

AGRI - CULTURE



COLORADO
Department of Agriculture



It's not just a state, but a **STATE OF MIND**

Coloradans love our land, our mountains, our sunshine and our bright blue skies. We are adventurous. We are creative and innovative. We are hard-working. Wherever you go in Colorado, mountains or plains, you know instantly that there's something different, something special here.

Photo provided by Cheryl Jacobson.

COLORADO AGRICULTURE

is much more than just high-altitude farming. It's a way of life that you can sense with every bite of flavorful Colorado beef, tender Colorado lamb, juicy Western Slope peaches and sweet Rocky Ford melons. Our crisp, dry mountain air, abundant sunny days, and varied growing environments, make Colorado one of the top agricultural states in the U.S. We produce crops, livestock, dairy and eggs that are virtually unmatched across the country and around the globe. We export annually more than \$2 billion in agricultural products, giving people around the world a taste of Colorado.

Agriculture drives our state and our state of mind. Colorado agriculture is spread across 36,000 farms and ranches on nearly 32 million privately owned acres. Another 20 million agricultural acres sit on leased federal and state land. Agriculture in Colorado contributes more than \$40 billion annually to our economy and employs more than 170,000 people. We are an agricultural state. You can sense it in our people, see it in our landscape and taste it in our food.



32
MILLION
ACRES

\$40
BILLION
TO COLORADO'S
ECONOMY

36,000
FARMS
AND RANCHES

EMPLOYS MORE THAN
170,000

Photo provided by Dan Ballard.



Diverse Landscape Leads to Sustainable Agriculture

Colorado has varied terrain, water conditions and soil types, making it an ideal landscape for growing a wide range of specialty crops, raising and processing livestock, and producing dairy and eggs. The result is a state at the top of the list for producing many of the U.S.'s most important agricultural commodities.



INNOVATIVE **AGRICULTURE**

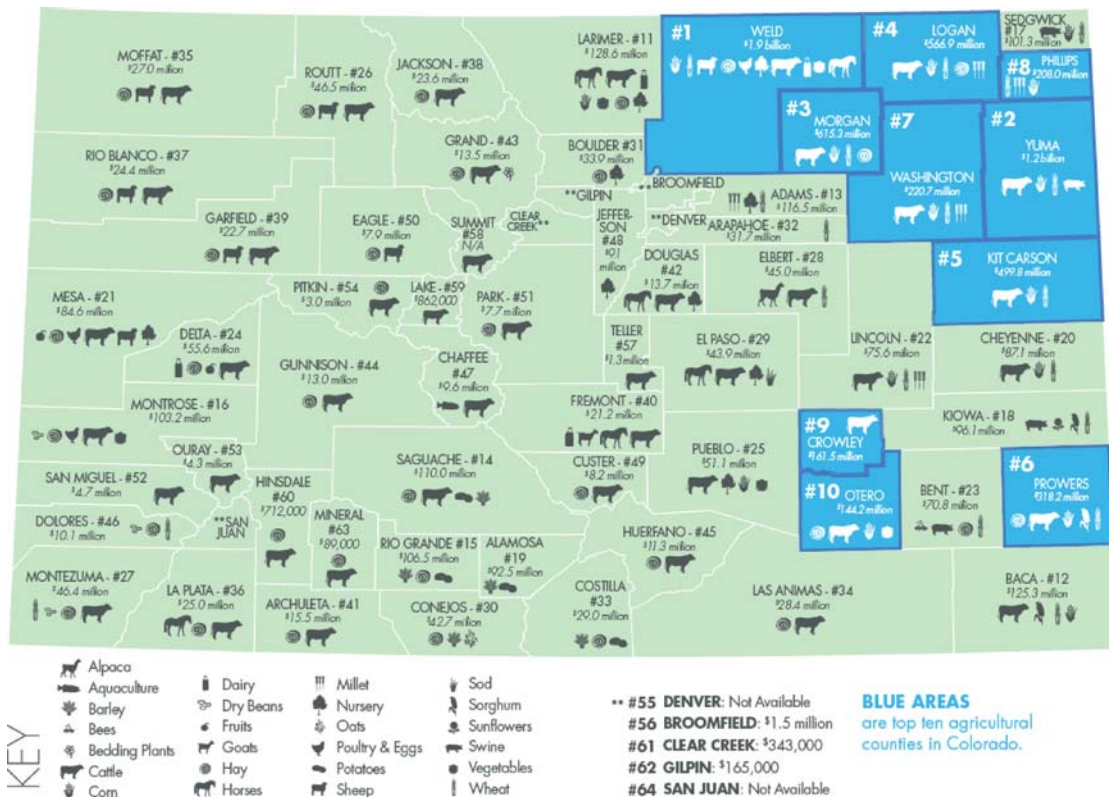
Colorado's varied terrain and population centers give us a unique geography. The Rocky Mountains rise abruptly out of the Eastern Plains, creating a natural geographic barrier called the Front Range. Our urban centers dot the Front Range and gradually blend into our rural farmland to the east. The result is agricultural production and processing close to our largest cities and research institutions, technology businesses and a pool of top talent – a rare combination that means new thinking and innovation for our entire system.

