



# EXTENSION ELEVATED 2023

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“Successful people are not gifted; they just work hard, then succeed on purpose.” – G.K. Nielson

This year has been nothing short of a success, and I am so very proud of the Extension Team and all of its' accomplishments!

The 4-H Youth Program once again had over 1,000 youth enrolled in the Program with the Juntos 4-H Program set to begin in early 2024; the Weld County Master Gardeners, along with the Horticulture and Agronomy Specialists, partnered and collaborated with the City of Greeley Museums and are all looking forward to the first growing season at the City's White Plumb Farm in the coming new year; the Family Consumer Science Agent connected with so many clients on growing vegetables and flowers, as well as the preservation and canning of their products; the Weld County Fair was once again a successful event culminating with the Junior Livestock Sale setting another record at \$1.78 million thanks to the generous and continued support for youth from the community; and the inaugural Colorado Women in Ag Conference was held in the Fall at Greeley's Island Grove Regional Park, hosted by Weld County, and surpassed all expectations...so much so that the planning and organizing for the 2024 conference has already begun.

Thank you for your continued support of the Weld County Extension Office and the Weld County Fair. We look forward to continued success in the New Year!

*-Hannah Swanbom*

CSU Extension of Weld County Director





*CWF Students to  
Washington, D.C.*

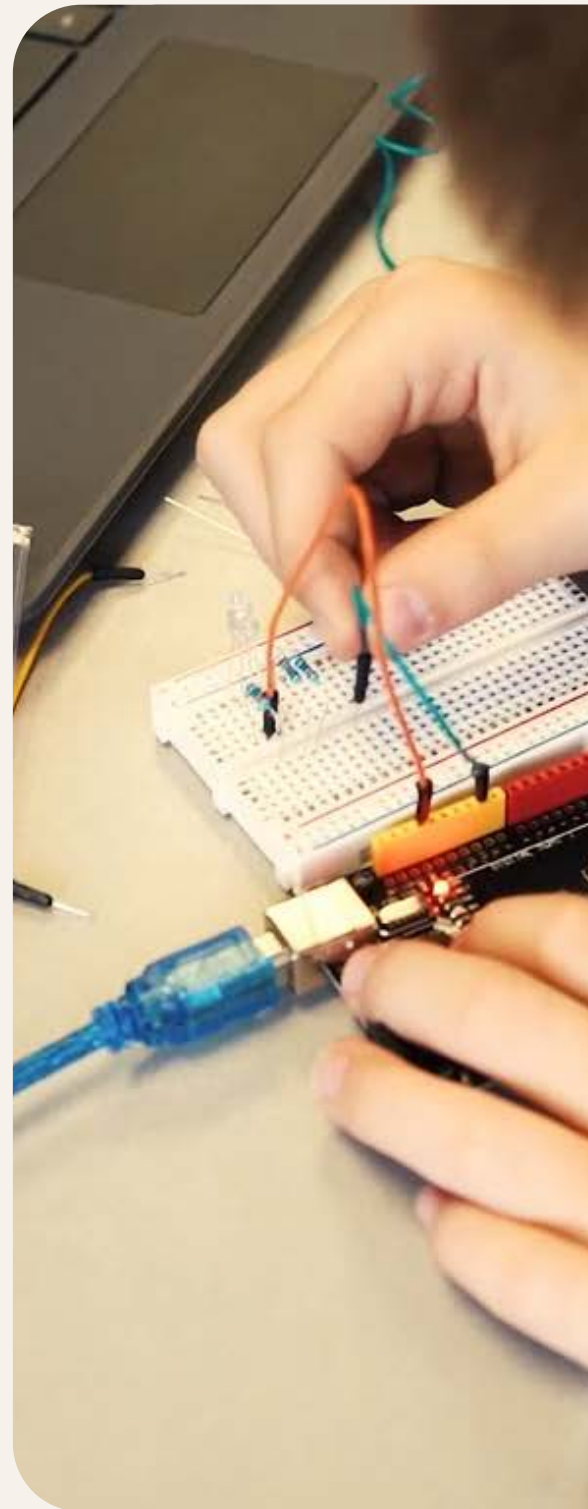


*Family Consumer Science  
Food Preservation Class*

*4-H Mardi Gras*



*Inaugural Colorado Women  
in Ag Conference*



*Weld County Fair Show*

*Wobble Bots Program*



# 4-H Youth Development:

Weld County 4-H offers a unique opportunity for Senior members through the Citizenship Washington Focus program. While in this program, youth work for 3.5 years to travel to a conference in Washington D.C. along with traveling the East Coast. The conference they attend is a national conference through National 4-H Council, so they get the opportunity to comingle with other states and learn about their 4-H programs. They also attend workshops, visit monuments, and meet with Senators/Representatives to hear about current topics. From the conference they get an additional opportunity to travel the East Coast and dive further into our Nation's history. They visit Ellis Island, Statue of Liberty, 9/11 Museum, Gettysburg and Amish Country, just to name a few. This experience is fully educational as the primary focus is on how our country developed and what made it what it is today.

