Geological Survey. In his off hours he devotes time to resolving conflict of another kind.

Through Colorado State University Extension's Wildlife Master Program, Andrews works to resolve the increasing friction between humans and wildlife in rapidly growing Jefferson County. He does this by sharing research-based information about human-wildlife interaction with residents who call in their "wildest" concerns.

The building boom along Colorado's Front Range has forced wildlife to flee or to adapt to urban living, and the resulting human-animal conflicts are the source of a multitude of questions from the general public.



"Animals that adapt often find themselves face to face with humans who don't want to share the habitat," said Shelley Stanley, Extension natural resource agent in Jefferson County, and current coordinator of the program.

The Wildlife Master Program, developed in Jefferson County in 1987, was designed to prevent or to help overcome these human-wildlife conflicts. It was modeled after the Master Gardener Program, Extension's nationally recognized volunteer program. Today the Jefferson County program has 22 volunteers who field hundreds of calls each year. The Wildlife Master Program has since spread to other rapidly-growing counties, including neighboring Adams, Arapahoe and Park counties.

Andrews said he volunteered because he is concerned about the impact humans are having on wildlife habitat.

"I see a lot of wildlife in my own neighborhood and I see a lot of people who don't understand what to do and how to maintain a peaceful coexistence. This gives me a chance to get involved in something I really think is important and to give a little back to my county and my neighborhood."

Answering questions about wildlife fills an important niche, Stanley said. "These are questions that the Colorado Division of Wildlife truly doesn't have a lot of time to answer."

Volunteers for the program are carefully selected for their willingness to be unbiased and provide all of the research-based options they are trained to offer callers, Stanley said.

Participants receive a minimum of 20 hours of training each of their first two years with the program and agree to give back volunteer hours. Training draws on the expertise of several wildlife agencies including Colorado State, the Colorado Division of Wildlife, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Wildlife Research Center and Wildlife Service, Jefferson County Parks and Open Space, and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

Through the Wildlife Master Program, Stanley sees cooperative relationships developing with these and other agencies. The program shares training with Jefferson County Animal Control, for example, which receives a growing number of wildlife-related calls. People seeking information from the Wildlife Master Program call the Extension office and leave their questions on a voice-mail system. Then, from home, the Wildlife Master on duty picks up the questions and calls back.

Wildlife Masters not only answer questions and provide information over the telephone, but they often send written information and refer callers to relevant websites.

Callers pose a variety of questions, said Andrews, including everything from, "there's a bear in the backyard, to a nest of snakes under my porch, bats in my attic or a bird pecking a hole in my house. What can I do?"

Clara and Wes Zerbe, of Adams County were also trained in Jefferson County as Wildlife Masters. After their third year in the program, the couple is used to a wide variety of questions.

"Most of the calls we get are about rodents and snakes," Wes said. "We've also had some strange stories about skunks!"

Mice, rats, pocket gophers, tree and ground squirrels are frequent query topics. Next come skunks and raccoons, followed by birds. All questions related to injured animals or large mammals, such as elk, bear or mountain lions, are referred to the Colorado Division of Wildlife.

"They have the equipment, the personnel and the training to handle conflicts with these species," Stanley said.

Users indicate consistently high levels of satisfaction with the program. In 2000, 94 percent of survey respondents said they were highly satisfied with the service. An equal number said they used or implemented the advice they received from Wildlife Master volunteers.

"So not only are residents getting the information, but they're using it," Stanley said. Within those statistics are success stories. For instance, Stanley described a homeowner in Park County who was able to peacefully resolve his struggle with a northern flicker, a type of woodpecker, and educate his neighbors as well, thanks to advice from a Wildlife Master. The bird had drilled holes in wooden siding causing thousands of dollars of damage. When the homeowner employed a scare tactic outlined in a Extension Fact Sheet, the bird stopped drilling and never returned.

"It saved the bird and it saved the property," Stanley said. "But the bigger lesson is that other people learned something. Neighbors took notice of the glittering Mylar™ strips the homeowner hung to deter the flicker. The advice worked!" she said.--*Sue Lenthe*

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Milliken: A Community Working Together

How does one get underage teenagers to stop drinking alcohol, carousing the streets and getting into mischief? What can be done to get speeders to slow down?

--We're asking the community for solutions.

Colorado State University Extension is helping Colorado towns pull together to fight crime and solve problems in their communities. Through "Partnerships for



Community Safety," Extension is helping to provide education, facilitators and resources for communities wanting to take a united approach to issues such as underage drinking, speeding, crime, disorder and community code enforcement. Extension's partners in the project are the Neighborhood Resource Center and the Colorado Regional Community Policing Institute funded through the U.S. Department of Justice Community Oriented Policing Service.

