



**COLORADO**  
Department of Agriculture



# Colorado Department of Agriculture 2024-25 Performance Plan



# Table of contents

**Message from the  
Commissioner**

[page 3](#)

**Who We Are**

[page 4](#)

**Agricultural Landscape**

[page 13](#)

**Strategic Priorities**

[page 20](#)

**Wildly Important Goals and  
Strategies**

[page 27](#)

**Previous FY Progress**

**Report**

[page 32](#)

Cover Photo, Table of Contents and  
Back Cover are all 2022 Best in Show  
Photography Contest entries

Cover Photo: “Out to Pasture” by  
Sidney Ferrari

Table of Contents Grand Prize Photo:  
“Shorthorns Near Needle Rock” by Kris  
Stewart

Back Cover Photo: “Cornfield in Sunset”  
by Shelby Schnorr



# About our Agency

# Commissioner's Message

Welcome to the 2024 edition of the Colorado Department of Agriculture's Performance Plan. I am honored to be part of an agency with more than 300 field and office employees dedicated to supporting Colorado agriculture in its many forms.

Agriculture is critical to the well-being and success of our state. The diversity of crops, produce, and livestock creates the foundation on which Colorado consumers depend as they make daily decisions at their local grocery store, favorite restaurant, and neighborhood food truck. The choices faced by consumers are largely informed by their trust in farmers and ranchers. They know that their neighbors, whether on the Western Slope, Eastern Plains, San Luis Valley, Northwest, or Front Range, work from sunup to sundown every season as stewards of our land and water. Each season, we are fortunate to enjoy the literal fruits of their labor.

The hard work of these producers is accomplished within the framework of regulations that our inspectors and crews help to navigate, ensuring a safe, healthy, fair process in which to grow and raise food, fiber, and fuel. Field staff are in every region and almost every town in Colorado as your friends and neighbors who also represent the state of Colorado. These relationships are also why Colorado's agricultural communities are such close-knit, partner-dependent, and vibrant places to live and work.

We've informed the goals and priorities in this Performance Plan by our relationships with ag communities across the state and our desire to grow those partnerships. Promoting climate-smart agricultural practices, supporting local processing needs, understanding economic drivers, enforcing animal health and wellness, and stewarding land and water are the external indicators used to calibrate our performance. The data gathered in this report tells a story of where we are and have been, but also shows the path to where we want go.

Please enjoy reading about our past, present, and future plans to sustain a thriving, adaptable, vital agricultural community.

Sincerely,



Kate Greenberg  
Colorado Commissioner of Agriculture

# About CDA

Colorado's agricultural and food industry contributes significantly to the state's economy, generating \$47 billion annually in economic activity and supporting more than 195,000 jobs. This success is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our farmers, ranchers, and food producers. We are deeply grateful for their tireless efforts.

The Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) supports and promotes the state's diverse agricultural and food industry. We are committed to ensuring the success of farmers, ranchers, and food producers by providing essential resources and fostering innovation. Moreover, we diligently oversee food regulations and inspection programs, ensuring the quality and integrity of Colorado's food products. You can trust that what you eat is safe and of the highest quality.

We are dedicated to the agriculture community, and we firmly believe that everyone, regardless of their occupation, can benefit from the resources we provide. Our doors are open to all, as we strive to create a stronger, more resilient agricultural community together.

If you've ever bought groceries, adopted a dog, or fertilized your lawn, the Colorado Department of Agriculture has served you. CDA performs hundreds of regulatory and support functions, including but not limited to:

