



# *Inside Ag*

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### **2008 CDA Book of Accomplishments**

#### **General**

- Colorado Commissioner of Agriculture, John R. Stulp, and CDA's markets division director, Tom Lipetzky, participated in a trade mission to China. Markets Division staff traveled to Russia for the first time to market beef cattle genetics to Russian livestock producers. A delegation traveled to Mexico for a similar trade mission.
- Exports of beef and beef variety meats from Colorado surged 81 percent in the first half of 2008 as compared to the same period of 2007. At \$241 million, the January to June 2008 level is the highest since 2003 and is the highest level on record.
- CDA has made great strides in transitioning our fleet to hybrid and E-85 vehicles. Of CDA's 96 fleet vehicles, 33% run on alternative fuels. (28 E-85 & 4 hybrids)
- The Department worked in cooperation with the Governor's office to secure disaster assistance for agriculture producers affected by flooding, tornadoes, severe winter conditions, drought, extreme heat, high winds, hail, and grasshoppers. In all, 54 Colorado counties were named primary or contiguous disaster areas. This effort included filing an amicus brief with the U.S. District Court in support of allowing Colorado farmers and ranchers with Conservation Reserve Program contracts to feed their livestock on their land.
- CDA hosted the 17<sup>th</sup> annual "Governor's Forum on Colorado Agriculture." The 2008 meeting, "Advancing Colorado's Rural Development," brought state and national experts together to discuss issues facing today's agriculture industry. The 2009 forum, "Learning from our Past, Cultivating our Future," will focus on agriculture megatrends and how utilize them.
- CDA worked cooperatively with the Division of Wildlife to decrease a feral hog population in southeast Colorado. Feral hogs are wild, non-native animals that pose a significant threat to wildlife and agricultural operations.
- Commissioner Stulp hosted two town hall meetings. These meetings are an opportunity to discuss local issues and agriculture challenges with producers, community leaders, and industry groups. The meetings were held in Lamar and Springfield, CO. In 2008, three meetings were held on the Western Slope.

#### **Animal Industry Division**

- Colorado had imported 50 breeding bulls exposed to tuberculosis from dairies in California. The infected bulls went to four different dairies, exposing more than 7,000 cows. CDA worked collaboratively with USDA to test the more than 7,000 cows in a timely fashion. The results of the tests showed that the cows were negative for TB enabling Colorado to retain its TB-free status. TB testing is a labor intensive, time-consuming process but enables the assurance of freedom from disease.
- CDA was successful in writing an emergency rule that creates an approved feedlot system. The approved feedlots will be able to import cattle from states that have downgraded status for TB or brucellosis without the usual import test requirements. Approved feedlots may only drylot feed cattle, thereby preventing exposure to Colorado's breeding herds. This system provides protection from communicable disease but also allows Colorado feedlots to remain competitive by reducing costs associated with disease testing.
- CDA convened a trichomoniasis scientific panel to review epidemiology pathogenesis and diagnostics of "trich." The scientific panel is providing important information that will be of benefit when we reevaluate our trich rules and regulations. The Colorado cattle industry appreciates the collaborative efforts of disease control and education from the committee.
- The Colorado Unwanted Horse Alliance (CUHA) has been meeting for the last several months and has created a website that will include a "virtual sanctuary" and basic information for owners of unwanted horses. Other information on the website may include information on euthanasia and disposal and a flowchart identifying options for unwanted horses, a list of rescue facilities, and educational information concerning issues potential horse buyers should consider before purchasing a horse. Three CDA employees have been regularly involved with this program.

- CDA has participated in a number of national food-protection meetings that culminated in a 3-day, 50-state food protection meeting in Saint Louis in mid-August. The purpose of the meeting was to evaluate and create potential improvement of the farm-to-fork food production system in the U.S. Meeting posted workshops that discussed improvements in trace-back of food safety and disease control inspections. Our input will be to continue to administer animal health and disease control programs to provide healthy livestock to the food production systems.

## **Colorado State Fair**

- Attendance was up at the 2008 Colorado State Fair as people came from all across the state to support the expo. The 2008 Colorado State Fair offered eleven days of entertainment and education to 486,659 people.

## **Conservation Services Division**

- The Palisade Insectary released or assisted in the release of over 100,000 tamarisk leaf beetles in the State of Colorado. Over 100 miles of tamarisk defoliation has been recorded on the Colorado, Dolores, Green, and Yampa Rivers. Conventional control methods would have cost millions of dollars and would have been extremely difficult in the remote and ecologically sensitive areas where beetles are currently at work.
- The Groundwater Protection Program installed and sampled a network of 69 monitoring wells to detect the presence of agricultural chemicals in groundwater along Colorado's urban Front Range from Fort Collins to Pueblo. This project was initiated to complement the agricultural focus the program typically has by expanding our work into urban areas.
- The Groundwater Protection Program installed and sampled a network of 20 monitoring wells to detect the presence of agricultural chemicals in the High Plains region of Colorado. This project will help assess the water quality status of the Ogallala aquifer which is vital to Colorado's High Plains communities.
- The Noxious Weed Management Program created 14 partnerships in the High Plains Invasives Project and allocated over \$57,000 to cooperative weed management projects on select noxious weeds infesting Colorado's eastern plains.