The concept of community policing has been around for years, but because of a lack of resources to police departments, it can be a difficult approach to implement. Community policing is a philosophy that promotes an organized, united, community approach to solving problems. The philosophy requires community, government and police commitment, and is effective against crime, fear of crime and other community issues.

It's also effective in building--or rebuilding--a sense of community and comradery within a town, something that many believe is missing in today's modern society.

"Partnerships for Community Safety gets everyone involved in solving community problems," said Jacque Miller, project coordinator with Colorado State Extension. "Many people feel disconnected from their community for a number of reasons. Perhaps they work in a different town, are new to the city, have lived there all of their life but the community has changed, or they simply aren't involved. When more people invest in a community's problems, more people are invested in finding an agreeable solution and making it work. There's strength in numbers."

Police Chief Gary Paxton of Milliken, a small town of about 2,500 people in Weld County, agrees. He's been a believer in community policing for more than a decade. Partnerships for Community Safety has finally given him the resources he's been looking for to make the concept work in his town.

"When there's a problem in a community, whether it's directly related to criminal justice

or not, people always go to the police and say 'Here's the problem. What are you going to do about it?', " said Paxton. "But I don't have all of the answers.

"I don't want to always rely on my perception to solve a problem. I want to hear solutions from others; I want to solve a problem collectively so it's not just my solution. The more minds we put together, the more ideas we get for solutions. A lot of things came out of this group that I never thought of, and that's the point of this type of partnership."

A year ago a group of 30 Milliken senior citizens, students, city officials, police officers and parents identified finding positive activities for youth as an issue they wanted to tackle through community policing. They're meeting in groups and are beginning to come up with solutions. The committee hopes that in giving youth something constructive to do, they'll be less likely to drink and party--an important step in a county with a high incidence of youth DUIs, suicide rates and traffic accidents.

Donna Liess, Extension agent, family and consumer sciences, in Weld County, was instrumental in introducing this program to this under-served area of her county and in developing new partnerships there. Once Colorado State Extension community safety program facilitators started the ball rolling, the project found its own momentum. Liess then assisted the community committee in coming up with some kid-oriented solutions, which included partnering with the Boys and Girls Club in a neighboring community.

"We spent six months researching what other communities had done to address youth issues similar to what Milliken was facing," said Paxton. "We found a lot of failures and some successes, and we wanted to learn from other's mistakes. One consistent response from successful communities was that when they brought Boys and Girls Clubs in, they succeeded in giving their youth activities that interested them."

Over the next few months, the Milliken community policing committee, Liess and others met with the Boys and Girls Club in Greeley and the two groups are working out an arrangement to work together in a fused program. In addition, the Boys and Girls Club has donated money to the Milliken community to help establish activities there.

"These types of things take time, but this project is very much alive," said Paxton. "Good things take time. I am patient, and I know we will succeed."

In fact, the Chief has taken a personal interest in the project and is putting more of his free time into making that success a guarantee. Paxton was elected to the local recreation board, which allows him to help open up communication between the two organizations and foster collaboration.

"This concept, lead by Colorado State Extension, provided facilitators who worked with us to develop a community policing approach--to make this a better place," said Paxton. "We're a community working together." -*Dell Rae Moellenberg*

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Who Gets Grandma's Yellow Pie Plate?

The loss of a family member is already a time wrought with difficult emotions. Conflict within family over the keepsakes and valuables left behind is often devastating to relationships and only adds to sorrow.

It's the prevention of those situations that makes "Who Gets Grandma's Yellow Pie Plate?", a program offered through Colorado State University Extension, so popular and sensible. Jackie Connor, Extension agent in Adams County, is



among many Colorado family and consumer sciences agents who offer this program to help families sort through yellow pie plates, antiques, family pictures and the like before a family transition--and before conflict arises.

"These situations involve deeply personal items that have memories and emotion attached to them," said Connor. "They often cause controversial and confrontational situations if the right steps haven't been taken in advance to prevent conflict. The transfer of ownership of household items has caused huge fights in families--to the point that family members don't speak to each other again."

Connor explains that although family heirlooms are often disbursed to the next generation after the death of a family elder, these items also may need to be dealt with when a family elder moves into a different living situation--a smaller house, apartment, assisted living center or retirement home.

