



## Logo design competition: BrandWerks is the winner!

The Board reviewed all four submissions and chose BrandWerks as the CFVGA logo winner!

John Recca, Managing Director of BrandWerks, grew up producing walnuts and wine grapes with his family in the Central Valley of Colorado. "We believe in giving back and enjoy working in agriculture," John explains.

BrandWerks is a full service brand development company, specializing in research, visioning, and strategic branding prior to design of outreach materials for clients. John describes that "branding is the communication essence that flows from the positioning of the brand...position is everything!"

BrandWerks worked to restore the brand and consumer confidence in Rocky Ford canteen following the 2011 food safety outbreak. John uncovered consumer attributes (sweet and juicy) and producer attributes (120 years of production over 5 generations of producers) to develop the branding of the Rocky Ford Growers Association.

Brand identity development, product packaging, website development and social media outreach are among the services BrandWerks can provide to commercial produce growers in Colorado. [Colorado Proud](#) members will receive a 20% discount and all receive an initial free consultation.



**Our abbreviated logo version from BrandWerks**

For more on BrandWerks, visit [www.brandwerksgroup.com](http://www.brandwerksgroup.com) and call John at 720-300-9955.

Thanks to all who submitted designs! John declined his \$100 prize and CFVGA will be donating it to the Colorado FFA Foundation

## Membership drive launched

We are full tilt into our membership drive for 2014. To date we have 15 grower members, 5 industry members, and 5 partner members with over 220 subscribers on our general interest email list.

If you have received this newsletter and are not currently a member, please consider joining a increasing number of commercial produce growers, industry members, and partners members interested in seeing commercial

produce growers of all sizes, production practices and marketing channels in Colorado THRIVE!

To find out more and submit your application for members, please go to <http://coloradoproduce.org>

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**A single bee cannot survive by itself. It's time for us to develop a hive mentality and accomplish things together that we can't do alone.**

## Who needs another organization? Colorado does!

Some of you know me as Bob's boy because I am fortunate to have grown up on Sakata Farms, our family vegetable farm in Brighton. He taught me the importance of working hard on the farm, staying up late to change the irrigation water, working no matter what the conditions to get crops harvested, and praying for good weather.

We face many more obstacles as produce growers than we ever have. Things like ever

increasing regulatory pressures, lack of qualified employees, and dwindling reliable irrigation water. Most Coloradans don't understand the challenges we face growing the food they are so lucky to consume. It is time for us to work not just harder but differently. A single bee cannot survive by itself.

It's time for us to develop a hive mentality and accomplish things together that we can't do alone. We are lucky that Color-

adans want to know who we are and what we do, they just don't know where to go to get that information. I'm proud to announce that CFVGA can be that organization...but to be successful we need you to join.

Visit: [www.coloradoproduce.org](http://www.coloradoproduce.org) to learn more and sign up today!

Sincerely,

Robert Sakata  
CFVGA Board President  
[rtsakata@aol.com](mailto:rtsakata@aol.com)

## Meet our Administrator — Vickie Root

As a Colorado native from the northeast area, I have been involved in agriculture in different settings throughout my life. Working at the Amherst Coop Elevator lead to a position with the Colorado Grain and Feed Association in 1993, which then led to positions with the Colorado Onion Association, Colorado Sunflower Administrative Committee, Colorado Dry Bean Administrative Committee

and served as President of the Denver Agriculture and Livestock Club. I am currently serving as the Executive Director of the Rocky Mountain Bean Dealers Association (21 years) and Accountant for the Colorado Agricultural Development Authority (since 2006).

It is with great pleasure to be involved with CFVGA and the dynamic individuals committed to the success of this viable organi-

zation!

The Colorado Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association readily embraces the growth and needs of growers throughout this beautiful state.

This is your opportunity to be involved in building an even stronger voice in government, as well as educating to expand consumer knowledge and addressing local challenges such as food safety, water and labor issues.



Click [here](#) to listen to Robert's radio interview on KSIR

### Stay connected CFVGA!

#### Info to you:

- **Website:** Here you will find resources on food safety, labor, water and other grower related resources.
- **Facebook:** Follow stories we think are notable between newsletters. Over 75 people are!

- **Email:** Members receive our quarterly email newsletter and alerts on key issues more frequently. If you are not on our general interest list, click [here](#) to subscribe for periodic updates. Over 220 people already have!

#### Issues or ideas to us:

We want to hear from you on issues you are having in the produce business AND with ideas you have for CFVGA. Two ways to connect with this info:

1. Contact Vickie (her info is on the back of the newsletter)
2. Submit an issue and/or idea in this online form: click [here](#)



## 2014/2015 Plan of Work

In 2014/2015 CFVGA will serve members in the following ways:

- Be the voice of CFVGA members at Ag Council (for State Legislators), other policy makers and to media
- Promote Colorado Fruit and Vegetables
- Network with other national fruit and vegetable grower groups
- Network with other commodity specific growers groups
- Provide a website with a password protected section just for members
- Coordinate research and educational programming with CSU
- Host annual meeting and conference
- Publish a quarterly newsletter with the inside scoop



CSU is playing a major role in the development of CFVGA and delivery of their POW.

