

# Food, Fiber & More!

## AGRICULTURE

IN THE

## CLASSROOM SUMMER INSTITUTE

LOCATIONS: CRAIG FROM JUNE 16-20TH AND FT. COLLINS FROM JUNE 23-27TH., 2008

This is a five day course designed  
*for teachers who have little or no  
agriculture background.*

You can receive 2 credits from  
Colorado State University.

**Cost: \$250**

(Scholarships available to pre-registered educators)

"The objectives listed for this class included developing a list of resources, developing an understanding of the agriculture industry, developing an understanding of agriculture's connection to our environment and society, obtaining ideas for using agriculture materials in the classroom, and developing curriculum ideas which integrate agriculture and academic education. For me, all of the objectives were met and I now have a wealth of information to share. My teaching is with college freshman and sophomores who plan to become teachers. I am very excited, however, to work with our college librarians to put all the resources into the collection for the use of all the students. I will make presentations in classes to inform the students about available materials.

The teaching methods included presentations and discussion with experts, field trips with the opportunity to ask questions of the various presenters, and a full-day hands-on experience working with a farmer or rancher in the area. These methods were so effective for me that I can say that this class was the most interesting class I have taken for many years."

Judy Gump~ Aims Community College



Student at the Summer Institute learn about the diversity in agriculture. These pictures show them preg checking cow, learning about plant research at CSU ARDEC Research Center and learning how to build mini-greenhouses for their classroom.

### TENTATIVE SCHEDULE\*:

#### DAY 1 HANDS-ON MATERIALS

featuring background and history of Colorado agriculture. Food safety, environmental concerns, wildlife, biotechnology, resource materials and more. There are fun and creative ways to integrate food and fiber topics with academic curriculum to reinforce Colorado Content Standards. (8:30 am to 5:00 pm)

**DAY 2 TOUR** farms and ranches. Learn issues and realities of agriculture production from the trenches. Natural resources, including water, and the environment are among the topics covered... (8:30 am to 5:00 pm)

#### DAY 3 TOUR and BBQ

**LOOK, VISIT & LEARN** - tour of farms, ranches and food production facilities.

**MEET THE PEOPLE INVOLVED:** Evening barbeque to meet your hosts for Thursday. (9:00 am to 8:00 pm)

#### DAY 4 - WALK IN ANOTHER PERSON'S BOOTS

What, irrigation boots? You can be a farmer or rancher for one day; hands-on...really, hands on. This is an opportunity for you to interact one-on-one, learn by experience. Former institute participants say this is the best day. You will meet your host(s) at the Wednesday evening barbecue and determine time and location. (Times vary)

#### DAY 5 - FOOD, LAND & PEOPLE WORKSHOP

A natural conclusion to the week with the Food, Land & People program and resources. (8:30 am to 3:00 pm)

\*The schedule is customized for each course/location

To Contact CFA

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# "Hey, Teachers! Ask me about Agriculture in the Classroom!!"



My name is Brian Birch and I teach middle school science at Twin Peaks Charter Academy in Longmont, Colorado.

Recently I attended a week long conference for teachers who have little experience with agriculture. This course was one of the most rewarding, informative and relevant adventures I have ever been on. The "Agriculture in the Classroom; Food, Fiber and More" is all about getting teachers involved in educating students about how food gets to their table.

The workshop is a yearly teacher training event and is organized and managed by Bette Blinde of the Colorado Foundation for Agriculture. Bette would make a great elementary school teacher. She is a true workaholic. She took on the daunting task of taking care of 24 teachers for a whole week. And everyone knows that teachers make the worst students. But she kept us on track and on schedule. Also, we were fortunate enough to have as one of our main instructors, an inspiring, motivating and informative teacher from CSU, Dr. Jack Fenwick. His enthusiasm for his subject matter was so contagious that it tempted me to think about enrolling as an Ag student at CSU myself!

The conference was filled with many highlights, insightful moments and memorable activities. During the course of the week we went on extensive tours of some of the local farms, ranches, retailers and cultural centers. Also, we received numerous supplementary materials for use in our classrooms that relate to agriculture and education. We were taught about food production, economic, social and ethical issues, and environmental concerns. During the classroom instruction portion of the seminar, I came to realize two important facts:

One, the tremendous economic impact that agricultural operations in northern Colorado, particularly Weld County, have on the state as a whole. Two, that water is the vital resource and key to all future development of any kind along the Front Range.