With this program youth get to experience this every three years, so this past summer 50 youth and their chaperones attended the conference. Together they worked to raise funds to cover their entire trip, participated in numerous community service activities, and build on their leadership skills in preparation for the conference. Within the state, Weld County 4-H is the only County that offers this combined program, and we truly pride ourselves on building the youth of tomorrow!





For over 60 years, the Saturday before Thanksgiving has been known as Mardi Gras for Weld County 4-H. Annually the 4-H Clubs of Weld County come together to celebrate another year and to raise funds for the Weld County 4-H Foundation. An old-fashioned carnival, Mardi Gras sees 1000's of participants each year and each Club plans, designs and staffs a game booth for the evening.

Teresa Johnson and Kim Eastwood coordinate the annual Weld County 4-H Foundation Mardi Gras each November. This event serves as the primary fundraiser for Weld County 4-H activities and gives the opportunity for members, families, and the community to get together for some old-fashioned family style fun.

Each Weld 4-H Club is responsible for developing a carnival game surrounding a theme, and in 2023 the theme was "Back to the '80s". With lots of big hair, roller skates, Rubik's cubes and boom boxes, the Exhibition building turned back the clock. During the event, there are also competitions for participants to be involved in including costume, eating contests, and Rubik's cube solving. In addition to the game tickets sold, each member sells a pre-sale ticket that gives its purchaser a chance at a door prize, there is a concession stand and silent auction. At the 2023 Mardi Gras, \$32,000 was raised to help support programs this coming year. The Weld 4-H Foundation has given out well over \$1 million in scholarships in addition to supporting other needs of our 4-H Youth including State Fair entries, team travel expenses, County competition expenses and awards. The Mardi Gras is the only fundraiser for the Foundation and without this event 4-H programs would not be able to happen as they historically have. Staff prides itself on being able to support kids through their 4-H journey.

Be sure to block out the Saturday before Thanksgiving to join us for some old fashioned family fun!





# 4-H Outreach

The 2023 year was one that brought youth so many opportunities to learn research-based STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) and Agriculture. A total of 3,546 youth were reached through our afterschool monthly programs at 13 different locations, our outreach events, and our in-school enrichment programs. In addition to these programs, thanks to the Jean Hoshiko Memorial Endowment Fund that provides funding for these opportunities the groundwork has also begun to launch the Juntos Program that serves both Hispanic and all students seeking opportunities to advance their education to a post-secondary learning with options. The program will be offered for the first time at Ft. Lupton High School and work to build relationships are already underway to prepare for the Fall of 2024.

At the start of 2023, for two months, 4-H Outreach facilitated five 4th and 5th grade classes at Union Colony Elementary in a program developed by the Imagine Science and National Science Foundation Network called Data Detectives. This 15-course program investigated epidemics such as 1918 Flu, Ebola, Nipah, Smallpox, and COVID. 95 youth read a chapter book about two youth who travel back in time to investigate various diseases and viruses. They discussed issues of epidemiology and analyzed graphs of actual data from the 1918 flu. Youth got to meet the author virtually and asked her scientific questions and how she got ideas of writing a novel. The program was a huge success with many youth being proficient in data analysis, some even interested in studying the field of Epidemiology. About three quarters of youth (73.3%) said that this program had a positive change in STEM Engagement, 57.8% of youth saw a STEM Career Interests and 48.9 % identified themselves with a STEM identity.

Weld County 4-H Outreach identified youth's learning needs and desires through both formal needs assessments and informally word of mouth. Youth have shown interest in mathematics, reading, 3-D printing, horses and livestock, and other STEM fields. According to the last needs assessment conducted in 2021, the issue of accessing technology such as computers was high on the list and having basic computing skills was a need identified by partners in the field.





