



Colorado County Agents Association

from the mountains to the plains

Newsletter
April 15, 2009

From the President

At the time of this writing there are very large challenges in the lap of and on the horizon for Colorado State University and for CSU Extension. Assuming the position of CCAA president with not quite 5 years under my belt, I may be the least qualified to offer thoughts on our organization.

However, I will offer some and hope they inspire some meaningful dialogue for the benefit of the CSU Extension. Money. Politics. Leadership. Public value. These are intertwined now and form the web of crisis we currently experience. They are also a means toward brighter days within CSU Extension.

How do we continue to provide public value while doing business as we have for decades? Can we be everything to every stakeholder and effectively demonstrate public value that is strong and recognizable by politicians? How can we reach that balance in upholding the timely (timeless?) needs of counties while changing how we do business to increase the notoriety and visibility of CSU Extension on a statewide basis?

How can we build a viable organization without adequate funding? We have bypassed TABOR for the time being, but that fight is returning very soon and TABOR must be addressed for Higher Education budgets to stabilize.

Do County Commissioners have the authority to create an a la carte Extension

office? Where do we draw the line in asserting the number of staff needed to operate an Extension office that will provide public value?

How do we bridge the classic disconnect between campus and the field within Extension, so that campus truly understands what work is like in the field and field staff are engaged in supporting the overall promotion of the organization?

Perhaps the 800 lbs gorilla in the room is massive institutional drain from the retirement or loss of staff that have provided leadership in the organization: Wayne Cooley, Frank Sobolik, Leonard Pruett, Ron Meyer, Jerry Aldridge, Scott Cotton, and more. We know that we will soon have others retiring who have been with the organization for decades. How do we replace this organizational knowledge as the baby boom generation leaves the workplace?

How do we retain exception staff without competitive salaries and benefits? We know that Extension has always changed to meet the times, however, true impacts really manifest from staff after about 5 years on the job as networks are created and programs really come to fruition. When new staff tenure is only 5 years, how can we truly have public value?

Is now the time to change the image of field staff by giving them a new title, one that many states use: Extension Educator?

I could keep posing rhetorical questions, but I think you get the drift. We are grappling with challenges and more are on the horizon,

yet I'm optimistic about the organization. Times of economic turbulence and new social movements are what Extension is built for.

As we move into the next 100 years of Extension in Colorado we need build a stronger organization. To fully engage in the challenges of our time we need stronger relationships with campus administration, campus specialists, regional specialists, and also with state politicians who can fight our cause in discussions of budget priorities.

We are an organization with a rich history of improving the lives, land, environment and businesses of Colorado's citizens. We need to learn this story and tell it well.

It has been explained to me that in the US we have a "crisis democracy", that we often continue in "business as usual" until a crisis hits. Our crisis is here and it is time to reconsider business as usual and address funding, staffing, and programming in a head-on way so that we rebuild CSU Extension for a new millennium.



Adrian Card
CCAA President
CSU Extension, Boulder County

Save the Dates! Nov 18 – 20

...for the Colorado County Agents Association Professional Improvement Conference in Salida, CO. CCAA is in the planning phases of a conference for all staff doing working under Natural Resources and the Environment CCA and Competitive and Sustainable Ag Systems CCA. The conference will feature time for work teams to program professional development sessions (technical updates,

continuing education, etc.) and work team sessions (planning, field trips, etc.) Salida is centrally located in Chaffee County, Colorado and features loads of recreational opportunities including hiking and hot springs.

Plan to bring the family for an extended stay at Monarch Mountain Lodge, the location of our conference
<http://www.monarchmountainlodge.com/>

CCAA is working to ensure this is a minimal cost conference for all Extension staff. Our plan is to cover meals, lodging, and most travel through non-county funds and without tapping agent's professional development funds from campus.

Please plan to attend and stay tuned for more details!

Bookmark This Page!

<http://www.extension.colostate.edu/boulder/AG/CCAA.shtml>

For CCAA bylaws, handbook, minutes, newsletters, and more!

Fun and Friends at 2008 Banquet

Our Executive Board did a great job with the CCAA Banquet. We honored Ben and Lynne Cooley with a Memorial Item and a donation from CCAA to a 4-H Fund for Montrose County in memory of Wayne Cooley.



