



EXTENSION ELEVATED 2024

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CSU EXTENSION OF WELD COUNTY
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““However difficult life may seem,
there is always something you can
do and succeed at.” – Stephen
Hawking

Director's Note

Weld County Extension continued to uplift our community in 2024 through education and events that inspired. We supported the growth of life and leadership skills in Weld County youth through our robust 4-H club program, which has over 900 members. We reached over 2,000 youth outside of the club program with activities to promote learning and career opportunities. We helped increase community health through programs such as food preparation, food preservation, food safety, healthy aging, and nutrition, including new efforts to promote the Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) to families in need.

We continued our long tradition of supporting agriculture through education and research as well as farm and small acreage site visits. We also continued to encourage smart management of yards and gardens through our Colorado Master Gardener program, new demonstration gardens, and other resources.

The 2024 Weld County Fair was a huge success, bringing in a record \$1.8 million at the Junior Livestock Sale and receiving over 5,000 entries in 4-H and FFA project competitions.

All of this is possible because of the partnerships we build, volunteer engagement, and the generosity of various sponsors who provide grants, gifts, and donations. It is also possible because of our committed team of staff, including support staff who streamline the work on behalf of Weld County citizens.

A new, permanent director will ensure that Weld County Extension continues to fulfill its important mission in 2025.

Thank you for your continued support of the Weld County Extension Office and the Weld County Fair. We look forward to continued success in the New Year!



CSU Weld County Extension Interim Director

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

BY: KIM EASTWOOD-4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST

4-H in Weld County is a highlight of our Extension Programs. With over 900 youth and 150 volunteers, Weld County hosts one of the largest 4-H programs in the state. Youth have the opportunity to be involved with 4-H from the young age of 5 until they are 18 years old, all as of December 31st. These youth can select from a wide range of projects: Food Preservation to Shooting Sports, Robotics to Scrapbooking, Rabbits to Cattle, Horses to Poultry, and everything in-between. They work on these projects throughout the 4-H year and then have the opportunity to showcase them at the iconic Weld County Fair in July.

Along with the projects, youth can travel to different events and contests throughout the state. There are four different conferences (Leadership Development Conference, Youth Fest, State Conference, and Colorado Leadership Camp) which are open to youth across the state. This allows for our members to not only learn additional leadership but to interact with other members from across the state. Beginning in 2022, Weld County teamed up with other counties along the Front Range to host Regional Contests for Creative Cooks, Speech and Demonstration, and Cake Decorating. This has opened the door for youth to see what others are doing from neighboring counties and to provide an opportunity to learn from each other.

Weld County 4-H has also implemented Career Focus tours that youth can attend to learn about different careers they can go into upon graduation. This past year we had the opportunity to spend the day in the Horticulture Department at Colorado State University where youth saw first-hand the different fields related to Horticulture. They were able to tour the greenhouses to learn about the different studies, participate in a horticulture activity, and tour all aspects of the college related to horticulture studies.

As we look towards 2025 we are excited for the new opportunities on the horizon and to see the growth that Weld County 4-H can have!



EXTENSION ELEVATED

2024 RECAP

4-H EVENTS-YOUTH EXEC COUNCIL

BY: TERESA JOHNSON, EVENT COORDINATOR

Weld County 4-H has a dedicated group of senior 4-H members that are known as the Youth Executive Council. This group is a vital part of many of the events throughout Weld County including Mardi Gras, Camp Cloverbud, youth dances & community service projects. The council meets monthly on the 1st Tuesday at the Extension Office and elect members as Senators to the District 2 4-H Council which includes Larimer, Boulder & Weld County as a working unit for the State 4-H program.

In 2024 the YEC helped members to attend a number of leadership events including Leader Development Conference in January and Colorado State 4-H Conference in June. As members of District 2 they helped to plan and implement at the LDC event and to put on Junior Jam in June for members that are 8 to 11 years old. Each year these hard working youth also award 3 scholarships totaling \$1500, this has been an ongoing endeavor and over 60 Weld County members have been recipients of this generous effort.

Each fall Weld County 4-H raises funds for the 4-H Foundation with their fall carnival known as Mardi Gras. The YEC is in charge of manning the inflatable games as well as organizing the youth dance that is held after Mardi Gras. Camp Cloverbud is for our youngest members age 5-7 and the YEC Youth can be counted on to be group leaders for this biannual event. One of their most important activities of the year is helping to organize and carry out Community Service throughout the year, in 2024 the group helped to gather kids books, work at the food bank, take treats to first responders and visit the elderly in a local retirement home.

