



Date: Wednesday May 13th, 2026

Time: 1:00 PM

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

Advisory Committee Members Attending: Carmen Farmer, Ryan Peterson, Chris Steadman, Eric Umbreit, Brad Justice, Amber Graves, Martha Sullins, Sarah Mayer, Emily McMurtrey, Dennis Lacerte , Sam Parsaye , Cheri Kraft

Commissioners' Office: John Kefalas

Staff attending: Andy Weakland, Laura Walker, Matthew Lafferty , Scott Benton

Other Members of the Community: Rebecca Hill, Catherine Grant, Brad Wind, Greg Dewey

1:00-1:20

Call to Order and Roll Call

- Call to order at 1:06pm

Amendments to the Agenda

- No amendments to the agenda

Approval of the Minutes

- March 11th, 2025
 - One change to \$3 Billion under the commissioner updates
 - Minutes approved as amended

Staff Updates (Andy Weakland)

Jess Updates:

- March 25th, Hosted Spring Pest Management for Organic Vegetable Producers webinar with Karim Gharbi, Denver County Horticulture Specialist
 - 32 virtual attendees

- April 21st, Hosted When in Drought: Smart Irrigation and Soil Management Workshop with PVCF and NoCo Foodshed Project.
 - The event included presentations about Irrigation Timing and Scheduling, Drought Management, How to Work with your Ditch Company, Soil Sensors 101, and Soil Management in Drought. NoCo Foodshed Project led a drip irrigation demo after the workshop.
 - 35 attendees in person and 10 online.
 - The event was recorded and the videos will be posted on our youtube channel
- April 23rd, Hosted Marketing Made Manageable: Tools For Busy Producers Webinar with NoCo Foodshed Project.
 - 15 attended virtually
- May 5th Supporting workshop event with NoCo Foodshed Project and CSU Food Systems,
 - “The Price is Right: Pricing Strategies for Producers” (6-7:30pm at Odell Brewing)
- Successfully Hired an Extension Summer intern.
 - They will help support our 2 local food public outreach summer events (Soil Health Day at the Farmers Market and NoCo Farm Hop). They will also be working with a CSU researcher to create a literature review on customer food purchasing behavior and how local and soil health influence consumer purchasing decisions.
 - They will be starting late May.

Cary Update:

- Farmers Market Kickoff
 - The season begins May 16th (Hours: 9:00am – 1:00pm). We encourage everyone to stop by and support our local farmers.
- Extension Annual & Impact Reports
 - These are now available for review. You can find the full digital versions by visiting our website.
- Process Improvement Update (Michael Murphree)
 - The team is currently finalizing a new webpage and checklist for farmers interested in launching a farm stand. Michael will provide further updates as they develop; in the meantime, please direct any specific questions to Cary or Jess.
- New Board Member Introduction
 - Please join us in welcoming Sara Mayer to the board.

1:20-1:30

Commissioner Kefalas Updates

- State Legislative Session
 - Today is the final day; 48 bills are still in play.
- Farmers Market opens this Saturday.
 - The commissioner will conduct "story time" at the Farmers Market kickoff this Saturday at 9:30am.
- Solid Waste
 - New landfill north of Wellington set for July ribbon cutting; current landfill at capacity by year-end.

- New Facilities
 - Updates on the diversion and transfer station; piloting food and yard waste composting and a construction/demolition (C&D) facility.
- Public Works
 - Poudre River Trail officially opens June 13th.
- Wildfire Mitigation
 - Received \$20 million in federal funding for mitigation on private lands in Red Feather Lakes and Estes Park areas.

1:30-3:25

Discussion Items and Action Items

1:30-1:50

- Larimer County Local Food Policy Study Scoping (Rebecca Hill, Catherine Grant, Martha Sullins)
 - CSU Extension internship discussion. A new intern was hired to support Ag Research.
 - Catherine Grant introduced as a PhD student focusing on water economics and economic impact.
 - Request to send out the Local Food Policy Study report from last year. (Andy)
 - Some discussion and recap around last year's study on local food policy and its impact.
 - Request for direction for the study that will take place by Catherine to the board as well as feedback on what the board would like to see in the study.
 - Suggestions from board to use AI for lead generation and to interview institutional buyers regarding "formatting blockers" (packaging/portioning).
 - Recommendations discussed from the board of who can be interviewed for the study as well as how this report may be used in the field to help support members of the Ag community.
 - Discussion around a subcommittee to help steer the study.
 - Brad, Sarah and Sam from the board all volunteered to help form the subcommittee
 - Follow-up will happen about rules surrounding the subcommittee and the proper protocol of how communication can occur outside of the regular board meetings.. (Andy)

1:50-2:20

- Legislative Update (Brad Justice)
 - Please refer to the legislative update presentation and slides.
 - Discussion Highlights

- Passed: SB 26-121 (Ag Overtime) signed, moving threshold to 56 hours; Ag Property Tax definition broadened to include smaller niche producers (pigs, goats).
- Signed/Moving: Extension of Conservation Easement Tax Credit; Cottage Foods Act expansion to include refrigerated items and meat.
- Concerns: SB 26-064 (Ag Future Loan Program) is oversubscribed; concerns that adding NGOs/Corporations to the applicant pool without new funding will displace individual farmers.
- Federal: "One Farmer, One File" initiative involves a \$300M contract with Palantir for unified digital records; concerns raised regarding data privacy and satellite-based compliance monitoring.

2:20-3:00

- Northern Integrated Supply Project (NISP) and Agriculture in Larimer County (Brad Wind, Greg Dewey)
 - Status: Project costs at \$2.6B; participants count down to 9 communities representing 20,000 acre-foot demand.
 - Project Shift: Original plan to exchange South Platte water with Poudre ditch systems has dwindled due to lack of ditch leadership interest.
 - Impact: Without NISP buckets, participants would likely target 64,000 acres of existing farmland for water rights.
 - Timeline: Potential construction starts in 2027.

3:00-3:25

- Larimer County Groundwater Study and Data Centers (Scott Benton)
 - Please refer to Larimer County Ground Water Study and Data Centers Presentation
 - Groundwater Study: \$400k study funded to map resources in the ag-urban transition area; board urged inclusion of water quality (salinity/nitrates) and radon concerns.
 - Data Centers: 6-month moratorium in place ending August 25th; public survey (2,800 respondents) shows 90% do not support data centers in Larimer County due to water/power concerns.
 - Regulatory Options: Discussion of requiring 75% renewable energy or "Economic Betterment Funds" in lieu of full taxes.

Future Agenda Items

- Follow up discussion posed by the questions from Scott Benton's presentation on Data Centers.

Adjourn

- Meeting adjourned at 3:51pm