During our bus tour of local production facilities on Tuesday, I was constantly amazed at what I saw and learned. One visit that stands out in my mind is the trip to the Northern Colorado Water Conservation District facility. This tour gave me detailed information about where our water comes from, how it gets to where it needs to be used, and who gets to use it first. They also have a scale model of the entire Big Thompson watershed. A great place to go on a field trip! Another tour



highlight was Dell's mushroom farm. I hadn't the slightest idea how mushrooms were actually grown. What an exquisite cycle of life, from sawdust to salad, every byproduct is re-used or recycled in some way! During our tours of Jordan's Floral Gardens and Fritzler's corn maze, I learned that many producers have to diversify their operations to stay economically viable. Sort of like how teachers have to differentiate in the classroom to best meet the needs of their students.

We visited the Schwalm Farm for lunch and a presentation by students from the Windsor FFA club. Randy Schwalm gave us a tour of his sugar beet, corn and wheat fields. His fertilized wheat looked a lot healthier than his neighbor's un-fertilized wheat. Farmers have to weigh the cost of fertilizer and the environmental impact of using it against the economic advantage of the greater yield produced. He explained that the ditch irrigation system he

uses is the least efficient (drip irrigation being the most efficient), but the initial cost of a drip or spray system is not economical for small producers. His tractor is the old fashioned kind without the air-conditioned cabin and GPS tracking system. However, he has a state of the art water sensing system that uses probes, computers and satellite communications for monitoring proper water use in his fields.

Another informative tour was at the Double J Farms, run by Jeff Hasbrouck. This sheep feed lot has a capacity of 50,000 lambs. Jeff provides natural lamb feed with no hormonal additives and has 8 different feed programs including hay/alfalfa, corn and protein supplements. Did you know that a lamb can gain over 60 pounds during their short time at the feedlot? That's a pound a day! Also, sheep that are over 1 year old are called mutton. We continued our tour at the Double J meat packing facility. They were processing bison on the day of our visit, which is no surprise as Double J is the largest bison operation in the U.S. The facility is USDA inspected and Whole Foods Markets approved. We observed the entire operation which only takes about 20 minutes from kill to chill, and they can process up to 90 animals a day. I am proud to say that I was not grossed out at all with what I saw. I'll still be a big meat eater. Actually, I was impressed by how clean it was at the plant.

On Wednesday we visited the Centennial Museum in Greeley, and were entertained and enlightened by Ken Morgan from the Division of Wildlife. He spoke on the pros and cons of the endangered species act and how it relates to the everyday operations of local farmers and ranchers. Basically, the benefit for wildlife with these regulations is the insurance of the continued survivability of the species. Another goal of regulation is to maintain the natural life cycles of the organisms with the least amount of negative environmental impact. On the other hand, regulators don't analyze enough information to reach clear conclusions on just what is the right thing to do in all situations. Furthermore, since there are no easy solutions to this problem,



# Food, Fiber & More Summer Agriculture Institute

much of the cost of implementing environmental programs is relegated to the farmers and ranchers themselves.

During the tours of local production facilities I learned by watching and asking questions. I was fortunate enough to hear local producer's views on various social and ethical issues and how these issues relate to their particular way of doing things. I was impressed by the resourcefulness and inventiveness that was evident in almost every aspect of their operations. I am very thankful to all the local producers who gave up their valuable time to impart their knowledge and show their hospitality to the teachers taking the tour.



The part of the workshop that influenced me the most was my day spent with George and Holly Golen at the Hohnholz ranch in Jelm, Wyoming. They own about 8,000 acres of range and have access to another 55,000 acres of National Park and National Forest land. It was here that I became aware first hand of the struggles it takes to be a rancher. Not only do they have to deal with variables beyond their control, such as: weather, market fluctuations, environmental concerns and government regulation, but must also accept that the American farm/ranch as a way of life is dwindling. The Hohnholz ranch is a good example. The patriarch of the family, Robert

Hohnholz, is retired but still has a say in the day to day operations of the ranch. George Golen, Robert's son-in-law, suffers from some health issues and isn't able to be as actively involved as he wishes, so the majority of the work falls on the shoulders of his wife, Holly Golen. She



does have a hired-hand who helps out part time. He is 73 years old! George and Holly's two children live in the Denver metro area and have no desire to take up ranching. What's going to happen 10 years from now when the Golen's want to retire from ranching? Many farms are bought out by big corporations, and now even towns and cities are buying up land, open spaces and water rights for metropolitan use.

## *What did I take with me from my experience at the Hohnholz ranch?*

I gained a deeper understanding of the commitment to a way of life that is the backbone of our society. I was reminded of the hard work that takes place 14 hours a day, 365 days a year. I was impressed by the ingenuity and resourcefulness I observed in how things got done.