"Wills and estate plans outline legal ownership transfers of larger, titled items such as real estate and vehicles," said Connor. "But it's the smaller items that often cause conflict. And, it's the smaller items that people find hard to deal with in wills. A common attitude from elders is that their children and family can fight over these items when they're gone. Unfortunately, that's often exactly what happens--they fight. The people the elder wants to have an item usually doesn't get it, or the people who want an item usually don't get it. This situation is often compounded by the complexity of families--children from previous marriages, divorces, the re-marriage of an elderly family member."

The best solution? Parents and grandparents should dictate--in writing--before they become ill or elderly how they want certain items to be disbursed. Not only does this ensure fewer family conflicts, and that last wishes will be carried out, it's also an opportunity to pass on a family history. When making arrangements for these items, the giver should write down its story--where it came from, who passed it down to them, why

it meant something special.

For Betty Casady, a nurse who worked at a rest home for years, "Who Gets Grandma's Yellow Pie Plate?" is a simple solution to the heartbreak and bitterness she saw many families go through over heirlooms. "Some families don't discuss these things," said Casady. "It's important to relay the history of items that are precious to us. Unless we talk about them to our children and family, they have no idea what they have. It's just 'old stuff' without the history.

"I have my grandmother's yellow pie plate, incidently. I still use it at times. Every time I see it, I remember her fresh fruit pies and the smell of her pantry. She died when I was young, but I still have memories of her, some of them tied to this pie plate. After going through this program, I shared those memories with my two nieces. They had no idea what this pie plate meant to me-- and to them and the history of our family."

Casady has started to mark each of her family treasures with the name of the person she wants to have it. In her family, it will be a complicated process. She has a blended family that includes a step son, a husband with a family of five siblings, and six siblings herself. That means sorting out things from different branches of each family, making sure that certain items are passed on to people who want them, and being fair.

"I have started to sort these things out already," she said. "Working as a nurse, I always hear people talking about regrets, saying 'if only I would have.' Yep, if you're going to share stories and treasures--do it today.

Connor echoes Casady's note that items should be carefully and fairly disbursed. "Some families have strong traditions surrounding certain items--a wedding ring, property, etc.," said Connor. "Gender, age, birth order all come into play. Some families choose to have a lottery. Another approach is to give everyone a set amount of play money and let them 'purchase' items that mean the most to them, each taking a turn."

"Everyone has a story," said Casady. "Even the homeless person on the street. Who knows what happens in life along the way to change a person's life. Everyone has a story, and pieces of furniture and plates and linens and watches represent that story. If these things could talk, the stories they could tell." -*Dell Rae Moellenberg*

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Veteran Rancher Never Loses Sight of Hope

Gail Claussen is a man of humor...and hope. He's also a life-long cattleman who is essentially blind.

Almost thirty years ago, he found out he had a hereditary condition that would make him lose his sight. That was macular degeneration, a condition in which the blood vessels in the retina leak, creating clots and ultimately causing blindness. It wasn't something that would happen all at once, but it was the end he could expect over the course of time.



Claussen, now 64, has been ranching since the age of 18, and his life depended on his continuing to do so. With 3,000 acres of land, 70 registered Angus cattle and 18 quarterhorses, not to mention a family to feed, this eastern El Paso County rancher had no option but to press on even as his eyesight failed.

"It was disconcerting to wake up knowing I was going blind," said Claussen. "I didn't deal with it too well back then. Now it's like I'm viewing life through a thick fog," he said.

At first he was able to get around daily tasks such as identifying cows ready for breeding by spray painting "X"s on their hind quarters, but when the markings were no longer visible to him, Claussen knew he needed a better method. It was at this point that he was introduced to AgrAbility.

AgrAbility is a partnership between Colorado State University Extension and Colorado Easter Seals, funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The program provides information, services and education to agricultural families with members who are affected by physical limitations or a disability. Through AgrAbility, ranchers and farmers like Gail Claussen find effective ways to overcome and compensate for their disabilities and maintain their way of life.

"We provide AgrAbility workshops across Colorado," said Bob Fetsch, Extension human development specialist and coordinator of the workshops. "Our workshops are designed to give farmers and ranchers information and to help families understand the limitations and frustrations created by disabilities. We also give workshops for community professionals who work with farmers, ranchers or their family members affected by disabilities. Because of the nature of their work, farmers and ranchers with a disability face unique challenges.

"Farming and ranching rank up there with mining as the nation's most dangerous jobs," said Fetsch. In Colorado there are about 1,660 farm-related injuries annually, many of which result in permanent disabilities and about 20 in death. The leading cause of death in agricultural occupations is suicide, followed by accidents with large animals, then tractor turnovers, he said. These brushes with death and serious injury are often related to fatigue, long hours, harsh working conditions or high stress.

