

CALP CLASS 15

PERSONAL PROJECT SUMMARY



Colorado Agricultural
Leadership Program



CLASS MEMBERS

CALP CLASS 15


Aly Kruse, Fort Collins, CO	2
Annaliese Danckers, Longmont, CO	3
Anneliese Phippen, Sedalia, CO	4
Blake Ferris, Wiggins, Co	5
Carrie Hackenberger, Denver, CO	6
Cullen Stevens, LaSalle, CO	7
Daniel Ray, Joes, CO	8
Jeremy McNeely, Canon City, CO	9
Jessica Crowther, Monte Vista, CO	10
Lacey Taylor, Cheyenne Wells, CO	11
Lauren Kolb, Boulder, CO	12
Matt Lopez, Broomfield, CO	13
Michelle Kardokus, Victor, CO	14
Morgan Weinrich, Sterling, CO	15
Preston Schow, Denver, CO	16
Shelby, Rich, Denver, CO	17
Stacey Crouch, La Junta, CO	18
Travis Grant, Denver, CO	19
Trevor Birky, Fort Morgan, CO	20

ALPHA GAINS - FOR THE EVERYDAY LIVESTOCK FEEDER

ALPHA-GAINS

BALED
MIXED RATION

Maintenance Ration




Alfalfa 33.33%
Triticale Silage 33.33%
Wet Distillers Grain 33.33%

50.13% Dry Matter
18.33% Protein


(Net Energy for Maintenance)
Dry NEm 74.88

(Net Energy for Growth)
Dry NEg 42.78

ALPHA-GAINS

BALED
MIXED RATION

Starter Ration




Flaked Corn 36%
Alfalfa 26%
Corn Silage 24%
Wet Distillers Grain 14%

63.16% Dry Matter
13.35% Protein

(Net Energy for Maintenance)
Dry NEm 85.70

(Net Energy for Growth)
Dry NEg 53.57



This product takes a total mixed ration (TMR) and bales it into a silage style marshmallow. It encompasses all the nutritional values for multiple livestock species to help maintain their body composition or grow the animals, whichever route you are taking. Most ranches with minimal livestock tend to feed roughages and grains that are simple and easy but not the most efficient and economical. This product will hold and stay fresh for over a year, as long as the wrap does not get punctured. It will also aid in teaching the importance of efficiency and cost of gains with what you are feeding your livestock. Alpha Gains will strive to see success when small quantity livestock producers understand the products potential for their livestock and their cost analysis. In creating Alpha Gains, I hope to reach the community with increased awareness on how to get more efficiency out livestock, especially with the increase in commodity prices.

All manpower and the machine was donated by Miller Cattle Feeders/Ault Feed Mill and C&H Logistics. Bales would be produced once a month and sold accordingly at auctions, the farm show and word of mouth. The machine has since been removed from the equation but the awareness and convenience for producers continues though trailer loads of the product being sold.

WHAT HAS THE CALP EXPERIENCE MEANT TO ME?

CALP has shown me the diversity of Colorado Agriculture. While growing up in the Pacific Northwest I was unaware of all my new home state had to offer. This program gave me the experience and knowledge to understand what Colorado Agriculture is. Connections and friendships will be one of my most valuable takeaways to further my growth in Colorado and the growth in agriculture.

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ALY KRUSE, FORT COLLINS



WHAT HAS THE CALP EXPERIENCE MEANT TO ME?

Without CALP, I would still be in a bubble of regenerative, Boulder-based agriculture. Now, I know farmers and friends across the state who care about agriculture to their cores. And I am proud to be part of the wider conversation about growing food with people who do not always see eye to eye with me. The experiences - locally and internationally - in CALP have grown my confidence and understanding about farming.

Project Details

In the winter of 2021, one of my customers approached me about doing a documentary on the farm. I thought at first, “well there’s nothing going on - it’s the middle of winter!” The customer, Chad Weber, had a much bigger picture in mind than a short clip of winter farming. Instead, a 25 minute film came together over a year and a half of filming, interviews, and coordinating through COVID. In the end, the film showcases my day to day lifestyle, why I farm, and what I hope the future holds for farming in Colorado.