It was a busy, busy day at the ranch. We started out at about 6:00 AM to do the morning chores. Feed the chickens, cats and dogs; send a weather report in to the National Weather Service (the Hohnholz ranch is a local weather station); check on Holly's parents at their house; prepare the tools, trucks, 4-wheelers and other equipment for the day's work. After a hearty breakfast, we set out for the pastures to divert irrigation water using plastic sheeting and 50 pound sandbags to form little dams that would re-direct the irrigation ditch's flow down over the hay fields. Holly Golen kept up a running commentary to explain everything we were doing. She went to extra effort to answer the many questions I had, and made sure she showed me every building on their ranch. I was continually amazed to see modern technology being used right along side of 19th century technology. Did you know that almost every fence-gate on a ranch has a uniquely designed latching mechanism? How about the fact that chicken eggs can be brown and white, but also greenish blue? After a delicious lunch (which is called dinner and is the main meal on a ranch) we re-stacked some hay bales that had fallen due to heavy winter snow fall. I found out that if hay gets wet, it is still O.K. for the cattle but not for horses. Then we set out across the plains on our 4-wheelers to deliver some salt for the cattle. After a short visit with some bulls and a herd of horses, we returned to the fields to construct more irrigation dams. We worked hard that day and my muscles were sore, but I had a lot of fun.

Holly told me, that because of the harsh winter and lack of help, they had to sell 170 head of cattle. Because of the difficulty in finding laborers, the Golen's are reluctant to consider purchasing more stock this year. Luckily, like most of the farmers and ranchers I talked to this week, the Golen's have been able to diversify their ranch to obtain extra income. They rent out several fishing cottages on their property which is along the banks of the Laramie River. Also, Holly's sister manages several thousand acres of property that is also part of the Hohnholz Ranch. They even have a small retail operation that supplies beef to a select clientele.

All in all my day was one I will remember for the rest of my life. For a city boy from Chicago, who had never even been on a farm, it was an eye-opening experience. I learned about the many challenges ranchers face, and the solutions they come up with to face these challenges.

The seminar wrapped up on Friday, with a debriefing from all the teachers about their experiences working with their host family on the farm. It was good to hear that my peers also had a fulfilling, rewarding experience. Then we discussed and practiced ways to incorporate lessons relating to agriculture in our own classrooms.



I had such a great time during this class that I wish I could take it again next summer! I can't wait to post my photos on my classroom door with the sign, "Hey, Teachers! Ask me about Agriculture in the Classroom!!"

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Fill out completely and mail to Colorado Foundation for Agriculture  
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GRADE LEVEL(S): \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

SUBJECT AREA(S): \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER OF YEARS TEACHING: \_\_\_\_\_

**SITE SELECTION:**

Craig area - June 16-20, 2008

Ft. Collins area - June 23-27, 2008

- Consider this application for the scholarship program.
- I understand the institute cost is \$250. Enclosed is \$75 deposit to reserve space. (The balance is due the first day of class).
- I need information about housing.

**Here is what participants have told us about the Food, Fiber & More Summer Institute:**

*You have brought an incredible group of talented specialists together. Thank you. Anita Evans*

*Enjoyed the diversity of the day. I learned so much new information that I did not know. Linda Goodhue*

*I learned many interesting things. Even though I live in this community, I didn't know so many of these things were going on around me. Amy Hawkins*

*Every producer had unique concerns and expressed their love of agriculture. Scott Nordberg*

*I learned ranching and business practices. All these people know their business. This really*

*impressed me. Plants, land, animals, what works, what doesn't. They are all very educated or self-educated people. This is an extremely useful experience. Michael Chastain*

*I learned there is so much technology in farming today. Computers can keep track of so much. I have a much better understanding of a dairy. They are very clean farms. This was an amazing experience. Robin Russell*

*I learned more about the interdependence of animals and people living on the land. I learned more about the need to conserve natural resources. L. McCombs*

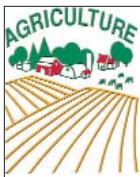
*I learned that teaching is not the only multi-hat job! I learned farmers are great environmentalists. I learned who to call for guest speakers. Anita Evans*

*Farming and ranching is a dynamic and highly technical operation whose function and survival is needed for our community, state and country to thrive and survive. Trace Fair*

*This is the best course I've ever taken. Thank you - thank you - thank you. Sheryl Hage*

*Very interesting that we all came to the conclusion that our hosts love the land and the work they do although the jobs vary. I enjoyed this class. It was well organized and applicable. Lorella McCombs*

*This week has reaffirmed and increased my view that farmers, ranchers, dairymen and other agriculture producers are eternal optimists who work hard, long hours to produce excellent food and other agricultural products for us, the consumer. Linda Soderquist*



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