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



# Agency Culture



## Mission

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

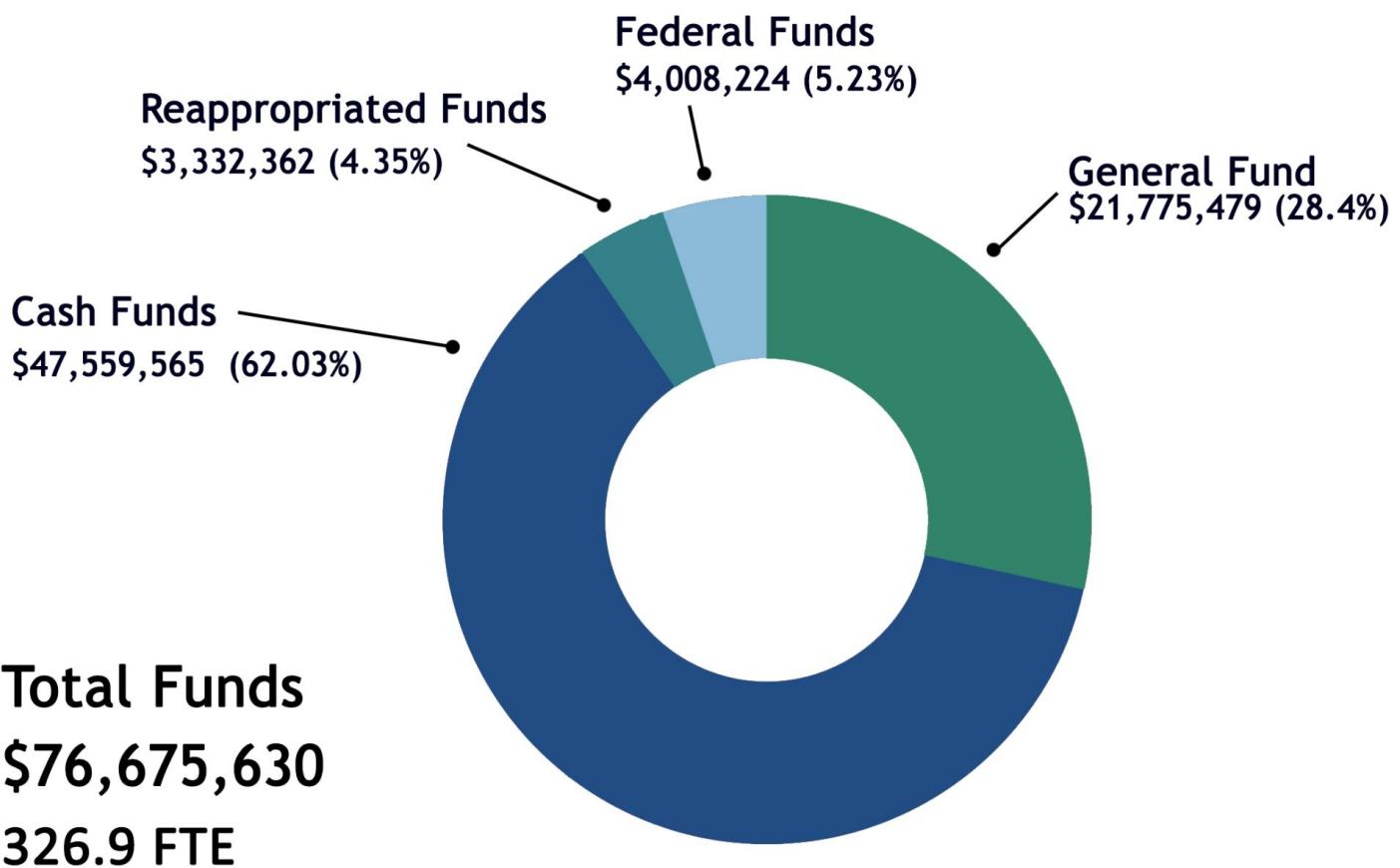
## Vision

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

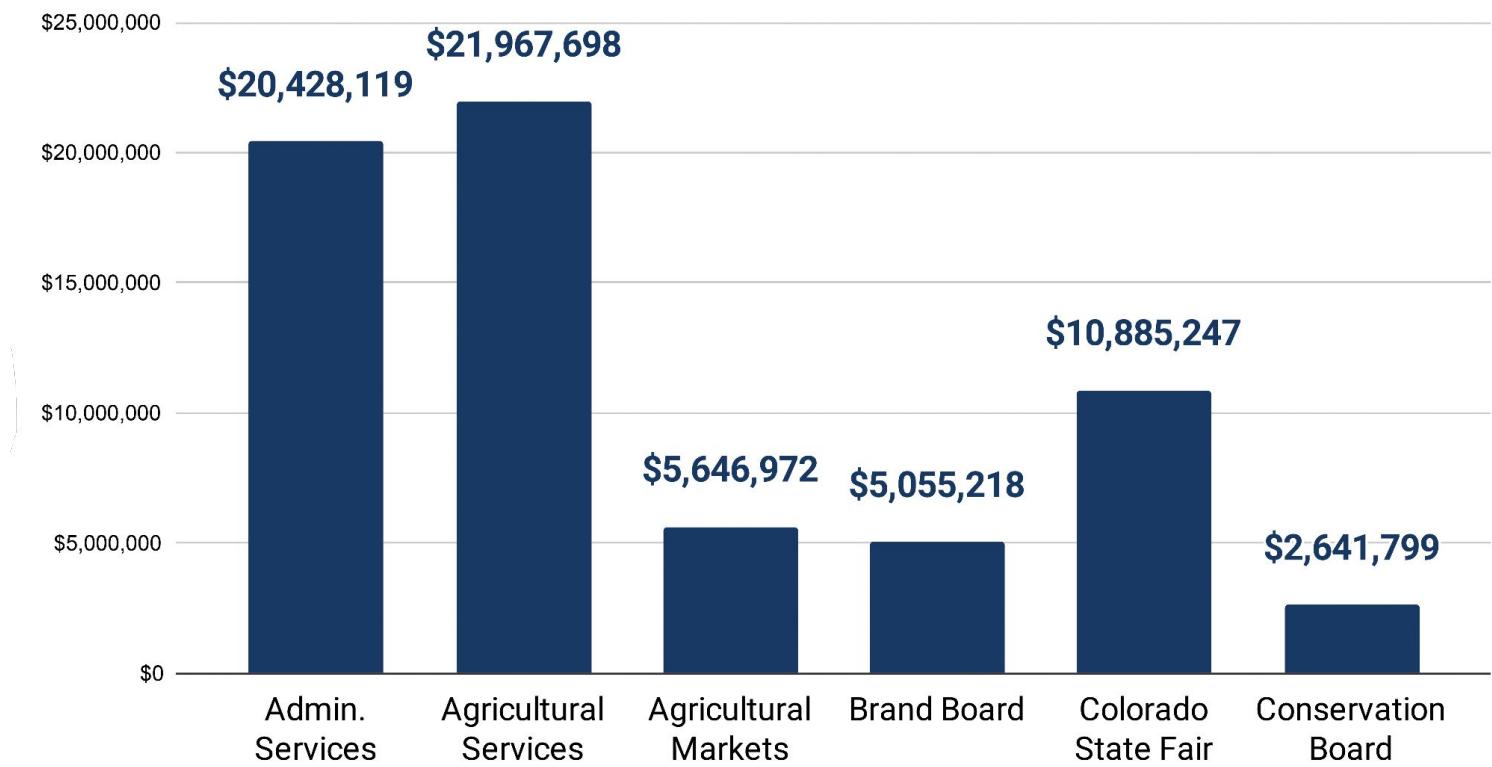
## Core Values

Partnership  
Service  
Professionalism  
Proactivity  
Respect

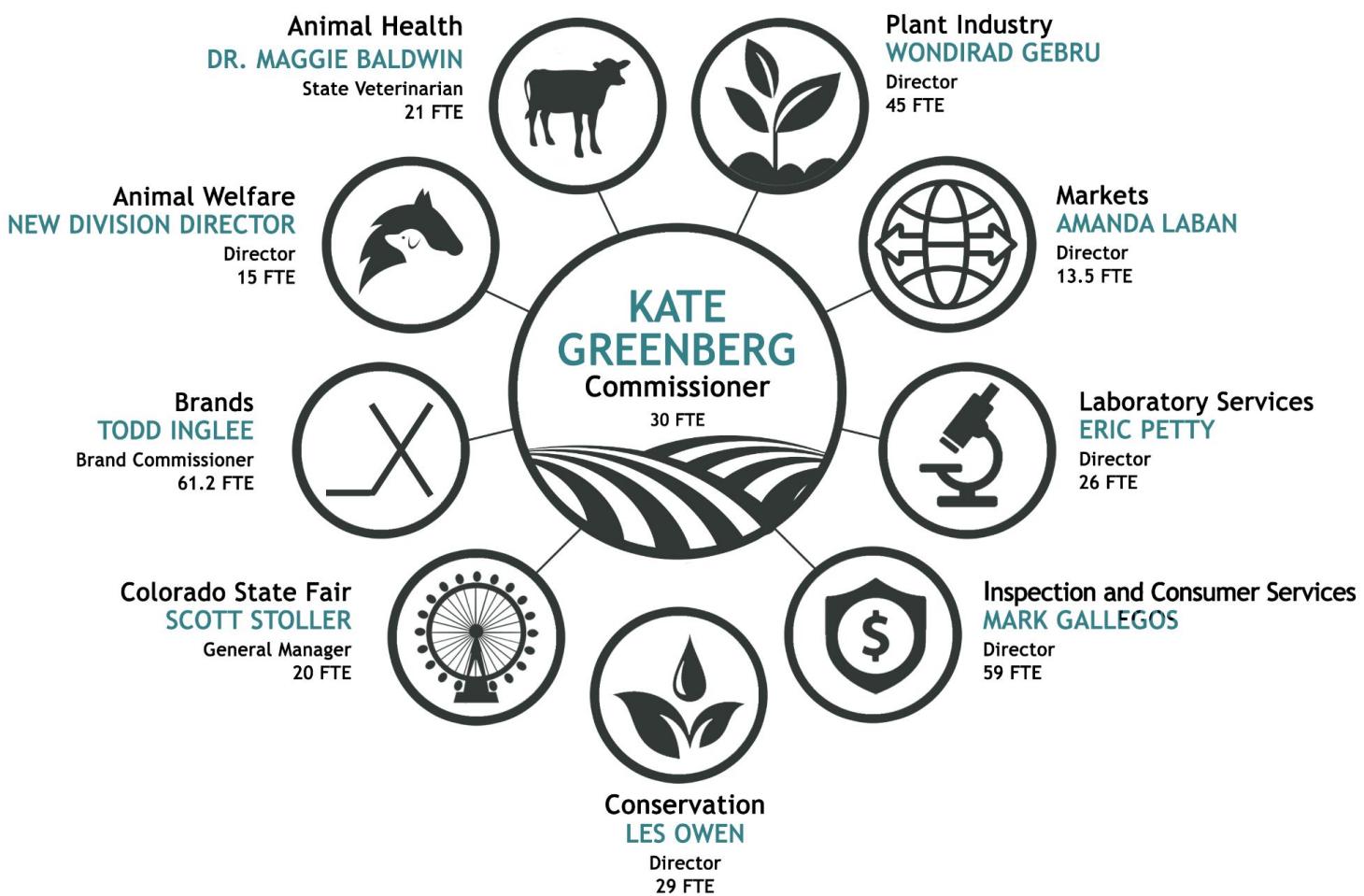
# Agency Budget FY 24-25



## Total Funds by Division\*



# Agency Structure



## Commissioner's Office Division

In collaboration with local, state, regional, and federal partners, and the agricultural community, the Commissioner's Office supports Colorado's agriculture industry. It serves as a central hub for financial management, legislative affairs, human resources, communications, process excellence, continuity of operations, and information technology. Our Regional Assistant Commissioners and community outreach are pivotal in connecting CDA and agricultural communities across the state. This division spearheads CDA's Rural Mental Health Initiative, forges partnerships to advance education, and drives public awareness of agriculture through CDA's website, newsletter, events, sponsorships, and collaboration with diverse media across the state. Discover more about our nine other divisions as you continue reading.