Why Pursue a Documentary?

One of the biggest disconnects in modern society is between the producers and consumers of food. How many people can say they know the name of the person who raised their holiday turkey, or who grew the celery that graces their Bloody Mary at brunch? Though I was afraid of being in front of a camera, up on a stage talking about myself, and even of publicizing the struggles we have farming, I knew this chance to educate was too important to be afraid. I pursued a documentary for my CALP project because video is a powerful tool to spread knowledge, passion, and the beauty surrounding Colorado agriculture.

Project Impact:

The film has been featured in at least three film festivals to date: Horsetooth Film Festival, Colorado Environmental Film Festival, and Breckenridge International Film Festival. I have also been on two panels post screening to keep people up to date on the farm, answer questions about regenerative agriculture, and keep the conversation alive about farming. This film has been seen on YouTube by thousands of people as of early 2023, showing it has had some reach beyond Colorado to draw attention to how we farm. I’ve had conversations with people about their pride in how diverse Colorado agriculture is, and how resilient farmers in our state can be. The overall impact has been a higher attention by consumers around the state on what it takes to be a farmer from scratch and grow food for local communities.

Next Steps

The film continues to be picked up by film festivals, as well as gain some traction locally by those interested in Boulder County agriculture. I plan to keep promoting it, going to panels to speak about agriculture, and continue to remind consumers about the people behind every meal they eat. My tagline is twofold now: “Know your farmer” and “Just do something” to learn more about the food we eat. Ideally, we will be able to make a sequel in the next decade, as the farm has already changed so much since production.

INTERNATIONAL AGRIBUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRADE & LIVESTOCK SHOWS



Visitors from Mexico, 2022 National Western Stock Show

During my employment with the Western Stock Show Association, I observed that revamping an International Agribusiness Hospitality offering could solidify Denver as a global destination for agriculture in January for years to come. Objectives included increasing awareness of the mission in place for this program since 1984, partnering with livestock show superintendents and with an advisory committee to grow this area of the show. We also located a larger space on site with the capacity to host educational demonstrations and conference areas for sponsor's networking socials, creating partnerships with agriculture trade and travel-focused membership organizations.

In 2022, the show reopened after a postponement from the COVID-19 pandemic. This global crisis severely impacted our international attendance numbers as visitors were not traveling across borders as much. Planning efforts were supported by a dedicated intern. Additionally, we worked with the NWSS volunteer program to staff hosts in the center each day. Combined, these supporters put in over 300 hours supporting the hospitality center. The Colorado Agriculture Program has expanded my knowledge of international networking opportunities, notably through our class trip to South Africa and visits with U.S.-based trade organizations. Although I have since changed careers, the next phase of this project will be continued by the National Western Stock Show and has a very bright future.

WISDOM OF COWS: UDDERLY IMPORTANT LESSONS OF LIFE FROM OUR BOVINE BUDDIES (CHILDREN'S BOOK)

Retrospection of this CALP project still leaves me as excited and optimistic as ever about imparting the wisdom of cattle to anyone interested in reading my book. At face value, the common bovine might not have much to contribute to a species that has the vast history and boundless future as the human race, but I'm excited to offer different perspectives and hope to garner a new appreciation for our four legged, long domesticated friends. Combining my passion of being around cattle and the enjoyment of documenting my thoughts, taking this approach to sharing the important lessons from cows was a tremendously exciting venture for me.

Another facet to pursuing this project was the notion of creating a deeper sense of gratitude for the beef industry and its significance for both cattle and rural America. Long term goals and ambitions for this write-up are that it could potentially benefit consumers and producers alike, building trust between the two on a relatively newfangled foundation (wisdom of cattle). This, however, was not the sole impetus for the book, but I am optimistic that it will coincide with the lighthearted message. While there is still some writing yet to be completed and further steps to be taken (publishing), this is nothing short of a project of sincere passion and its continuation after my time in CALP is a given.

MY CALP EXPERIENCE...