With help from the AgrAbility program, more and more rural residents with physical limitations are finding ways to stay in agriculture. The program does what it can to enable amputees, stroke and cancer victims, people with head or spinal cord injuries, and those with many other disabilities to accommodate their limitations and remain on their farm or ranch.

"We provide educational workshops, information and direct services to ag families to help them deal with stress and anger and other psychological problems, understand care-giving and relationships, and show them how adaptive equipment, assistive technology, workplace modifications and nuts-and-bolts techniques can help them keep the life they love," Fetsch said.

Claussen, with the help of his wife Karol, a seeing-eye-horse named Silk Shotgun, a great sense of humor, and AgrAbility, is able to tend his registered black Angus cattle and keep his ranch running smoothly. AgrAbility provides equipment that allows Claussen, who is legally blind but still retains some sight, to view and record important daily information such as weekly weight gain of his prize heifers. This is possible with the use of what Claussen refers to as his "reading machine." It is essentially a camera that focuses onto a writing plate and then magnifies and projects notes or objects that are placed on the plate onto a closed-circuit television screen so that Claussen can see them. The AgrAbility program also provided him with ZoomText software to modify his computer--by magnifying letters and numbers--which allows him to keep records, send e-mail and work on a book he is writing about his experiences.

"AgrAbility helped me figure out how to live with myself," Claussen said with a smile in his voice. After almost thirty years of dealing with the slow loss of his eyesight, Claussen maintains a positive attitude. He is full of the same spit-fire that his childhood stories contain. His gentle laugh, quick-witted sense of humor, and warm heart tell of a life full of meaning.

"I wouldn't be here, and I couldn't do what I do without my wife," he said. "Other people call me for advice on how to stay in agriculture and I tell them about AgrAbility, and how I'm a lucky man."

This man, this father, this husband, will continue his dream of ranching long after his sight is gone. -*Jaime King & Wendy Douglass*

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Building Bridges Across the World

"A life-changing event."

That's what a family goes through with the birth or adoption of a child. And when that child is cross-cultural it becomes a life-changing cultural event. When that child is only temporarily entrusted to you for care and nurturing, that life-changing cultural event condenses all the joys and challenges of family life into an abbreviated time frame.



Parenting an exchange student--whether a few weeks to a year-long "home-stay"--brings the whole spectrum of parenting and its emotions into a moment in time that most families will tell you they "wouldn't change for anything." And an added benefit is that not only have they "adopted" the child or children--because many families repeat the experience again and again--but that they have "adopted" a whole new family somewhere across the world.

Today, we live in a world community. We are connected by communication, economics, transportation and common beliefs. The realization that the world comes into our living rooms everyday, makes it critical for us to think beyond our national boundaries and reach out to understand our world neighbors. One way to learn about the people from other cultures is to live, work and play side-by-side as family members.

Colorado State University Extension's 4-H International Programs offer young people and families opportunities to participate in exchange experiences. Families who host an international youth gain a chance to share their culture with someone from a different country and see their own community through the eyes of a foreign friend. Both the visiting youth who spends time with an American family, and the American youth who lives in a different culture--complete their experiences as a family member instead of a tourist.

One of the 4-H International Programs that brings the prospect of peace and understanding closer is FLEX--the Future Leaders Exchange. "This nationwide program was created because of former U.S. Senator Bill Bradley's conviction that the best way to ensure long-lasting peace and understanding between the United States and the emerging democracies of the former Soviet Union was to enable young people from the New Independent States to learn about democracy firsthand--by experiencing it," said Courtney Loflin, Extension specialist and 4-H international programs coordinator.

Colorado has four such young visitors this year, she said. One is 17-year-old Anuar Kalkamanov, who is spending a year as a new addition to Karol and Gail Claussen's family who's natural family members have grown and moved away from home (see related story page 12). Anuar adopted quickly to his new American life and family as evidenced by his attraction to pizza and steak, his high grades in math and biology, and his new-found role as a defensive corner/tight end on the Ellicott High School football team. He loves to ride horses and is a great-worker around the Claussen ranch near Yoder, Colo. After a visit to the high school, it is not hard to see why this outgoing teenager is well-liked by his American peers, and his teachers agree that he has been a great addition to the community.

"He is a great kid!" said the school counselor. "Send us some more just like him."

The major goal of the FLEX program, which is administered through the U.S. State Department, is democracy-building-exposing teenagers ages 15 to 17 to our democratic society and free market economy. Since the program's inception in 1993, thousands of young citizens from the former Soviet Union have been awarded scholarships to participate in this program.