Ben and Lynne Cooley

Our President and emcee, Thaddeus Gourd, also presented friend of CCAA to John Sauter and Tony Koski and DSA Award to Tommy Covington, and Communications Award to Nick Striegel.



John Sauter, Friend of CCAA



Congrats Tommy on the DSA!

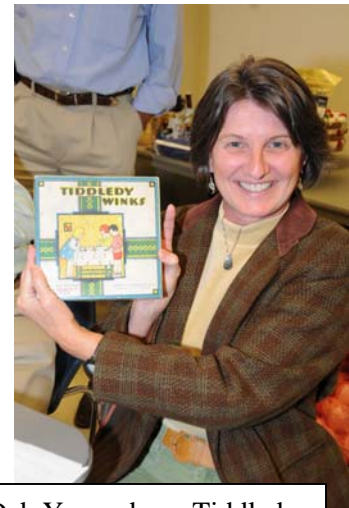
We watched the dvd for the 2009 Annual Meeting/Professional Improvement Conference in Portland. This AM/PIC looks to be a good one.

Adrian Card, president elect, presented Thad with a thank you plaque for his service 2007 – 2008 as CCAA president.



Adrian is literally dazed by Thad's brilliance as CCAA President

Our Executive Board for 2008 – 2009 was elected and is:
 Adrian Card, president
 Kurt Jones, president elect
 Ed Page, vice president
 Tommy Covington, treasurer
 Eric McPhail, secretary



Deb Young buys Tiddley Winks at auction

Dan Fernandez inducted and presented canes to new members: Mark Platten, Brooke Edmunds, Deborah Lester, and Natalie Edmundson.

And then the event everyone enjoys, Bill Nobles cued up for his hilarious and lucrative role as auctioneer. Deb Young joined in on the auction fun!



Dan welcomes Mark Platten, Brooke Edmunds, Deborah Lester, and Natalie Edmundson as new CCAA members!



Thad presents Communications award to Nick Striegel



Bill making us all laugh as auctioneer (aka Mr. Cakehead)

Plan now to attend the 2009 NACAA AM/PIC in Portland September 21 – 24

<http://www.nacaa.com/>

Campus professional development funds can be a great way to pay for your flight, lodging and registration. You will need to have campus arrange and pay for your flight or they may not reimburse you! Submit a PD funds request asap, form at:

<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/staffres/profimpmenu.html>



2008 – 2009 Executive Board (left to right): Kurt Jones (president elect), Adrian Card (president), Ed Page (vice president), Tommy Covington (treasurer), and Thaddeus Gourd (immediate past president). Not pictured Eric McPhail (secretary)

Regional Board Members:

Updated at 2008 Forum:

Northern Region: Tom Fey for 1 year, Brooke Edmonds for next 2 years

Southern Region: Bruce Fickensher for 1 year, Merlin Dillon for next 2 years

Western Region: Dan Fernandez for 1 year, Bill Ekstrom for next 2 years

**National Association of County Agricultural Agents
Oct 2008 – September 2009 State Committee Appointments**
(we didn't do a good job getting vice chairs)

PROGRAM RECOGNITION COUNCIL

Communications

Chair: Tom Hooten

Vice Chair:

4-H & Youth

Chair: Dinah Peebles

Vice Chair:

Recognition & Awards

Chair: Tom McBride

Vice Chair:

Search for Excellence

Chair: Eric McPhail

Scholarship

Chair: Bill Ekstrom

Vice Chair:

Public Relations

Chair: Dan Fernandez

Vice Chair:

Professional Excellence

Chair: Tom Fey

Vice Chair:

PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT COUNCIL

**Ag Economics and Community
Development**

Chair: Adrian Card

Vice Chair:

Agronomy and Pest Management

Chair: Scott Brase

Vice Chair:

Animal Science

Chair: Nick Striegel

Vice Chair:

Sustainable Agriculture

Chair: Ed Page

Vice Chair:

Horticulture and Turfgrass

Chair: Thaddeus Gourd

Vice Chair:

**Natural Resources/Aquaculture/Sea
Grant**

Chair: Dean Oatman

Vice Chair:

EXTENSION DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Agricultural Issues and Public Relations

Chair: Tommy Covington

Vice Chair:

Early Career Development

Chair: Kurt Jones

Vice Chair:

