



FOOD SYSTEMS INSTITUTE
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

2023

ANNUAL REPORT

Colorado State University (CSU) approved the Food Systems Institute (FSI) through unanimous support of the Faculty Council in the spring of 2022, establishing the FSI as a CIOSU (Centers, Institutes, and Other Special Units) and propelling CSU into a leadership position in food systems-related research, teaching, and engagement, not only in Colorado but nationally and internationally. FSI's goal is to facilitate change, creating a place where everyone with a stake in the future of food systems can join in creating solutions based in science and practice. We work to achieve this ambitious goal in three important ways:

- **Tap into the power of CSU's student body** to bring innovative approaches to transdisciplinary research. Creating cutting-edge scholarship, as well as new and novel sources of data, we build new generations of food systems leaders and thinkers.
- **Engage communities to identify ongoing challenges and stubborn problems.** Leveraging the resources of campus and Extension, we work to ensure that solutions have immediate application and impact.
- **Bring diverse voices to the table.** Breaking down barriers between disciplines, partners, communities, and food system sectors, we create holistic interventions and system-level outcomes.



Colorado Food Summit Participant



TAPPING INTO THE POWER OF THE CSU STUDENT BODY

Through its programming, FSI creates opportunities for students, Extension agents, and CSU faculty engaging in relevant research to connect and learn from each other. Here's what we did in 2023.

STUDENT SYMPOSIUM

April 26, 2023 | Lory Student Center, Fort Collins, CO

On April 26th, 2023, The Food Systems Institute collaborated with The Interdisciplinary Training, Education and Research in Food-Energy-Water Systems (InTERFEWS) Program to cohost the 1st Annual Food Systems Institute Student Symposium. The event highlighted the engaged, outward-facing research and scholarship that CSU students are doing on food systems-related issues. The Student Symposium showcased the amazing work our students are doing in the broader campus community, particularly in areas relating to food and agriculture, while also professionally developing into the next generation of food systems thinkers and movers.



Student Symposium

Unlike typical research-oriented symposiums, we asked students to share their research stories. What drove them to study what they did? What did they hope to accomplish? Who did they meet along the way (including non-academic stakeholders)? How had their research made a difference? The event, which was open to both graduate and upper-level undergraduate (at least 90 credit hours completed) students, had 13 student participants. They took part in a two-round competition: 3-minute presentations, followed by three students moving to the finalist stage to present 10-minute presentations to place 1st, 2nd, and 3rd and win \$500, \$250, and \$100, respectively.

Students presented to four judges and an audience of fellow students, CSU staff and faculty, and community members. In addition, the Symposium included a faculty panel discussion and networking lunch.



Student Symposium

PAST THE POST-IT NOTE: NEW METHODS FOR WORKING ACROSS THE DISCIPLINES

November 2, 2023 | Nancy Richardson Design Center, Fort Collins, CO


As part of FSI's commitment to train students in bridging academic research with application, FSI hosted an event on November 2nd, 2023, to showcase new ways to facilitate transdisciplinary-engaged research and stakeholder collaboration. The interactive workshop taught students how to use Ketso – a portable, felt-based kit created in the United Kingdom – that enables productive collaboration and learning. Ketso provides a way to capture different ideas and then sort them into different paths or opportunities for problem solving. Through hands-on learning, we explored how to use Ketso in food systems research projects and on broader community engagement levels.



Past the Post-It Note Training



FSI EVENT SERIES
FALL 2023



PAST THE POST-IT-NOTE: NEW METHODS FOR WORKING ACROSS THE DISCIPLINES


INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP

STUDENT EVENT

The CSU Food Systems Institute invites you to join us for an interactive workshop led by Shoshannah Inwood from Ohio State University. In this interactive workshop, students will learn how to use Ketso – a portable felt based kit – that enables productive collaboration and learning. Ketso provides a creative platform where everyone can be heard equally, making group interaction time-efficient and highly effective. Through hands-on learning we'll explore how you can use Ketso in transdisciplinary research projects and broader community engagement initiatives. Students at the graduate level are encouraged to attend, undergraduate students are also welcome.

2 | Nov 2023 | **NANCY RICHARDSON DESIGN CENTER**
2 pm - 4 pm | Room 120

PLEASE RSVP!