# Divisions

## Animal Health

The Animal Health Division works closely with livestock producers, veterinarians, industry associations, and state and federal agencies to promote the health and marketability of Colorado's livestock.

They provide livestock disease prevention and control, animal disease traceability, coordination of livestock emergency incident preparedness and response, disease surveillance, and licensing of aquaculture facilities.

## Animal Welfare

The newest addition to CDA, the Animal Welfare Division, is dedicated to proactively ensuring the welfare and humane treatment of animals across the state.

Established in 2024, this division focuses on implementing and enforcing animal welfare laws, promoting responsible ownership, and providing education and resources to the public. They work in collaboration with other agencies and organizations to protect and advocate for the welfare of all animals.

The Bureau of Animal Protection (BAP) is one program under this division. BAP oversees and trains commissioned animal protection agents, administers a stakeholder task force, conducts outreach and education, and works with local animal protection and law enforcement officials to advance cooperation in investigating potential animal mistreatment, neglect, or abandonment.

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





## Brands

Brand inspection has been part of Colorado's history in one form or another since 1865. It serves several essential purposes, including deterring theft, facilitating commerce, protecting livestock producers and lenders, providing accurate tracking of livestock movements for disease traceability, facilitating the return of stolen or stray livestock, and helping keep the livestock industry healthy and viable.

The Brand Inspection Division inspects and verifies ownership of approximately 4.5 million head of livestock annually. We investigate stolen or missing livestock cases, assisting in their recovery and return and in criminal prosecutions as necessary.

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

## Colorado State Fair

The Colorado State Fair Authority's mission celebrates Colorado's vibrant and diverse industries, emphasizing agriculture. Our three main priorities are:

1. To put on an annual celebration of Colorado's varied cultures, communities, and traditions. Our goal is to offer an enriching, family-friendly event that promotes awareness of agriculture, Colorado Proud food products, and the state's industries.
2. To showcase and honor Colorado's Agricultural Industry through a permanent agriculture education exhibit.
3. To establish a "Gathering Place" for the Pueblo and Southern Colorado communities by utilizing venues for public and private events throughout the year. We aim to create a range of activities and attractions for the enjoyment and education of the Southern Colorado public.

# Conservation

The Conservation Services Division provides leadership on land and resource management issues, including federal lands.

We're composed of ten programs: the Agricultural Water Quality Program, the Agricultural Drought and Climate Resilience Office, Climate-Smart Marketing, Biological Pest Control, Chemigation, the Colorado State Conservation Board (CSCB), Natural Resource Policy and Planning, Noxious Weed Management, Pesticide Data Program, Soil Health Program, and Weed-Free Forage.

These programs provide voluntary technical and financial support and incentives, leadership and coordination, and regulatory oversight to private landowners, public land managers, and agricultural businesses statewide on various natural resource management challenges.

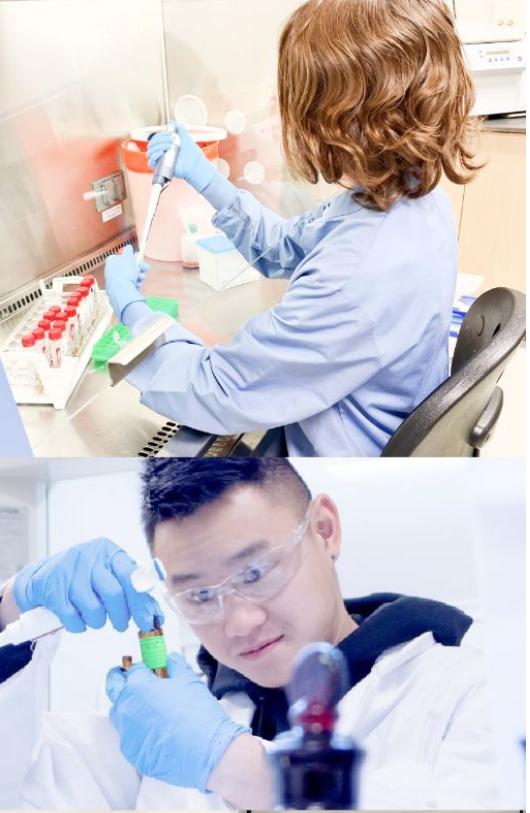
## Inspection and Consumer Services

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

In any given year, ICS inspectors conduct over 21,000 inspections across Colorado. These inspections include more than 25,000 commercial scales of various types and sizes, providing size and grade inspection services and conducting Good Agricultural Practices verification audits through the Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Section in Monte Vista. Additionally, ICS provides free mediation and dispute resolution services to farmers and ranchers through the Colorado Agricultural Mediation (CAMP) program.