Anuar, whose family is from Astana, Kazakhstan, joins three other NIS teens who are experiencing family life in Colorado this year-Gor from Armenia is with a family in Chevaw, Anna from the Ukraine is at home in LaVeta, and George from Georgia is living in LaJara. Other FLEX participants around the country are from Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgystan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Participants are recruited and selected through a merit-based competition that considers academic performance, English language competence and personal qualities in the selection process. Approximately 1 in 30 of the initial applicants are ultimately selected as participants.

When asked about what happens to FLEX students when they return home?, Loflin answered: "After living a year in the U.S., FLEX students change tremendously. Most alumni say they have learned to appreciate their home country more, but it is clear they have learned much about American culture, as well."

Loflin added that alumni of many international exchange programs often say that the most difficult adjustment they have to face is the reverse culture shock they experience when they go home. To ease this adjustment and help FLEX students perpetuate their American experience, the program offers alumni networks throughout the NIS which meet regularly for discussions, American movies and holiday celebrations, speaker nights, career counseling, and community service activities. The alumni associations serve as outlets for these bright, young citizens and give them opportunities to participate in activities that support their movement toward positions of leadership in their own countries.

"Programs like this can break down misconceptions and stereotypes and bring the world closer together," Loflin said. "And these 'adopted' families are never the same again." - *Wendy Douglass*

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Education & Teamwork BEEF Up Agriculture

Eastern Colorado rancher Rex Buck drives 90 miles to attend Colorado State University Extension-sponsored educational programs through the Beef Education and Economic Forum, or BEEF as it is known.

Buck joins producers from a six-county area who gather at the Logan County Extension Office in Sterling to hear Colorado State University faculty and Extension specialists discuss topics related to beef production. He makes the hour-and-a-half drive from his operation east of Wray to Sterling once a month--February through May--because he wants to know as much as he can about his industry.



"You can't stay in the livestock business if you aren't succeeding. It's a tough, tough business," Buck said. Success requires cutting-edge information and tools.

BEEF program components put producers in touch with ag experts and the data they need to make better business decisions. In addition, the program links producers with each other, building a strength-in-numbers kind of foundation from which they can dissect problems and share solutions. Program participants and facilitators see broad benefits in BEEF, ranging from more efficient problem-solving to economic development. David Colburn, Extension livestock agent in Logan County, said the 20 to 25 producers who gather in Sterling for the BEEF presentations come from widely varied operations. While most have cow-calf operations, some run 50 head, while others maintain herds of 200 to 300 head. Some run commercial herds, others purebred.

The seven-county region they hail from--Logan, Morgan, Phillips, Sedgwick, Washington, Weld and Yuma--is a diverse territory, as well. Some ranch on the edge of sand hills, others in short-grass prairie settings.

"I would say we've probably got the full spectrum of producers you can have," Colburn said.

What they share, however, is Buck's hunger for knowledge about their industry. BEEF program topics have included discussions on reproductive physiology, genetics, beef quality assurance, economics, forage management, animal nutrition and marketing. But there's more to BEEF than listening to the experts. Colburn said the program incorporates a technique called the Better Practices Process which encourages participants to become involved in identifying the problems they face and dictating the information they need to hear.

BEEF has its roots in the efforts of the Western Center for Integrated Resource Management at Colorado State University. Integrated resource management recognizes that many of the issues farmers and ranchers face in managing their operations aren't isolated problems related simply to one area of their businesses, said Brian Ripley, WCIRM coordinator. "A ranch or a land unit is a system of its own. Making a change in one area affects all the other areas."

Ripley said the overall purpose of the BEEF program is to bring that systems approach to life. The program provides northeastern Colorado producers with the tools they need to understand their operations as systems, see where problems fit within those systems and find solutions. As a facet of the BEEF program, northeastern Colorado Extension agents are working to form small groups of producers who will meet weekly to talk about their operations.

"A large percentage of the time, producers, just by sharing with one another, can come up with solutions to their problems. There's a lot of power in working together," Ripley said.

The Feedlot Discovery Program is another BEEF program facet. It allows producers to place a small number of calves into a feedlot setting and receive carcass data back on those calves. Graduate students at Colorado State run the carcass data through different marketing scenarios or options, Colburn explained. This gives producers information they may never have had before because they typically sold weaned calves, rather than feeding them out.

"Producers can use this data to figure out where to best market their cattle," Colburn said. When producers can retain ownership of just a small number of calves it lowers the risks inherent in such a change, Ripley said, allowing them to safely and reasonably investigate the potential outcomes. Producers also can opt to take part in a Standardized Performance Analysis of their operations, designed to help them collect and process production and financial data into standardized performance measures.