Next time you're at a 4-H event, watch for these hardworking dedicated youth. They are always looking for new members!



4-H EVENTS-YOUTH EXEC COUNCIL

BY: TERESA JOHNSON, EVENT COORDINATOR



EXTENSION ELEVATED

2024 RECAP

4-H ENDOWMENT - OUTREACH

BY: PATRICK PULIS, 4-H OUTREACH SPECIALIST

During the past year, Weld County 4-H Outreach has made significant progress in educating youth throughout Weld County in Ag and STEM programs. Our 4-H Outreach taught at 17 different locations and organized a total of 109 events and programs. The total reach of youth was 2,089. Our county's outreach helped with large events such as National Western Stock Show, Farm Show, Skyview School of STEM Celebration, Bookmobile Day, 4-H State Conference, CSU's Ag day, YES Fest, and Ag Tour.

This year the monthly program topics that were offered to schools and libraries included the science of sound, birdfeeders and birdwatching, rocketry and Orion's belt, power protectors, pressed flower art, GPS and Geo Spatial Technologies, balancing act, energy board games, soda can art, Rwanda solar micro grids, creative pulp making, know to grow greenhouses, and viruses. Part of the mission of Extension is to bring the University's research and work to the community. In the program on Rwanda solar micro grids, youth learned how faculty at CSU are working to bring power to the African Country of Rwanda by utilizing solar panels. Youth watched the work being done and got to make their own micro grid circuits using copper tape and LED lights.

At the four locations of Fort Lupton Library, Erie Library, Hudson Library and Meadow Ridge Elementary School each participated in our Embryology program where youth learned about the development of chicken eggs and got to see live hatches. This program gets youth excited about chickens and agriculture. It is always a favorite among schools and libraries.

In response to a needs assessment by the community that raised the issue for youth to build skills in financial and budgeting awareness, 4-H Outreach responded with a new program teaching youth entrepreneurship skills. During the Months of March through May, Weld County 4-H, Young Americans, and the Highplains Library District teamed up to inaugurate the first 4-H Youth Biz Academy for Young Entrepreneurs where 6 youth met to learn about how to start a business. Youth learned financial budgeting skills and built a prototype product meant to solve a real-world problem. After pitching their product to a panel of sharks, youth then went on to manufacture 15+ products. They learned about packaging and developed their own marketing campaign. Finally, the youth sold their items at a Market Day fair that was open to the public. In the fall of 2024, a second cohort of 13 youth participated in the second Academy and sold a combine revenue of over \$1,000 at their Market Day. A third cohort is scheduled to take place in the spring of 2025.

Over the summer, an intern contributed to teaching a 30 Days Lost in Space Coding program as part of the GEAR UP camp that took place at Heath Middle school. 42 youth took the Coding class over the course of a week. When asked if youth like STEM more so after taking this coding class, 62% answered that they did. A total of 14 youth said they "want to work with coding in the future."

4-H ENDOWMENT - OUTREACH

BY: PATRICK PULIS, 4-H OUTREACH SPECIALIST

Over the past four years, the program “Our Energy” has been implemented at various locations. The program’s highlights and successes were presented at the CAE4-HYD conference in April. Currently the “Our Energy” program is being delivered to over 70 youth at Fred Tjardes School of Innovation. The group of 2nd-5th graders are learning about topics such as Potential and Kinetic Energies and the science behind different sources of energy. Over the course of 15 sessions, youth will participate in hands on activities from designing their own Energy City to building static charge detectors and more. During the final session, youth will have the opportunity to play the “Energy Nation” board game which has been finalized for play this year.

In August, Patrick made an appearance on CSU’s Wiz Kid on an episode that talks about honey and native bees and pollination. Pollination is a key component to our Agriculture and food production. As youth learn about this topic, they come to understand the important role of bees in their food production. The episode is due to air soon.

Recently, a committee was formed to help fundraising for the Jean Hoshiko Endowment Fund which supports the outreach efforts in Weld County. This committee formed goals and objectives for the position and plans on raising money to fully fund a position. With much gratitude, 4-H Outreach would like to thank both The Colorado Farm Show and Pivot Energy for donating to the Endowment to help fund outreach efforts.

Finally, 4-H Outreach finished the year teaching a great program for the families of the Centennial Board of Cooperative Services (BOCES) which offered English classes for the parents and a Coding class for the Hispanic youth. Youth learned the basics of coding on the computer while also building circuits that got components like LED lights to work.