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FSI EVENT SERIES
FALL 2023




CULTIVATING IMPACTFUL RESEARCH EXTENSION COLLABORATIONS

FACILITATED DISCUSSION · FOLLOWED BY LUNCH

FREE EVENT

The CSU Food Systems Institute invites you to join us for an interactive discussion led by Shoshannah Inwood from Ohio State University. Inwood is a rural sociologist and an associate professor in the School of Environment and Natural Resources. She holds degrees in rural sociology, environmental science, and biology. Her integrated research and extension program focuses on the intersection of agriculture, environment, and society in the context of community and economic development. Shoshannah has maintained a dual focus studying both the role of communities in food system development and the socio-cultural household level processes that underlay the American food and agriculture system. She co-directs the Center for Community and Working Landscapes on the OSU Wooster Campus.

3 | Nov 2023 | **LORY STUDENT CENTER**
11am - 2 pm | Room 304-06

PLEASE RSVP

ATTEND ON ZOOM




FOOD SYSTEMS INSTITUTE
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION
foodsystems.colostate.edu

CULTIVATING IMPACTFUL RESEARCH EXTENSION COLLABORATIONS

November 3, 2023 | Lory Student Center,
Fort Collins, CO

FSI hosted an interactive discussion across campus and field-based faculty, led by Shoshannah Inwood from Ohio State University, on November 3, 2023. This event, which featured >40 in person and 17 online participants, showcased opportunities to cultivate impactful research and Extension collaborations. To do this, Dr. Inwood highlighted some successful examples from her work, including work related to a recently completed USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture grant entitled Pathways to Prosperity (Pathways). The Pathways project focused on how communities can collaboratively develop local food processing facilities, branding and marketing campaigns, and other value-added agriculture strategies aimed at improving the profitability and economic viability of local farms and ranches. Among other examples, Inwood highlighted how one result of the project was bringing together different types of farms and ranches that do not usually sit at the same table to work more closely with Wayne County, Ohio, in devising plans for agricultural economic development. Extension and research faculty at CSU were left with tangible ideas to support the development of effective, collaborative approaches to strengthening the value-added food and agricultural sector in rural communities by developing their unique resources and amenities.



Impactful Research Extension Collaborations



EXTENSION NETWORKING EVENT IN SEPTEMBER

September 19, 2023 | Avogadro's Number,
Fort Collins, CO

The FSI hosted a networking event to build bridges across our Food Systems Extension team and campus-based faculty doing relevant research on September 19th at Avogadro's Number in Fort Collins. In preparation for the event, we asked members of our Food Systems Extension team to identify one to three Food Systems programming areas where they were either currently working or intended to work in the next year. Based on the responses, we invited CSU-based faculty conducting Colorado-applicable work to make very brief (< 3 minute) presentations at the event so that Extension team members could find folks with whom to connect on campus. Identified priority areas included:

- Food access/security - especially for limited income and aging populations
- Home/community gardening
- Food safety (produce/meat)
- Local food markets and supply chains - especially farm to school

- Farm and supply chain business development
- Connecting local food markets and low-income consumers
- Drought resilience in ag
- Food systems as community/economic development
- Year-round production
- "Sustainable" ag and the role of organic production
- Cottage foods
- Healthy meals in schools - focus on nutrition

Participants met new campus- and field-based personnel, and work is underway to build on these new connections.

ENGAGING COMMUNITIES AT THE SCIENCE-POLICY INTERFACE

Through its wide-reaching network, FSI brings together communities to identify specific local and regional challenges and resources, creating long-lasting partnerships and connections.



Extension Networking Event at Avogadro's Number, Fort Collins



NW ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGIONAL FOOD BUSINESS CENTER

As part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Regional Food Business Centers network, the Northwest and Rocky Mountain Regional Food Business Center supports a more resilient, diverse, and competitive food system. It is designed to be a node for our region's small and mid-tier food and farm businesses and local and regional food sector development initiatives by supporting cross-regional collaboration, providing and analyzing relevant and timely data, and serving as a gateway for USDA programs and other third-party funding opportunities, with a focus on underserved farmers, ranchers, and food businesses. FSI staff played a key role in writing grants for the funded \$30M Center and now provides leadership for its research and evaluation components.