Without an ounce of exaggeration, I could quite literally type for hours on end about how much enjoyment and fulfillment that I was able to achieve all through the 2 years of the program. Being a part of CALP Class 15 was truly a blessing, and I will be forever grateful for the countless memories, lifelong friendships, reaffirmation of passions, and broadening of horizons both in terms of agriculture and generally speaking. I am leaving the program much more versed in professionalism (etiquette training, proper attire, etc.), government affairs (going through the Capitol in Denver, meeting with national organizations in Washington D.C., talking with representatives, etc.), well connected (CALP fellows, alumni, tour leaders around the state and country), a better speaker (in meetings, publicly), self-aware (peer reviews), and an overall far more capable leader for the agriculture industry I care so deeply about. In reflection, CALP was everything I was hoping for and more; I am thankful beyond words to simply be a part of this program.

BLAKE FERRIS, WIGGINS



INTEGRATING A VOLUNTEER COMPONENT INTO CALP

For my project, I decided to focus on leveraging my passion for volunteering. The first step of my project was to organize an optional volunteer day and invite my CALP classmates, colleagues and friends to participate. For this, I organized a group of 7 volunteers and for four hours we worked with Benefits in Action to pack food boxes that served 240 families in need in the Denver Metro area.

The second step was to schedule a volunteer activity for the current CALP 15 class and the incoming CALP 16 class during the Denver seminar in February. This activity will also be a group activity with Benefits in Action to pack food boxes for families in need.

The last step of my project will be to present to the CALP board and requesting they consider officially incorporating a volunteer requirement into the CALP curriculum.

I believe a primary component of leadership is community service. In order to be a good leader, you must be willing to use your experiences, knowledge and abilities to give back to others and serve those around you. Requiring a volunteer component into the CALP curriculum will ensure the cohorts are learning all aspects of leadership.



WHAT CALP HAS MEANT TO ME:

CALP has been an amazing experience that I wouldn't trade for the world and the people within the program are the foundation of those feelings. CALP not only brought me a foundational knowledge of agriculture, it brought me colleagues whom I now consider friends and a network of agriculturist that I will cherish forever.

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CARRIE HACKENBERGER, DENVER



SUGAR BEET MOONSHINE

When looking for a project for CALP, I came up with the idea to create a product that would provide local sugar beet farmers in my area with an additional source of revenue when the sugar beet factory has reached its limit on beets and there are still truckloads left over. Knowing many of the local farmers, I see the frustration when the factory can no longer accept beets, and farmers are left with large piles of products and have nothing to do with them. Therefore, I wanted to create something that would utilize that leftover product to reduce waste and supplement revenue to decrease the cost of growing sugar beets.

Many people have been interested in developing this idea and creating this product. From a classmate who gave me a small still to developing products for local farmers who have given me beets to test, there has been plenty of interest and investment.

At the beginning of this project, I expected to have a developed product by the end of CALP that I could then transition into a working business in the years after. Unfortunately, the variability available when distilling liquor has added much time to my start-up's research and development phase. I am still testing different methods and recipes to produce something worth moving forward with. Another problem I have encountered is the storage of sugar beets for year-round production. With only two years of this project, I have yet to find the best method of storing sugar beets for later use. However, even with these problems, I plan to continue creating a product and start my own distillery in the future.

I have thoroughly enjoyed the different ideas and the people who have come together to help with my project. While the fruits of this idea have yet to bear, there has been no shortage of people willing to chip in and lend their thoughts, and I am grateful for the connections that have come from this project and the program.

RAY FARM GARDEN PARTY PROJECT

The Garden Party project was designed to bring people of differing views together over a truly home raised meal. Year one we served pork and chicken raised on our farm along with vegetables from our garden. Year two we had BBQ beef, pulled pork along with more veggies from the garden. No money was raised for this although much time and effort was put into it.

The community was effected by a widening of thought for at least a fleeting moment from differing viewpoints one may seldom come across in his or her own respective world. My family was the main voluntolds for this project. Many hours were spent hoeing the garden and tending to the livestock. I have been asked to continue this get together by many of our guests. Though in the future we may tone down on the meal side to burgers or a pot luck style dinner, the true value is in the people.