At the Clearview Library, youth learn about solar micro grids in Rwanda and replicate their own grid by creating a circuit with a 3-D printed solar house and LED lights



A student at the Coding Class is learning how to run a program to get a digital program to count upwards to 100



Youth at 4-H Youth Biz Academy of Young Entrepreneurs are learning the requirements/steps to run their own business

FAMILY CONSUMER SCIENCE

BY: SHEILA BECKLEY, FAMILY CONSUMER SCIENCE SPECIALIST

Family and Consumer Science programming in Weld County, offered through CSU Extension, continues to grow and respond to community needs. This year, Food Safety classes were offered to various community groups, including older adults, entrepreneurs through the Food Safety Training for Colorado Cottage Foods Producers, commercial foodservice workers, and nutrition volunteers. Additionally, commercial food safety testing services were provided in both Spanish and Mandarin Chinese.

Healthy aging programs remain in high demand, with presentations on topics such as Alzheimer's and dementia, nutrition, meal planning for older adults, cooking for one or two, chair exercises, low-impact aerobics, financial management, and healthy eating during the holidays.

Food preparation and preservation classes also continue to attract strong interest, with sessions on low and high-acid canning, fermentation, and more. It was an honor to be invited by Mayor Elizabeth Austin of Milliken to present on food preservation and serve as a resource at the 100th Beef 'N Bean Day. Additionally, Weld County residents took full advantage of the pressure canner gauge testing services.

This year also offered a great professional development opportunity at the Modernizing Home Food Preservation Conference, hosted by Oregon State University in Portland. It was an honor to present on the topic "Exploring the Resurgence and Science of Sourdough" at the conference.

Community requests for food preparation classes focused on nutrition, health, and food safety included topics such as the Mediterranean Diet, the Science of Chocolate, meal planning, high-elevation baking, and cooking and candy-making. Nutrition and chronic disease prevention classes continue to be well-received, with courses covering diabetes, the Mediterranean Diet, and basic nutrition.

This summer, a grant was awarded to hire a student intern for the "Resources for Older Adults in Weld County" project, which addresses a key need identified in an assessment survey conducted by United Way of Weld to support AARP's Age-Friendly Community designation. The information gathering and categorization phase is now complete, and the project is currently in the website development phase, with plans to launch in 2025.

Whether volunteering at Caregiver's Day or collaborating on nutrition outreach with the Health Department and the Food Bank, these efforts would not be possible without the invaluable partnerships with the dedicated individuals and agencies across Weld County. Sincere gratitude is extended to the High Plains Library District, Clearview Library, UCHHealth, Weld County Department of Public Health and Environment, Greeley Active Adult Center, United Way of Weld, Thriving Weld, Weld Senior Networking, Meeker Commons, Weld County Food Bank, Weld County Credit Union, Village Cooperative of Greeley, West Greeley Conservation District, and the Alzheimer's Association in Weld County for their support and the collaborative opportunities they provided.

EXPANDED FOOD & NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

BY: BRIANDA GUILLEN, EFNEP PEER EDUCATOR

Colorado State University Extension's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) helps families with limited resources increase their self-sufficiency, nutritional health, and well-being. Through a series of lessons EFNEP participants gain the knowledge and skills necessary to improve their diet, increase their physical activity, stretch their food dollars, and handle food more safely.

Brianda Guillen began her role as an EFNEP Peer Educator in August 2024 and has successfully completed the EFNEP New Staff Training. During this intensive 6-week training provided by EFNEP specialists and faculty in CSU's Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition, Brianda learned how to facilitate the *Eating Smart, Being Active* curriculum and was instructed on the research-based nutrition, physical activity, food resource management and food safety content included in the 9-lesson series. She also received knife skills and culinary training to assist her program participants in preparing the delicious, low-cost recipes that are included in each *Eating Smart, Being Active* lesson. In December, Brianda participated in a training on the 3 optional *Eating Smart, Being Active* maternal and infant nutrition lessons.

Brianda is currently teaching several groups in collaboration with local food pantries and Weld County Public Health and planning new groups for 2025. Parents, expectant parents and young adults (18-29 years old) who are eligible for programs such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), WIC or Head Start are eligible for EFNEP. Classes are free and available in English and Spanish.



