Updated Membership Options—Welcome GIM!

The CFVGA Board presented bylaws to the membership at our February 25, 2015 annual membership meeting. The membership voted to approve these new additions to the membership structure detailed in the bylaws. Grower Members will see no changes to their membership criteria and cost in 2015. Industry Members are now called “Allied Members”, a category that includes all who are not growers but have a financial interest in Colorado fruit and vegetables.

The Partner Member category has been further defined as “Any person with a collaborative interest in CFVGA that is an employee of CSU Extension, research, teaching and/or other higher education institution or an employee of any government entity that is involved in exemplary contribution to the commercial vegetable and fruit industry in Colorado who pays the annual membership dues and is approved for membership by the Board of Directors or its designee shall be a Partner Member.”

Our newest category is “General Interest Member (GIM)”: “Any person that does not qualify for any of the above membership categories, who is approved by the CFVGA Board of Directors for their inclusion into this category and who pays the annual membership dues.

Membership drive past the century mark: 154 from 92 last quarter!

We are full tilt into our membership drive for 2015. To date we have 50 grower members, 50 industry members, 23 GIM, and 31 partner members with over 317 subscribers on our general interest email list.

Inside this issue:

- President’s message; CFVGA Policy Development
- CFVGA Sponsors
- Water Committee; Colorado’s Water Plan; NRCS Snowpack Report; Western Growers
- Opt-In Member Directory
- Labor Committee; Food Safety Committee; CSU Specialty Crops Position
- Colorado Legislation; Colorado Ag Council Report; Invasive Grass Aphid
- CFVGA Annual Conference Report
- Food as Medicine?; Colorado Dept of Agriculture Specialty Crops Block Grants—due May 1

If you have received this newsletter and are not currently a member, please consider joining. An increasing number of commercial produce growers, allied members, partners members and GIM interested in seeing commercial produce growers of all sizes, production practices and marketing channels in Colorado THRIVE and Coloradans benefit from an abundance of fresh, safe, and healthy local produce. To find out more and join online or by mail please go to http://coloradoproduce.org

Updated Membership Options

Any text that is red is a hyperlink to a website or email. If you have problems opening any, please email info@coloradoproduce.org
President’s Message

THANK-YOU EVERYBODY for a FANTASTIC inaugural Annual Conference! Your board of Directors worked tremendously hard over the last 12 months to organize the conference. But now that we have had a great conference it’s time to get some work done, not only in our farming operations but in the CFVGA. I know on my farm the biggest unknown for the coming season is if I can find enough qualified help. I am really tired of leaving crops in the field. I attend the CSU Ag Innovation Summit and the main point was how we are going to double our food production as the world’s population reaches 9.5 billion people in 2050. A speaker from the World Wildlife Fund said that in the U.S. 40% of the food is wasted and I went up to him after his presentation and asked him how much product is lost just to the lack of qualified agricultural help. He was shocked and through that conversation hopefully we have gained an ally outside of the agricultural community that can help us get the message to Congress the critical nature of getting a workable agricultural guest worker program in place. I know many of us don’t like to talk with the press but it’s really time for us to being telling our story. If you have a personal story that you would like to tell please let us know and we will be more than happy to help you get that out.

If you have any suggestions or questions I would enjoy hearing from you so email me at rtsakata@aol.com

Additionally, you can submit issues and ideas via this online form.

Sincerely,
Robert Sakata
CFVGA Board President

How will CFVGA develop its policies?

One of the important ways that CFVGA can be a benefit to you our members is to help influence legislation and to provide input in rulemaking and regulatory agency’s policy development. As a new organization we want to make sure that the procedures we use to take a position is well thought out and is based on the needs of our members. At the same time we hope that we can be nimble enough to respond quickly to inquiries about the CFVGA position on a given topic. If you would like to be a part of crafting this process please let us know at info@coloradoproduce.org

Sponsorship Campaign Full Speed

CFVGA is proud to have 31 sponsors on board! We welcome those passionate about supporting Colorado fruit and vegetable growers to contribute. Sponsors will be a vital part of CFVGA serving its members.

Sponsors will receive benefits based on their sponsor level and may include:

- Logo on our sponsors page
- Recognition at CFVGA events and in outreach materials
- Free booth and attendance at the annual conference
- Opening remarks at the annual conference

See details at: http://coloradoproduce.org/sponsors/
CFVGA is deeply grateful for our sponsors!