Colorado State University, the University of Colorado and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, three hotbeds of public agricultural technology and research, are all within 100 miles of each other and sit in proximity to Colorado's most productive agricultural area – the northeast corner of our state.

The Eastern Plains of Colorado, a region once thought to be barren and un-farmable, is now the top-producing agricultural region in the state. In fact, Weld County is one of the top 10 agricultural counties in the U.S. Likewise, our high plains and arid Western Slope, also once considered difficult land to farm, are giving our state and the nation some of the best fruit, vegetables and specialty crops.



A GLIMPSE OF COLORADO'S AGRICULTURE*



** #55 DENVER: Not Available
 #56 BROOMFIELD: \$1.5 million
 #61 CLEAR CREEK: \$343,000
 #62 GILPIN: \$165,000
 #64 SAN JUAN: Not Available

BLUE AREAS
 are top ten agricultural
 counties in Colorado.

*Value of
 agricultural products
 sold by county. Data
 from 2012 Census
 of Agriculture, USDA

CATTLE

Cattle is king in Colorado, representing the largest segment of agriculture and contributing nearly \$4 billion in annual cash receipts. Our varied landscape, warm summer days and cool nights give our livestock an abundance of grazing and feed options. Colorado cattle have access to millions of acres of grazing land across the state. With more than 300 days of sunshine, Colorado has a mild climate, benefiting our cattle feeding industry. Plus, we have innovative and state-of-the-art processing facilities, ensuring our beef is safe to eat and delicious to taste.



CORN

Colorado has a vibrant history growing corn for livestock feed and other uses. More than a million acres across the state are dedicated to the corn crop that supplies raw materials for feed, fuel and biodegradable products in the U.S. and internationally.