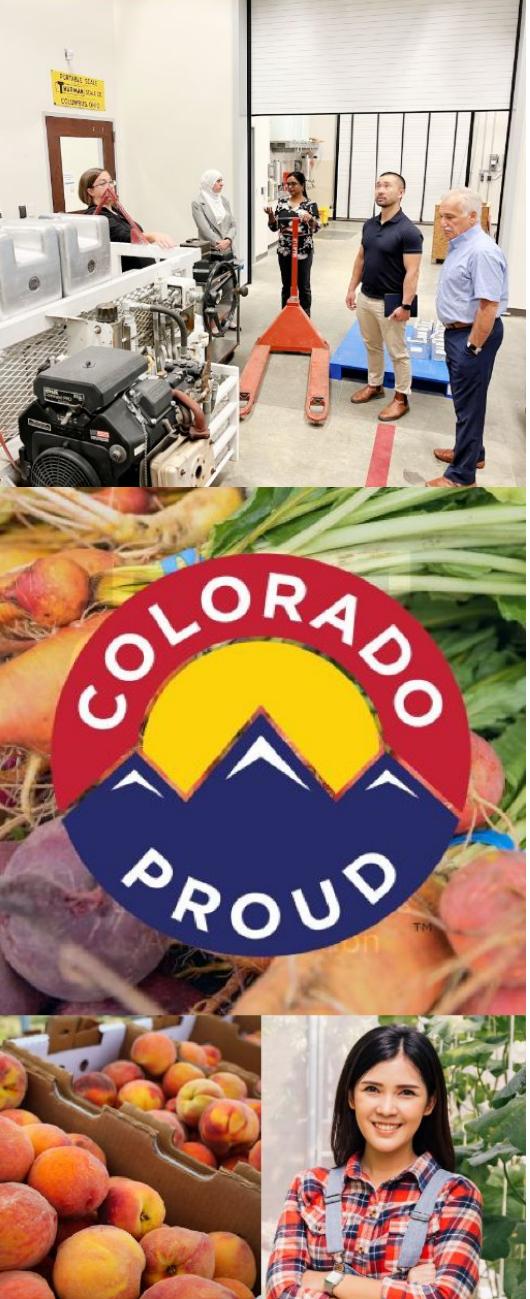


# Laboratory Services



The Division of Laboratory Services (DLS) provides valuable and consistent testing services with integrity and impartiality. DLS comprises three laboratory operations: Animal Health, Biochemistry, and Metrology. We handle various sample matrices at DLS, showcasing our versatility and capability. From artifacts for calibration to bodily fluids for animal disease detection, cannabis, environmental samples, and more, we conduct approximately 160,000 individual analyses annually. All three laboratories maintain ISO/IEC 17025:2017 accreditation, a globally recognized standard ensuring our testing services' quality and reliability. Our commitment to education is demonstrated through the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics program aimed at educational organizations to learn about the science performed at our facility, fostering a culture of knowledge sharing and learning.

## Markets



The Market Division aims to increase marketing opportunities for Colorado's farmers, ranchers, and food and beverage producers, promote value-added business ventures, and support the next generation of agriculturalists and leaders. Colorado Proud helps consumers and buyers identify and purchase food, beverage, and agricultural products grown, raised, or processed in Colorado. We also assist producers and companies in finding new domestic and international markets through business-to-business meetings, trade shows, and missions. Additionally, we oversee market order programs that fund viticulture research, promote Colorado wines, and administer the state's Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. We are deeply committed to supporting the next generation of agricultural producers through valuable training opportunities, including internships and leadership training. Our programming now also includes the Colorado Agriculture Future Loan Program, Community Food Access Program, and Climate-Smart Marketing program, expanding the scope and breadth of our support for Colorado's food and agriculture industry.



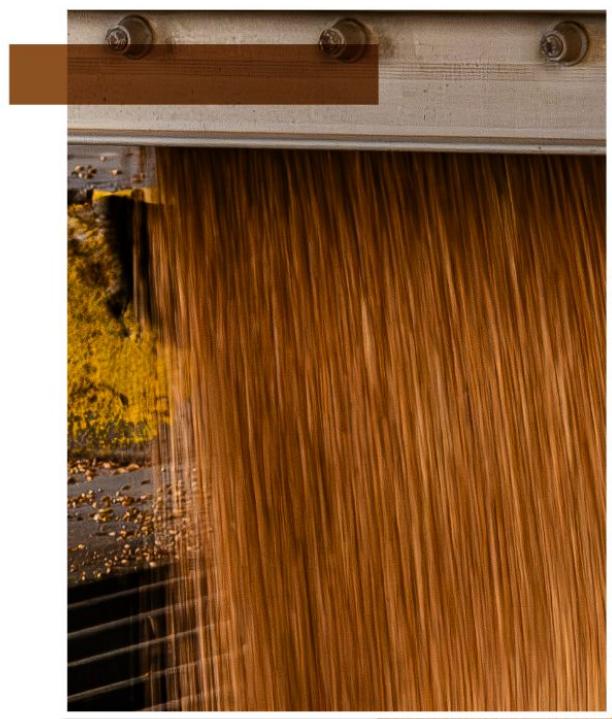
# Plant Industry

The Division of Plant Industry protects and promotes the state's agricultural and horticultural industries. They regulate plant production, sale, and distribution and implement programs to prevent the introduction and spread of plant pests and diseases. The division supports farmers, consumer protection, environmental and public health protection, and Colorado's plant industry from damaging diseases and insect pests.

We certify the organic industry, support exports of agricultural commodities, register and administer industrial hemp cultivation, enforce seed and nursery industry regulations, test and license commercial and private pesticide applicators, license restricted-use pesticide dealers and register pesticide products, maintain the list of pesticide-sensitive persons, and monitor invasive pest species.



# Agriculture Landscape



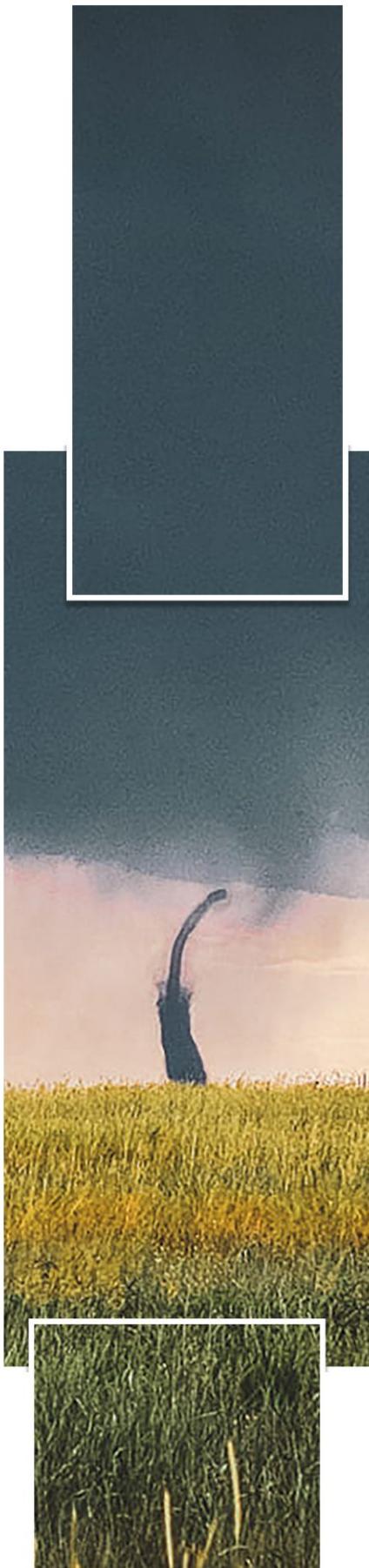
# Agricultural Landscape

Both nationally and in Colorado, the agricultural landscape faces numerous challenges, including climate change-induced weather extremes, labor shortages, trade uncertainties, inflation, and more.

However, these challenges also present opportunities. Colorado has been a leader in showcasing how innovation, adaptation, and investment in family-scale agriculture can build a path toward ensuring food security, resource stewardship, and agricultural prosperity for future generations.

Climate change concerns and market demands have prompted Colorado farmers to diversify their crops and operations. Traditional crops like wheat and corn continue to be strong performers, but producers have added new crops such as quinoa, hemp, and specialty crops like fruits and vegetables. This diversification mitigates risks associated with climate variability and taps into niche markets, bolstering economic resilience.

Each year, CDA works with our national partners at the U.S. Department of Agriculture to administer the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, which enhances the competitiveness of Colorado specialty crops, such as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops (including floriculture).



# Agricultural Landscape continued...



The shift toward diversification also means Colorado producers have added or expanded their use of regenerative agricultural practices. This shift has been a defining feature of Colorado agriculture over the past several years.

From advancing soil health practices such as planting cover crops, rotational grazing, and minimizing soil disturbance to implementing water-saving technologies, farmers and ranchers in Colorado continue to prioritize natural resource stewardship that will help ensure long-term agricultural viability.

The Colorado Soil Health program in CDA's Conservation Division has been instrumental in securing funding to help producers experiment with new or different techniques to see what works best for their operations. The Soil Health team works closely with conservation districts and other partners, who serve as local experts and provide technical assistance to producers enrolled in the program.