To meet one of the issues brought up by the needs assessment in “accessing technology”, 4-H Outreach facilitated a program called 30 Days Lost in Space developed by Invetr.io. This program teaches youth how coding works giving them access to technologies such as computers and Arduino Hero Circuit boards. Youth are given a kit that contains basic hardware pieces such as LED lights, wires, switches, a bread board, and an Arduino circuit board. They are then taught the difference between hardware, software, and terms such as circuits, inputs, and outputs. The youth then are guided to complete a circuit and type a code to finally make the LED lights turn on. This program teaches youth how basic coding works and problem-solving skills to debug problems that arise from an incorrect code.

4-H Outreach meets with various schools, libraries, and youth centers on a monthly basis, teaching in STEM and Agricultural topics that range from electromagnetism to making Lip balm out of products found in Agriculture. This year had a few themes where youth learned a lot about how a simple circuit works as they made a toothbrush bee, an electromagnet, and in our Coding program, they discovered that connecting wires to a watch battery can move a motor that is attached on a toothbrush head to make a bee buzz, all the while learning the process of pollination and how our food depends upon so many insects. Another theme this year had to do with light. Youth enjoyed learning how light can be reflected, refracted, the intensity, as well as the color spectrum in the Lights fantastic program as well as the Lunar and Solar Eclipse program. Youth saw the absorption of a red laser light on a red gummy bear allows it to glow with a great intensity.

4-H Outreach also attended various one-time events to showcase STEM and Agriculture. We were able to attend the Yes Fest, presenting a workshop on Liquid Nitrogen and showcasing a booth with our Van De Graffs Generator. Over 1,000 people attended that event with Dr. Temple Grandin giving the opening speech. We also made a presence at the Poudre Pour in Windsor as adults and youth planted succulents in mugs. Finally, 4-H Outreach of Larimer County partnered up with us to teach about the Science of Sound at the Windsor Charter Innovation Night that had over 800 in attendance.

Looking ahead to 2024, we plan to tackle another issue identified with the needs assessment that asked the need for youth to develop life skills such as managing finances. Weld 4-H has teamed up with YouthBiz to bring about an Entrepreneurship program to teach youth the business cycle from developing a business plan, product prototyping, to manufacturing and selling their finished products. This program will be offered to youth in 2024 at the new Library of Innovation Center (LINC) in Greeley. Youth will follow along a 15-course program that will span over 2 months.





# Family & Consumer Science

The Family and Consumer Science Program at Colorado State University (CSU) Weld County Extension has focused on nutrition, physical health, healthy aging, food safety and food preservation this year. Classes in these areas have been a comprehensive approach to promoting overall well-being.

This year marked a significant milestone in fostering health and well-being within the community through strategic partnerships. Collaborations were solidified with organizations such as the Aspen Club of UCHealth, Greeley Active Adult Center, and Meeker Commons in Greeley. Together, a diverse array of classes was curated, addressing the unique needs and interests of the community. Nutrition for Older Adults aimed at promoting the well-being of seniors, while the exploration of the Mediterranean Diet provided a cultural and health-centric lens on dietary habits. The Dining with Diabetes program, a national program developed by Extension universities across the United States, empowered individuals to manage their health through informed meal planning and culinary skills. Recognizing the increasing importance of understanding Alzheimer's and dementia, specialized classes developed by the Alzheimer's Association were offered to provide support and knowledge in navigating these challenges. In parallel, dynamic partnerships with Weld County libraries, including the Kersey Library, Riverside Library and Cultural Center, Clearview Library, and Carbon Valley Regional Library, brought the community together for hands-on classes in food preservation.

On October 4th of this year, Sheila Beckley, Extension County Specialist of Weld County, CO had the distinct honor of being an invited guest speaker at the annual Weld Senior Symposium, a notable event dedicated to addressing the unique needs and interests of older adults in the community. In a room filled with more than 80 participants, Sheila delivered a presentation on the crucial topic of "Nutrition for Older Adults." The session provided invaluable insights into the significance of tailored nutrition for the aging population.





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This year, Sheila served as a judge for the preserved food categories during the Weld County Fair. In addition, she helped design an informational poster that showed a summary of events, map of the fair and other logistical details. Furthermore, she coordinated with the Weld County Health Department and CSU Extension to develop and place food safety signs for the event.

Sheila mentored a nutrition graduate student from CSU through a project titled "Colorado Grows Greens." This innovative program aimed to educate and empower the community on the entire lifecycle of leafy greens, from cultivation and propagation to preparation and cooking, all while emphasizing the nutritional and economic value of leafy greens.