Thanks to our sponsors! See more sponsors at:

[link to sponsors page](coloradoproduce.org/sponsors)
Water Committee Report—
Robert Sakata

The Water Committee has participated in the drafting of the Colorado Ag Water Alliance comments to the draft Colorado Water Plan. The Colorado Water Conservation Board will be reviewing all of the comments they have received over the last 3 months and will be releasing the second draft by the middle of this summer. At that time we will again review any changes that they have made and provide comments to them. The Water Committee is still looking for participants to join us to come up with other ways that the CFVGA can help our members when it comes to water. To learn more contact the Committee Chair, Robert Sakata at RTSakata@aol.com.

Colorado’s Water Plan

People love Colorado: our population ballooned from 1 million in 1930, to over 5 million today, and is projected to grow even faster in the future. So how do we ensure that we are able to preserve what we know and love about our state alongside population growth?

When it comes to our water, Colorado’s Water Plan has answers. This plan offers a strategic vision: a productive economy that supports vibrant and sustainable cities, productive agriculture, a strong environment, and a robust recreation industry.

How can we achieve this vision for Colorado water?

How do we ensure water for the agriculture sector?

Comments on the First Draft of Colorado’s Water plan are due May 1.

The Second Draft will be released July 17 for public comment.

Comments on the Second Draft are due September 17.

Final 2015 CWP Submitted to the Governor by December 10, 2015

See details at: coloradowaterplan.com

For a factsheet on the process click

April Snow Pack Conditions—click & enter date

Western Growers Partnership

We are extremely excited to announce our new member benefit partnership with Western Growers, www.wga.com

All CFVGA voting members that are in good standing will be able to utilize the benefits of Western Growers through 2016.

This includes all of their informational webinars, educational materials and many other resources to help growers.

Western Growers is the largest fruit and vegetable association in the western United States representing growers in California and Arizona. They not only have offices throughout California and Arizona but also a fulltime staff in Washington D.C. so be sure to take advantage of this great opportunity.

You should have already have gotten a welcome email from them and if you haven’t contact us at info@ColoradoProduce.org
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Labor Committee Report
– Amy Kunugi

Colorado Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association’s Labor Committee is working on ways to help our members address the current labor shortage. We hope to establish an interactive website where members will be able to post job listings, internships, and resumes.

We will also list current labor contractors operating in Colorado. Additionally, the Committee plans to network with other industry groups and to conduct strategic meetings with key legislators to represent and lobby for our Ag Labor interests. Other providers of services which our members’ clients may request, such as social responsibility audits, may also be listed.

Current Labor Committee members are: Amy Kunugi, M. F. Fisher, Dawn Thilmany, Jason Griffith, James Pritchett, Shane Milberger, and Joe Petrocco.

If you are interested in joining the Labor Committee, please contact Amy Kunugi at amykun@gojade.org. Our next teleconference will be on April 9th or 10th (to be announced).

Food Safety Committee Report—Martha Sullins

In the next few weeks, look for a new and improved food safety section on the CFVGA website!

In collaboration with Western Growers, CFVGA will be featuring articles and webinars on the Food Safety Modernization Act, water issues, and more.

If you have suggestions or specific information needs, please contact Jason Condon (Jason@IsabelleFarm.com) or Martha Sullins (Martha.Sullins@colostate.edu, 970-498-6006)

Specialty Crops Position at CSU to aid Fruit and Vegetable Industry—Mike Bartolo

The search for a new faculty member that will concentrate on specialty crops is in its final stages. Currently, a pool of applicants has been narrowed and interviews are being conducted for a faculty position that will be housed in the Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture at CSU.

The new faculty member will be directly engaged with the fruit and vegetable industry in Colorado and will be an excellent resource for the CFVGA. This position will conduct research and teach specialty crop production and utilization, including the application of organic methods. The main area of focus will be fruits and vegetables and production issues that are important here in Colorado. The new appointee will have specific responsibilities that will include:

- Teaching and advising undergraduate and graduate students in vegetable and/or fruit crops and in organic production methods.
- Designing educational programs that deliver the results of specialty crops research to growers in Colorado.
- Developing a research program focused on solving problems and promoting opportunities for specialty crop growers in Colorado, including organic and small farm producers.
- Maintaining a liaison role with the Colorado Department of Agriculture (Markets Division) which may include administration of that agency’s program of grants to specialty crop growers.