Farmers and ranchers also continue to diversify by adding processing or value-added capacity, including promoting agritourism as an additional revenue stream. Immersive experiences such as farm stays, harvest festivals or farm-to-table dining have created new income sources for producers and help create greater understanding of and public engagement with agriculture.

# Agricultural Landscape continued

CDA has supported small and mid size producers as they work to expand their processing capacity. Through grants, loans, and partnerships, we've supported farmers and ranchers looking to invest into their operations and expand their offerings.

While the average age of ag producers continues to rise across the nation, some recent trends show that more young producers are joining the ag workforce. Across the US, young producers (under the age of 35) were much more likely to be a beginning farmer (those who farm for 10 years or less) with 81% of young producers self reporting as beginning producers, compared to 30% of all U.S. producers. In Colorado, there were 24,166 Colorado farmers with 10 or fewer years of experience, an increase in the number of beginning farmers from 2017 of 14.2%. Young producers make up 8% of all Colorado producers.

According to the [National Young Farmer Survey](#) from the National Young Farmers Coalition, young producers want to be part of agriculture's solution to ongoing climate challenges. 83% of young farmers, 87% of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) young farmers, and 88% of Black farmers say that one of their farm's primary purposes is to engage in conservation or regenerative agriculture.

CDA has continued to focus on increasing resources for young and beginning producers, including helping them gain access to capital, land, and leadership development opportunities.



# 2022 Census of Agriculture

This year, we obtained crucial insights into Colorado's agricultural industry. The [U.S. Department of Agriculture conducts a Census of Agriculture](#) every five years, with the most recent data collection from 2022 released this February. This comprehensive dataset, compiled and analyzed by the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, offers a detailed snapshot of Colorado's agriculture landscape, providing valuable information for CDA and stakeholders.

## Farmland

The 2022 Ag Census numbers reconfirm an ongoing trend in Colorado and the nation: the agriculture sector is witnessing consolidation, with larger farms having an increasing share of production. Since 2017, Colorado lost nearly 3,000 farms, going from 38,893 farms and ranches to 36,056.

The average size of a Colorado farm is 838 acres (up 2.4% from 2017) on 30.2 million acres of farmland (down 5.1%). Colorado's farmland is 3.4% of all U.S. farmland.

**36,056**  
Total Farms in Colorado

**93%** are Family Farms

**30.2 M**  
acres of Farmland in Colorado

### Agriculture Products Ranked by Sales

	1	Cattle and Calves	\$4.7B
	2	Grains, Oilseeds, and Dry Beans and Peas	\$1.5B
	3	Milk from Cows	\$1.2B
	4	Vegetables, Melons, and Potatoes	\$475M
	5	Other Crops and Hay	\$461M
	6	Nursery, Greenhouse, Floriculture, and Sod	\$285M
	7	Hogs and Pigs	\$210M
	8	Poultry and Eggs	\$112M
	9	Sheep, Goats, Wool, Mohair, and Milk	\$98M
	10	Fruits, Tree Nuts, and Berries	\$50M

# 2022 Census of Agriculture continued...

## Farm Income and Expenses

While the number of farms in Colorado decreased, our total market value of ag products sold has surged by more than \$1.7 billion since 2017 (from \$7.49 billion to \$9.22 billion). With farm production expenses of \$8.16 billion, Colorado farms had a net cash income of \$1.83 billion. A total of 34.8% of Colorado farms had positive net cash farm income in 2022, and average farm income rose to \$50,692.

Most Colorado farms are smaller in scale, with more than three-quarters (78% or 28,342) under 500 acres; of those, just under 16,000 farms are under 50 acres. Almost half of Colorado farms (17,688) have less than \$2,500 in annual sales. However, nearly 80% of all Colorado farms and ranches are family-owned and operated, including the majority of the large farms with more than \$500,000 in sales per year. The 1,000 farms with sales of \$1 million or more were 2.8% of Colorado farms and 23.1% of farmland; they sold more than 82% of all agricultural products in Colorado.

## Total Overview



Market Value of Products Sold	\$9.22B
Government Payments	\$289M
Farm-Related Income	\$476M
Total Farm Production Expenses	\$8.16B
<b>Net Cash Farm Income</b>	<b>\$1.83B</b>



Since 2017  
Net Cash Farm Income  
**up 58%**

## Top Counties: Land in Farms (acres)

Weld	1,987,213
Las Animas	1,805,818
Lincoln	1,598,737
Yuma	1,511,087
Washington	1,381,696

## Share of Sales by Type

Crops	31%
Livestock, poultry, and products	69%

# 2022 Census of Agriculture continued.

## Producers

While the average age of all Colorado producers was 58.3, up 0.7 year from 2017, this is a slightly smaller increase than the average age increase between prior censuses. It's also a smaller increase than the national average.

There were 24,166 Colorado farmers with 10 or fewer years of experience, an increase in the number of beginning farmers from 2017 of 14.2%. Beginning farmers in Colorado are younger than all farmers, with an average age of 49. The number of Colorado producers under age 35 was 5,439, comprising 8% of all Colorado producers. The 4,061 Colorado farms with young producers making decisions tend to be larger than average in both acres and sales.

In 2017, 28,839 (41.7%) of producers were female. By the 2022 Census, female producers decreased to 27,746, accounting for 40.9% of all Colorado producers. Additionally, 69% of all Colorado farms had at least one female decision maker.



**67,852 Producers**  
in Colorado

Between 2017 and 2022, U.S. producers held steady at **3.4 million**.



Colorado Producers  
Average Age  
**58.3 Years**

U.S. Producers  
Average Age  
**58.1 Years**



 **27,746**  
Female Producers in Colorado

 **40,106**  
Male Producers in Colorado



# Strategic Priorities

# Building a Path Forward

CDA's Multi-Year Strategic Plan serves as our compass, guiding our work in five distinct directions in which we support Colorado producers and workers through a broad spectrum of services and programs. The following outlines the five directions CDA programs will pursue through strategic actions over three years, starting in Fiscal Year 2025.

## Direction One

**People and Community**



## Direction Three

**Environmental Stewardship and Climate Resilience**

## Direction Five

**Internal Operational Improvements**

## Direction Two

**Market and Economic Productivity**

## Direction Four

**Animal Health and Welfare**

Within these directions are diverse paths, each with defined objectives and strategic actions that not only identify, track, and measure the progress of the services and programs across nine divisions, but also pave the way for our future success.

We can ensure the success of these actions through the collective efforts of all CDA employees. We use measurable benchmarks to guide our progress, swiftly adjust our tactics, and capture and celebrate successes.



# Direction One

## People and Community

### Direction One

#### Paths:

- **Ag Workforce**
- **Next-Gen of Ag Leaders**
- **State Fair Advancement**
- **Tribal Partnership**
- **Celebrating 150 Years of Colorado Agriculture**
- **Mental Health**
- **Urban Agriculture**



We work daily to ensure agriculture is a community where all are welcome and provided with equitable access. We recognize and celebrate the diverse agricultural heritage that predates statehood.