Sheila was honored recently at the National Extension Association for Family and Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS). She was a member of the team that received the 1st Place Western Region NEAFCS Family Health and Wellness award at the conference held Sept. 11 - 14 in Providence, Rhode Island. In receiving the award, Sheila was recognized for The Meal Planning with Confidence toolkit that helps Extension Specialists empower clients with the skills and resources to save time, money, and energy, while reducing stress and food waste. The NEAFCS Family Health and Wellness Award, which was established in 2012, recognizes innovative programs that promote and improve the health and wellness of families in areas such as nutrition, fitness, family meals, meal planning, time or stress management, healthy lifestyle and more.





# Horticulture and Colorado Master Gardeners

The Master Gardener program in Weld County had many opportunities and projects to serve local communities in 2023. Among those opportunities, the Master Gardeners continued their partnership with AIMS Community College. They offered 18 classes about home gardening for personal development that were open to the public.

The topics included lawn care, ornamental grasses, xeriscaping, proper tree planting, vegetable diseases, and more. These classes have helped 47 attendees learn how to compost, grow in containers, and build raised beds. Some attendees learned about the Colorado Master Gardener program for the first time and applied to volunteer themselves.

The program in Weld County was supported by 42 active Master Gardeners and 9 Apprentices in 2023. Horticulture classes with AIMS will start again in Spring, 2024.

**SUPPORT FEE FACILITATE**  
**ATION IN CLEAR CREEK**  
**NTY?**

Arg LI, M.A. Program  
Department  
Committee Member:  
Professor  
Specialist

**COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY**  
EXTENSION

**COLORADO GROWS GREENS**  
Natali Mendez, MS student  
Sheila Beckley, Family and Consumer Science County Specialist  
Extension Mentors: Marisa Bunning, Food Safety Specialist; Amy Lertz, Horticulture Specialist;  
Jessica Clifford, Nutrition Specialist

**PROJECT INTRODUCTION**  
Leafy greens are among the most widely consumed vegetables and an important part of an overall healthy diet. A few examples of leafy greens are kale, collard greens, spinach, cabbage, and lettuce. Also known as superfoods, leafy green vegetables stand out nutritionally among produce types because of their versatility, availability, low calories, and for providing a variety of phytochemicals and antioxidants that promote health. Furthermore, they are easy to grow as they are quick to mature and succeed in nearly any space or season.  
Thus, the purpose of the Colorado Grow Greens internship was to introduce consumers to growing their own leafy green vegetables and prepare leafy greens regularly in the easiest ways possible.

**WHAT YOU DID**  
• Identified the types of leafy greens that grow well in Colorado.  
• Developed several social media handouts to promote the benefits of growing and consuming leafy greens. See under Materials.  
• Researched available information from CSU and other Extension resources, including recipes and blogs.

**MATERIALS**  
• **Colorado Kale Blend**  
• **Star-Fried Bok Choy**  
• **Garlic Braised Greens**  
• **Leafy Greens and Tahini Soup**  
• **Lamb-Lettuce Greens and Kale Salad**

**INTERNSHIP OBJECTIVES**  
#1. To gather information and develop resources related to vegetables which could be shared by CSU Extension and the Garden to Kitchen program and other existing food nutrition programs.  
• Develop promotional materials to be shared on social media to educate and encourage consumers to grow leafy greens at home.

**LEARNED**  
• Research to design marketing resources and promotional materials.  
• Use existing resources to organize and plan project.  
• Create new connections and networking (e.g. professionals in other disciplines).  
• Use the Canva graphic design program for the social media posts.

**APPLICATION**  
I began the internship with the nutrition background about leafy greens, but no knowledge on the horticulture or food safety aspect. Now however, after the internship, I have gained experiences like growing my own leafy greens and developing evidence-based educational materials. What I learned directly applies to my future career as a Registered Dietitian who strives to help all age groups and different communities achieve their optimal health.

**NEXT STEPS**  
To present all material that was developed during this internship as a webinar to the public and to distribute the Leafy Greens Tool Kit.