MASTER GARDENERS / HORTICULTURE

BY: NICOLE DOYLE, HORTICULTURE PROGRAM ASSISTANT

The Master Gardener program in Weld County continues to serve the local community. Our Master Gardeners have dug into the newest demonstration garden project at White Plumb Farm this year. Partnering with the City of Greeley to create six demonstration gardens at White Plumb Learning Center to show homeowners what they can do in their own landscapes.

The Weld Master Gardener program was awarded a grant from the Colorado Garden Foundation for the six gardens early this year and work was quickly under way. The gardens will be another opportunity for our volunteers to share information and educate the public as well as enhance the property. The six gardens focus on Colorado native and Plant Select plants, Firewise gardening, Heirloom and Weld County natives, as well as plants that have historical and agricultural significance from the past and present.

In 2024, the program in Weld County supported 53 active Master Gardeners and 12 Apprentices. Our Master Gardeners stay active throughout the year with providing horticulture information and education through classes and events in Weld County.



AGRONOMY

BY: KAT CASWELL, AGRONOMY SPECIALIST

Crop production in Weld County experienced some drought but continued the historic standards of high quality. The summer of 2024 marked the beginning of efforts to establish gardens and cover crop plots at the historic White Plum Farm in partnership with the City of Greeley Museums.

In January of 2024, the second annual agronomy educational event was held at the CO Farm Show. Participants attended sessions on wheat stem saw-fly and research on several new crop for Colorado dryland production. Feedback from presenters and attendees was positive and encouraging. Agronomy will continue to participate at the Farm Show educational events in the future.

Other highlights from 2024 include weighing wheat yield in plots for the Cooperative On-Farm Testing program in Weld and other counties. An additional Weld County site was included in the 2024 COFT program to evaluate irrigated wheat. The irrigated wheat performed very well, which was encouraging for future work in diversifying irrigated crop rotations.

Extension Specialists within Weld County and the Front Range partnered to conduct site visits for small acreage owners and advise them on the best management for their properties. Farm field visits were also completed in topics from crop loss evaluation to hay quality.



Taking a break to check plot map



A soil moisture reader installed in Eastern Colorado as a part of the CO Soil Health Program



White Plumb Farm sprinkler set up



White Plumb Farm sunflowers emerging

EXTENSION ELEVATED

2024 RECAP

LIVESTOCK PROGRAM

BY: LARRY HOOKER, LIVESTOCK SPECIALIST, ADULT AND 4-H YOUTH

In 2024, our livestock programming was a very exciting year, our county fair animal ID process begins in February with our market ID for cattle, then finalizes in May with goats, sheep and hogs' ID's. We had our 22nd Annual Weld County Goat Extravaganza on April 26-28, our 22nd Annual Colorado Dairy Youth Extravaganza on June 9-11 which always leads into the Weld County Fair which began on July 20th thru the 29th, which gives our 4-H families a great time with exciting outcomes in the livestock shows.

This year I am highlighting our Weld County Fair Carcass Contest because it is another way that our youth can enhance the educational value of their youth livestock projects and gain some financial rewards too. In Weld County, our county fair market livestock animals are not only judged live in the show ring, by an individual judge who looks their structure and confirmation, but each animal can be judged on their carcass merit using ultrasound.

A company called Ultrainsights, ultrasounds our market beef, sheep, goats and hogs during the time they are at our county fair. They are great to work with and do a fantastic job for us gaining this information. Each species has a specific time interval during the county fair that they come to get ultrasound data taken. It is not required to be in the carcass contest, but our numbers indicate the popularity of this contest. After ultrasound data is taken, Ultrainsights analyzes the data, places it on a spreadsheet. and sends it to the CSU Meats department to rank the data. Then they send it to us to finalize the data.

The Weld County Fair Carcass Contest Award Program was held Thursday, September 12, at Island Grove Regional Park. The Carcass Contest judges the animal based on total lean meat product produced, instead of just a visual comparison. This year we had 54 market beef, 99 market goats, 64 market sheep and 169 market swine that were entered into the carcass contest. We usually have around \$18,000.00 that goes toward the cash awards in the contest. That money is divided by 4; \$4500.00 per species. Then we give the top ten in each species a rosette ribbon and a cash award plus the Champion and Reserve Champion for market beef, goat, sheep and swine receive a plaque as well.

The Weld County Fair Carcass Contest is a really great contest for our 4-H and FFA youth livestock exhibitors. It gives our youth another way to compete in the livestock project, that may not do well in the show ring. Its great to watch the smiles on the exhibitors that come about when reading off the top ten award winners in each species. If the carcass contest is new to you or you would have an interest in supporting the Weld County livestock program please consider making a donation to the carcass contest, it would really be appreciated.

