

# News

Winter 2016 Volume 3, Issue 1



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## CFVGA Annual Conference

Feb. 17, 2016

Register by Jan. 25 and Save

<http://cfvga.org>

## Colorado Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association

P.O. Box 672

Strasburg, CO 80136

303-594-3827

[admin@coloradoproduce.org](mailto:admin@coloradoproduce.org)

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## CFVGA Conference to Feature Slew of Educational & Inspirational Topics, Register by Jan. 25 and SAVE

The Second Annual Colorado Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association Conference will feature a full schedule of educational and inspiring topics as well as tons of networking opportunities to make you a better grower, or business person. The full-day conference is Feb. 17, at the Renaissance Denver Stapleton Hotel. Members who register for conference by Jan. 25 pay only \$60, plus Eventbrite processing fees.

Conference goers will learn the importance of fruit and vegetable cultivation, economically and nutritionally, when addressed by Colorado Department of Agriculture Commission Don Brown and Major General (Ret.) Gary Dylewski, in his keynote address *Farmers on the Frontline: Fueling our Forces*

U.S. Department of Agriculture Deputy Under Secretary of Marketing and Regulatory Programs Elvis Cordova and USDA Agricultural Marketing Services Specialty Crops Program representative Leanne Skelton, who is concurrently on staff with the Food and Drug Administration, will discuss the new FDA food safety rules implemented last November under the Food Safety Modernization Act. In addition to discussing how the new rules will impact growers' operations, a question and answer time is part of the agenda.

Also on the agenda is (retired) Colorado Supreme Court Justice Greg Hobbs, a renowned expert on Colorado water law and history. Currently the co-director of the Environmental and Natural Resources Program at the University of Denver School of Law, he has authored five books.

In addition, the conference will feature grower/buyer networking opportunities as well as resources for growers in the areas of labor, nutrition, business development and updates on current and future research. During the conference the CFVGA membership will elect board members and vote on other items of business. **Early registration rates end Jan. 25.** For more information and to register, visit <http://cfvga.org>

Interested in getting more involved? Why not considering running for one of the open board seats? Let CFVGA Nominating Committee Chair Amy Kunugi know why you think you would be a good representative on the CFVGA Board of Directors.

"The CFVGA Conference Committee has worked very hard to offer a schedule of tremendous value for our members," said CFVGA President Robert Sakata, Sakata Farms, Brighton, Colo. "Please join us!"



## 2016 Association Priorities Outlined

By President Robert Sakata, Sakata Family Farms, Brighton, Colo.

Happy New Year! What are your expectations for 2016? Are you planning on trying any new crops this year? Is your operation going to try to find a new source of qualified help? How are you going to adapt to new regulations with which

you need to comply?

As fruit and vegetable growers, we are fortunate to be among (in my opinion) one of the best professions in the world, but we also face the widest variety of challenges. No longer do we just plant the seed, add water and harvest. Now is time for us to work together for solutions to the challenges we face.

### Second Annual Conference

The Colorado Fruit & Vegetables Growers Association, just now beginning its third year of existence, has experienced tremendous success as a group working together. If you're not familiar with all the activities that CFVGA has become involved in, I hope you will join us at our Second Annual Conference Feb. 17. Find out how CFVGA is using the momentum of healthy eating to promote the consumption of locally grown fruits and vegetables. In a presentation titled ***Farmers on the Frontline: Fueling our Forces***, Retired U.S. Air Force Major General Gary Dylewski from Space Command will inspire and educate conference goers on the important role diet plays in making U.S. troops ready for service.

Also, come to learn what CFVGA is doing to help with the labor crisis, water issues around the state, and to help growers comply with new food safety regulations. Come prepared for a lot of information, come ready to join and get more involved in CFVGA.

### Sponsorship

What's unique about your sponsorship to CFVGA? First it's the audience. If you are a supplier to fruit and vegetable growers there isn't another statewide organization that is targeting these type of growers! If you are a

grower, it's because the CFVGA has become the go-to association when buyers are looking for new sources for locally grown produce. Growers should also become sponsors so they support an organization that is fighting for their needs.