## 2015 Annual Meeting

The CFVGA Board is current exploring a site and committee structure for planning and organizing a 2015 annual meeting.

At this meeting the membership will elect Board members for the expiring one year seats on the initial Board. A nominat-

ing committee will work to explore potential board members in each region and meet stated goals of maintaining diversity of size, crops, production techniques, and marketing channels of a seated board.

The Board is also desiring educational content, a

trade show, and networking time for member and non-member participants.

Please stay tuned for more details and contact Vickie Root if you are a member and are interested in serving in an advisory capacity for planning the educational content for the annual meeting.

**The CFVGA Board is current exploring a site and committee structure for planning and organizing a 2015 annual meeting.**

## Organic Corner: Cost Share is Back! By Amy Stafford, Colorado Department of Ag

Organic Cost Share has returned! The 2014 Farm Bill has renewed the organic cost share program. This program reimburses organic farmers for a portion of their organic certification fees. [Colorado Department of Agriculture](#) will be working with organic farmers to ensure they are able to take advantage of this benefit. At this point in time, CDA is waiting for the USDA to information about the 2014 program; as soon as we know anything we will ensure organic growers are aware

of what steps need to be taken to apply for reimbursement. The previous Farm Bill provided for reimbursement of 75% of the organic certification fees, up to \$750; the 2014 Farm Bill is providing the same.

[Are you interested in organic certification, but unsure of the process, or are not sure how to complete an Organic System Plan?](#) Colorado Department of Agriculture is working with Boulder County Parks and Open Space to hold an in-depth

organic certification workshop. This workshop will be open to everyone; you don't need to be a Boulder County resident to attend. The workshop will cover the National Organic Program regulations, the Organic System Plan, inputs allowed for organic certification and resources for organic farmers. At this time, we are in the preliminary planning stages; we are hoping to have more information later this spring. Check back at this [page](#) for more details as they unfold.



## FDA: Food Safety Modernization Act News by Martha Sullins, CSU



Stay tuned for FSMA updates here and through member alerts.

Although the first comment period for FDA's proposed Standards for the Growing, Harvesting, Packing, and Holding of Produce for Human Consumption (Produce Safety Rule) and proposed changes to its Current Good Manufacturing Practice and Hazard Analysis and Risk-Based Preventive Controls for Human Food closed in November 2013, FDA is currently revising language in both rules concerning:

- 1) water quality standards and water testing;
- 2) standards for using raw manure and compost;
- 3) mixed use facilities; and
- 4) procedures for withdrawing the qualified exemption for certain farms.

Expect to see a second comment period open in June 2014, after which the final rules:

- are published in the Federal Register in August and October 2015, and

- become effective in January 2017 for large growers, in January 2018 for small growers, and January 2019 for very small growers.

Click [here](#) for more on FSMA (including webinars, fact sheets and other resources) and register for FSMA updates [here](#). The [Produce Safety Alliance](#) also provides updates, training materials, and opportunities to interact with FDA about the proposed rules.

Additional Colorado produce on-farm food safety info can be found at:

[Farmtotable.colostate.edu](http://Farmtotable.colostate.edu)

## Legislative Update: Under the Dome By Robert Sakata

During the Colorado legislative session there have been a number of water bills. Most did not make it very far and if they did proceed ended up being referred to the interim water committee that will meet this summer. A great resource to track water related legislation is through the [Colorado Water Congress](#) website. Under the "Committees" tab click on "State Affairs", scroll down and click on the "Bill

Status Sheet".

A non-water related bill, HB 1119 allows for a Colorado income tax credit for a portion of the value of any food item donated to a charitable organization. There is a fiscal note attached to the bill so it has not been passed yet but is still being considered. HB 1007 may introduce restriction on agricultural burning. HB 1300 deals with limited civil liability for agritourism operations.

At the national level nothing new to report on a viable [H2A temporary worker program](#). Congress still doesn't get it that without this Colorado fruit and vegetable growers will continue to struggle to find qualified help.

Quite a few new proposed rules from FDA and the EPA may have big impacts on farmers across the country. Please check out those articles on p. 4 and p. 7.

## Working Together with Colorado's Diverse Commodity Groups and Organizations



Rocky Ford Growers Association is on board with CFVGA!