**Administrative Skills Development
Committee**

Chair: John Deering

Vice Chair:

Teaching and Educational Technologies

Chair: Mark Platten

Vice Chair:

Life Member Committee

Chair: Marvin Reynolds

Vice Chair:

COLORADO COUNTY AGENTS ASSOCIATION STATE COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Auction Committee

Chair: Bill Nobles

Vice Chair:

Cane Committee

Chair: Dan Fernandez

Nominating Committee

Chair: Tom McBride

Vice Chair:

Audit Committee

Chair: Kurt Jones

Vice Chair:

Association Policy

Chair: Bill Ekstrom

Vice Chair:

When I started in my position this was hanging on the wall, a reminder of the integrity many of those before me have brought to the job. While the content is dated, the concepts can remind us of the spirit of our work as we evolve into the 21st century:

Cooperative Extension Service
Agriculture and Home Economics

Extension Workers Creed

I believe in people and their hopes, their aspirations, and their faith; in their right to make their own plans and arrive at their own decisions; in their ability and power to enlarge their lives and plan for the happiness of those they love.

I believe that education, of which extension work is an essential part, is basic in stimulating individual initiative, self-determination, and leadership, that these are the keys to democracy and that people, when given facts they understand, will act not only in their self-interest but also in the interest of society.

I believe that education is a lifelong process and the greatest university is the home; that my success as a teacher is proportional to those qualities of mind and spirit that give me welcome entrance to the homes of the families I serve.

I believe in intellectual freedom to search for and present the truth without bias and with courteous tolerance toward the views of others.

I believe that the Extension Service is a link between people and the ever-changing discoveries in the laboratories.

I believe in the public institutions of which I am a part.

I believe in my own work and in the opportunity I have to make my life useful to mankind.

Because *I believe* these things, I am an Extension Worker.

Executive Board Bios

Eric McPhail, Secretary – Gunnison County Extension

I've enjoyed growing up and spending my life dedicated to the agricultural industry. I was born and raised on a large-scale farm and ranch operation in central Texas. I am married to Stacy, and have two boys Gage and Sam Henry. I've always enjoyed training horses, golfing, and watching my children grow up. From the time I was a young boy, I always had an interest in animal well being. This led me to receive in 1995 a B.S. in Animal Science (Science Option) from Texas A&M University. Wanting to continue my education, centered on beef cattle and animal nutrition, in 2000 I completed my M.S. in Nutrition (Ruminant), also from Texas A&M University. Before coming to CSU Extension I managed our 15,000 acre family ranch and consulted with beef cattle and horse producers to be industry leaders. My ambition to be a leader in agriculture and educate the youth of tomorrow led me to my current position now as a county Extension director and 4-H and Agricultural Agent. Programming efforts for me, as the director of a small county, vary extensively from Early Childcare and parenting education classes to high altitude gardening workshops to beef cattle calving assistance workshops. Having the chance these past few years to offer leadership to kids, so that they find their own directions, has been a true blessing. While finding the most success in the everyday contacts, fair, and workshops, I also have a great devotion as a livestock judging coach, and hosting the oldest livestock judging competition in the state. While wearing many hats, I still hold my love for beef cattle operations, and will always enjoy educating ranchers from a first-hand and practical background.

Ed Page, Vice President – Tri-River Area Extension

I began working in Extension a number of years ago in Oregon. This was a pasture and livestock position, primarily with small and medium size operations. Following that, I worked as a sheep rancher, real estate broker, and exporter.

Currently, I am a small acreage management and CRD agent in the Tri River Area with an office in Montrose County. The primary activities in this position are pasture management, fertility, weed control, and irrigation. I also extend program through serving on the boards or steering committees of several organizations: Western Colorado Food and Agriculture Council, Colorado Food Systems Council, Montrose Farmers' Market Association, Black Canyon Land Trust, and the CCAA.

Extension is, I believe, one of the best inventions of education. It cannot replace other institutions or methods of learning, but it fills a remarkably important niche, particularly in rural areas and inner cities. We have the ability to take the full resources of the land grant university system to those who are most in need of that understanding. The member agents of the CCAA fill a very basic niche within Extension: helping people to feed themselves and other in a safe and efficient manner. Our challenge in the future will be to learn and teach the ways that production can be done in an era of diminishing resources and rising costs so that the agricultural community can be prosperous and the public be fed and clothed.