Within the next few months, this new faculty member should be in place and starting to solicit ideas from growers about potential issues and projects. This new person and associated works will be an exciting new development in the partnership between CFVGA and CSU.
Colorado Legislation

Things are moving fast as we have passed the half way mark of this session of the Colorado Legislature. Here are a few pieces of legislation that may be of interest:

**Colorado General Assembly**

Search for bills directly at [LegiScan](#)

HB15-1006: Invasive Phreatophyte Grant Program

HB15-1013: S. Platte Aquifer Study Recommendations

HB15-1057: The Statewide Initiative Process

HB15-1088: Interagency Farm-to-school Grant Program

HB15-2202: Expansion of the Cottage Food Grant Program

HB15-1166: S. Platte Alluvial Aquifer Monitoring Network

HB15-1178: Emergency Well pumping Damaging High Groundwater

HB15-1222: Water Efficiency Savings Instream Use Pilot

SB15-119: Sunset Pesticide Applicators

SB15-121: Drinking Water Fund Assistance Nonprofit Entities

SB15-253: CWCB Construction Fund Project

Ag Council Report

The [Colorado Ag Council](#) has been meeting every other week at the state Capitol. This year not only are they discussing any current legislative efforts but have held an informational forum about livestock management. Upcoming Forum discussions will be the Colorado Ag Water Alliance comments to the draft Colorado Water Plan and potentially a discussion about oil and gas well drilling activities. Also the Colorado Ag Council, in partnership with the Colorado Ag Leadership Program, held a hugely successful event on Ag Day at the Capitol. It's an annual event during which Legislators and their staff are treated to some fantastic food prepared by local chefs using Colorado products.

[Ag Day Article in Denver Post](#)

[Ag Day Article in Colorado Statesman](#)

[You Tube Ag Day Video](#)

Invasive Grass Feeding Aphid Found in Western Colorado

-Bob Hammon

An exotic grass feeding aphid has been found infesting some weedy winter annual and native perennial grasses in Mesa County. This aphid is native to Europe and Asia, and has been established as a significant pest of small grains in Argentina since 2002. It is expected to move to other grasses and small grain crops as the Colorado growing season progresses. The aphid is known as Sipha maydis, with the hedgehog grain aphid proposed as a common name. The insect is a small black aphid covered with stiff white hairs, resembling a mini hedgehog.

This aphid is not a direct threat to any broadleaf crop including fruits and vegetables. It may however impact grasses such as oats planted as cover crops, or seedling grasses planted as orchard floor covers. It has overwintered in Mesa County on annual wheatgrass, hare and foxtail barley, downy brome and some other closely related grasses. We expect the aphid to spread across much of the state of Colorado within the next couple of years. Its impact on agriculture remains to be seen.

This aphid has been intercepted by USDA inspectors as a hitchhiker on produce at least once. It has the potential to contaminate field packed fruits and vegetables. It is an insect that all growers should watch for and be aware of.

Grasses are a dominant part of the vegetation across the entire state of Colorado and the hedgehog aphid could potentially infest them at some point during the season wherever they grow.

For up to date information on this aphid, visit [http://wci.colostate.edu](http://wci.colostate.edu)
CFVGA Annual Conference a Smash Hit!

If you were able to join us February 25 at the Renaissance Hotel in Denver, you know we made a big splash for Colorado produce just ahead of the Governor’s Forum on Colorado Agriculture the next day at the hotel. As a first annual conference, all indicators point to success and a spring-board for new potentials for members.

**By the numbers:**
- Attendance: 260
- Exhibitors: 25
- Roundtable topic discussions: 14
- Buyers in networking session: 20

**Survey results of participants:**
The chart below summarizes the audience response via “clickers” in the morning regarding demographics of attendees.

Members in the audience accounted for 44% of attendees.

The same fast polling of the participants by clickers revealed that finding qualified help (37.3%) topped the list of “biggest challenges to your operation” followed by finding adequate irrigation water (26.9%). Food safety and marketing polled 16.4% and 15% respectively.

Participants later filled out a paper copy evaluation which showed knowledge gained from all plenary presentations and roundtable discussion tables.

Of growers attending the grower/buyer networking session, 100% indicated that it was useful to them. When asked about the time allotted for networking and socializing, 57% of growers said it was just right and 43% said it was too short. Growers love to visit and chat at conferences!

Finally, the end-of-the-day annual member meeting, despite wintry weather, achieved a quorum of voting members. These members approved the annual budget, the bylaws and seated the first member elected Board of Directors for CFVGA! Just 14 months old, the Association is now official and continues to gain momentum.