Our work is rooted in relationships with our ever-expanding communities, built on trust earned over time and nurtured by a shared commitment to the land, natural world, economic opportunity, and future generations. We will focus on critical objectives such as:

- Expanding access to resources to agricultural workforce and employers.
- Increasing internships and other educational opportunities for ag leaders.
- Connecting more State Fair visitors with agriculture through education.
- Continuing partnerships with Ute Mountain Ute Tribe and Southern Ute Indian Tribe.
- Increasing access to mental and behavioral health resources for producers and workers.
- Advancing the growth of urban agriculture.



## Direction Two

# Market and Economic Productivity

### Direction Three

#### Paths:

- **Marketing and Promotion of Colorado Agriculture**
- **International and National Market Expansion**
- **Local Food System and Local Food Access**



We are committed to creating a future where everyone in agriculture has the resources and opportunities to thrive and profit. This includes diversity in people, markets, practices, and biodiversity.

Colorado's small and mid-size farms and food businesses can benefit from accessing local, national, and international markets.

CDA's marketing programs will provide producers and value-added businesses with marketing resources and assistance, focusing on strengthening Colorado's local food system. We will focus on critical objectives such as:

- Expanding Colorado Proud to be more dynamic and diverse.
- Promoting marketing strategies and opportunities for climate-smart agriculture.
- Opening new national and international markets.
- Supporting the development of local food systems through investment and engagement.



# Direction Three

## Environmental Stewardship and Climate Resilience

### Direction Three

#### Paths:

- **Renewable and Energy Innovation**
- **Regenerative Agriculture**
- **Water resilience and Adaptation**
- **Invasive Pests, Diseases, and Noxious Weeds**
- **Pesticide Protection**



We aim to create a more resilient agricultural community that anticipates and prepares for future challenges. This effort is a proactive step towards mitigating and addressing tomorrow's challenges.

We believe that by being proactive, we can significantly improve the lives, landscapes, and ecosystems we help steward while preserving a robust future for Colorado agriculture.

We will focus on critical objectives such as:

- Advancing energy efficiency, renewable energy, and water resilience.
- Expanding climate-risk resilience initiatives through our soil health program.
- Supporting community response to invasive pests, diseases, and noxious weeds.
- Expanding pesticide testing for public health threats.



## Direction Four Animal Health and Welfare

### Direction Four Paths:

- **Emergency Preparedness**
- **Foreign Animal Disease Preparedness and Response**
- **Animal Disease Traceability**
- **Ag-Wildlife Program**
- **Animal Welfare**



Our unwavering focus is on the health, safety, and welfare of Colorado livestock and companion animals. We remain vigilant to emerging threats that can devastate multiple levels.

Whether it's the threat of a natural disaster, the emergence of foreign diseases, the safety of our herds, or the scarcity of feed, we've designed our animal programs to elevate Colorado's preparedness and response to these and other threats, ensuring the continued well-being of our animals. We will focus on critical objectives such as:

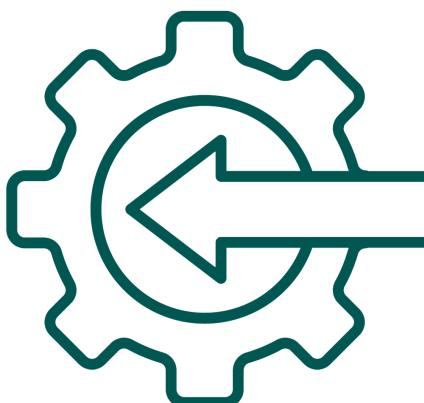
- Increasing capacity to respond to natural disasters impacting our ag communities.
- Enhancing foreign animal disease preparedness and resiliency.
- Increasing animal disease traceability and response efforts.
- Advancing practical non-lethal predator mitigation tools and resources.
- Supporting long-term sustainability of Colorado wild horses.
- Advancing our animal welfare programs.



## Direction Five Internal Operational Improvements

### Direction Five Paths

- **Workforce Effectiveness**
- **Communication and Community Outreach**
- **Business Operations and Financial Stability**
- **Greening Operations**
- **Technology Modernization**
- **Inspection Standards**



Improving operations is more than just a one-and-done initiative. It is a combined effort that calls on all to evaluate and optimize processes, people, and resources.

We commit ourselves to increasing operational efficiency through consistent effort, continuous learning, and a culture of constant innovation and employee engagement. We will focus on critical objectives such as:

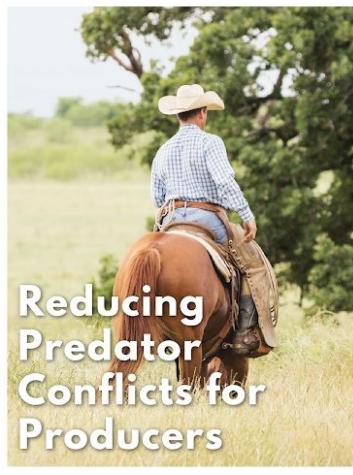
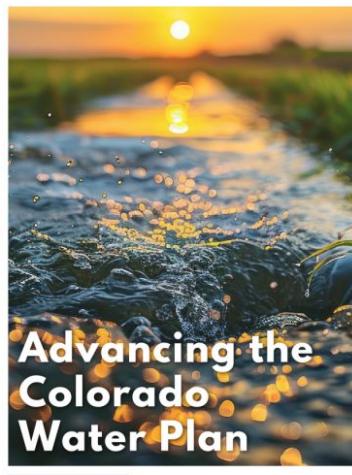
- Attract and develop excellent employees.
- Support employees to feel empowered and engaged.
- Target communication and outreach efforts to new and diverse communities.
- Stabilize and modernize CDA technology infrastructure.
- Provide consistent and timely inspection services throughout our regulatory programs.

# Tracking Our Strategic Paths and Wildly Important Goals

Along with our strategic plan, CDA developed a dashboard to measure our progress over the next three years. The dashboard allows us to focus on and plan critical initiatives and achieve defined benchmarks and output metrics across all CDA programs. The dashboard, while primarily for our staff, is also a tool of transparency. We believe it is crucial to provide the public and our partners with updates on our strategic progress. The dashboard, accessible to all, will allow the public and our partners to follow our efforts along the paths (topics) that interest them.

Within the first four directions in our Strategic Plan, we designated one critical path as a wildly important goal (WIG) over the next three years. Within each WIG are specific strategies, either through lead measures or program milestones, to move the larger goal forward and track progress.

The WIGs identified for the next three-years are a subset of our high-priority goals across the department. They represent our strategic focus in areas that require us to go above and beyond. Day-to-day, we engage in a full range of strategic actions to support all Colorado agriculture, ensuring a comprehensive and robust approach to our mission.

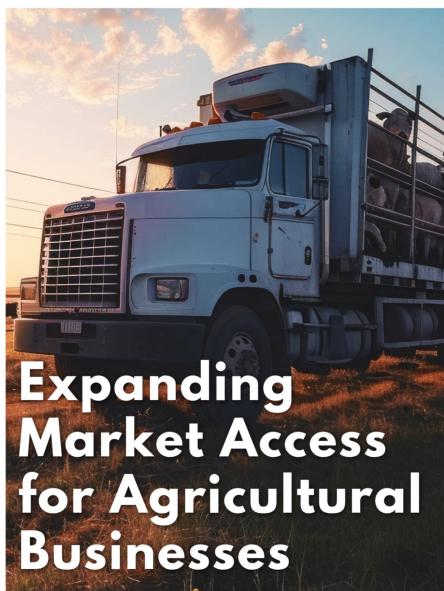


# WIG #1

## Expanding Market Access for Agricultural Businesses

Through support from CDA marketing programs, 260 Colorado businesses will gain or have expanded access to national and international markets by June 30, 2027.