My personal moments are both simple and expensive: I like to read, mostly environmental and political topics and I like to travel, sometimes far and fast, sometimes just to the local hot spring.

Dr. Thaddeus Gourd, Immediate Past President – Adams County Extension

Thaddeus Gourd attended New Mexico State University where he graduated with a B.S. degree in Pest Management and Horticulture. He continued his graduate level education at New Mexico State University and earned his Master's Degree with thesis study in Entomology. Following six

years as a Field Entomologist for an Agriculture Chemical company, Thaddeus continued his educational experience by attending North Carolina State University where he received a Ph.D. in Plant Pathology with emphasis on plant parasitic nematodes.

Thaddeus has worked over 19 years in the private sector of the agriculture chemical business. During this time, Thaddeus was exposed to all types of farming practices and pests across the United States including travel to Brazil and England to evaluate insecticides, herbicides and nematicides.

In April 2000, Thaddeus became the Colorado State University Extension Agriculture Agent for Adams County. Programs Thaddeus is currently involved with include:

- Front Range Small Acreage Management
- High Value Crops
- Northeast Colorado Dryland Cropping Systems
- IPM Systems for Colorado Crops
- Japanese Beetle Task Force

Tommy L. Covington, Treasurer – Fremont County Extension

I am the County Director for Fremont County with our office in Cañon City. My responsibilities include; agriculture, horticulture, natural resources, 4-H Youth Development, and anything else that comes up.

I began my career in extension in June 1995 in Fremont County after 22 years as an Agriculture Sciences Instructor at Duncanville High School in Texas. I have a B.S. in Agriculture Education and M.S. in Agriculture from East Texas State University.

I love the outdoors and the many opportunities we have in Colorado. I hike, backpack, mountain climb, ski, and snowboard. I'm also an avid motorcyclist, enjoying the many wonderful scenic rides that we have.

I've been a member of CCAA ever year that I have been in extension and have served previously as our regions representation to the CCAA Board. I was honored to receive the Distinguished Service Award at the NACAA National Conference in Greensboro, NC this past July.

One important note is that I probably hold the record of losing the CCAA checkbook within one week of taking office! To ease your mind, I did find it so all is well.

Kurt Jones, President-Elect – Chaffee County Extension

I currently serve as the County Extension Director for Chaffee and Park Counties. Programming emphasis includes home horticulture, small acreage management (pasture management, water quality, forest management, etc.), agriculture and 4-H Youth Development.

I started as an extension agent in May, 1997, in Lincoln County. After 2 1/2 years, I moved (back) to the mountains. I enjoy fly fishing, inflatable kayaking, play tuba in Salida Brass, and am an avid skier and weekend ski instructor. I have been a "CSU Ram" since 1990, played sousaphone in the Ram Marching Band, and am proud to work for CSU Extension. There aren't many places in the world looking for extension professionals who also play tuba and ski...luckily I found my home.

I was given some good advice when I started to join CCAA and to "get involved." I have served on many state committees, as well as Western Regional Vice-Chair (4-H Committee) and for two

years as the National 4-H Chair. NACAA has honored me as a National Finalist - Fact Sheet, and with the Achievement Award. I have attended 5 NACAA AM/PIC conferences, which have aided my growth as a professional. I am excited about the recent professional development state conference in 2008 and one that is in the works for 2009.

Thanks to the membership for their vote of confidence as I begin my year as President-Elect. I am always open to questions or comments to make your organization better for all our members.

Adrian Card, President - Boulder County Extension

Adrian started in local foods in 1993, working with Happy Heart Farm CSA in Ft. Collins. He led the student organic garden movement on the Colorado State University campus in 1998, sold at farmers markets in Ft. Collins, worked as an assistant manager at the CSU Horticulture Farm in 1999, worked as a research associate in the Foodlinks research project at CSU in 2000, spearheaded an experiential education program for food crops students and worked with colleagues on organic programs at CSU in 2002, and in 2003 managed Student Organic Farm at the Center for Environmental Farming Systems at North Carolina State University. He has BS in ag education and M Ag in extension education both from CSU. Adrian started as an Extension Agent for Colorado State University Extension in Boulder County in 2004. Current efforts include sustainable agriculture and small farm programming. He is the coordinator for a Boulder County Commissioner advisory committee, the Boulder County Food and Agriculture Policy Council. Adrian's current passions include beginning farmer programming thru his "Building Farmers Program" www.extension.colostate.edu/boulder/AG/agr.shtml

CCAA Member Work

The following is info on projects our members are working on and submitted for this newsletter. Always good to hear about the excellent work our members are doing in the field!