A major goal of the Colorado Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association (CFVGA) is to work in close cooperation with existing commodity groups and organizations to add strength and representation to issues that face everyone in the specialty crop industry includ-

ing, labor, food safety, marketing, water, and production practices. Several of our board members also are also members of other state associations including the [Colorado Onion Association](#), [Western Colorado Horticultural Society](#), and [Rocky Ford Growers As-](#)

[sociation](#). The CFVGA board has been in close communication with these and other state organizations and looks forward to building strong relationships with all interested organizations that will ultimately add value everyone's efforts!

## Water news: What's Flowing?

By Robert Sakata

The big news in water for the northern part of Colorado has been the favorable snowpack conditions. Although the Arkansas River basin has improved southern Colorado is still behind average conditions for this time of year. For NRCS snowpack data click [here](#)

Colorado Water Plan (CWP) progress report: All of the state's 9 basin roundtables are busy working on their basin implementation plans that will be submitted to the

Colorado Water Conservation Board and incorporated into Colorado's Water Plan. It's important that fruit and vegetable growers provide input from your perspective. Too many people don't realize the diversity of agriculture and this cannot be stressed enough as the CWP is developed. Click [here](#) and under the "Get Involved" tab click on "Agriculture". PLEASE let the CWCB know that growing fruits and vegetables in this state is important and without ade-

quate clean water supplies that won't happen.

On March 28 a district court ruling that ordered the EPA to redo its "Water Transfer Rule" may have far reaching consequences and is being monitored closely by all entities that transfer water from one basin to another because it may mean that they will need to obtain a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit. Search online for "Water Transfer Rule" for the latest news.



**Water drives all of produce growing in Colorado!**

## Research Corner: Fruit and Vegetable Research at CSU

The Colorado Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES), an integral part of Colorado State University, was established in 1888. The mission of the CAES is to conduct research that addresses the economic viability, environmental sustainability, and social acceptability of activities impacting agriculture, natural resources, and consumers in Colorado.

In addition to supporting numerous on-campus faculty members, the CAES supports 7 off-campus research centers

(9 sites) to conduct research to meet agricultural production needs in different regions of the state. Several of these Centers conduct research specifically directed at fruit and vegetable crops.

Near the campus in Fort Collins, is the Agricultural Research Development and Education Center (ARDEC) which supports numerous vegetable crop trials in both conventional and organic production methods. The Western Colorado Research Center consists of two sites; one near Fruita and one

at Orchard Mesa. The research conducted at the Orchard Mesa site includes tree fruits and wine grape production. In southern Colorado, The Arkansas Valley Research Center, located outside of Rocky Ford, conducts irrigation and pest management research focusing on crops like onions, melons, peppers, and tomatoes. Near Center, Colorado is the San Luis Valley Research Center which has major emphasis on potato production. For further information you can explore the [CAES website](#)

**PLEASE let the CWCB know that growing fruits and vegetables in this state is important and without adequate clean water supplies that won't happen.**

## Beginning Farmers' Corner: Notable programs in Colorado

Beginning farmers by USDA definition have from 0 to 10 years of experience farming.

CFVGA has board members and general members who are graduates of the Colorado Building Farmers/Building Farmers in the West Program.

CBF teaches business planning and management skills and offers mentorships and internships.

Stay up to date on program offerings via their [Facebook page](#) and [website](#).

Additionally, the [National Young Farmers Coalition](#) is making headway with local chapters in Colorado. NYFC focuses on advocating for national policies that would benefit young farmers plus networking young farmers locally to foster success.



**Also known as "Building Farmers in the West"**

## Debut of CFVGA at the Governor's Forum on Colorado Agriculture

Our official launch was at the 2014 Governor's Forum on Colorado Agriculture February 27 in Denver. We had over 60 people at standing room only in our breakout session.

The CFVGA board and supporting staff made a detailed presentation of where the organization had grown to date followed by great dialogue

with the audience on our purpose and growth potential.

Amazingly we think that we were able to connect a large restaurant lettuce buyer with a grower in the audience.

Are you as surprised as we were that this buyer did not know where to find out about Colorado

produce?

Just another great benefit of having a professional association for Colorado fruit and vegetable growers!

Not all board members were able to attend. Those that were are pictured below with some of our supporting staff and a board affiliate.

**CFVGA Board  
and supporting  
staff at the  
2014  
Governor's  
Forum on  
Colorado  
Agriculture**



Bottom row left to right: Kerry Mattics (Board Member, Montrose County), Robert Sakata (President, Adams County), Shane Milberger (Board Member, Pueblo County).

