Produce Trends Expert to Keynote CFVGA Third Annual Conference, Register by Feb. 7 and Save!

Pamela Riemenschneider, editor of Produce Retailer magazine, will keynote the CFVGA's Third Annual Conference, Feb. 21, 2017 at the Renaissance Denver Stapleton Hotel, with a presentation that delves into how consumer trends shape retail. She also will provide a special preview of the 2017 Fresh Trends survey results.

This interactive session will include the latest in consumer demand for some of the most popular items in the produce department and an outlook for Colorado-grown produce. Attendees will see how demographics can skew demand, and retail sales and influence variety preference.

“Consumer trends are a powerful influence on retailers, and growers as well,” Riemenschneider said. “It’s crucial to understand not only what consumers are looking for now, but also how demographics shape that preference going forward.”

Following the keynote, Bonnie Fernandez-Fenaroli, executive director of the Center for Produce Safety, will provide attendees with an overview of the latest in food safety research and discuss its impact on the produce industry.

The conference also will feature CFVGA's annual meeting, a produce-focused lunch, topic roundtable discussion groups, grower-buyer networking session and over 25 exhibitors. In addition, breakout sessions will include experts in labor, food safety, business development, production and produce nutrition research.

CFVGA urges registration by Feb. 7, when early rates end. For further savings, make sure your CFVGA membership is current.

The day prior to the conference, Feb. 20, CFVGA along with Rocky Mountain Farmers Union will offer a Food Safety Modernization Act Produce Safety training to enable farms subject to compliance with the Produce Safety Rule to meet this requirement. CFVGA members get a $100 discount on this training. Seating is limited. Registration ends Feb. 16.

Conference and food safety training information and registration are available at: http://cfvga.org
CFVGA Hard at Work for You
By President Robert Sakata, Sakata Family Farms, Brighton, Colo.

Welcome to 2017! Let me start off by offering a sincere apology for my message in the last quarterly newsletter. It wasn't my intention to leave you depressed with my lamenting over the increased paperwork, regulations and mandatory costs. At the same time, I think that's why I truly believe in what CFVGA is doing. Alone, some of the challenges we face and could face in the future would discourage the best of us, but when we come together as a cohesive organization, we can formulate solutions. That path won't be easy, but your investment in CFVGA will be put to good work throughout this year.

I encourage our members, especially grower members, to consider becoming a sponsor because the work we are doing is for you. By the time you read this, CFVGA will have already attended several January meetings across the state, been involved in a roundtable discussion with our elected officials from Washington D.C. and hosted several lunchtime webinars focused on the special needs of growing fruits and vegetables.

In this newsletter, you will learn about a few of the exciting and valuable events that CFVGA will be hosting to help your operation comply with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), as well as to manage water, marketing and labor. In February, CFVGA will host or co-host two separate food safety training events to enable growers to meet complex FSMA requirements. CFVGA members will save $100-350 on these training events over non-members.

CFVGA also is fostering two-way communication about fruit and vegetable production with the public. We need buyers to understand how hard growers are working to ensure the public has fresh, wholesome, tasty produce at affordable prices. We also want to understand their concerns and priorities and how we can respond to these needs.

For 2017 I would ask that you become engaged with CFVGA activities to make our collective voice and actions “Colorado Proud!” Start by registering today for the CFVGA annual conference, Feb. 21. I look forward to seeing you there!
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- Valley Irrigation of Greeley
I hope you will determine to get involved with the Colorado Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association in 2017! Now in our third full year of operation, we have some great member benefits. Here are just a few ways to participate:

1. Take FSMA Produce Safety training Feb. 20 and/or Preventive Controls for Human Food training Feb. 1-3 to improve your safety practices as well as to comply with the new rules. CFVGA members attend at deep discounts.

2. Use Members Only resources at coloradoproduce.org including directories, classified advertising, help wanted advertising and much more. All are free. More details on page 7 of this newsletter. Trouble logging on? Don't hesitate to contact me admin@coloradoproduce.org for help.

3. Attend CFVGA's Third Annual Conference to network, attend the grower-buyer networking session, visit exhibitors, be inspired and learn what is new in the industry that will affect your operation/business. See more on page 1 of this newsletter, but whatever you do, make sure to register by Feb. 7 for the best pricing.

4. Volunteer to serve on a CFVGA committee. This is an excellent way to understand what CFVGA does and to help shape priorities.

5. Ask your business associates and neighbors to join CFVGA. Strength is numbers is our mantra, but it's more than a mantra. The more members we have, the easier it will be to accomplish our goals.