Produce growers need a stronger voice at our public research institution, Colorado State University. Joining together as a body of growers and supporting industries enables us to present a united front with Colorado and federal legislators. Legislators and regulators need to know how difficult growing our crops is. We need to let them know that our high elevation, short growing season and mostly arid climate is unique and should be considered specifically when making legislation and regulations that apply to Colorado produce growers.

To accomplish this and address many other challenges, the CFVGA needs the financial commitment of all CFVGA members.

### Colorado Legislative Update

The Colorado Legislative session is just getting started and CFVGA is ready to monitor the activities at the Capitol though its involvement with the Colorado Ag Council. Water bills like the Flex Market bill may be highlighted this session. Because legislators and fellow agriculture organizations need CFVGA's expertise to understand the importance of fruits and vegetables and our industry's specific growing needs, we are asked to be involved in a wide range of legislative issues.

To be responsive to these requests we need to be able to mobilize quickly and provide timely input. We also want to balance this need to act in a timely manner with the desire to represent our members. Watch for email notices from your board of directors asking for input on issues. The CFVGA leadership feels strongly that it is important to hear from all of you. And, please don't miss the CFVGA Second Annual Conference, as we begin to formulate the basic principles to guide our legislative activity. If you come across issues that CFVGA should be involved in, please contact us!



## 2016 Sponsors

### Platinum Sponsor



### Gold Sponsors





# 2016 Sponsors

## Silver Sponsors





**Robert Sakata, President**

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## From the Executive Director

### Challenges & Opportunities

When I interviewed to be executive director of the Colorado Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association last summer, the challenges and opportunities of this organization were on my mind. Its challenges and opportunities are still on my mind.

Opportunities. With the release last year of the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines from the federal government, we are reminded that increased consumption of fruits and vegetables by Americans is an important component to improved health. Not only is poor health a personal concern, it affects us as a nation, due to higher worker absenteeism and greater health care costs. Even the ability to have prepared and able military troops is dependent on good nutrition, as we will hear in the keynote address at our convention next month!

CFVGA was formed to address issues common to all the state's produce growers. This includes increasing opportunities for growers to sell product to restaurants, retailers and wholesalers. We will continue to find these

opportunities and to channel interested growers to buyers. One of these opportunities is the grower-buyer networking session during convention.

Challenges. As with any member organization, the challenge often lies in funding the opportunities. We are fortunate to have a very innovative, hard-working board of directors who work tirelessly to promote and fund our organization. You need to know that your elected board members have invested their know-how and personal dollars to make CFVGA successful and continue to do so.

But, to be successful we must widen the net of involvement. We cannot survive without financing. So, pay your dues and ask other growers who are not yet members to join CFVGA. Consider upping your financial commitment by becoming a 2016 CFVGA sponsor. Silver and higher sponsors who make a commitment prior to conference get a free booth and all sponsors get at least one free conference registration.

In addition to financial help, your time and expertise are needed. Register to attend conference, consider joining a committee or even run for an open board seat. Your involvement is vital to the success of the Colorado Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association!

## Members Only Website Launched

By Adrian Card, Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Agent, Colorado State University Extension, Boulder County

CFVGA now has a new member benefit available that will grow into a great resource in 2016. The CFVGA members only website was officially released Dec. 11, 2015 for members to login and explore.

Starting now, specific online content and resources developed and curated by CFVGA committees will only be available to current grower and allied members through <http://coloradoproducemembers.org>

In addition, all content available on the public site <http://coloradoproduce.org> also will be available on this members only website.

Login access has been established for the primary contact for each member business. Those primary contacts received an email Dec. 11, 2015 with login information. CFVGA will resend this information to all current grower and allied members in March. We'll prompt you by email with new updates of significant content to this members only website.

Email [info@coloradoproduce.org](mailto:info@coloradoproduce.org) with questions.

## Grower Member Produce Directory Coming

Buyers from all marketing channels in Colorado and beyond have been contacting CFVGA over the past two years looking for a resource that will help them connect with growers. CFVGA has been emailing these requests to grower members and now is planning a more aggressive, active approach. The CFVGA Board of Directors has responded to this market opportunity by expanding grower member benefits to offer grower members the opportunity to be listed in a produce directory published online via the "Colorado Grown" section of our website: <http://coloradoproduce.org/coloradogrown/> Look for an email to grower members in late February to be included in this new Colorado produce directory.