Back row left to right: Mike Bartolo (State Veg Specialist, CSU, Pueblo County), Jason Griffith (Board affiliate, Boulder County), Amy Kunugi (Vice Pres, Alamosa County), Adrian Card (CSU Extension, Boulder County)

Not pictured: Bruce Talbott (Secretary, Mesa County), Jason Condon (Board Member, Boulder County), Paul Casper (Treasurer, Otero County), Bob Hammon (CSU Extension, Mesa County), Martha Sullins (CSU Extension), Vickie Root (Administrator, Larimer County)

## EPA: “Waters of the US” Proposed Rule by Rebecca Perrin, EPA Region 8, Denver

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Army Corps) have jointly released a proposed rule to clarify protection under the Clean Water Act. For nearly a decade, members of Congress, state and local officials, industry, agriculture, environmental groups, and the public asked for a rule-making to provide clarity to jurisdictions following 2001 and 2006 Supreme Court Decisions. The proposed rule does not protect any new types of waters that have not his-

torically been covered under the Clean Water Act and is consistent with the Supreme Court’s more narrow reading of Clean Water Act jurisdiction. The proposed rule preserves the Clean Water Act exemptions and exclusions for agriculture. Additionally, EPA and the Army Corps have coordinated with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to develop an interpretive rule to ensure that 56 specific agricultural conservation practices, that protect or improve water quality, will not be subject to Clean Water

Act Section 404 permitting requirements. The agencies will work together to implement these new exemptions and periodically review and update USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service conservation practice standards and activities that would qualify under the exemption. EPA and the Army Corps are seeking your input to shape a final rule. The proposed rule will be open for public comment for 90 days from the date of publication in the Federal Register. For more information click [here](#).



**Stay tuned for these EPA proposed rule changes here and through our member email alerts.**

## EPA: Worker Protection Standard Proposed Rule

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is proposing revisions to the Worker Protection Standards (WPS) to increase protections from pesticide exposure after more than a decade of extensive input from government agencies and from across the agricultural community, including farm workers, farmers, and industry. Proposed changes include increased frequency of mandatory trainings, ex-

panded mandatory posting of no-entry signs, a first time-ever minimum age requirement, no-entry buffer areas, measures to improve the states’ ability to enforce, personal protection equipment, label and Safety Data Sheets for farmworkers, and continued exemptions for family farms. EPA is seeking your input on the proposed Standards and has identified specific [questions for your consideration](#).

**Comments must be received on or before June 17, 2014.** To review the proposed Standards and provide comment please see [the Federal Register notice](#) docket number EPA-HQ-OPP-2011-0184-0002. If you want the comment period extended, put that in your comments. For more information from CSU click [here](#) AND go to a WPS workshop mentioned in “Upcoming Events” in this newsletter below.

**Any pesticide (including National Organic Program and OMRI approved) with an “Ag Use Requirement” box on the product label requires compliance with the WPS.**

## Upcoming Events and Resources

- [CDA Specialty Crop Block Grant proposals due May 1](#)
- Arkansas Valley Research Center Field Day, Rocky Ford, Thursday, September 4th at 3:30 pm, [michael.bartolo@colostate.edu](mailto:michael.bartolo@colostate.edu) (719)254-6312
- [WPS Current Regs and Proposed Rule Changes Workshops](#):
  - April 8, 9-Noon, Lamar
  - April 14, 1-4 pm, Palisade
  - April 15, 9-Noon, Delta
  - April 22, 9-Noon, Brighton
- Beekeeping 101, Chaffee County Fairgrounds, April 16, 6:30-8:00pm, 719-539-6447
- [Cofarmtomarket.com](#) for info for produce growers on federal, state and local food licensing regulations and best practices



## COLORADO FRUIT AND VEGETABLE GROWERS ASSOCIATION

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

Send your friends and colleagues to our website where they can download member information. Our plan is to have online payment in place soon, but for now mail in your membership.

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



[Coloradoproduce.org](http://Coloradoproduce.org)

### Meet a board member - Jason Condon



Jason and Natalie with Gus and Lucy on the farm.

Jason Condon and his wife Natalie own and operate [Isabelle Farm](#) in Lafayette, Colorado. Together they raise 120 acres of USDA Certified Organic produce and distribute their produce both retail and wholesale. In addition to growing produce, they also operate an on-farm farm store, as well as a 350-member CSA.

Jason Condon was born and raised on a family farm in Boulder, Colorado. His family roots reach back in Boulder County to 1859, when his family first settled at the mouth of Eldorado Canyon. In 1865, a separate branch of his family started and operated the stage coach line into Denver from Leavenworth, Kansas. Just after the turn of the century, the family moved from the Eldorado Canyon area to a farm east of Boulder, where they farmed and operated a custom threshing company and did custom plowing with their two steam engines. They also raised beef and dairy cattle, and grew row crops.

Jason grew up farming on a conventional hay, wheat and cattle

farm near the family homestead. In his early-twenties, he served for five years as a Seabee in United States Navy. After the service, he spent four years career in construction management, and then returned to farming.

Isabelle Farm grows a large variety of produce, from leafy greens, brassicas and roots to melons and winter squash. "We just love to grow good food," says Jason. "We feel truly blessed to be able to get up every morning, do what we love, and know that we are providing a healthy product at a fair value."