## **Division of Brand Inspection**

- In 2008, CDA's Brand office inspected four million head of livestock and administered approximately 33,000 registered brands.
- Brand inspectors were stationed at exit gates for the Colorado State Fair and National Western Stock Show.

## **Division of Plant Industry**

- The number of phytosanitary certificates issued to allow for export of Colorado Commodities to foreign countries has increased 33% in the last two years. (FY 06 to FY 08) actual numbers are 2,204 to 3,224.
- The number of CDA certified organic farms has increased 37% from 116 to 185 in the last two years. Organic products generally receive a premium in the marketplace for producers.
- CDA received two grants from EPA to help implement School Integrated Pest Management (IPM) in Colorado school districts. School IPM is a program designed to help reduce children's exposure to pesticides.
- We have transitioned 35% (6 out of 17 trucks) of our fleet to alternative fuels in the last two years. All are flex fuel that run on E-85.
- We have implemented a process to allow CDA to accept credit cards for pesticide applicator licenses and testing fees for individuals who come to the office. We can also accept credit cards online for people ordering private pesticide applicator test materials.
- We have entered into a cooperative agreement with USDA to provide cost share funding for individuals who obtain organic certification (\$s are all federal). This offsets the certification costs between approximately 25% and 75%, based on the size of the operation.

## **Inspection & Consumer Services Division**

- The Inspection and Consumer Services Division was awarded a \$245,000 grant, administered by the Food Emergency Response Network through the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Safety Inspection Service; that will support research in detecting food borne, disease-causing organisms and enable the Colorado Department of Agriculture to play a leading role in promoting a safer food supply.
- Fees assessed for services under five programs within the Inspection and Consumer Services Division were lowered in 2007 under a general fund appropriation of \$1.3 million. For 2008, most fees remained at the 2007 rate. A few fee increases and decreases were made to cover the updated, individual program costs.

- The Inspection and Consumer Services Division completed a comprehensive overhaul and upgrade of the Department's metrology laboratories to meet higher standards of weights and measures compliance consistent with the National Institute of Standards.
- The Inspection and Consumer Services Division was awarded a five year grant for over \$250,000 by the Federal Food and Drug Administration to conduct feed inspections to prevent Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy ("Mad Cow Disease") and protect the beef industry and the human food supply.
- Governor Ritter signed SB 08-097, which requires all anhydrous ammonia tanks to be registered with the department prior to use. This will help agricultural producers to ensure that anhydrous ammonia use as a fertilizer will continue and that the tanks are not used illegally.
- Governor Ritter signed HB 08-1231, which updated the Colorado Commercial Fertilizer Law and added authority for the Department to provide regulatory oversight for compost sold in Colorado and for agricultural producers that sell compost but are not regulated by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

## Markets Division

- Grants totaling more than \$500,000 from the Advancing Colorado's Renewable Energy (ACRE) program helped encourage the development of 15 renewable energy projects beneficial to Colorado's agriculture industry. These grants helped farmers and ranchers participate in Colorado's new energy economy and focused on the development of wind, solar, micro-hydro, and biomass resources, as well as the development of biofuels.
- Membership in Colorado Proud grew by more than 140 companies in 2008, pushing total membership to more than 1,000. The program helps food and agricultural suppliers identify to consumers that their products are grown, raised or processed in Colorado. Currently, 60 percent of grocery shoppers between the ages of 25-54 are aware of the program and are reporting increased purchasing of Colorado products. Colorado Proud truly is "Better for you. Better for Colorado."
- The "Colorado Pavilion" was launched at this year's Produce Marketing Association Fresh Summit Expo. The Pavilion helped to create greater visibility for the seven Colorado companies and associations participating in the Expo, as well as demonstrating to the 25,000 produce buyers, retailers and distributors attending the Expo that "Colorado is a produce state." Companies reported nearly \$4 million in immediate sales as a result of exhibiting at the Expo. Based on the initial success of the Colorado Pavilion at the Expo, the concept will be expanded in future years to encompass other prominent food and agricultural trade shows.
- The Fruit & Vegetable Inspection Service received 3,556 requests for size and grade inspection from produce growers and shippers, and responded to 99.9 percent of the requests in an hour or less. The inspections encompassed nearly 18 million cwt. of fresh produce – an amount that equates to about 37,500 semi-loads.
- Colorado wines captured a larger share of consumer wine purchases among Colorado consumers. Although market share is still relatively small, at just 1.8 percent, the increase demonstrates the coming-of-age of Colorado's wine industry. Colorado now boasts 72 licensed wineries – up from 64 a year ago, and because of promotional efforts undertaken by the Colorado Wine Industry Development Board, the industry is gaining national and statewide media recognition. For example, the Travel Section of the New York Times opined "Colorado ... a rising star in the wine-making universe" and Sunset Magazine described Colorado as "an extraordinary wine scene."