CALP threw me a learning curve. On our first meeting we were asked if anyone was not very quick with technology, I was the only one to raise a hand. That's been the area of most growth to tell the truth. I can say that at least I'm not completely incompetent when it comes to emails and google docs now. I am taking away from this the urge to travel Colorado with my family. Get out and see what this state has to offer, be active in my community, stand for what I think is right, and call that congressman!

DANIEL RAY, JOES

In Fremont County, drought is having a huge impact on the agricultural industry. A good percentage of farmers and rancher depend on the annual snowfall from the Pikes Peak Region. As the county extension agent, I feel it is necessary to educate our producers on how to minimize the impacts of drought and look at different ways they can modify their operations for a future with less water.

With the support of local businesses, the conservation district, and cattlemen’s association, we were able to receive sponsorships totaling over \$900. We also received a WSARE grant which paid expenses of \$2,310 for a total contribution of \$3,210.

With the help of other agents in the area, we developed the program which focused on climate change, water, soil, range management, ag business management, and noxious weeds. Speakers included experts from Colorado State University, NRCS, The Colorado Water Center, and USDA-ARS in New Mexico.

Overall, it was a very successful program with over 60 attendees as well as ag businesses who set up around the edges to promote products specific to developing drought strategies. Attendees took a pre and post test to measure understanding and to see if behaviors would be modified. Overwhelmingly, results showed increased understanding and a willingness to adjust practices.

WHAT HAS CALP MEANT TO ME?

My CALP experience is one that I will never forget. I made some lifelong friendships and have a better understanding of agriculture in Colorado. My skill levels in relation to the personal and professional development workshops has increased 10-fold. I would recommend it to anyone who loves agriculture and wants to fight for it the right way.

JERAMY MCNEELY, CANON CITY

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COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION **SARE**
Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education

Drought Resiliency Symposium
March 25 & 26, 2022

Pathfinder Park Event Center
March 25-26th, 2022
6655 State Hwy 115, Florence, CO
Cost: \$40. Includes 2 meals and social hour

Sponsors Include:
Fremont Conservation District, EARLY COWS, FEED AgStart, Arkansas Valley Seed, Daylight 2 Dusk Carwash, Mini Storage

What You Will Learn:

- Climate and Weather Impacts
- Land/Soil Potential
- Soil Health Application
- Ag Business Decision Tools
- Weed Control
- Range Management
- Protecting Yourself from Water Shortages

Friday March 25th
5:00-5:45 p.m. - Keynote
Dr. Logan Thompson
How Shifting Climate and Weather Patterns is Going to Impact Agriculture in the Future
5:45 - Dinner Served
6:00-6:45 p.m. - Blake Osborn
Beyond the Horizon: Regional Drought Implications
6:45-8:30 - Social Networking

Saturday March 26th
8:30-9:00 a.m. Arrive/Continental Breakfast
9:00-9:45 a.m. - Jeff Herrick
How Can Understanding of Land Potential Increase Drought Resiliency
9:45-10:30 a.m. - Josh Tashiro
We Live in Drought
10:30-10:45 a.m. Break
10:45-11:30 a.m. - Annie Overlin
Building Drought Resilience into the Ranch: A Case Study of the Taylor Oswald Ranch in Fremont County
11:30-12:15 p.m. Lunch/Networking
12:15-1:00 p.m. - Jeff Tranel
Strategies for Your Cow Herd During Times of Drought
1:00-1:45 p.m. - Kara Harders
Weeds in Drought
1:45-2:00 p.m. Closing/Evaluations

To register, visit:
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/drought-resiliency-symposium-tickets-260347364977>
(Closes March 18, 2022)

Or contact Jeramy McNeely at:
Phone: 719-276-7390
Email: jeramy.mcneely@colostate.edu

GROWING AG LEADERS

This project focuses on working with a local FFA Chapter to give their students opportunities to explore more career paths within agriculture. I'm excited for the opportunities that these students are exploring and for the eye-opening experience that this project has brought to high school students at Monte Vista. The students were able to take a course through FFA, where they learned about job opportunities and career paths within agriculture as a large sector the first semester of school, the second semester they had the opportunity to be placed in different work places throughout the ag sector. The importance of this is helping students understand the large scope of jobs that are directly and indirectly related to agriculture. Expanding high school student's horizons and making them aware of opportunities throughout the ag sector, helps them to better understand the working parts of the ag industry as a whole and in a different realm they can use their talents to assist our overall small, agricultural community as they grow-up and move into their focused careers.