**RESOURCES**  
1. Nutrition & Health: Food Smart Colorado (colorado.edu)  
2. Planning Your Season Vegetables - Pueblo County Extension (colorado.edu)  
3. Crop Specific - Veggie Crops A-Z - Grow and Cook (colorado.edu)  
4. Myka MC, et al. Nutritional and bioactive in green leafy vegetables and cognitive decline: Prospective study. *Neurology*. 2018;90:314-214.e222.  
5. Publications - Colorado State University Extension  
6. Food & Health: Live Smart Colorado  
7. Growing Leafy Greens in 6 Home Systems. University of Maryland Extension  
8. Nutrition Value: www.nutritionvalue.org/food/vegetables/leafygreens.html

**College of Health and Human Sciences**  
**Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition**



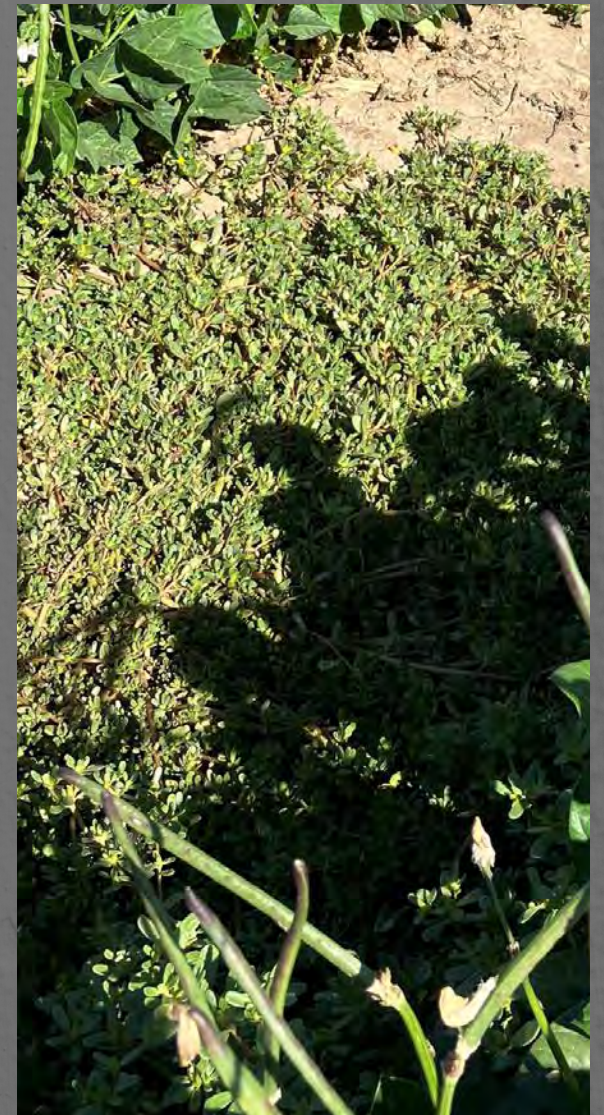
# Agronomy

Crop production in Weld County had an interesting year in 2023. The winter of 2023 started out dry, with producers across the eastern half of the state reckoning with the lasting effect of drought conditions. By the time the annual CSU Crops Testing Wheat Field Days took place in June, participants were sliding down muddy hills and looking forward to a great wheat harvest.

The unique growing conditions of 2023 made the launch of the CAMCrops website all the timelier (<https://csucrops.com/camcrops/>). Extension Specialists from across the state contributed regional growing condition updates and articles. Having been launched in May of 2023, the page has received approximately 500 unique page views.

In January of 2023, the first agronomy educational event was held at the CO Farm Show. Participants attended sessions on manure management, an update on wheat stem saw-fly, and updates on sorghum variety testing. Feedback from both presenters and attendees was positive and encouraging. Agronomy will be added to the Farm Show educational events as a reoccurring session in the future.

Other highlights from 2023 include weighing wheat yield in plots for the Cooperative On-Farm Testing program in Weld and other counties. An additional Weld County site will be included in the 2024 COFT program to evaluate irrigated wheat. The Weld County Extension office hosted Blooming Health Farms to conduct a workshop on hydroponic fodder for backyard poultry owners. Weld County was also the host for the CSU Crops Clinic in December. The Crops Clinic focuses on providing research updates and professional development for crop advisors and producers. Attendees come from both CO and other states, with the sessions being offered both in-person and online. Extension Specialists within Weld County and the Front Range partnered to conduct site visits for small acreage owners and advise them on the best management for their properties. Farm field visits were also completed in topics from crop loss evaluation to hay quality. Finally, Kat Caswell successfully passed the Certified Crop Advisor exam, lending more opportunities and credibility to the Agronomy Program in Weld County.