## Beginning Farmer Tools & Resources Available

New farmers now have a new resource to start their farming business. The U.S. Dept of Agriculture recently released a new website designed based on feedback from new and beginning farmers and ranchers around the country who cited unfamiliarity with programs and resources as a challenge to starting and expanding their operations. The site features advice and guidance on everything a new farm business owner needs to know, from writing a business plan, to obtaining a loan to growing a farming or ranching operation, to filing taxes as a new small business owner. By answering a series of questions about their operation, farmers can use the website's Discovery Tool to build a personalized set of recommendations of USDA programs and services that may meet their needs. Check out this website at: [www.usda.gov/newfarmers](http://www.usda.gov/newfarmers)

Another USDA beginning farmer and rancher resource is <http://www.start2farm.gov/> This website synthesizes projects funded.

Visit these online resources for additional new and beginning farmer and rancher resources:

- Colorado Building Farmers – business planning and management courses offered by Colorado State University Extension in select Colorado communities <http://buildingfarmers.com/>
- Colorado Ranching Legacy Program – business planning and management and animal husbandry offered by Colorado Cattlemen's Association <http://coloradocattle.org/coloradoranchinglegacy-program.aspx>
- Colorado Land Link – land access for beginning farmers and ranchers in Colorado and resources for success <http://guidestonecolorado.org/colorado-land-link/>
- National Young Farmers Coalition – advocacy and resources for new farmers in the US <http://www.youngfarmers.org/>



**Amy Kunugi** is general manager of Southern Colorado Farms and Nature Fresh Organics, Center, Colo., owned by the Smith family. This operation produces conventional iceberg, spinach

and hay as well as organic carrots, spinach, kale, broccoli, beets, Swiss chard and hay. She also serves as vice president of Colorado Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association, chairing the Health & Wellness Committee and co-chairing the 2016 Nominating Committee.

**How long have you operated this farm? What, if anything, did you do for employment before farming?**

I have been working on this farm for 20 years and managing the farm for 15 years. After graduating from Cornell in Plant Science, I served in the Peace Corps in Guatemala and Bolivia, working in vegetable production for three years.



*Amy participated in Colorado Proud's Pop-Up Picnic program. The program visited 11 cities this past summer hosting 20 Pop-Up Picnics, to encourage consumers to "Choose Colorado" and "ReFRESH with local produce." The Colorado Proud team handed out produce samples along the way, including watermelon, cantaloupe, potatoes, carrots and peaches. From grocery stores and farmers' markets to festivals and concerts, Colorado Proud traveled across the state to educate people about Colorado produce.*

NEW

## Membership Directory Now Opt Out, Action Required NOT to be Included

The CFVGA membership directory has been an opt-in directory since it was first offered in 2014. All members will now be automatically added to this directory. Grower, Allied and General Interest Members have the option to add additional details about their operation/business/self.

Those wishing to not be included in this directory must choose to opt out. Look for a quarterly email corresponding to the quarterly release of the CFVGA newsletter with the option to opt out or to add more detail with your listing.

Then, I moved to Colorado, worked as an agricultural consultant, then worked for Valley Fresh Organics which was purchased by Nature Fresh Organics.

**How do you market your produce?**

We have great, long-term relationships with the clients that contract with us.

**What are some of the challenges and opportunities you face in your operation?**

The weather in Colorado can be challenging, and more recently, the labor shortage has caused me grief.

**What advice would you give to new produce farmers?**

Don't take unnecessary financial risks, there is enough risk due to weather. Farming is a gamble in the best of years.

**In what way do you think the CFVGA can help fruit & vegetable farmers like no other organization?**

CFVGA is able to lobby and advocate for Colorado produce! CFVGA "has your back," and strives to support the needs of Colorado's produce industry.

**Is there anything else of interest or that might be helpful about you/your operation/your opinion/your leadership that would be good for readers to know?**

I believe that eating more fruits and vegetables would solve most of the major health issues facing the U.S. population (heart disease, cancer, diabetes, etc.)



