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FOOD SUMMIT
— DENVER, COLORADO —

Session title: New Entry Farmer and Rancher Panel

Note Taker: Pratyoosh Kashyap

POST SESSION FOLLOW UP FROM CSU:

POST SESSION :

Starting January 17, 2023 through March 7, 2023, Colorado Building Farmers will be offering an online class that covers the principles of business management, developing a marketing plan, managing risk in your operation, obtaining financing, and more. Classes will be held on Tuesdays from 6:00-8:30 pm. This 8-week class culminates in you presenting your draft business plan to a group of your peers. This class is intended for new and intermediate level farmers and ranchers in Colorado. For more information and the full class schedule, view the registration page (<https://CBF2023.eventbrite.com>).

Main points of each panelist:

1. Facilitator: Elicia Whittlesey
 1. Farming illuminates equity and justice, and provides tools to fight these.
 2. The need to ask better questions for better farming practices.

2. Speaker 1: Jesus Flores
 1. Manager of Rio Grande farmer
 2. Have water rights, need to take advantage of that
 3. Fourth generation
 4. Love to work and know a lot about agriculture, appreciate the love of agriculture.
 5. 11 workers, 14 families on the farm
 6. Ag workers have the right to decide what they want to cultivate and sell in the farmers market
 7. Do their own compost, and not buy it.
 8. Conserve the land, use less chemicals wherever possible.
 9. Have many people of color working in the fields – but we are all eating the same foods.
 10. ‘I am not used to saying the word undocumented, since I believe we are all born equal.’
 11. Emphasis on the need to grow our own food.

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12. Associate with kids from high school to learn how to farm, produce food.
 13. Advantage in the san luis valley – that everything gets sold – important in continued farming.
 14. After preparing the food, prepare for winter – like weed management, rotation for better soil, keeping some land fallow to cultivate the following year – not depleting the soil.
 15. Have a network with other ranchers in the san luis valley, do tours, and learn from each other.
 16. Also, connection with local organizations and youth to support in farming and weeding
 17. Have a market in the rio grande farm – people come to sell in this market and buy.
 18. Tours in winter, through a bicycle tour program.
 19. Education center on the farm – lots of meetings, events, other organizations doing their meetings.
3. Speaker 2: Terrance Boyd
1. Farm/ ranch started two years ago, built the ranch from the ground up
 2. Access to money is a huge overhead for farms and ranches
 3. Consumers buying directly from farmers helps a lot, and processing is a big part of that
 4. /Large investment in a truck and trailer – to get your investment to where it needs to be. And these investments can be pretty large for a lot of farmers.
 5. All their livestock are a 100% grass fed – do rotational grazing.
 6. Composting on farm – big deal as a regenerative farm.
 7. Eggs going at 6.99 in a grocery store! Happy to produce eggs at the ranch for the people.
 8. Moving forward as a beginning farmer – learning how to start small and work your way up.
 9. State is also working vigorously to help new ranchers and farmers, and events like these helps the public to understand how farm to table is supposed to work, it is not just the producer, but also the consumer to take the lead to buy from farmers who are taking actions to support the environment.
5. Speaker 3: Damien Thompson
1. Sustainable food systems lead faculty
 2. Got into farming as an educator and has generational components to it.
 3. Something about growing up in a farm – “We were poor, but we did not know it.”

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4. What can farming mean for a black farming family?
5. Looking at black farmers and recognizing that old mcdonald may not always be a white guy.
6. Engaging students and community with food justice and equity issues.
7. “You cannot teach food justice. I had to first understand what that meant. To do that, I became a farmer.”
8. Have farm to table dinners, fundraisers, harvest parties to celebrate community
9. Do community education activities, round table discussions to engage people, volunteer days
10. Came to farming to educate people around farming.

Key points of panel discussion:

1. Equity in access and relationships, and in knowledge.
2. Equity in term of land access and ownership. Lack of structure to create new land ownership.
3. What could be some ways of creating new farmers? – need to connect federal dollars and not just private investment.
4. Need for collective work to stand up to the word ‘equity’

Question and Answer Summary:

1. how to support beginning farmers and ranchers? – state developed program, older farmers teaching new and younger ones (facilitating mentorship). Through partnerships and funding to facilitate mentorship. Accepting failure alongside support.

Panel Q: how does equity inform your work?

Jesus: While I don’t care about the fact that I have people of color in my farm. But I care about their ability to grow their own food. I worry about my ability to give them enough water to grow their crops, manage their weeds, make sure the irrigation system functions – so to make sure that we all have access to the opportunities. ‘Equity’ is a big word. He feels bad when at most events of ag, there are mostly white people – need for more equity. Many people of color are landless and work on the farms/ ranches but are not able to learn the work. Water is increasingly becoming an issue nowadays, There are many people of color who are farming but may not have access to the right of having water on their lands. No water means no

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opportunities. Minimize food waste and donate when they can. Encourage farmers to donate fresh foods at food banks.

Damien: We come from a perspective that there is inequity in the food system in various ways. Makes sure that the percentage of the food they produce goes into the community – to people who needs it the most. Create partnerships to address equity. Practice equity in policy – worked to get ag worker bill passed. Also working in areas of housing, health, and pushing policy in these areas. Figure out ways to own land to ensure equity in wealth and opportunities for new farmers.

Terrance: Processing has been a huge factor for small farms and ranches in getting food out to the people. People coming from Africa do not have access to traditional activities like burning the hair off the goat skin. They ensure that such services are available on the farm. Access to land has been especially more critical for being a new farmer trying to raise livestock. No bankers for beginning farmers – why? Breaking even is close to impossible if a farmer is buying a 100 acres to grow livestock. Extremely difficult to pay off a loan to purchase land. Purchasing land without capital is hard, especially the objective is to ranch. But it is not all doom and gloom. Being able to sell directly to consumers helps financially.