JESSICA BRADSHAW,
MONTE VISTA



WHAT HAS THE CALP EXPERIENCE MEANT TO ME?

.I have grown so much in the last two years, both personally and professionally. Being apart of CALP and gaining a large group of friends that are passionate about ag and leadership was amazing. I truly feel that I have found some of the best, lifelong friends and colleagues. I'm excited for the opportunities that await, as this chapter closes.

CATTLEWOMEN'S COLLEGE (CWC)



The Cattlewomen's College (CWC) is a collaboration coordinated by Colorado State University Extension Cheyenne County. The goal of this one-day program was/is to offer participants tools to better understand the beef industry. We offered sessions on meat selection identification for your home, Meat Science Boot Camp, effectively sharing your agriculture story on social media, rangeland health and outlook, Beef Quality Assurance Certification, and financial resources and tools to help your operation.

All sessions were taught by industry or educational professionals from CSU Extension, Nebraska Extension, Lamar Community College, and Otero Junior College, Fort Lewis College, and National Cattlemen's Beef Association. We charged \$10-\$15 per session, secured donated beef for lunch, and a Western SARE grant to offset speaker and travel fees.

We had four sites: Southeast Area in May 2021, Archuleta County in October 2021, Holyoke in May 2022, and Pueblo in December 2022 for a total of 55 participants. We achieved 100 percent BQA certification.

The highlight for many attendees was receiving Beef Quality Assurance Certification and the ability to see the yield and grade scores on Ribeye, Choice, and Skirt steaks as part of Meat Science Boot Camp.

We had 100 percent "yes" response when asked if attendees learned something new. We had 96 percent "yes" response to using the information learned and four percent to neutral. The value and shared expertise in this set-up fostered partnerships and community engagement. We believe we have a strong foundation for future programming.

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LACEY TAYLOR, CHEYENNE WELLS

BOULDER HEIRLOOM AND HERITAGE APPLE ORCHARD

LAUREN KOLB, BOULDER

In the mid-1800's, there was an incredible diversity of apple varieties planted across the United States. Much of the land in the city of Boulder was planted in fruit trees and remnants of these orchards are sprinkled throughout the now urban and suburban landscape. More than 1,000 heirloom apple trees remain in Boulder County, but it is estimated that 10% of the population is lost each year due to age. I identified a one-acre parcel within the Open Space and Mountain Parks system that would make an ideal location for a small orchard that will help to preserve some of the remaining unique varieties and provide an accessible site for community members to visit, learn and engage.



The orchard at Chautauqua. Photo courtesy of Boulder Historical Society



Rendering of the heirloom apple orchard on Louisberg property

Site planning and design, soil restoration efforts and heirloom scion wood grafting was completed in 2022 in anticipation of planting in April 2023. Planting, ongoing maintenance and harvesting of this 35-tree orchard will be accomplished by leveraging existing volunteer networks, area youth service-learning programs and CU Boulder's place-based undergraduate research experience model. To date, students and volunteers have worked 160 hours on property rehabilitation. At maturity, these trees should produce around 200 pounds of apples per tree. The harvest will be donated to the Boulder Emergency Family Assistance Association, which helps people in need access healthy and nutritious food.



OSMP's Junior Rangers spreading compost in July 2022

WHAT HAS THE CALP EXPERIENCE MEANT TO ME?

The CALP program has been transformative for me, both personally and professionally over the past two years. I have found that the trainings on communication, fundraising and leadership have changed the way that I work and brought greater clarity, persuasiveness and understanding and to my writing, conversations, and work planning. That my CALP classmates are unique, remarkable, and brought so much creativity, energy and passion for agriculture to the program was icing on the cake.