## Food Safety Committee

Submitted by Martha Sullins, Co-Chair, CFVGA Food Safety Committee

The CFVGA Food Safety Committee is working to bring a Produce Safety Alliance train-the-trainer and grower training event to the Mountain Region and to Colorado. For an overview of the curriculum, see: <http://producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/training.html>

We hope to hold the first of these trainings in March 2016 and are currently waiting on the curriculum to be finalized and approved by the Food & Drug Administration, in accordance with the Food Safety Modernization Act and the final Produce Safety Rule. See: <http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/FSMA/ucm334114.htm> for additional information on the rule.

You can contact FDA directly with questions at the [FDA Food Safety Modernization Act \(FSMA\) Technical Assistance Network](#) or send a mail inquiry to the FDA at:

Food and Drug Administration  
5100 Paint Branch Pkwy  
Wiley Building, HFS-009  
Attn: FSMA Outreach  
College Park, MD 20740

Important: Don't miss your opportunity to chat with FDA officials about your food safety concerns at the Second Annual CFVGA conference Feb. 17 in Denver, where Leann Skelton will discuss "What the New FDA Food Safety Rules Mean for your Operation." CFVGA will also announce some additional food safety education opportunities at this event, so join us next month at the conference!

## Health & Wellness Committee

By Amy Kunugi, CFVGA Health & Wellness Committee Chair

The federal government's new dietary guidelines were recently released, after a year of arguments, lobbying and directives from Congress.

Among other things, the new guidelines recommend a healthy eating pattern including:

- A variety of vegetables: dark green, red and

orange, legumes (beans and peas), starchy and other vegetables

- Fruits, especially whole fruit

According to U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Thomas Vilsack and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia Burwell in an introduction to the report: "Today, about half of all American adults—117 million people—have one or more preventable, chronic disease, many of which are related to poor quality eating patterns and physical inactivity. Rates of these chronic, diet-related diseases continue to rise, and they come not only with increased health risks, but also at high cost. In 2008, the medical costs linked to obesity were estimated to be \$147 billion. In 2012, the total estimated cost of diagnosed diabetes was \$245 billion, including \$176 billion in direct medical costs and \$69 billion in decreased productivity."

This push for Americans to live a healthy lifestyle is vital for quality of life and national economic soundness. It is also a great opportunity for produce growers to promote greater consumption of fruits and vegetables. The CFVGA Health and Wellness Committee works on programs and alliances with other organizations toward this end. Please visit our website: [www.coloradoproduce.org](http://www.coloradoproduce.org) to learn more about the health benefits of the produce that is grown in Colorado.

Sources: <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/executive-summary/#figure-es-12015-2020-dietary-guidelines-for-americans-at-a-glance> ; nbcnews

## Labor Committee

By Reid Fishing, CFVGA Labor Committee Chair

The Labor Committee met in late December and drafted the following:

Purpose statement: CFVGA Labor Committee is a unified voice for CFVGA members surrounding labor policy with the long-term goal of retaining and recruiting a quality workforce.

During the CFVGA Second Annual Conference the Labor Committee will present a workshop on labor that

*continued on page 9*



Labor Committee--continued from page 8

will feature a panel of speakers addressing the following:

Dawn Thilamy, CSU: U.S. and Colorado labor trends and best practices surrounding the agricultural labor force

Kerry Scott, Mas Labor: Pitfalls and mishaps surrounding farmers and H2A workers

Will Jacobs, Workforce Advantage: H2A anticipated changes

The committee is exploring promotion of CFVGA as a resource for potential workers with Spanish radio stations and is also researching the value of preparing a research paper and/or webinar on H2A changes. Labor Committee meetings for 2016 are tentatively set for the first Wednesday of March, June, September and December at 11 am. Please let me know if you have ideas for the Labor Committee or know of issues we need to address.

Water Committee

By Robert Sakata, CFVGA Water Committee Chair

CFVGA was invited to attend an event last November where the Colorado Water Plan was presented to the governor. The event focused on the importance of irrigated Colorado agriculture, and I'm glad that CFVGA is at the table for the discussion about Colorado water. Do you have favorite or helpful water websites that you think we should have linked for on the CFVGA website? Check out the links we have there now and send your suggested links to admin@coloradoproduce.org, so we can add them to our site. We'd love to know if you want to be involved with water issues; if so, send us your contact information.