We look forward to seeing you at conference Feb. 21. As always, make sure you send me or any of our board members suggestions for what CFVGA can do for you. And, last, I wish you all a peaceful and prosperous 2017!
Released in 2014, Whole Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP) allows farmers to insure historic revenue, rather than each individual commodity. It is designed for diversified farms with up to $8.5 million in insured revenue; including farms with specialty or organic commodities – (both crops and livestock), or those marketing to local, regional, farm-identity preserved, or direct markets.

WFRP allows farmers up to 85% coverage against loss of revenue from commodities produced during the insurance period and commodities you buy for resale during the insurance period, whether they are sold or not.
Beth LaShell, manages the Old Fort at Hesperus, Hesperus, Colo., through Fort Lewis College. The farm includes an incubator and farmer-in-training program for beginning vegetable growers on 6.5 acres as well as a 1 acre education garden for interns and community education. The farm grows more than 40 vegetables and herbs grown with emphasis on root vegetables that can be stored in the farm root cellar.

LaShell is also a member of the CFVGA board of directors.

How long have you operated this farm?
I have worked for Fort Lewis College for 21 years, teaching agriculture until 2012. Since 2010, I have been the coordinator of the 6,318 acre Old Fort at Hesperus property.

How do you market your produce?
We have a 40-member summer Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, a 20-member winter CSA, campus farm stand, farmers markets in Farmington, N.M. and Cortez, Colo., restaurant sales and an on site country store in Hesperus.

What are some of the challenges and opportunities you face in your operation?
With a large agriculture and community-based property to manage, it is challenging to allocate time during the growing season to each of the individual enterprises. It is important to hire good staff that you can trust.

In our beginning farmers programs, initially it was challenging to find strong applicants for the farm incubator program that were ready to start their own business. After starting a Farmer in Training Program to bridge the gap between intern and business owner, our numbers have increased. Now, we are working with beginning farmers to purchase or lease land in our high-priced region.

What advice would you give to new produce farmers?
Always have a market before you grow a lot of something.

In what way do you think the CFVGA can help fruit & vegetable farmers like no other organization?
CFVGA serves as a voice for fruit and vegetable growers. It also offers a tremendous amount of resources for growers of all sizes on the CFVGA website and through webinars and meetings.

LaShell operates an incubator and farmer-in-training program for beginning vegetable growers.
Food Safety Committee
Chair: Dominic DiSanti

Along with sponsorship from Rocky Mountain Farmers Union, CFVGA will host a FSMA Food Safety training, Feb. 20, at the Renaissance Denver Stapleton Hotel. Plan to attend this training and then the CFVGA Conference the next day. For more information and to register: cfvga.org. Members attend at a $100 discount!

In addition, CFVGA has teamed up with Western Growers to offer a course on Preventive Controls for Human Food to help growers and packers of produce comply with FDA rules. The course, which was developed by the Food Safety Preventive Controls Alliance, is Feb. 1-3, at the Adams County Extension Office in Brighton, Colo. Register by Jan. 25 at: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/fspca-preventive-controls-for-human-food-course-brighton-registration-30049005384?aff=CFVGA. CFVGA members save $350!

Nutrition & Health Committee
Chair: Amy Kunugi

The Nutrition & Health Committee has supported LiveWell Colorado’s launch of a statewide program Double Up Food Bucks (DUFB) in July 2016. DUFB (www.doubleupcolorado.org) provides a cash incentive to SNAP (formerly food stamp) recipients by matching every SNAP dollar they spend with funds to purchase Colorado-grown fresh produce, up to $20 per visit to a participating market. DUFB currently operates at 42 sites in 20 counties across the state and provided $49,145 in incentives to SNAP recipients in its inaugural three months of operation. Every one of these dollars went to a Colorado farmer. For more information contact Wendy Peters Moschetti at wendy-moschetti@livewellcolorado.org.

Labor Committee
Chair: Reid Fishering

The Labor Committee continues to advocate for the labor needs of growers. Several webinars to help growers understand labor issues and regulations are planned for 2017. CFVGA will be advertising the Help Wanted section of its website on Entravision Spanish language radio and possibly Colorado Public Radio this spring. It is VERY important that grower and allied members use this free service to list the help needed at their farms. Use this link https://coloradoproduce.org/job-postings/ to submit a Help Wanted notice.