Before everyone adjourned, the BOD and Western Growers partners came together for a group photo.

As this newsletter is released, the annual conference committee is exploring venues and getting ready to deliver another great conference to you in 2016.

See more pics at: https://www.facebook.com/CFVGA

See presenter slides and videos of presentation at: http://coloradoproduce.org/news-issues/

See BOD details at: http://coloradoproduce.org/board-members/
Have you ever thought of producePr as medicine?

I’m Chef Martin Oswald, Owner of Pyramid Bistro in Aspen, and I am very passionate about the healing power of fruits and vegetables. About 23 years ago I had a family member reverse heart disease with the Dr. Dean Ornish program. Five years ago, after reading Dr. Joel Fuhrman’s book Eat to Live, I changed my way of eating to a low fat, nutrient dense, plant based diet. I lost 35 pounds in two months and never felt better. This combination of insights, along with my experiences cooking in Austrian Health Resorts, finally motivated me to open Pyramid Bistro.

Since opening the restaurant, I have heard many personal stories about the healing powers foods provide.

Guests have told me about how they reversed diabetes 2, heart disease, skin issues and countless other health conditions. Mostly this was achieved by switching from eating the standard American diet to nutrient dense foods. I also have noticed that Pyramid Bistro attracts a steady stream of cardiologists, nutritional scientists and dietitians from all over the country. In my conversations with these researchers I have learned that every single vegetable and fruit has its own unique phytonutrient combination.

There are thousands of phytonutrients, and extensive research on their health benefits is ongoing. One big topic in the world of nutrition is the impact antioxidants have on our wellbeing. Through the complex process of photosynthesis plants develop antioxidants such as the colorful carotenoids, vitamin C or vitamin E. Humans cannot produce these important nutrients so we need to get them from plants to protect ourselves from free radicals.

Do you see a marketing opportunity here? I think it is time to rethink how fruits and vegetables are promoted to the general public. It is time to sell them for what they really are, super foods, each packed with a unique combination of hundreds of immune boosting and life-saving nutrients!

Funds Help Colorado’s Specialty Crops Thrive!

Colorado specialty crops range from perennial favorites like potatoes and onions to exciting innovators such as chiles and hops. To help develop and promote the state’s specialty crops, the Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) is seeking proposals for the Specialty Crops Block Grant Program. Specialty crops are defined as fruits and vegetables, dried fruits, and nursery crops including floriculture and sod.

CDA anticipates that approximately $800,000 will be available for this year’s grant program, with approved projects starting early in 2016. Producer groups, organizations, and associations, as well as state and local organizations, academia and other specialty crops stakeholders are eligible to apply either as single entities or in combined efforts.

Proposals submitted by individual producers must demonstrate that the potential impact of the project will accrue to a broader group of similar producers, region or industry segment.

Proposals must be received electronically by close of business (5:00 p.m.) on May 1, 2015. For more information and an application, [www.colorado.gov/ag/specialtycropgrant](http://www.colorado.gov/ag/specialtycropgrant) or call (303) 869-9173.

Upcoming Events, Notices and Resources: send us your events

- [National Young Farmers Coalition](http://nationalyoungfarmerscoalition.org) advocacy and resources for young farmers
- [CSU Extension Building Farmers 2015 programs](http://extension.colostate.edu/)
- [CSU Farm to Table](http://extension.colostate.edu/) grower food safety resources
- [CFVGA online calendar](http://cfvga.org)
- [Western Growers](http://www.westerngrowers.com)

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We want YOU and those in your network as members! All can find a fit as a grower member, allied member, general interest member or partner member.

Send your friends and colleagues to our website where they can download member information or apply and pay directly online.

Go to: [www.coloradoproduce.org](http://www.coloradoproduce.org)

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Meet a Board Member—Roger Mix

Roger Mix is a third generation potato grower from Center, Colorado. The family organization farms 274 acres of Certified Seed and 476 acres of Coors Malt Barley. They currently produce Yukon Golds, Canela Russet, Classic Russet, a new variety Fortress Russet and specialties Purple Majesties and Desiree.

Roger's responsibilities include day to day management of growing crops and is in charge of the farms food safety program. His wife Rosalie takes care of the farm bookkeeping and payroll. His dad Sherrel who is semi retired helps out where needed.

Their seed potatoes are marketed within the San Luis Valley in Colorado and the pacific Northwest.

Roger's concerns in the potato industry are immigration reform in working towards having a reliable workforce.