Market access is crucial for any business to thrive. For many small and midsize Colorado farm and food businesses, the challenges of maintaining competitiveness and gaining access to appropriate resources, knowledge, and relationships to venture into new markets can be steep. In response to these challenges, CDA recognizes the need to provide farm and food businesses with additional opportunities to expand their sales beyond the borders of Colorado. Throughout this 3-year WIG, CDA's International Marketing, Climate-Smart Marketing, and [Colorado Proud](#) programs will assist agriculture businesses with gaining or expanding their access to markets nationally and internationally.



### FY25 Strategies by June 30, 2025

- Provide financial and technical assistance to 75 businesses for trade missions and trade shows.
- Attend seven trade missions or trade shows to establish relationships for future business connections.
- Engage with leaders from six countries to lay the groundwork for new trade opportunities for Colorado businesses.
- Develop strategic plans for the Colorado Proud and Climate-Smart Marketing programs to expand national and international market access.

Baseline	FY 24-25 Goal	FY 25-26 Goal	FY 26-27 Goal
66	75	170	260

# WIG #2

## Developing Agricultural Leaders

**Support 670 Colorado agricultural leaders in their professional development through internships, apprenticeships, scholarships, and direct leadership training by June 30, 2027.**

As a significant portion of the agricultural population approaches retirement, it is crucial for Colorado to continue cultivating a strong network of leaders who can drive the state's agricultural future. Experience in food production, stewardship, and emerging technology; knowledge of the agriculture sector; leadership skills and practical experience can help set up young people for success. CDA is committed to enhancing access to internships, apprenticeships, scholarships, and direct leadership training to help reduce barriers to those interested in pursuing a career in agriculture, no matter their starting place.

CDA aims to assist in professional development over the next three years through efforts from our [Ag Workforce Development Program](#) and [NextGen Ag Leadership Program](#), and developing new programs.



### FY25 Strategies by June 30, 2025

- Expand the Agricultural Workforce Development Program by increasing internships from 14 to 45.
- Increase grant funding to agricultural organizations and educators in the Next Generation Agricultural Leadership Program from \$120,000 to \$260,000.
- Complete a feasibility report that assesses how CDA can develop a Leadership Network that incorporates mentors, cohorts, and agricultural apprenticeships.
- Launch a pilot program supporting emerging leaders in the agricultural workforce through education and professional development.

Baseline	FY 24-25 Goal	FY 25-26 Goal	FY 26-27 Goal
120	180	420	670

# WIG #3

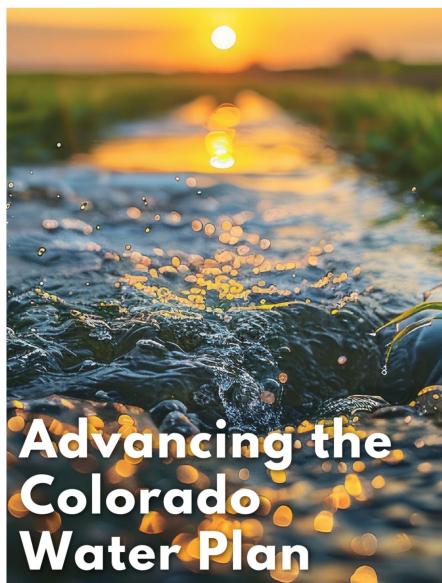
## Advancing the Colorado Water Plan

**To advance water resiliency within Colorado agriculture, CDA will take action on 12 agency initiatives that are aligned with the Colorado Water Plan by June 30, 2027.**

Colorado is facing unprecedented climate challenges that profoundly change how we think about the future of agriculture and water supply in Colorado. [The Colorado Water Conservation Board's Colorado Water Plan](#), a result of collaborative efforts, identifies ten agency actions to help maintain a robust agricultural landscape in the state.

CDA is committed to helping implement the Colorado Water Plan. Recognizing the critical role of water in agriculture and the need to adapt practices, CDA plans to implement 12 initiatives over the next three years in line with the Colorado Water Plan.

### FY25 Strategies by June 30, 2025



- Facilitate 20 in-field practice demonstrations that illustrate soil health building techniques.
- Improve soil health on 5,250 new acres of land by engaging producers and Conservation districts.
- Conduct 10 meetings with local government entities to help incorporate strong agricultural practices into local government planning.
- Gather 600 new water quality samples from Colorado's watersheds and monitoring wells.
- Develop a plan for initiatives CDA will pursue within the Colorado Water Plan in collaboration with the Colorado Water Conservation Board.

Baseline	FY 24-25 Goal	FY 25-26 Goal	FY 26-27 Goal
0	4	8	12

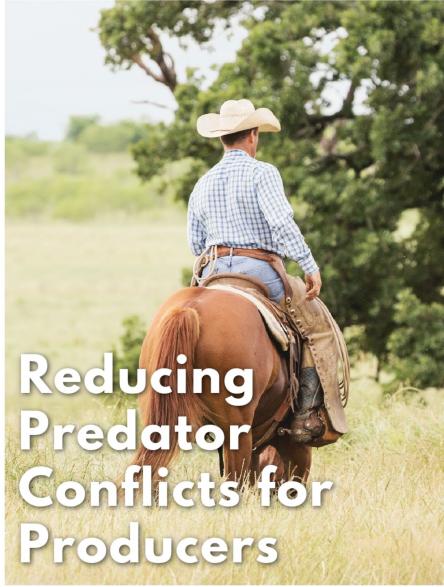
# WIG #4

## Reducing Predator Conflicts for Producers

**Establish a Non-lethal Predator Conflict Reduction Program and engage with 250 livestock producers to promote the program's technical assistance services and provide education by June 30, 2025.**

Colorado has always had predators on the landscape. With the reintroduction of gray wolves in 2023, and the natural migration of wolves from other states, Colorado's livestock producers are adapting to protect their livestock as we work toward greater coexistence with carnivores. CDA's goal over the next year is to establish a [Non-lethal Predator Conflict Reduction Program](#) which will provide critical resources and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers across the state through education on non-lethal deterrent methods, equipment, and other resources.

### FY25 Strategies by June 30, 2025

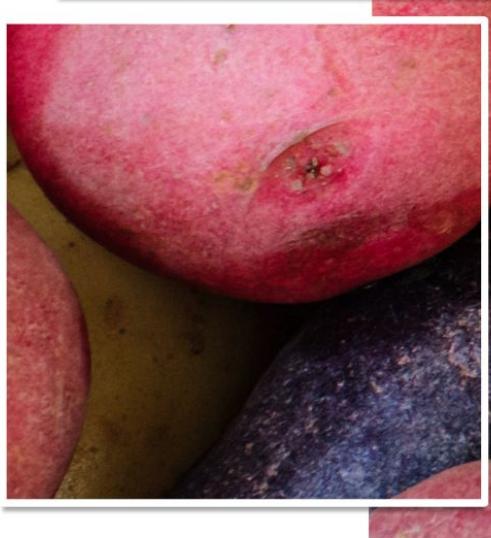
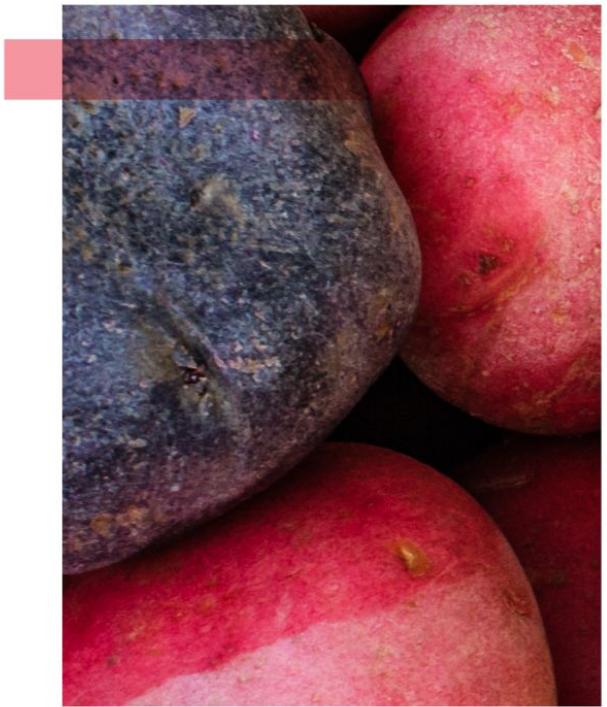