Business Development Committee
Interim Chair: Robert Sakata
Submitted by Shaina Knight, Committee Co-Chair

The Business Development Committee is hard at work populating the soon to be published web page. Look for both general and Members Only web content in the coming months. We wish everyone a fantastic new year and are looking forward to serving CFVGA members with new projects this coming year.

Water Committee
Chair: Robert Sakata

Thanks to all of you who attended the Colorado Ag Water Alliance (CAWA) Ag Water Viability Conference last November. It was held in conjunction with the Inter Basin Compact Committee meeting. The main objective for the CFVGA Water Committee in 2017 will be to provide input into Colorado Ag Water Alliance (www.CoAgWater.org) water workshops across the state: For our members in the San Luis Valley, CFVGA will be a co-sponsor for the Rio Grande River Workshop to be held in Alamosa Feb. 28. Also, CFVGA will be monitoring Colorado legislative activities. If you have any specific water topic that you would like to have explored either as a regional workshop or lunch time webinar please feel free to contact Robert Sakata at rtsakata@aol.com.

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Researcher Devotes 25 Years to Developing Chile Variety

By Marilyn Bay Drake

Dr. Michael Bartolo is the best sort of person, accomplished yet humble. Since 1992, he has patiently bred chile peppers to find varieties that are popular with buyers and profitable for growers. In 2005, Arkansas Valley growers first planted “Mosco”, a Pueblo chile type. Today, Mosco is one of the most popular chiles grown in and around Pueblo, Colo.

That is not an easy accomplishment, given that Arkansas Valley residents are serious about their chiles. The region’s largest city, Pueblo, Colo., hosts one of the largest food festivals in the state. The Pueblo Chile and Frijole Festival, held annually in September, draws in over 130,000 visitors. The main attraction is the ever-popular Pueblo (a.k.a. Mira Sol) Chile.

Bartolo, who is the vegetable crop specialist and manager of Colorado State University’s Arkansas Valley Research Center in Rocky Ford, Colo., was born and raised on a small farm east of Pueblo. He received his undergraduate and master’s degrees at Colorado State University, and in 1990, he received a Ph.D. in plant physiology from the University of Minnesota.

In 2014, he joined with other growers and allied industries to serve on the organizing board of directors for the Colorado Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association (CFVGA). He continues to serve as a CFVGA board member.

According to Bartolo, the Pueblo Chile has been cultivated in southern Colorado for over 100 years. “It is characterized by the upright growth habit of the pepper,” he said. “Hence the name Mira Sol, which translates into looking at the sun.”

The Pueblo Chile originated in Mexico and was brought into the United States and improved by horticulturist Fabian Garcia, a researcher at what is now New Mexico State University. From there, the pepper made its way into southern Colorado.

Bartolo’s chile breeding legacy started officially in 1992 when he obtained a strain of Pueblo Chile from his uncle, Harry Mosco, a farmer on the Saint Charles Mesa, east of Pueblo. Today, the Mosco variety has become the predominant Pueblo Chile variety in and around Pueblo.

The researcher’s matter-of-fact modesty makes it sound as though development of the Mosco variety was a small project on the side with which he was fortunate to associate. In fact, it was a project “on the side,” as Bartolo’s primary work is researching production and irrigation practices. But, development of the chile took a lot of time and many hours of work over two-plus decades.

Bartolo’s chile plants grow in the open. “Chiles cross-pollinate, and insects can carry pollen from long distances, providing potential for some unusual varieties.”

“In 1994, I found a superior plant and saved its seeds. I continued to use the single plant selection process to develop more uniformity within the desired traits,” he said. “I asked a few growers and family members to try the seeds and took their feedback to adjust my selections in future years.”

In addition to taste and hardiness, Bartolo’s input from growers steered him toward plants that yielded fruit that was easy to pick and which had thick, “meaty” flesh, ideal for roasting.

“Mosco has thick fruit walls and high yield potential relative to the original forms of the Pueblo Chile,” he said. “This variety also has excellent roasting and eating characteristics.”

The Mosco Chile is more pungent than a typical Anaheim-type pepper, yet less “hot” than a jalapeño. Its estimated pungency is 5,000-6,000 Scoville units. The Mosco Chile is green and turns red as it further matures. It is Bartolo’s opinion that the red Mosco Chile is a bit sweeter with a subtler heat.

Bartolo’s chile breeding program is recognized for its importance to the chile industry by Pueblo growers.

“Mike Bartolo’s work to breed peppers that are both suited for cultivation in southern Colorado and sought after by consumers is invaluable to chile growers,” said Dominic DiSanti, a fifth generation chile grower from Pueblo, Colo., and a fellow CFVGA board member.