Buck said the analysis has sharpened his focus on the financial side of things and sparked some minor management changes. "I'd always kind of figured my cost of production, but the SPA analysis is very, very detailed and very in depth," he said. The analysis revealed, for example, that Buck could boost alfalfa production profits by delaying calving until later in the season when his ranch yields more green grass to meet the high nutritional demands of lactating cows.

The changes he's making as a result of participating in the BEEF program aren't necessarily drastic, Buck said, but he believes they'll make a difference. "If we can get 10 percent more efficient a year, in 10 years we're twice as efficient as we were before. Hopefully, profits will follow." --*Sue Lenthe*

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Partnering Keeps Western Colorado Green

To a lot of residents in western Colorado, Curtis Swift is a man of many talents. During a typical day on the job, he might be a gardening columnist for the local newspaper, an advisor to area gardeners, or a teacher of apprentice Master Gardeners. However, for Swift, a Colorado State University Extension horticulture agent, meeting the many needs of his multiple audiences is all in a day's work.



Based in Grand Junction, Swift has been educating the residents of Colorado's Tri River Area (Delta, Mesa, Ouray and part of Montrose counties) on horticulture issues since 1980. With more than 25 years of Extension experience, his advice on gardening and plants has helped countless people from rural and urban communities in Colorado to small villages overseas. Swift's work has taken him from El Paso County, where he was an Extension horticulture agent, to the Republic of Armenia where he assisted the U.S. Department of Agriculture in training local vegetable producers and Extension staff.

Like many regions in Colorado, the Tri River Area is growing and changing. Steady newcomers and expanding communities have put Extension in high demand. Part of that demand includes up-to-date research-based information Swift supplies to homeowners, "green industry" professionals, local governments, and agricultural businesses. These groups turn to Extension for information that will help them make educated decisions about horticulture issues facing their business, clients or property.

Swift explained that Extension's horticulture and plant pathology information is in-sync with the practices used by the area's green industry, a group of professionals, businesses and government departments that specialize in gardening and horticulture work. He frequently provides on-site information about plant disease and insect problems to sod farms, golf courses, greenhouse producers, lawn care companies, and chemical applicators.

"I've tried to blend the efforts of Extension and the local green industry together so that we learn from each other," Swift said. "By having this coordination, we've been able to keep professionals current with research-based information and build a better program. If they do better, we all do better."

In an effort to improve the dissemination of horticulture information throughout his region, Swift routinely asks both large and small growers, "How can I improve Extension's response to you?" He recognizes Extension's Master Gardener Program, a

nationwide volunteer force that focuses on problems encountered by the gardening public, as one of the best ways to reach both homeowners and industry personnel. Strong involvement with local businesses and government has increased participation in the Tri River program to more than 230 apprentice and continuing volunteers, of which 27 percent are green industry professionals.

Dennis Hill, owner of Bookcliff Gardens in Grand Junction, can attest to the value of Master Gardeners. In his 20 years of working with Extension, not only have many of his employees participated in the program, but he also teaches alongside Swift. He credits the classes with raising the level of awareness of horticulture issues in western Colorado, resulting in the growth of a loyal customer base for his business.

"If someone comes in with a yellow leaf, there may not be something to sell that person, but they may need advice," he said. "If a customer plants something and it lives, it helps the industry. We engender a feeling of trust and confidence to keep customers coming back. Extension helps us do that."

Tom Ziola, a consulting arborist in Grand Junction, agrees that Extension has had an impact on the community. Having been involved in the Master Gardener Program since 1992, Ziola attributes Extension with keeping western Colorado green and a better place to live. "It allows individuals to continue educational opportunities, increase their knowledge, and better serve the community in turn," he said.

Swift continues to find additional ways to expand the support he gives area gardeners and growers. Through a weekly gardening column he writes for the Grand Junction Daily Sentinel newspaper, a website he maintains on area gardening topics--a site that is accessed more than 20,000 times a month, and an electronic list-serve (in conjunction with Extension in Eagle County) with 140 green industry subscribers, Swift maintains that Extension invariably reaches the individuals and businesses in the Tri River Area who need growing advice.

Additionally, Swift has developed relationships with local, regional and national authorities who invite him to speak on current issues regarding plants and the landscape. Some of the professional associations that have enlisted his insight include the Associated Landscape Contractors of Colorado, the Colorado Association of Lawn Care Professionals, the Sports Turf Managers Association, the Rocky Mountain Turfgrass Conference, and the Colorado ProGreen Conference.