# Livestock

The 21st Annual Weld County Goat Extravaganza (WCGE) was held at Greeley's Island Grove Regional Park June 21-23, 2023. These three days were packed full of educational programs, jackpot showmanship contests, a fantastic silent auction, vendor merchandise and information, dinner social, and Boer, Dairy and Pygmy Goat shows for adult and youth goat exhibitors. The two educational seminars offered were Positioning Your Operation for Success presented by MacKenzie Stoaks of American Ag Credit and Goat Health Basics and When to Call the Vet, presented by Dr. Rachel Oman, DVM from CSU Vet Teaching Hospital. They were well attended and packed full of great information. The silent auction was great this year with 42 items that generated \$1,516.00. All of that money went back into the Weld County Goat Extravaganza program. Participation was better in 2023 than it has ever been with 12 different vendors, half of them were return vendors and half were new to this year's show.

One of the fun activities that we have at the WCGE show is our dinner social, which is always on the Saturday evening of the weekend. The Weld County 4-H Shooting Sports Council serves the meal, it is part of their fund-raising activities for the year. Our meal is always goat related, this year they served goat meat tacos and burritos, we had approximately 65 people attend and it is always well received. The goat shows for the Weld County Goat Extravaganza expanded from years past, the Junior American Boer Goat Association (JABGA), American Boer Goat Association and Commercial Boer Goat Show all had four shows, The American Dairy Goat Association had two shows this year and the Pygmy Goat show had three goat shows at the WCGE this year. We had over 300 exhibitors attend all the shows, and they were well attended. Our show welcomes exhibitors and spectators from all over Colorado and surrounding states to attend. If you are interested in this program or have questions about it, go to our Weld County Goat Extravaganza website, [www.wcgoate.com](http://www.wcgoate.com) for more information.





# Weld County Fair

Mikayla Gabel is the new Coordinator for Weld County Fair and is excited to kick off her first official Fair this 2024 year. Mikayla is no stranger to the Weld County Fair and is a proud 4-H alumni, and 14+ year member. Growing up and exhibiting in Weld County herself, this industry has given her a strong appreciation for the Weld County Fair and has been a strong source of community pride. She knows that she is able to lean on long lasting traditions in agriculture for years to come.

Mikayla is excited to jump right in with her team to uphold the permanent influence of the Fair. It is a dynamic position that merges diverse communities in a single event which celebrates hard work and passion. The collaboration between generations of Fair Board members, superintendents, City employees, and volunteers forge the power to continue the legacy for all to enjoy.

When looking back at the 2023 Fair, although Mikayla's role was a volunteer packing ribbon boxes and setting up/tearing down the Open Class Show, she knows it was another record-breaking year for Weld County. The Jr. Livestock Sale generated a new high of \$1.78 million. It truly takes a village to execute such a high caliber experience or surrounding communities, and everyone at the Fair looks forward to everyone being a part of it.

Planning never stops, and we are excited for all that will be in store for the 106th Annual Weld County Fair, July 20-29, 2024, at Greeley's Island Grove Regional Park. We look forward to seeing you and building memories together that will be passed down years to come!





# Admin Support/Logistics

The year 2023 was an exciting year which saw the inaugural Colorado Women in Ag Conference come to fruition after months of visioning and planning.

Michelle Langston was instrumental in creating a website solely dedicated to Colorado Women in Ag...everything from committee contact information to speaker and vendor resources to sponsorship opportunities to programming and scheduling of sessions for the conference. She also focused time on assuring that all websites are in compliance with new Americans with Disabilities Act laws and making sure key timelines and deadlines are met in this regard. As always, she also assisted all agents and other staff with a variety of tasks and projects.

Cheryl Aragon was also at the table for all things Colorado Women in Ag assisting with session scheduling, catering, registration desk planning and set up, wayfinding for attendees and general logistics. Cheryl also accepted new assignments and tasks related to the 2023 Weld County Fair following the departure of its' Fair Coordinator in March. It was a fun, wild, and crazy learning experience and one that will make her a better resource for Mikayla Gabel, the Fairs' newly appointed Fair Coordinator, as they plan for the 2024 event along with the Weld County Fair Board.

Cindy Nosko continued to manage all accounting aspects of the Weld County Extension Office and its various programs, foundations, and funds, as well as keeping the Weld County 4-H Foundation website up to date. In 2023, Cindy also played a key role in supporting various tasks and special projects related to the Weld County Fair and the inaugural Colorado Women in Ag Conference.







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