LIVESTOCK PROGRAM

BY: LARRY HOOKER, LIVESTOCK SPECIALIST, ADULT AND 4-H YOUTH

The Weld County Fair Carcass Contest is a really great contest for our 4-H and FFA youth livestock exhibitors. It gives our youth another way to compete in the livestock project, that may not do well in the show ring. Its great to watch the smiles on the exhibitors that come about when reading off the top ten award winners in each species. If the carcass contest is new to you or you would have an interest in supporting the Weld County livestock program please consider making a donation to the carcass contest, it would really be appreciated.



Carcass Contest Winners

WELD COUNTY FAIR

BY: MIKAYALA GABEL, FAIR COORDINATOR

With Mikayla Gabel's first Weld County Fair as coordinator under her belt, the 2024 Fair proved once again to be a standout event. Showcasing the best of Weld County's agricultural heritage, the Jr. Livestock Sale rounded out the Fair with another record-breaking sale at \$1.8 million.

One of the most remarkable aspects of the Weld County Fair is its strong agricultural roots. This year, the fair proudly upheld its long-standing tradition for local youth to display their hard work and dedication in 4-H and FFA competitions with over 5,000 entries. From livestock exhibitions to crop displays, the fair highlights the hard work that goes into Weld County's agricultural industry.

The Weld County Fair has evolved over the years into an event that brings together more than just agricultural exhibits. The fairgrounds were alive with entertainment kicking the Fair off with a Truck and Tractor Pull. There were over 1800 attendees and we are excited to bring it back for 2025. We also brought back a Team Roping that is here to stay for years to come.

The success of the 2024 Weld County Fair stands as a testament to the dedication of the sponsors, participants, and volunteers who make this annual event possible. With each year, the fair continues to evolve, offering more activities, exhibits, and opportunities for community engagement.

Planning never stops and we are excited for all that will be in store for the 107th Annual Weld County Fair, July 19-28, 2025, at Greeley's Island Grove Regional Park. We look forward to seeing you and building memories together that will be passed down years to come!



WELD COUNTY FAIR

BY: MIKAYALA GABEL, FAIR COORDINATOR

2024 WELD COUNTY FAIR PHOTOS



EXTENSION ELEVATED

2024 RECAP

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT-ACCOUNTING

BY: CINDY NOSKO, OFFICE TECH IV

As an Office Tech for the Weld County Extension Office, Cindy Nosko does all the accounting for the Extension office while taking care of numerous accounts and programs, including the Dairyman Fund, Weld County 4-H Foundation, Endowment, 4-H Raffle Fund, Livestock Sale, and the Weld County Fair. Cindy also takes care of about 20 programs within the Extension program. Each program has a separate income/expense report that has to be completed monthly. For the 4-H Foundation, she communicates and delivers the financials on a quarterly basis to the Board Members.

Cindy manages and maintains the Weld County 4-H Foundation Website as well as the Extension Advisory Council page on the CSU Extension website. Cindy oversees the fiscal activities that occur in the office which often include weekly deposits and invoice settlements. Cindy is responsible for creating the yearly reports for CSU to report the income/expenses for Extension and the County Fair. Additional duties include, renewing the non-profit reporting for the 4-H Foundation to the State of Colorado. Cindy also works with agents and staff on purchasing and maintaining supplies.

When not busy with fiscal responsibilities, Cindy maintains the 4-H Foundation website and the Extension Advisory Council website. She also assists with the other websites as needed. Commitment to learning new skills to provide better services for clients keeps Cindy looking for new learning experiences.



ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT-4-H

BY: MICHELLE LANGSTON, OFFICE TECH III

The year of 2024 has been a year of learning. There has been new state and federal ADA laws that have gone into effect for print and website. Michelle has attended a couple of trainings to stay up to date on the new ADA requirements. She is still learning how to do update documents and websites to meet the new standards.

Michelle enjoys working with the families and leaders in the Weld County 4-H program. We had a successful year and she is looking forward to the new 4-H year.

With the hiring of an EFNEP Educator, Michelle has created a website page promoting the EFNEP program and how to get connected with Brianda for programing.

Michelle is currently working with Sheila to create website pages for Older Adult Resources. She is enjoying creating these pages for the Weld County citizens. Throughout the year, Michelle assisted the specialist with a variety of projects.



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