

**1525 Blue Spruce Drive
Fort Collins, Colorado 80524
(970) 498-6000
www.larimer.org/ext**

Extension Advisory Committee Minutes

November 5th, 2025
8am – 10:00 am*

Advisory Board members attending: JoAnn Herkenhoff, Kara Rudnick, Dick Christensen, Kelly Pollard, Margaret Long, Xochi Arellno

Commissioners' Office: Commissioner Kristin Stephens

Extension staff attending: Andy Weakland, Cary Weiner, Analecia Vasquez, Alison O'Connor, Bailey Schilling, Jess Callen, Christa Timmerman, Maggie Switzer, Lexie Casper, Rachel Wildman, Lisa Auer

Public Attendees:

- A. CALL TO ORDER
 - a. Call to Order at 8:05am
- B. AGENDA REVIEW
 - a. Agenda approved
- C. APPROVAL OF LAST MEETING MINUTES
 - a. Minutes from September were approved
- D. COUNTY COMMISSIONER LIAISON REPORT/COMMENTS
 - a. County Update
 - i. First budget hearing on November 10th, 2025.
 - 1. Cutting budget but doing so without layoffs and still including raises.
 - 2. All information is online as well as the budget explorer tool.
 - ii. SNAP benefits are still unclear but looks like only half of the benefits are set to be released this month.
 - 1. 2500 residents had no money left on their cards at the end of October, so our staff will be reaching out for them to let them know about resources available.
 - 2.
 - iii. Phase 2 at the Ranch ground breaking has occurred with a ribbon cutting ceremony.

1. Great Lawn will have an amphitheater to accommodate larger concerts.
 2. All of this being done to make sure Ranch will be self-sufficient.
- iv. Questions
1. How many citizens use SNAP?
 - a. 34,000 citizens in Larimer county use SNAP.
 2. Any update on election results?
 - a. Transportation tax will not pass it appears. Commissioners will regroup to discuss.
 - b. Child care tax is close so not called.
 - c. Child lunch ballot issue looks to have passed.

E. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS/DISCUSSION

4-H (Bailey, Britney, Rachel, Roxanne)

- Open House October 9th 2025
 - Approximately 80 new families attended
 - 11 Clubs and 5 Projects were represented
- The new 4-H year has officially started! Enrollment in Larimer County 4-H began officially on October 13th, 2025
- Carcass awards night October 15th, 78 members in attendance
- Beef Orientation October 17th,
- Horse Leadership Meeting October 20th
- Achievement Night Friday, November 7th
- Front Range Volunteer Symposium, November 15th

Ag & Natural Resources (Jess)

- Recruited on the new board for the Hispanic Women Farming Proyecto, we just hired a new project manager who will be expanding the reach of the proyecto and help access new funding
- Co-PI on a Colorado Department of Agriculture Agrivoltaic grant, we are starting to work on creating two extension fact sheets, a workshop in January, and a networking group. The goal of the grant is to train extension and research personnel on agrivoltaics so they can be better equipped to work with landowners and stakeholders.
- Working on the 2026 Farm2LocalBiz event, the event will be held on Feb 5th at Block One Events in Fort Collins, we will be recruiting producers to have tables at the event starting next week.

- Grant and Grow will be taking place at the Ranch on January 15th, this year grant and grow will be called grants, loans, and grow due to federal funding losses we will be highlighting the existing producer grants and credible loan providers.
- We are working with CALC (Colorado Agrivoltaic Learning Center) to host a documentary screening of “Save the Farm, Save the Future” on November 18th at the Lyric, and they will be hosting an agrivoltaic informational session for county and city officials on Nov 19th at 3pm at the Oak St. Building.
- 6 small acreage site visits since last advisory board meeting with a total of 29 site visits for the year from April - November (14 Fort Collins, 4 Lyons, 5 Loveland, 2 Berthoud, 1 Timnath, 1 Windsor, and 1 Masonville)

Community Development (Lisa)

- The Spanish Aging Mastery alumni group spent an afternoon at the Museum of Discovery enjoying lunch, a dome show about Apollo, and a visit to the archives to explore the history of Fort Collins.
- The Spanish Aging Mastery fall class is underway with 11 participants, including some returning alumni and occasional guests, and will wrap up the 10-session program on November 17
- Collaborating with the FLTI state team to develop a *Community Engagement* training. What began as Community Development 101 shifted focus when the team recognized that Community Engagement, as a key component of Community Development, warranted a dedicated half-day workshop on its own.
- Lisa co-facilitated a statewide FLTI Family, Schools Community Partnership 10 week virtual curriculum Thursday evenings with 20+ participants completing the course including participants from PSD and TSD school systems. Will receive \$7500 for facilitation and recruitment efforts to put towards local FLTI programming in 2026.
- FLTI is continuing to assist with coordination and facilitation for the Nueva Vida monthly community meetings.