STAR PROGRAM

As part of both the USDA Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities and a Conservation Innovation Grant, the FSI received over \$700k from the Colorado Department of Agriculture to research the social dimensions of the soil health program STAR (Saving Tomorrow's Agriculture Resources) over the next four years. This research is part of a larger effort along with other subawards at CSU and with researchers from other universities outside of Colorado. Our specific subaward examines factors that support and/or inhibit agricultural transitions as they relate to soil management practices. The research team is using a mixed-methods case study approach to understand how the STAR program may or may not mobilize resources needed to transition farm and ranch operations. For example, which parts of the program increase the adoption of social health practices and for whom? Are there differences between those that participate in peer-to-peer learning, pay-for-performance, or merit-based (i.e., number of stars) motivations? A central goal of this project is to inform policy in a way that considers the sociological aspects of so-called individual decision-making in hopes of supporting more sustainable and just agricultural transitions. Elements of the STAR program are being adopted in numerous other states, making the lessons learned from our research of national importance.

CITY FOOD POLICY: REGIONAL LINKAGES

Building on the success of CSU's \$1.1M Foundation for Food and Agricultural Research (FFAR)-funded

interdisciplinary research partnership with Denver (see: <https://foodsystems.colostate.edu/research-impacts/urban-rural-linkages/>), the CSU team created a follow-up >\$2.5M project supported by the Rockefeller Foundation, FFAR, the NY Farm Viability Institute, and others. The City Food Policy Project explores the potential of cities to use food procurement policies to advance social, environmental, and economic goals for themselves and their surrounding regions while benefiting the health and nutritional wellbeing of the people who provide, and who are served by, publicly procured food. Specifically, the project is a collaboration with the New York City Mayor's Office of Food Policy that is evaluating the tradeoffs associated with their implementation of the Good Food Purchasing framework. The work with New York contains four component objectives:

- Foster enhanced sharing and support opportunities for co-learning across urban and rural food system stakeholders,
- Build on the lessons learned from the work in Denver to create a rigorous, defensible, and interdisciplinary model for New York,
- Provide information to the New York City Mayor's Office of Food Policy on the environmental, economic, and sociocultural tradeoffs associated with different Good Food Purchasing Program implementation scenarios to inform their procurement policies, and
- Work with key national and international stakeholders to consider how the extended modeling effort can be more easily replicated in other cities that are considering various food policy scenarios and commodity options.

Results from this work will inform ongoing international efforts to understand the role of public food procurement in meeting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

BRINGING DIVERSE VOICES TO THE TABLE

FSI breaks down traditional barriers to drive holistic and systemic outcomes, bringing stakeholders from across the food system together to discuss shared and unique challenges and building a sense of understanding, collaboration, and empowerment to reach across silos.



FARM TO LOADING DOCK EVENTS

April and December

There is an unprecedented amount of both state and Federal financial and human resource support for “farm to loading dock” market development in the state (e.g., farm to school, farm to institution). Accordingly, in partnership with the General Assembly and Governor-appointed Food Systems Advisory Council (COFSAC), Nourish Colorado, and the Donnell Kay Foundation, the FSI organized two events to bring together “farm to...” stakeholders across the supply chain to determine opportunities for supply chain investments or other gaps exist and how investment could best support and identify profitable ways to get more Colorado grown and raised product to market.

April CSU SPUR Campus, Denver, CO

For the FSI’s first “invite only” event, almost 80 individuals gathered at CSU’s SPUR campus. The participants included state agency representatives, statewide organizations involved in farm to institutional procurement, and funders. The preliminary event convened key agencies and organizations engaged and vested in supporting the successful implementation of Colorado’s “farm to...” procurement efforts to meet the following objectives: 1) clarify goals, timelines, roles, and resources for local procurement initiatives (highlighting farm to school); 2) identify unmet needs for