- Establish the Non-lethal Predator Conflict Reduction Program by securing staffing, acquiring equipment and determining deployment to assist livestock producers.
- Develop a communication plan framework with on-the-ground partners to share the vision and services of the program.
- Develop a statewide mitigation plan with subject matter experts to advance non-lethal predator prevention methods.
- Attend 12 statewide events to increase awareness of the Non-lethal Predator Conflict Reduction Program.
- Provide grant funding to 10 organizations.

Baseline	FY 24-25 Goal	FY 25-26 Goal	FY 26-27 Goal
0	250	*TBD	*TBD

\*CDA has a one-year goal for this program and will determine goals and strategies for future years.

# Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Efforts



# Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

CDA prioritizes equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) across our agency and industry. The implementation of [CDA's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Plan](#) is driving us forward. We are educating ourselves on how to advance this work. We plan to continue this work through various strategies, including:

- Investing in the next generation of agriculturalists.
- Distributing funding and tax credit dollars to serve underserved and underrepresented communities, and building and strengthening relationships across farming and ranching communities.
- CDA focused internally and externally on making the department more diverse, equitable, and inclusive. Internally, we have examined trends and data in our workforce around our applicants, interviewees, and new hires. As a result, CDA has made strides toward our goal of having our workforce more closely mirror the makeup of the State workforce in terms of gender and ethnicity.

## EDI Major Achievements

- CDA created an Inclusive Leadership Program that is required for all CDA managers. 82 leaders and aspiring leaders within the agency completed the first year and are continuing to learn for a second year. A second cohort of 36 leaders has begun the program.
- CDA's external efforts include Workforce Development. Minority applicants made up 36% of this pool.
- Our Loan program distributed 26% of awards to underserved communities resulting in an investment of more than \$4.5 million in farmer financing. Additionally, 39% of grant awards went to those communities who have previously been systematically excluded from agriculture.
- CDA implemented and continues to expand its Agricultural Worker Resource program to provide information about pay and available services to ag workers and their employers.

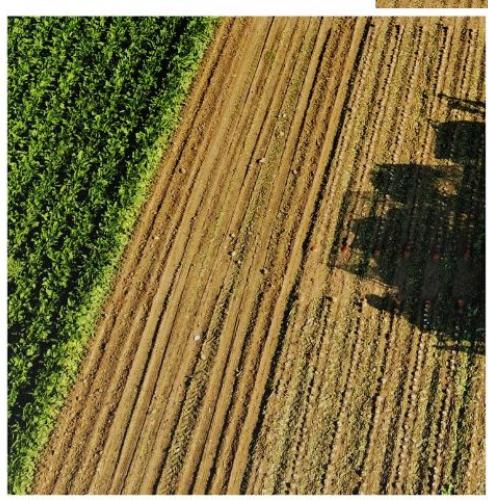
# Digital Accessibility Efforts

Accessibility involves equal access to services and information for individuals with and without disabilities. For CDA, this means ensuring our customers can easily understand, navigate, and interact with our services, forms, applications, and websites. These improvements are not just for individuals with disabilities, they benefit all of our users by making our services more user-friendly and efficient.

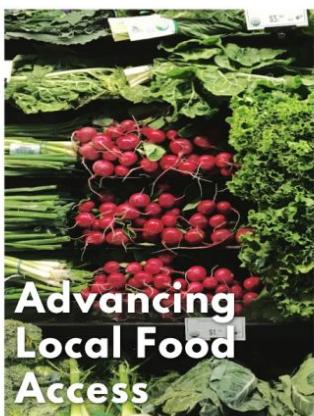
Our commitment to creating a more inclusive and accessible digital environment is evident in our plans for 2023 and 2024. This project improves the user experience for everyone and increases staff confidence in creating accessible documents and websites. By concentrating on document and website remediation, we ensure that all digital content meets accessibility standards, reducing potential risks and enhancing the overall user experience. The progress we've made in the past year is a testament to our dedication and sets a promising path for the future. Here are some highlights from the past year.

- Reached 90% completion on our IT checklist.
- Remediated over 400 documents.
- Purchased 150 Grackle licenses to give staff tools to gain confidence in accessibility.
- Awarded a State Internet Portal Authority grant for CommonLook and CommonLook Office software.
- Audited through manual testing of CDA main, Colorado Wine, Colorado State Fair, and Colorado Wine websites and achieved at least a 5 point increase on our Siteimprove score.
- Added accessibility topics to our all-hands and employee newsletters.
- Stood up an Accessibility Intranet with all the resources staff need to learn and engage in accessibility work.

# **FY 2023-24 Performance Plan Summary**



# Performance Plan Summary



For FY 2023-2024 we chose to commit our efforts to these Wildly Important Goals.

## **WIG #1 Advancing Local Food Access**

Our goal was to increase the capacity of farmers to distribute and small food retailers to purchase healthy food by \$1 million in low-income, low-access communities by June 30, 2024. We were able to provide \$1.68M in increased capacity in low income low access communities.



## **WIG #2 Supporting the Next Generation**

Our goal was to reduce barriers young people face in building a career to 1500 of the next generation of agricultural leaders and producers by June 30, 2024. We reduced barriers for 1,588 people and 86% of Ag Workforce Development participants reported they would see career advancement from completing the program.

## **WIG #3 Expanding Water-Resilient Agriculture**

Our goal was to assist 1,000 producers and water conservation leaders in incorporating effective water-resilient practices to ensure robust agricultural production. We were able to get 1,500 producers and water conservation leaders to incorporate water-resilient practices.



## **WIG #4 Advancing Animal Health and Welfare**

Our goal was to provide education and outreach to 3,500 veterinarians, animal owners, and stakeholders to advance animal health and welfare by June 30, 2024. We were able to provide 4,986 veterinarians, animal owners, and stakeholders educated on animal health and welfare practices.



We are immensely proud of our team and their commitment to serving our agriculture community. We are excited to report that we met the majority of our goals and are committed to continuing this work in the future.

Please read more and view our progress on [CDA's Dashboard](#).

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

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

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



**COLORADO  
CRISIS SERVICES**

**844-493-TALK (8255)**  
**OR TEXT TALK TO 38255**

**REACH OUT FOR FREE, CONFIDENTIAL, 24/7 SUPPORT**



**Thank you for supporting  
Colorado Agriculture**



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