Farmers’ Market & Food Systems (Maggie)

- We have achieved another record-breaking gross sales year at the market, with **\$1,954,437.58** in sales (and counting!)
 - This is an increase of \$132,948.66 from 2024 (and counting!)
- SNAP sales are up this year, with \$21,802.00 collected from vendors in SNAP vouchers, up 5% from 2024
 - For the entire season, we have an increase of over 100 SNAP transactions
- Double-Up Food Bucks (DUFEB), which incentivizes fresh produce with SNAP sales, has also increased to \$19,589.00, up 20% from 2024
- Produce Bonus sales did well this year, with over \$11,000 spent in direct SNAP sales with participating vendors

- Market Days spending: \$12,960: this is a decrease from 2024, but we also decreased the amount of participants in the program to conserve funds, and to build up savings account for future years for sustainable funding of the program
- For the last two markets (October 18 and 25), we hosted Walgreens Pharmacy to distribute COVID and flu vaccines, and they successfully vaccinated more than 220 people between the two weeks
- We hosted focus groups for customers using the Produce Bonus program at the market on September 18, in collaboration with Nourish Colorado, Colorado Dept. of Human Services, Colorado Dept. of Public Health and Center for Science in the Public Interest - the focus groups went very well and many people had very positive things to say about the program
 - We will use the feedback to help improve market operations and communications about program
 - We will also host a vendor-specific focus group at the end of the market season
- Market season finished with another great final day, which included a Fall Festival hosted by the 4-H team, a competitive vendor Halloween costume contest, and market-wide trick-or-treating
- We hosted the [CSU Ram Explorers](#) at the market on October 4 and October 25 - on October 4 they organized a food drive where 150 pounds of food donations went to the Food Bank, and October 25 they helped with the costume contest and fall festival, they also enjoyed the market community and helped with attendance counts
- Upcoming projects: Coordinating Farm2LocalBiz with Jess and hosting the Colorado Farmers Market Association annual conference in early 2026

Food Safety (Analecia)

- Retail Food Safety:
 - Total after 3rd Quarter-
 - CFPM- 192 total participants with a 82% passing rate. Full class total participation 86% pass rate. 9 total requested training classes, 4 Spanish interpreted classes.
 - CFPM- 32 Total participants that have registered but have not completed training and exam
 - FSW- 97 total participants, the program has had 4 requested classes in Spanish held at the businesses location throughout Larimer County. 2 requested private classes that are also repeat clients.
 - Voucher Program- The Larimer County Department of Health and Environment (LCDHE) has donated \$5,000 from the fees collected through late renewals of Retail Food licenses. LCDHE aims to reinvest these funds into the local food industry by supporting food safety education. Through this program, managers and their employees can access food safety training without financial barriers.

- **LIGHTR Grant (Local • Industry • Grant • Train • Retain)** In partnership with the Larimer County Economic and Workforce Development (LCEWD) and the City of Fort Collins Economic Health Office, the LIGHTR Grant provides funding through our collaboration with CSU Extension to offer specialized training opportunities. This program fully covers the cost of **Certified Food Protection Manager (CFPM)** training—helping local food businesses meet state food safety requirements, invest in their employees’ professional development, and strengthen their workforce through enhanced skills and confidence. The grant aims to support **up to 60 participants by March 2026**, fostering a stronger, more resilient local food industry.
- Between both funding options, we have the opportunity to certify an additional 90 participants by March 2026. To accommodate the increase in registrations, I’ve added an extra class day each month through March. By leveraging the LIGHTR Grant, we can certify up to five employees per business. These sessions can also be offered as private classes, providing businesses with a more flexible and tailored training experience.
- Upcoming Training: I will be conducting two private Basics of Food Safety trainings in partnership with the Aspen Club and hosting one more Spanish-interpreted class before the end of the year.

Health & Well-Being (Christa)

- Presentation

Horticulture (Alison)

- The annual Master Gardener Banquet will be held on Saturday, December 13 at 9:00am at the Larimer County Administrative Services Building (200 W. Oak Street, Fort Collins). The Advisory Board is welcome to attend - please RSVP to Alison (astoven@larimer.org) and let her know of any food allergies.
- The Rocky Mountain Turfgrass Association Conference is December 2-4 at the Ranch in Loveland. Alison has been serving on the leadership board and will present “Woody Plant Diagnostics CSI” with Eric Hammond as a Tuesday workshop.
- Alison and Dr. Khursheed Mama will present “Pet-Friendly Landscaping” with OLLI on December 3; [register here!](#)
- CSU Green School begins November 5! While Larimer County isn’t training new Master Gardener volunteers this year, there are over 40 Larimer County individuals registered for the certificate training. Alison will be teaching the tree and turf courses.
- Alison is currently working with a statewide committee to develop a recertification training program for Master Gardener volunteers. This will launch in 2027 and all volunteers will complete recertification every five years, along with a background check.

- Evergreen Elders has several classes scheduled this fall for Hearthside Dementia Care, Good Sam in Loveland, the Estes Park Senior Center, and the Worthington in Fort Collins

General/Other (Cary)

- The Roberts Ranch Public Tour was a success, with approximately 60 attendees who gave extremely positive evaluations. Sixteen of 17 survey respondents (94%) indicated that they feel a stronger connection to our local agricultural system as a result of the program.
- Natural Resources Coordinator position update
- Event support needs
- Holiday celebration

F. COMMITTEE FEEDBACK - None

G. STAFF PRESENTATION (Health & Well-being - Christa)

- Health and Wellbeing
 - Radon Grant
 - Senior Access Points
 - Connection Cafe
 - Nature and Health
 - Future Programs and Projects

H. DISCUSSION:

- Marketing and Communications Plan Overview
 - Communication Strategy Draft
 - Will be emailing out to team for input
- 2026 Work Plan (including vote)
 - Discussion around the topics that we had on our 2025 work plan and what future topics for our 2026 work plan should have.
 - Work plan for 2026 has been approved

I. UPCOMING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- 4-H Volunteer opportunities in Weld County next Saturday. Please reach out to Bailey if you are interested

J. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Meeting Adjourned at 9:57 am

K. NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED: 1/7/2026: 8:00am - 10:00am

Per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Larimer County will provide reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with a disability who need assistance. Services can be arranged with at least seven (7) business days' notice. Please email us at aweakland@larimer.org or call (970) 619-6002 or Relay

Colorado 711. "Walk-in" requests for auxiliary aids and services will be honored to the extent possible but may be unavailable if advance notice is not provided.