"Curt and all of Extension have been invaluable to the whole city," said Mike Vendega, park supervisor and forester for the City of Grand Junction. "The proactive relationship with Extension has helped me do my job. Not only do we go to Curt with problems, he also comes to us with problems. The information that Extension provides is always pertinent to what we're doing," Vendega said. --*David Hachigian*

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"Playing Around" Helps Find Common Ground

Five Colorado counties ranked among the top-ten fastest growth areas in the nation last year, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Residents in these communities struggle to address the challenges around land-use and growth issues.



Opinions vary from one extreme to another, and many communities have found that differing opinions can expand from neighborhood squabbles to gridlock among policy makers. But what if community members could go to a simulated town where they could consider information, engage in decision-making, and see consequences of land-use decisions? And what if they could reflect on their experience and discuss how ideas and insights from it could be used in real life?

This is exactly what people can experience through "WestLand: the Workshop," a five-hour participatory activity that encourages non-divisive communication among participants through involvement in a simulated community. They become citizens of WestLand where they make decisions that affect local agriculture, natural resources, the economy and the community. The workshop uses tools developed by land-grant institutions and partners, with western enhancements created by staff from the Center for Rural Assistance, other Extension faculty and representatives of the Colorado Rural Development Council to better mirror the Western landscape.

The computerized portion of the simulation illustrates how future conditions are influenced by current decisions. Players must determine how lands will be used while the town council makes policy decisions. At the end of each round, all decisions are entered into the computer and the results are displayed and analyzed. In WestLand, citizens have access to a local newspaper and radio broadcasts. They also participate in a public forum where they hear from a guest speaker who shares experiences of some neighboring communities via a videotape. In the Managing Community Growth video, citizens and officials from "areas to the north" explore issues and some of the management techniques used by small towns and overburdened counties affected by rapid growth.

Dean Oatman, Extension agent in Custer County, who facilitated a WestLand simulation in his county, said this fun approach to decision-making and growth management served as a springboard for better communication among local participants--including a newly-elected county commissioner, several local agricultural producers, the county cartographer and several new residents who own small-acreage properties.

"We had very positive feedback. Everyone who attended said those who didn't missed a good experience," said Oatman. "Finding a way to deal with growth starts with communication and finding common ground. This program helps to facilitate that kind of discussion. The participants see that life on the other side of the street isn't as easy as they thought."

A Custer County cartographer in real life, Charlie French has seen first-hand how the landscape has changed with the booming growth around the town of Westcliffe. French said although he had always sympathized with the amount of work that goes into running a family farm, playing a farmer in the simulation gave him a unique perspective.

"The workshop really helped me understand how everything is interrelated and how one thing affects the other," said French.

Don Kaufman, retired U.S. Air Force Major General and Custer County rancher, also attended the workshop. "WestLand offers a superb opportunity for participants to see and experience the interrelationships of factors impacting current rural communities," he said. "Everyone who has the opportunity should grab the chance to participate in this outstanding program."

Workshop facilitators hope that by seeing the interconnection, as well as the cause and effect of their actions within the simulation, participants will be able to look at issues from different perspectives when they arise in their everyday lives.

Dick Downey, a newly elected Custer County Commissioner who was on the Westland policy council, said the lessons learned in the workshop will be valuable to him when making policies that affect his real-life community.

"WestLand: the Workshop will be a help to me in decision-making on land-use issues in my new job as county commissioner," Downey said. "It is strong on cause-and-effect and related government decisions."

Oatman noted that the program will be expanded in 2001 to reach more people, with the hope that community leaders who participate will be encouraged to work together to ensure they can accommodate growth and yet still maintain a desired way of life.

"I hope that 20 years from now these communities will have preserved things that are important to them," said Oatman. "Communities have to first determine what is important, and programs like WestLand: the Workshop are a great way to get people together to find out what is worth preserving." --*Jason Crowe & Diana Laughlin*

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A "Little Learning"--Mixed With Homespun Fun

Festivals, fairs, shows, special events...that's where people gather to socialize, celebrate, share stories, feast, and have fun!

And if a little learning should take place, that's a good thing.

Colorado State University Extension believes a "little learning" is a good thing, but when it is mixed with having fun...that's an even better thing.



You'll find Extension faculty involved in producing and participating in hundreds of fairs, shows, and special events all times of the year, every year, because community festivals and shows are adult and youth education opportunities. They often attract people who might not take part in traditional learning experiences. They often are an effective setting to teach certain topics, capture interest in specific ideas, or provide demonstrations on educational subjects. There are cultural celebrations, community gatherings, county fairs and special attractions that showcase community customs or traditions, recreate historic events or celebrate community participation. They can encourage a sense of belonging, reach community goals, develop local resources, build community pride, and bring in economic rewards.