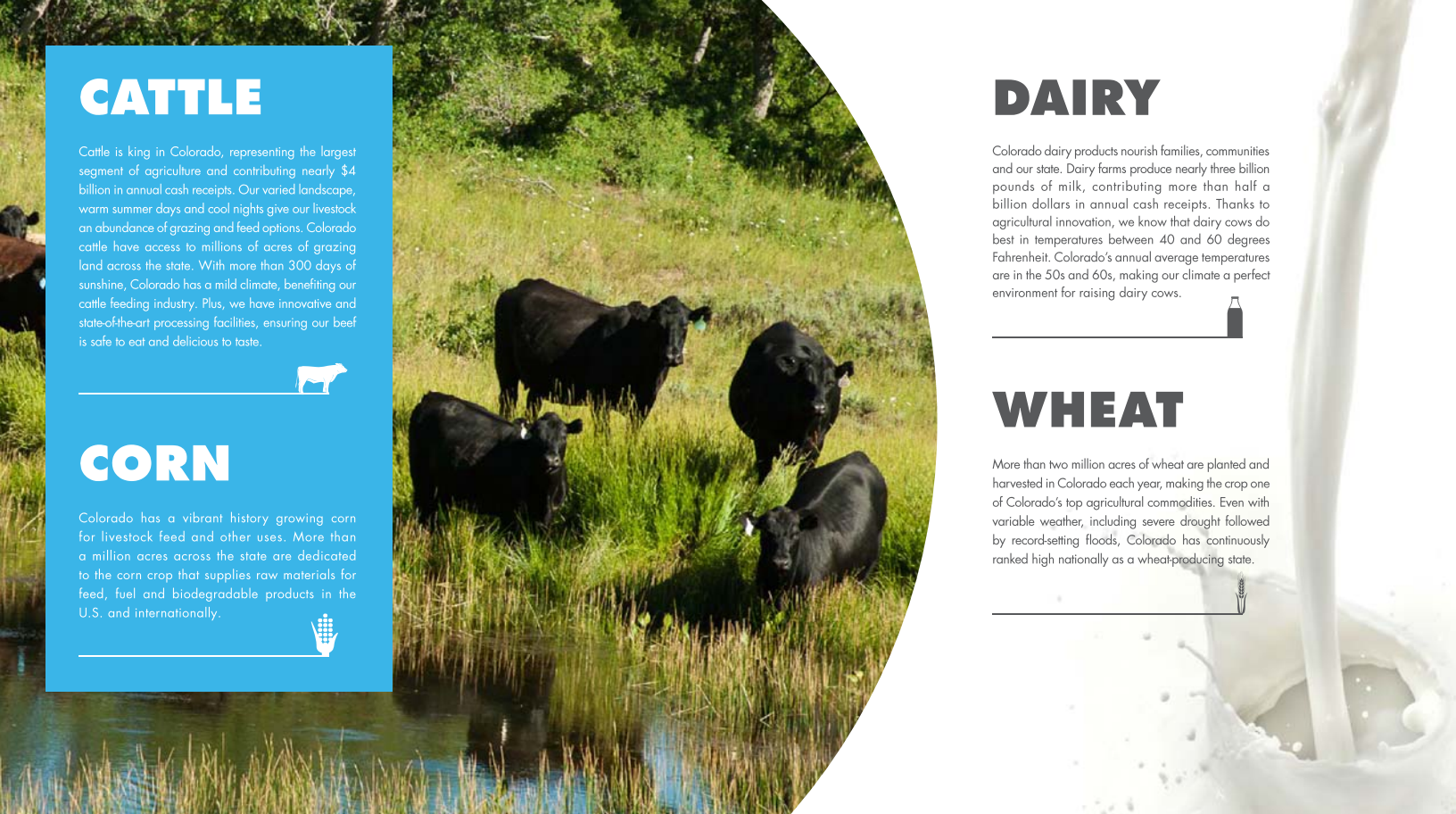
DAIRY

Colorado dairy products nourish families, communities and our state. Dairy farms produce nearly three billion pounds of milk, contributing more than half a billion dollars in annual cash receipts. Thanks to agricultural innovation, we know that dairy cows do best in temperatures between 40 and 60 degrees Fahrenheit. Colorado's annual average temperatures are in the 50s and 60s, making our climate a perfect environment for raising dairy cows.



WHEAT

More than two million acres of wheat are planted and harvested in Colorado each year, making the crop one of Colorado's top agricultural commodities. Even with variable weather, including severe drought followed by record-setting floods, Colorado has continuously ranked high nationally as a wheat-producing state.



WINE

Colorado is a “beautiful state of wine.” Our extensive sunshine, cool nights and dry climate are ideal for producing perfectly balanced wines without the need for pesticides or fungicides that most wine regions require. Colorado wines have won national and international competitions, including the World Riesling Cup and the prestigious Jefferson Cup. The Colorado Wine Industry Development Board funds research through Colorado State University and promotes all wines made in the state.



FRUIT & VEGETABLES

Warm days, cool nights, high plains, and broad, dry plateaus give way to some of the country's sweetest, juiciest fruit and crispest, most flavorful vegetables. From peaches, apples and melons to sweet corn, chiles, potatoes and lettuce, Colorado grows a wide variety of fruit and vegetables. Colorado produces nearly \$670 million in fruit, vegetables and other specialty crops each year.



NURSERY & GREENHOUSE

Agriculture is much more than just plows and cows, and Colorado's greenhouse and nursery industry is proof of that. Contributing more than \$1.8 billion to the state's economy, greenhouses and nurseries provide seeds, plants and other resources to Colorado's agricultural landscape. And greenhouses and nurseries not only beautify and enrich our land, they contribute to our entire ecosystem and food supply.



HAY

Hay is an essential agricultural crop, providing feed, bedding and seed that sustain overall agriculture in Colorado, across the U.S. and worldwide. Nearly one and a half million acres across Colorado's mountain meadows and fertile plains produce a diverse range of hay, including alfalfa, grass and various mixes.



POTATOES

Colorado's San Luis Valley, in the south central part of the state, has a rich history of potato farming. It is a high-altitude valley with moderate year-round temperatures, making it ideal for growing potatoes. Colorado is consistently one of the top three shippers of fresh potatoes in the U.S., producing more than two billion pounds of potatoes annually. Colorado also leads the nation in discovering and growing new varieties of potatoes, giving consumers new and tasty choices for the dependable spud.



SHEEP & LAMB

Sheep and lamb are raised in nearly every state in the U.S., but Colorado ranks consistently as one of the top five producers of lamb year after year. Eighty percent of American sheep and lamb are raised for their meat, but wool quality is also an important component. Colorado's climate and geography allow us to raise lamb with consistently tender, succulent meat no matter what time of year the lamb is harvested.



POULTRY & EGGS

Colorado hens lay more than a billion eggs a year. Just like other Colorado livestock producers, Colorado egg and poultry farmers are at the forefront of innovative poultry handling and egg processing, ensuring safely and humanely raised chickens and quality-assured farm fresh eggs. Acknowledging the diversity of consumers in the state, Colorado egg producers are proud to offer consumers the choice between cage, cage-free, organic, nutrient-enhanced, and brown and white eggs.



SWINE

Our hog farms use new and innovative practices and better feed to raise and process leaner yet tender meat. The result is pork that is 16 percent leaner and contains 27 percent less saturated fat than it did nearly 20 years ago. Colorado's pork is tastier and more nutritious than ever before.



A COLORADO STATE OF MIND

Colorado Proud, an important program of the Colorado Department of Agriculture, supports agricultural products that are grown, raised or processed in Colorado. For more than 15 years, the program has been encouraging consumers to seek out and buy agricultural products labeled Colorado Proud.

With more than 2,000 members, Colorado Proud represents farmers, ranchers, growers, manufacturers, processors, restaurants, grocers and other retailers. Membership in Colorado Proud is free. The program is dedicated to marketing and promoting Colorado food and agriculture.

According to consumer surveys, 90 percent of Colorado consumers said they would buy Colorado agricultural products if they were clearly labeled as being from Colorado – a statistic that is a testament to the success of Colorado Proud.





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