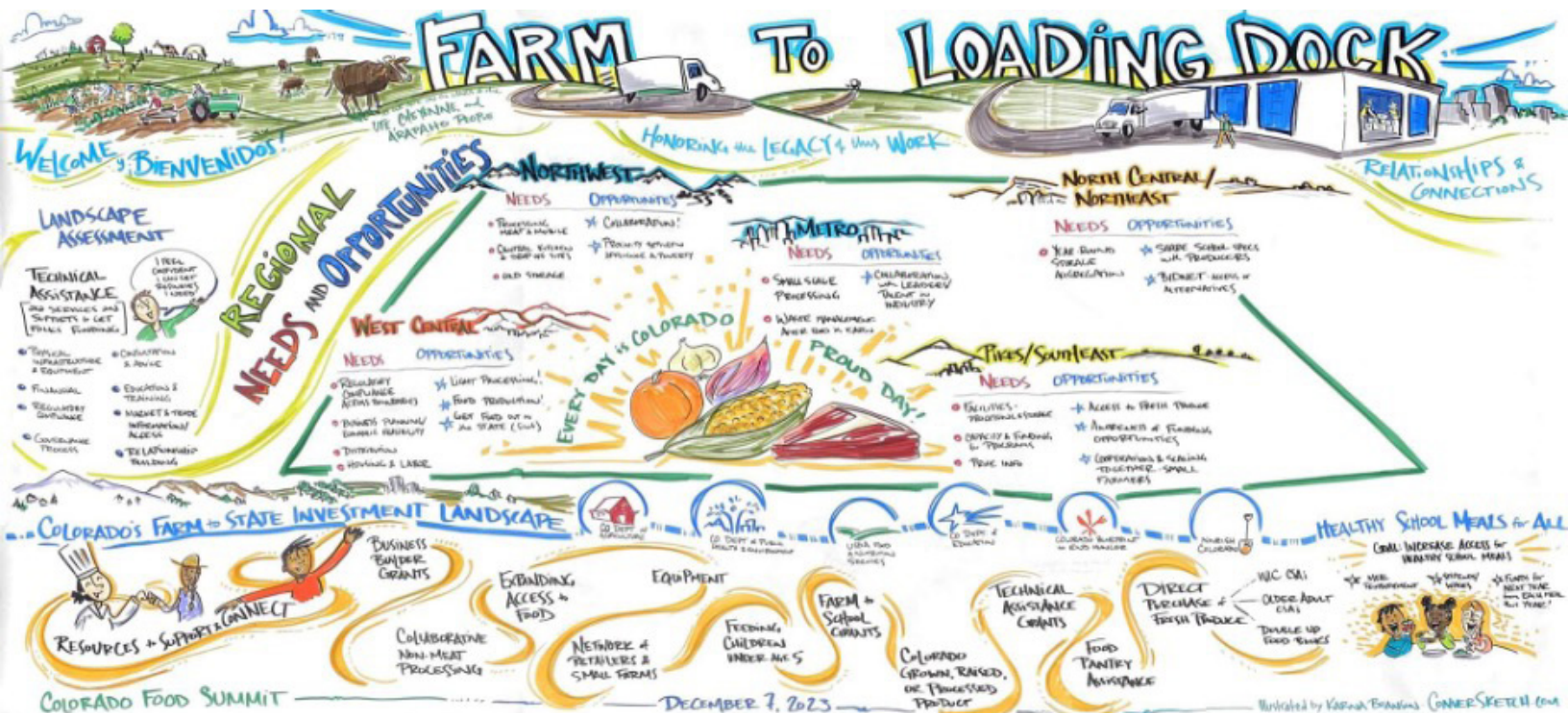
data, stakeholder engagement, technical assistance, infrastructure, and evaluation; and 3) discuss potential topics for a Colorado “farm to...” procurement roadmap in the next 12-18 months. The event created a foundation on which to build an outreach and engagement campaign to increase community and producer buy-in on Colorado procurement programs across numerous state agencies.



Farm to Loading Dock Event at SPUR Campus

The Results: A Farm to Loading Dock Landscape Assessment

Between the April and December events, our Farm to Loading Dock planning partners conducted a Landscape Assessment evaluating the availability of technical assistance to support local institutional



procurement and identifying gaps in existing offerings. The rationale for conducting the assessment included:

- There was a proliferation of technical assistance providers serving across the state at different scales, targeting different stages of the supply chain.
- Healthy School Meals for All legislation included Local Food Program Training and Technical Assistance Funds of \$5M available annually, requiring immediate understanding and investment prioritization.
- New and expanded infrastructure and other funding was also available through Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure, Regional Food Business Centers, Community Food Access Programs, and more.
- There was no statewide entity with a complete grasp of the work going on in the farm to loading dock space.



Farm to Loading Dock Event

This assessment defined “technical assistance” as the range of services and supports for individuals, businesses, communities, and organizations involved in the institutional procurement of Colorado food and agricultural products. Assistance will help them make informed decisions, adopt best practices, navigate regulatory requirements, and improve the overall operation of food and agricultural businesses.