Timely Ag Information for Legislative Decisions

I often hear people decry the divide between rural and urban Colorado. I've seen parts of rural America try to form new states because of legislative decisions that hurt rural America. Through CALP, I've heard the concerns about a lack of representation many ag producers share.

CALP provides the opportunity to hear and see, without filters, the concerns and successes of Colorado's ag producers, and CALP challenges us to use what we have learned to make a positive impact for agriculture. So what can I do to help?

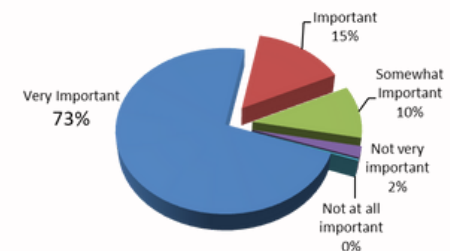
Early in CALP, I had an idea of what my project could be, but I just could not find the right vehicle or means to affect a change to benefit Colorado agriculture. Finally, I realized the solution can be as simple as better and more timely information in the hands of our legislators

Colorado's Department of Agriculture commissions a survey that provides information about Colorado's perspective on agriculture. Unfortunately, this survey happens about every six or seven years and costs CDA about \$30,000.

My project is to introduce a bill to give CDA the money and spending authority to make a survey every other year, with an executive summary to be presented to the full legislature during the legislature's onboarding/training week.

To complete this project, I will draft legislation that obligates the spending authority, the funding, and requires an executive summary to be provided to the legislators during onboarding/legislative training week.

How Important would you consider Colorado's Food and Agriculture industry to the state's future economic resiliency?



2022 Public perceptions survey Q7 (without farmers, ranchers, and homesteaders)

FarmFit



I chose this project because I am passionate about connecting fitness, nutrition, agriculture, and business. The parameters for this project are wide so I've done a few things to contribute to this cause. I chose to start an LLC and use that business as a platform.

I also have a DBA of Iron Lady Farms which is the name and operating company for my farm business. I have invested personal funds of \$1,500.00 as well as have increased revenue through selling services and goods.

In 2022 FarmFit started selling grass-fed organic practice beef and pork to members of CrossFit and Martial Arts Gyms in Southwest and Central Colorado. The goal of this targeted market is to connect fitness enthusiasts to local and healthy farm to table products. From there a collection of cottage goods was created using local, organic, quality ingredients; handcrafted for nutritional value. Some favorite products are naturally sweetened jams and preserves, probiotic "Punching Pickles" and fermented "SABBAGE" sauerkraut. I have also expanded into natural and fermented cleaning products.

The logo represents FUNCTIONAL & SUSTAINABLE FITNESS, NUTRITION, & AGRICULTURE. We have created and sold many t-shirts with the FarmFit logo to spread awareness and start conversations around the project.

One of the most valuable experiences in 2022 was the opportunity to teach nutrition classes to an alternative high school in Cortez, CO. I spent many weeks teaching teens about macronutrients and educating them about food choices. This program ended with students helping to prepare a "Farm to Fork" meal for the entire school.

The beef was purchased by Iron Lady Farms and the students enjoyed learning culinary skills, nutritional education, and connecting with their fellow classmates and teachers over a delicious meal.

FarmFit will continue to grow and expand into any project that is fitting. Future goals include building a FarmFit style gym or obstacle course on our property at the Grey Wolf Resort. I would also like to improve our CSA program to include healthy recipes and even purchase a food truck to visit fitness competitions and bring local, quality farm fresh goods to the fitness community.



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WHAT HAS THE CALP EXPERIENCE MEANT TO ME?

My personal experience with CALP has been monumental. I have been exposed to so many ideas and people. I feel confident in my ability to be involved with the Ag community as an example of what Ag can do for our health, happiness, and sustainability.

MICHELLE KARDOKUS, VICTOR



2022 CLAY SHOOT CLASSIC

Monies Raised: \$633.38

Volunteers: CALP Class 15 (about 6 hours)

In the fall of 2020, due to COVID restrictions, CALP Class 14 had to quickly transition the format of the Colorado Ag Forum. The class hosted the first annual Clay Shoot Classic in Wiggins, Colorado in February 2021. The success and participation of the event sparked my interest in hosting the CALP Clay Shoot Classic as an annual CALP Alumni event for my class project. With the help of CALP's Executive Director, we hosted the Clay Shoot in April 2022. Due to weather conditions, we had a slim turnout for the clay shoot, but were able to host a great crowd for the CALP alumni social that evening.