Community festival and event planning can be a great way to teach and learn a variety of leadership and management skills; a way to become involved as leaders, organizers and volunteers. Special events offer educational opportunities to directly teach and reach new audiences, to bring groups together to share challenges and explore a little learning.

Extension has shared knowledge and expanded clientele through events such as All About Kids Expo--an annual two-day Denver event that attracts about 12,000 multicultural families with young children from throughout the Front Range with educational and entertaining activities; Extension's Western Small Acreage Expo--a spring event held in Grand Junction that attracts more than 600 small acreage landowners from throughout the area and adjoining states to a day of demonstrations, seminars and exhibits on how to manage acreages, pastures, animals and natural resources; ProGreen Expo--jointly sponsored with six green industry associations each January for six years, provides professional development education and research updates for 7,000 landscape architects and contractors, greenhouse growers, arboriculturists, and nursery and garden center employees from throughout the Rocky Mountain region.

Extension helps produce specialized events like the annual Colorado Agricultural Outlook Forum--that reaches 450 professionals who spend a day addressing agribusiness and

legislative issues and innovative developments in agriculture; or CSU Ag Day-that celebrates Colorado agriculture by combining educational demonstrations with fun, food and football for about 3,500 participants each year.

Colorado State University faculty have presented demonstrations, seminars and educational exhibits at such annual events as the Colorado Garden & Home Show-where, since the early '60s, they have joined other nonprofit groups to share information and educational presentations in a week-long venue at the Colorado Convention Center that reaches 60,000-70,000 consumers eager for information on landscaping and gardening. In the last six years, Extension and CSU's Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture have built a large popular display garden to demonstrate research-based horticultural information in real life, and to showcase the expertise of Extension Master Gardeners who answer thousands of questions from attendees.

Channel 9 (Denver KUSA-TV) resident gardener Bill Kuster has said of the event: "People doing battle in the trenches of their own backyards truly have a friend in CSU Extension. Each year they learn new and doggone important information."

Extension's participation in the three-day Colorado Farm Show, begun in Greeley in the 1960s, has provided ample opportunities to reach agricultural producers and the farm community throughout a multi-state area. Today the free attraction involves 24,000 participants who attend seminars on such topics as dairy, beef and equine issues, and visit 330 commercial and educational exhibitors in one of the largest ag trade shows in eastern Colorado and adjoining states.

Both the Colorado State Fair, a statewide tradition held in Pueblo in late summer, and the National Western Stock Show, the area's largest livestock trade show held in Denver during January, are both heavily attended events filled with rodeos, shows, sales, demonstrations, educational activities and high-quality family entertainment. The 16-day Stock Show, in its 95th year, attracted 623,000 people to the Denver Coliseum; the 17-day Colorado State Fair, that will celebrate its 129th year in 2001, regularly attracts from 800,000 to 1 million visitors to the State Fairgrounds. Youth involvement is one of the highlights of both shows when 4-H and other youth exhibitors participate in educational experiences and compete for recognition, awards and scholarships.

Side benefits of many of these events, including the Garden and Home Show, the Farm Show, State Fair and National Western Stock Show are the monies generated for student scholarships and grants to support educational programs that are an important part of special events.

Community celebrations link town and country, old and young, visitors and residents, traditions and opportunities; and they provide places for Extension to share a "little learning" mixed with homespun fun. -*Wendy Douglass*

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Background and Funding

Extension is the off-campus educational arm of Colorado State University. The Extension system, a nationwide educational network, is a partnership of county, state and federal governments working cooperatively with the private sector. The Smith-Lever Act established state Extension Services as a third program branch, along with resident instruction and research, of the land-grant universities in each state. Extension agents and specialists are general faculty of Colorado State University. They work with local constituents throughout Colorado in planning, developing and implementing the educational programs of Extension. Volunteers also have an important role in the delivery of Extension programs. Extension programs serve Coloradans wherever they live.

Funding for Extension is provided from multiple sources: federal, state, county and non-tax monies. Federal funds are allocated to the states on the basis of law and formula. Additionally, some federal funds are earmarked to meet special national priority needs. Extension receives state funds from Colorado State University's allocation through the Colorado Commission on Higher Education as part of the state's higher education budget. County commissioners appropriate annual budget funds to support the operation of the Extension office in their county. Some funds are received from non-tax sources such as program grants and cost recovery fees.

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