The assessment identified 57 relevant technical assistance providers or government divisions (38 were interviewed) and 11 food hubs that also support technical assistance (10 were interviewed). We used this list to identify gaps and presented it at the December Farm to Loading Dock event for feedback.

December CSU SPUR Campus, Denver, CO

We held the sold-out December event, with 120 registered participants, as a pre-meeting of the Colorado Food Summit that sold out. FSI engaged participation from technical assistance providers, farmers, and ranchers and provided financial support to those that needed it to attend. The meeting convened and engaged stakeholders to share information and gather feedback on “Farm to Loading Dock” technical assistance opportunities. The objectives for the meeting were three-fold. First, build common understanding of the “Farm to Loading Dock” investment landscape, ensuring that attendees know how to access funding, technical assistance, and support for “Farm to Loading Dock,” including (a) funding and programs that exist and are coming down the pipeline; (b) relevant contacts; (c) upcoming due dates and processes; (d) where to get bids/RFP/grants; (e) “who they are calling on Monday”; and (f) how to stay updated and engaged. Second, share initial results of Farm to Loading Dock surveys and interviews and engage participants in the next phase of stakeholder feedback. Third, identify, define, and prioritize the technical assistance and investments needed to facilitate local food procurement in schools/institutions.

One week after the event, we shared a follow-up email that included a survey with participants and received 64 post-event survey responses.

- 92% of respondents strongly or somewhat agreed that the event was a good use of their time.
- 91% of respondents reported being somewhat or strongly aware of funding opportunities.
- 72% of respondents reported being somewhat or strongly aware of their ability to apply for funding.

We asked participants an open-ended question about what they saw as a priority for next research steps.

Value Chain Coordination	12	30%
Supply	8	20%
Direct Producer Support	7	18%
Transportation/logistics	6	15%
Infrastructure	4	10%
Education	4	10%
Centralized Database	3	8%
Governance	2	5%

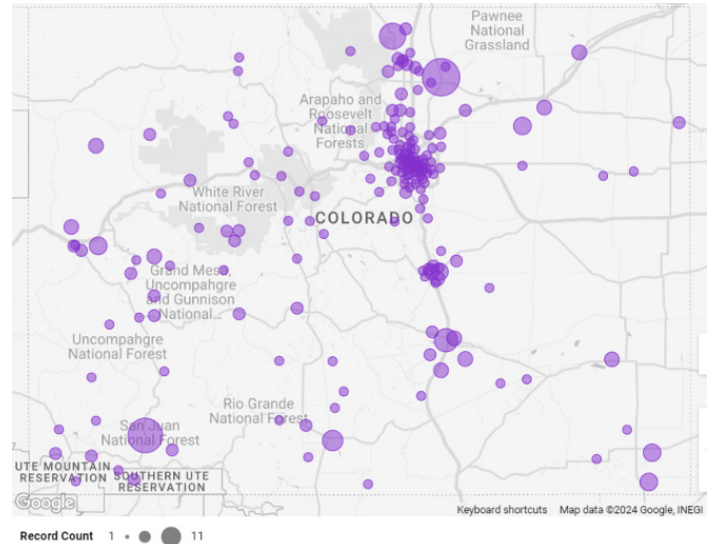


2023 Colorado Food Summit
December 7-8, 2023 | Stockyards Event Center,
Denver, CO

The third annual Colorado Food Summit (CO Food Summit) in 2023 brought together food and agriculture stakeholders from across the state to help build shared understanding of the complex opportunities and challenges facing our food and agriculture systems. The Summit inspired collaborative action towards a more resilient and equitable food future in the face of uncertainty (e.g., pandemics, drought, inflation, supply chain shortages) through panel presentations, storytelling, interactive workshops, and facilitated networking.

The FSI spearheaded the CO Food Summit as a collaborative effort with the Colorado Blueprint to End Hunger, the Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA), the Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council (COFSAC), the CO Food Summit Young Leaders Host Committee (a group of 11 young leaders from across CO funded by a grant from the CDA to the FSI), and the Statewide Steering Committee, with representatives from eleven of the state's local food policy councils and coalitions. The Summit hosted 622

participants from across Colorado, representing all parts of the food system, and 63 young leaders.