“Growers are grateful to work with someone who understands real world production issues and offers so much knowledge and experience in specialty crops. The results of his two and a half decades of pepper development and research have helped our production tremendously and

continued on page 11
National Legislative Scene to Change, But How Is Uncertain
By Dennis Nuxoll, Western Growers, Vice President, Federal Government Affairs, Washington D.C.

As the new year begins, Washington, D.C. is preparing for the Trump presidency. Republicans are now in charge of the White House, the U.S. House and the U.S. Senate.

During January, we can expect the House and Senate to begin the first procedural steps to repeal Obamacare, but what is unclear is how Republicans intend to replace the health care law.

The produce industry is in an especially interesting position regarding this topic, since we tend to be one of the rare segments of agriculture that could run up against the 50-employee requirement under Obamacare which triggers an employer to provide his/her employees coverage.

The other major issue is identifying and then confirming new leadership for the various federal government agencies. Confirmation hearings are starting in the Senate for cabinet nominees, but behind the scenes resumes are being exchanged and individuals are being vetted for various slots within all the government agencies.

In addition, tax reform seems to be an area where House and Senate Republicans, the president-elect and Senate Democrats and House Democrats all have an interest.

Tax reform proposals will include both corporate and individual structures. As an example, almost every tax reform proposal put forward by Republicans seeks to lower rates. Lowering rates without exploding the federal budget necessitates eliminating deductions. On the corporate tax side, most proposals would eliminate every corporate deduction except deductions for research and development. On the individual side, itemized deductions would be nearly eliminated with most proposals exempting the mortgage interest deduction.

This level of change has serious implications. Eliminating the deduction for state and local taxes would be a significant tax increase for taxpayers living in states with high state and local taxes, an increase that may not be compensated for with lower federal tax rates. Western Growers and other agriculture groups are working together to engage on your behalf as tax reform unfolds in the upcoming congressional session.

Colorado Legislative Report

The Colorado General Assembly convened Jan. 11. Most people feel the state budget will be the biggest item of discussion. The Governor’s staff projects the state may face a $119 million shortfall, as legislators look for ways to fund education, hospitals and infrastructure. Any potential legislation that has a fiscal component will most likely face scrutiny this legislative session.

CFVGA will watching closely as funding for the Colorado Department of Agriculture and the Colorado Water Conservation Board are debated. CFVGA also has been attending the Colorado Ag Council briefings at the Capitol bi-weekly and will participate in the Legislative Meet and Greet Jan. 29. Watch for legislative email updates and CFVGA member opinion polls as bills of importance to our membership are introduced. If you know of any state legislation that CFVGA should be involved with, please contact Robert Sakata at rtsakata@aol.com.
**Member Directory**

**Grower Members**
- Anchor Farms
- Aspen Moon Farm LLC
- Colorado Mushroom Farm
- Croft Family Farm
- DenverFarmer.com
- Dionisio Farms & Produce Inc
- Domenico Farms, Inc.
- Ela Family Farms
- Fagerberg Produce, Inc.
- Garden Sweet LLC
- Golden West Farms
- Hanagan Farms
- Hines Farms
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- White Rock Specialties LLC
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- Colorado Dry Bean Admin Co.
- Colorado Potato Admin Committee
- Colorado Seeds, Inc.
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- Peak to Plains Food Distributing
- Philosophy Communications
- Possibilities Unlimited
- Primus Auditing Ops
- Rabo AgriFinance
- Rocky Mountain Farmers Union
- Rocky Mountain Soil Stewardship, LLC
- Silveus Insurance Group
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- Western Growers Association
- Wilbur-Ellis Co

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- Canon City Schools
- CFVGA
- CO Department of Labor & Employment
- Colorado Department of Agriculture
- Colorado Farm to School Task Force
- Colorado State University
- Colorado Wine Industry Development Board
- CSU Arkansas Valley Research Ctr
- CSU Extension
- CSU Extension - Adams County
- CSU Extension - Arapahoe County
- CSU Extension - Larimer County
- CSU Extension - Mesa County
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- CSU Extension - Pueblo County
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- CSU Extension/Western Regional Center to Enhance Food Safety
- CSU Extension-Jefferson County
- CSU Soil & Crop Science Dept
- Denver University
- Fort Lewis College
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- Weld Food Bank

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Look for the most up to date member directory and complete contact information under the membership tab at coloradoproduce.org