Bruce Bosley – Logan and Morgan County Extension

Lower South Platte Irrigation Research Project (Ilf CO) objective is to develop and investigate cropping system options that: use less water (that can then be made available for meeting increasing urban water needs) but at the same time sustain viable economic returns to the agricultural and rural sectors

No-till farming systems increase residues and precipitation storage efficiency from 15% to 35%. Residues also reduce precipitation runoff and increase infiltration and soil organic matter. Five no-till farmers harvested 44.4 bushels of wheat per acre compared to six conventional till farmers who averaged only 25.7 in 2008 wheat COFT trials.

Farmers, ranchers, and their crop advisors seek CSU Extension help in troubleshooting crop and range problems. I helped 126 people troubleshoot insect, disease, weed, abiotic stress, livestock poisoning, and range management problems in the 2008 growing season. Pest Management information was provided in 29 news columns, 4 newsletters, and programs.

Darrell Hanavan, Colorado's Wheat Executive Director, says CSU's Collaborative On-Farm Trial program increases farmer's adoption of new wheat varieties. Colorado farmers seeded improved varieties on 27.9% of acres 2005-2007 giving them a yield boost of 3.2 bushels or \$20.40/acre. Farmer's improved variety adoptions returned them \$13.4 million in 2008.

Darrin Parmenter – LaPlata County Extension

In cooperation with Healthy Lifestyles La Plata, Extension has made a measurable push towards local food awareness, production, and availability. Last spring, we held a Farmer-Chef Connection, where 12 producers and 30 food purveyors participated in a “speed-dating” process. The most noteworthy outcome was an eventual contract between the 9-R School District and a local rancher that called for all ground beef for the upcoming school year be locally and organically produced.

Held the 1st annual Homegrown Festival in October. Over 600 people attended the event, which showcased what you could do with our neighborhood food production. In conjunction with the event, we harvested approximately 4,000 pounds of apples – all within a 10 mile radius – which was turned into 200 gallons of juice. That juice is being brewed into a local apple-beer. The proceeds will benefit next year’s event.

Starting in January of 2009, La Plata County will hold the Growing Farmers Class. Based off a similar concept used in Boulder County, the Growing Farmers program is a series of 9 evening classes designed to provide intermediate and experienced farmers with tools and ideas to refine and enhance their business management, production, and marketing skills; and to help new farmers explore farming as a business.



4,000 lbs of apples harvested produced 200 gallons of juice from a 10-mile radius in LaPlata County!

Karen Crumbaker - Custer County Extension

Noxious Weed Work:

- Through a partnership with the Upper Arkansas Cooperative Weed Management Area – host annual meeting with 75 attendees; work with landowners to secure a USFS grant totaling \$25,000.
- Received Commissioner approval for the Custer County Weed Management Plan and Implementation

Radon Work:

- Secured grant for 2008-2009 – Provide free short-term radon test kits to homeowners; provide a \$500 scholarship to a local resident to become a licensed radon litigator; host radon awareness workshops in Wetmore and Westcliffe.

4-H Youth Development:

- Custer County 4-H clubs will hold their annual holiday food drive to collect non-perishable food to distribute to families in the community – December 19, 2008

Heather Hodgkin – Jefferson County Extension

Extension Agents and Specialists from across the state of Colorado are teaming together to develop a Home Food Production Course Series. Douglas, Pueblo, Boulder, Jefferson, Adams, Eagle, Garfield, San Miguel, and La Plata counties are joining forces to meet the public's demand for growing their own food and providing research-based guidance for the establishment of successful micro-farms.

The course series will be held in the fall of 2009 with ten, two hour session covering topics such as: Soils and fertility, Composting, Irrigation and water management, Disease management, Insect management, Berry and tree fruit production, Planning succession and variety selection, Cultural practices, Harvest and post-harvest handling, and Weed management.