New Advertising Opportunity!

Get your message out to Colorado's fruit and vegetable growers, allied organizations and others by advertising in the CFVGA NEWSLETTER.

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Reserving advertising space:

Contact Marilyn Bay Wentz, CFVGA executive director, at admin@coloradoproduce.org or 303-594-3827 to confirm availability of space and to submit advertising artwork.

2016 CFVGA Newsletter Publication Schedule\*

Table with 3 columns: Issue, Deadline, Approximate distribution date. Rows include Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall.

\*schedule subject to change

2016 CFVGA Newsletter Advertising Sizes

Half Page (7.5 x 4.75 or 3.5 or 3.5 x 10)

Quarter Page (3.5 x 4.75)

Submitting advertising artwork:

For best results, submit advertising artwork as JPEG or EPS (encapsulated postscript), low resolution when possible. We can help you convert if PDF, if necessary. Please note that all advertising is subject to approval by CFVGA.

Publication of advertising:

The CFVGA newsletter is produced and distributed as a PDF on an 8.5 x 11 format and formatted to fit within the email message by a Constant Contact template.

### CFVGA to Play Important Role in New University Food Safety Training Center

By Marisa Bunning, Colorado State University



Colorado State University and five other partnering land-grant universities in the Rocky Mountain region have received notice that the Western Regional Food Safety Training Center based at Oregon State University has been funded. In October 2015, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced the establishment of the

\$1.2 million center, which will focus on helping small and mid-sized farms and food processors in 13 Western states prevent foodborne illnesses. Across the United States, a total of four regional food safety training centers will be designated by USDA.

Researchers from Colorado, New Mexico, Montana, Nevada, Utah and Wyoming have formed a team in the mountain states sub-region to coordinate trainings in their states and assist in the development of region-specific food safety materials to address local production challenges.

The Colorado Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association will play a critical role in providing guidance for the development of region-specific materials and the coordination of training sessions for local produce farmers. The Colorado team involved in the project includes Marisa Bunning, CSU associate professor and Extension food safety specialist; Martha Sullins, Front Range Regional Extension specialist; and Adrian Card, Boulder County Agriculture and Natural Resources specialist. Previous work by CSU Extension, including the Colorado Building Farmers' program, regional farm food safety workshops, and webinars addressing Good Agricultural Practices and farm food safety plans helped position CSU to be the lead for the Mountain States sub-region.

The Produce Safety Alliance, based at Cornell University, and the Food Safety Preventive Controls Alliance at the Illinois Institute of Technology developed the curricula which will be used for the production and food processing trainings. Dates for regional training opportunities will be announced later in 2016.

### Colorado Department of Agriculture Farm Products Program: Protecting Producers

By Mark Gallegos, Colorado Department of Agriculture Program Administrator

We all know that the agricultural community is more than growing a product and selling it at a market. As farmers and ranchers, you must also be the drivers, accountants, and negotiators. You have a hand in every aspect of your business. But where can you turn when business doesn't go as planned?

The Colorado Department of Agriculture's Farm Products Program protects producers and dealers of fruits, vegetables, hay, grain, and livestock by licensing and bonding farm products dealers; and conducting examinations and financial analysis of dealers. When appropriate, non-payment complaints between producers and dealers are investigated.

What is the Farm Products Act?

The State of Colorado, Department of Agriculture, Farm Products program, is a regulatory program that protects producers by regulating Farm Product Dealers that purchase Farm Products for processing, resale and store agricultural products for others. The program does

this through a system of licensing and bonding Farm Product Dealers, auditing and inspecting licensed dealers for financial soundness, and through the investigation of complaints.

The Colorado Farm Products Act requires that anyone or any company that is purchasing Colorado farm products for the purpose of resale or processing must be licensed and bonded. A dealer that is operating without a license or a bond is committing a class 6 felony, and is subject to prosecution under the criminal statutes. But there are exceptions; restaurants, retail grocery stores, small feedlots, and any person or company that is purchasing farm products for their own consumption need not license.