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MORGAN WEINRICH, STERLING

INVESTMENT THESIS: DO INVESTMENTS IN US AGRICULTURE PROVIDE HIGHER RETURNS THAN THE REST OF THE MARKET?

I work for Farmland Partners, a publicly traded farmland owner, whose goal is to maximize financial returns to shareholders. I truly believe that investments in American agricultural industries are safe and profitable. For this project, I used analytical research and my own money to investing a few select sectors of publicly traded American agriculture companies. I am pleased to report, with exceptions, that my thesis proved true as evidenced by the comparison of Farmland Partners against S&P 500 Index for 2022 seen below. This information, which will be shared in depth with my peers at the Ag Forum, will inform the public about the benefits of my investment thesis. My goal is to increase personal investments in the American Ag sector which will help to provide profitability and longevity for agricultural industries. I plan to continue my work in the arena for the rest of my life and strive to be a source of information to anyone interested in the topic.



Source: Yahoo Finance

WHAT HAS THE CALP EXPERIENCE MEANT TO ME?

CALP has been an immersive and inspiring experience which keeps me optimistic about the future of agriculture in our state. In Washington DC, in the presence of 3 different Ag Leadership Programs, I explained that my “Aha” moment was just that – being present with everyone. I mentioned an inspiring book that I read, and I’d like to share a quote which has and will continue to hold true to all of the connections that I made during my time in the program. “It’s sometimes surprising how people can open up when you demonstrate a willingness to listen to their stories with attentiveness and respect.”

— Kevin Fedarko, The Emerald Mile

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PRESTON SCHOW, DENVER

COLORADO AGRICULTURE LICENSE
PLATES FOR A CAUSE



For my CALP project, I worked through my organization, National Western Stock Show and partnered with the office of Lieutenant Governor, Dianne Primavera, to sell the rights to agriculture-themed license plate configurations. These ag-themed license plates were auctioned off during the Mile High Auctioneers Championship at National Western in 2022 and 2023, with all proceeds benefitting National Western education programs and the Colorado Disability Funding Committee.

What exactly is being sold? Certain license plate configurations have been withheld by the Colorado DMV – they aren’t in circulation, and the average Joe cannot go into a DMV and request the license plate “GOTBEEF”. Rather, these plates are being held for an opportunity to be sold, with proceeds benefitting incredible causes.

The primary cause goes toward the Colorado Disability Funding Committee. This committee allocates grants from the proceeds for disability application assistance programs and new and innovative programs that improve quality of life and independence for Coloradans with disabilities.

In my partnership with CDFC, they have also allotted 25% of the proceeds to go toward National Western education programs. Ag education is intrinsic to our mission, history and tradition at NWSS. Together with the Colorado Auctioneers Foundation, we were able to auction off license plates in a live setting for the first time in 2022. \$9,540 was raised selling 12 plates, with \$2,385 (25%) going toward National Western education programs.

2022 Configurations & Selling Prices:

- GOTBEEF - \$2000
- BID2WIN - \$500
- AUCTION - \$1000
- WLD WST - \$600
- HIGHBID - \$450
- CWBYUP - \$800
- BULL - \$675
- 1ONOW20 - \$90
- COWCALF - \$800
- SPUR - \$225
- AUCT10N - \$1300
- HEIFER - \$1000



WHAT HAS THE CALP EXPERIENCE MEANT TO ME?

Being a member of Class 15 has been so incredibly rewarding, personally and professionally. I have grown tremendously as a person and as an advocate for agriculture.