The Home Food Production Curriculum Team will be building on the past successes of the work done in Boulder county, and will be evaluating the merits of having non-Extension expert instructors. The courses will be taught in a circuit, where appropriate, and there will be a fee for members of the public wishing to enroll. The Team will also be evaluating on a county-by county basis the value of partnering with other Extension staff such as 4-H or FCS Agents to meet the needs of the citizens in their counties.

Bob Hamblen - Boulder County Extension

Worked as a part of an 8 state team to develop Small Acreage curriculum and provide two trainings for perspective trainers in Bozeman and Albuquerque. We had over 70 participants between the two –two-day trainings. Most of the participants were from the western states but we had participants from South Africa, American Samoa, Indiana, and Iowa.

Once final changes are made to the curriculum, I will be getting complete CD's for every Extension office in the state. The curriculum includes lesson plans, activity sheets, power points that are modifiable, and evaluations. There are 8 modules and twenty-three lessons. Modules include: Inventorying resources, Your living soil, All life depends on water, Living with wildfire, Love your grass as much as your animals, Don't forget the animals, So you want to make a buck?, and The whole property approach. In addition a website is being launched for people to share photos and new information related to small acreages.

Lastly, USDA CREES recognized the "Living on the Land" project for a national award for the multi-state effort.

Mark Platten – Teller County Extension

1) Noxious weed tour 2008. We had 28 people attend with co-sponsoring agencies including USFS, CACD, NRCS, and the Coalition of the Upper South Platte (CUSP). We had 6 of the participants contact one of our agencies for noxious weed treatment.

2) Harvest Center planned to create an educational center in Woodland Park to teach how to grow at high altitude, harvest, store, collect seeds, etc. They will also teach how to create greenhouse and hoop tunnel methods to extend growing seasons. Everything will be off the grid using solar, wind, biomass, etc. again as a model of possibility for the community. Finally, they will have a year-round farmer's market.

3) Co-sponsored a "Rural Lands Preservation Group" Forum in October to help educate local ranchers regarding the benefits of easements. We had a panel of 4 area ranchers who have easements discuss their experiences; we had a panel of land trusts discuss what they offered, we had a tax credit broker discuss how the State credits and Federal benefits work, and we had a land appraiser discuss how they appraise the properties and why there has been such problems in the southeast CO.

Merlin Dillon – San Luis Valley Extension

Over 20+ years I have been involved in developing our 4-day Ag Conference and Trade Fair. The Monte Vista Chamber of Commerce handles a "sold-out" Trade Fair. SLV Research Center scientists put together pertinent topics for a "Potato Day". I put together the educational topics and speakers for "Alfalfa/Forage Day", "Small Grain Day" and Water Day. Attendance is over 900 grower-days.

I conduct field trials for spring wheat and malting barley that are not being done anywhere else in the state. New varieties from commercial companies and experimental lines from U. Idaho and ARS-Aberdeen, Idaho, are compared to the standard varieties. Two new varieties of hard white wheat have been identified that will greatly out perform the current one being contracted. Blanca Grande and Plata will produce at least \$100/acre more income based on \$5 per bushel wheat.

An EPA Grant has funded a bio-control rotation study. Green manure crops of sorghum-sudan, canola, mustard, and radish are compared to fallow or barley and wheat grain crops in their ability to reduce potato pests -- specifically the Columbia Root-knot nematode. Growers have adopted the use of mustard and sorghum-sudan green manure crops in order to save irrigation water, reduce nematodes, and reduce the need for using caustic pesticides such as Vydate and fumigants.

Research Questions Posed by CCAA Members

From Merlin Dillon – SLV Extension

Our pressing need relates to our groundwater problem. The water table has been lowered, mostly in '02.

- What crops might we grow that use less water?
- What impacts might we have if we deficit irrigate second cutting alfalfa?
- How can we best establish permanent grasses on CREP land with no irrigation after 2-3 years limited to grass establishment?

From Adrian Card - Boulder County Extension

- What are the metrics of energy efficiency and carbon footprint of various production methods based life cycle assessment (i.e. is organic more energy intensive than a comparative convention production system)?
- What are the metrics of energy efficiency and carbon footprint of various distribution systems (i.e. under which circumstances are local/regional food distribution systems more energy efficient and less C footprint than a national/global food distribution system)?