When a complaint is filed against a licensee, the Department investigates the complaint, and if the complaint is deemed to be valid, a claim will be made against the licensee's bond. Owners of farm products have 120

*continued on page 11*



## Trade, Water, Environment Anticipated in 2016 Federal Legislative Agenda

By Dennis Nuxoll, Western Growers, Vice President, Federal Government Affairs, Washington D.C.

Below is a summary of some of the key legislative issues for growers that Western Growers anticipates for 2016. Please feel free to contact me [dnuxoll@wga.com](mailto:dnuxoll@wga.com) if you have specific questions.

**Trade:** Trade was a hot topic in 2015 and will continue to be a significant item of discussion in 2016. In 2015 the United States completed negotiations on the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) with some dozen other countries. TPP involves liberalizing trade among countries that account for roughly 40 percent of the world's

Gross Domestic Product. TPP has the potential to stabilize and increase trade significantly for the United States and American agriculture.

For produce, the agreement especially provides benefits with respect to trade with Japan, as tariffs on a variety of fruits and vegetables will be lowered on Japanese imports. In addition, the agreement sets up new procedures that make it harder for other countries to falsely use food safety and invasive pest controls to illegally block U.S. exports. These types of changes help fruit and vegetable producers, big and small, whether or not they export

product. When larger companies can more easily export product to foreign markets, demand for produce at home strengthens.

**Water:** In 2015 the U.S. House a bill passed a drought bill. While this bill is mostly focused on California's drought problems, there are some provisions that would help states like Colorado. Concurrently, in the U.S. Senate multiple hearings were held with the idea of crafting legislation to benefit states throughout the West. U.S. Senator Cory Gardner, R-Colo., for example, championed the need to streamline environmental reviews so projects can begin in a timelier fashion. A push to move water legislation forward occurred last fall when over a 130 organizations throughout the West, including Western Growers and CFVGA, signed a letter urging Congress to enact drought/water legislation to provide relief to agricultural producers. Western Governor's followed up this effort, pushing Congress to act. We are hopeful that early 2016 will see the Senate pass legislation so that the House-Senate conference can iron out differences and enact legislation.

### CDA Farm Products Program--continued from page 10

days to file their claim from the date the transaction occurred. The bonding companies' liability to pay on a claim is 180 days from the date of the transaction.

Although separate from the USDA's PACA program, the Department will coordinate with PACA when appropriate to investigate non-payment complaints. Producers should contact the USDA to know what their rights are through the PACA program.

**Protect Yourself, Protect Your Business**

The most important step you can take to protect your business is to get your transactions in writing. Often, the major problem in trying to settle disputes is trying to determine what was agreed to. But don't think you need to hire a lawyer for this step. A simple handwritten contract explaining the terms of the agreement will work. Important items to include would be:

- Who is the buyer?
- Quantity sold
- Quality agreed upon
- Sale price
- Method of payment
- Use of the farm product
- Where and when does the title transfer
- When is payment expected to be made Plus, consider other documents that may support your agreement: receipts, scale tickets, bills of lading, warehouse receipts, or delivery receipts can be used. These are all vital documents in settling transaction disputes.

The Farm Products Program falls under CDA's Inspection & Consumer Services division, which is committed to promoting an honest, equitable marketplace and to encouraging integrity in agriculture and industry. For more information, contact Mark Gallegos at (303) 867-9213.

**Environmental Issues:** In the last half of his administration, President Obama issued new rules and regulations (not unlike President Bush did before him). This is an area of concern and one we are monitoring closely. Of major concern is pesticide regulation under EPA as well as changes to the Interior Department's Endangered Species Act.



## Grower Members

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Cooksey Produce  
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Crop Production Services  
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<http://coloradoproduce.org/join-the-growers-association/>

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Wilbur-Ellis Co  
Workforce Advantage

**Please Note:**  
CFVGA Grower & Allied members are listed here and on the website unless they opt out. (See page 7.) To view the complete directory, including contact information and products raised: <http://coloradoproducemembers.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/CFVGA.Oct-1.2015.-Member-directory.v2.pdf> Also, please note enhancements coming to the CFVGA grower directory. See page 6.