SHELBY RICH, GRAND JUNCTION

WOMEN INVOLVED IN FARM ECONOMICS (WIFE) MEMBER RESOURCES



[USDA](#)

[WIFE Logo](#)

[WIFE Letterhead](#)

[How to complete a Freedom of Information Act \(FOIA\)](#)

[Guide to writing a persuasive policy letter](#)

[Locate your legislator](#)

[U.S. House of Representatives Ag Committee](#)

[U. S. Senate Ag Committee](#)

[Track a bill United States Congress](#)

[Colorado Open Records Act Information](#)

I was invited by a longtime friend to join her in being a nonpartisan voice for women in agriculture by joining Women Involved in Farm Economics (WIFE). Through the years this group of women have advocated for agriculture and family farms and ranches by making their voices heard to our legislators. As I spoke with people, I found that they had many questions about how our government works, how to contact their legislators and how to find what bills were being presented. Members wanted to be active but didn't have the experience. The organization needed to have a resource for members. With the help of other WIFE members, we began to build a resource for members on the webpage. There are links provided for many things that will help members to stay up to date on policies affecting agriculture as well as contacting legislators. We plan to continue adding to this resource.

WHAT HAS THE CALP EXPERIENCE MEANT TO ME?

CALP has enabled me to meet some of the most unique and passionate agriculture advocates that not only challenge themselves to continue to grow but encourage others along the way. Having the opportunity to see the diversity in agriculture in Colorado, South Carolina and South Africa has broadened my perspective. This experience has strengthened my skills to better advocate for agriculture.



After much deliberation and discussions with friends about what to do as a personal project for the Colorado Ag Leadership Program, I settled on what became “Rural Colorado Is Colorado”. The idea and name came about during the PAUSE Act; Because of the work that I do, I spent about a week and a half at meetings with a variety of agriculture industry folks and rural community leaders, all who were shocked and seeking more information about the PAUSE Act. I had quickly become an expert on what was in the PAUSE Act and spent much of that 2 weeks providing information to a variety of groups.

RURAL COLORADO IS COLORADO

Almost every time I gave that speech, it ended with, “I don’t think most of urban Colorado is malicious to agriculture, they are just unaware, and they have to know that, “Rural Colorado is Colorado”. That led to the forming of Rural Colorado Is Colorado. It was originally meant to be a podcast with social media presence to support it.

At this time, I have been using the Rural Colorado Is Colorado page on Facebook to highlight the stories of agriculture and rural communities, share important messages about upcoming meetings and dates, while also being an educational tool. After the first year, the page has 1,300 followers, 500 posts, and the organization has been the co-host of multiple events. I am in the process of determining the next steps but look forward to continuing to use Rural Colorado Is Colorado to build awareness, communities, and fundraising for agriculture and rural communities.

WHAT HAS THE CALP EXPERIENCE MEANT TO ME?

I can still remember how I felt in February of 2021 as I drove up to the first CALP seminar; I was equal parts excited, and also nervous about what the next 2 years would look like. I was immediately comfortable when I knew I was surrounded by a great group of classmates, a Board looking to help us succeed in this program, and great speakers at every seminar. CALP class 15 has created lifelong friends, lifelong leaders in the ag industry, and given myself and my classmates a broader horizon than we might have otherwise had. I have no doubt that much of my future successes in ag and policy will be attributable to the knowledge and relationships gained through the Colorado Ag Leadership Program.



FOOD BANK OF THE ROCKIES SWEETCORN PICK

The sweetcorn pick is important for providing food to folks that are in need of nutrition. We planted 5 acres my first year and 3 acres the following. The corn seed was donated by Dekalb and Nutrien also help cover some chemical costs. Numerous other local ag businesses pitched in, in different capacities, the day of the pick.

The day of the corn pick brought together roughly 125 people the first year and 250 the second. The first year was difficult with Covid still impacting gatherings. We had not only local volunteers but many folks from Denver, Loveland, Fort Collins, and surrounding areas. The Fort Morgan football team also donated their Saturday morning both years to assist with lifting the heavy bags. Bringing all these people together helped to improve a sense of community for all as well as give people the opportunity to be out on the farm, some for the first time. Both years the event lasted a full morning concluding with a BBQ lunch sponsored by CHS Cooperative.

I look to continue this project for years to come providing approximately 100,000 ears of sweet corn to food banks all around the state of Colorado!



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TREVOR BIRKY, FORT MORGAN

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