CO Food Summit Participants by Zip Code. (N=622)

The Planning Process

The work of food and agricultural groups, councils, and coalitions operating across the state informed the 2023 CO Food Summit sessions. Sources of information included the 2022 post-summit survey



and 2023 Priority Planning Survey (sent out with 2023 Save the Date). Further, Summit collaborators compiled a list of Colorado food and agriculture events in early 2023, followed by collecting and analyzing relevant planning documents, reports, assessments, meeting notes, minutes, and agendas from April and June of 2023. Every effort was made to collect information about events that did not supply relevant documents, including through discussions with key informants. An external partner coded the documents, identifying and categorizing regional priorities by theme and synthesizing them into four conference tracks for the 2023 CO Food Summit.

We then shared the regional priorities and assigned tracks with stakeholders for feedback and verification, holding meetings with each of the five regions (Western, Southern, Eastern, Mountain, Front Range) in July. We synthesized all the feedback into four briefs—one for each track—outlining topic priorities, session ideas, and potential collaborators.

We added a new track that was added developed entirely by 13 Young Leaders Steering Committee to the 2023 Summit. It encouraged young leaders to learn about food and farming systems. From the basics, like Food Systems 101, to the essentials, like Managing Food Waste, they learned about what it takes for large systems like food and farming to function, from scattered cities to grass-strewn rural communities and everywhere in between. Young Leaders discussed problems and opportunities surrounding food and farming systems, including how they impact government decisions and how personal actions and stories can uplift and motivate others to create positive change within community food and farming systems.

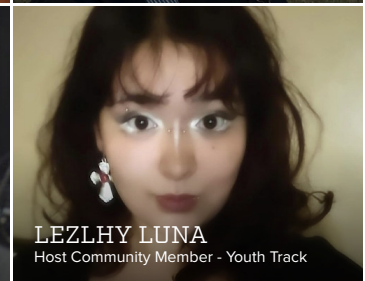
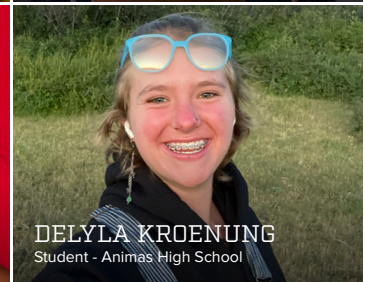
Summit collaborators nominated session speakers, resulting in a diverse and engaging set of more than 75 speakers from across Colorado. The complete list of speakers is available here: <https://foodsystems.colostate.edu/events/food-summit-2023/speakers/>.

Funding and Financial Assistance Programs

FSI raised more than \$330,000 from partners and sponsors to support the event, which allowed for an expansive, equitable access initiative that provided



YOUTH PLANNING COMMITTEE



~\$50,000 in financial assistance (complimentary registration, lodging, childcare, and other travel costs) to all 148 individuals (24% of attendees) who completed requests for support, as well as simultaneous translation and interpretation. We also paid an hourly rate to the members of the Young Leader Steering Committee for their support of and participation in the event.

2023 Food Summit Impacts

The 2023 CO Food Summit evaluation reports important impacts. As one example, 93 percent (!) of past CO Food Summits participants took action because of something they learned or a connection that they made at a previous Summit. Respondents noted that they:

- Felt supported by the community when they shared personal experiences at these summits
- Learned and became more passionate about addressing hunger

- Went to Washington, DC to advocate for changes in the Farm Bill
- Held workshops on budgeting, health choice, and grant writing
- Applied for and received money to both participate in and support others to participating in equity training

2023 Food Summit New Connections:
2,201
 2023 Food Summit Reconnections:
1,583

2,201 new connections were made during the Summit (N=157), and attendees reconnected with 1,583 individuals. On average, Summit attendees made 24 new connections and reconnections, 6.4 of which they plan to reconnect with after the event. More than 97 percent of the participants surveyed were planning to

follow up on connections made during the event. Ninety percent of respondents viewed the Summit as a safe environment for learning.

Colorado Food Summit



THE TEAM



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SAVE THE DATES

April 2-4, 2024

Food Systems Extension Team Retreat
Nathrop, CO

April 16-17, 2024

Food Systems Collaborations:
2nd Annual Food Systems Institute
Graduate Student Symposium
Fort Collins, CO

To learn more please visit:

FOODSYSTEMS.COLOSTATE.EDU/FSI



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*Creating more sustainable and equitable
communities by solving food systems challenges*