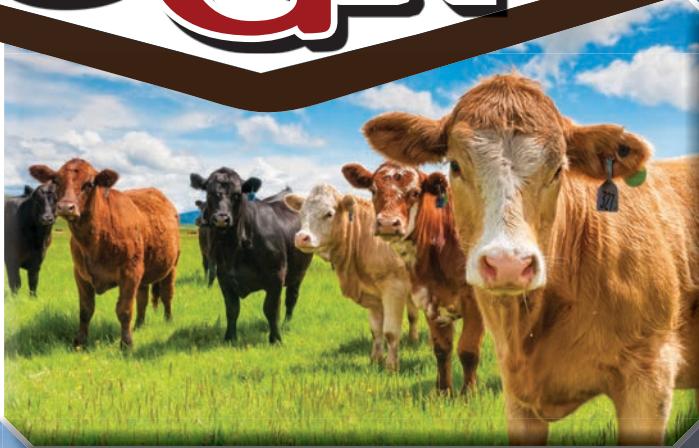


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Section

# AGRICULTURE 2021

## SAN LUIS VALLEY PROGRESS



January 20,  
2021



File photos

# 2021 Rocky Mountain Ag Conference and Trade Show is still a go

BY REBECCA COBLEY

**MONTE VISTA** - The 2021 Rocky Mountain Ag Conference will still be happening this year although due to the COVID-19 pandemic it will look a little different than in years past. A statement from the Monte Vista Chamber of Commerce's website explained how both the pandemic and the construction of the new Ski-Hi Complex has affected this year's conference saying, "As we are all painfully aware, COVID-19 has affected many events and this conference has been no exception. This year's conference will be a scaled down version due to health restrictions and the effect that COVID-19 delays have had on the construction of the new Ski-Hi Multipurpose building."

Despite these challenges the annual conference will still be happening Feb. 2- Feb. 4. Presentations and classes will be held virtually. For those interested in attend-

ing the cost for one day will be \$30.00 and \$60.00 for three days. The conference will only be accepting PayPal payment and those wishing to register can do so at: <https://www.coloradopotato.org/agconference/>.

There will be a trade show on Feb. 2 and Feb. 3 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The trade show will be held in the McMullen Building at Ski-Hi Park and CSU extension will be conducting a virtual conference. The trade show will be open to the public. All booths will be 10X10 and there will be at least 6 feet between booths. Masks will be required, and will also be available at the Chamber of Commerce booth right at the door when entering. Meals will not be provided this year, however there will be a food truck available outside for the public to purchase food.

For more information on this year's Rocky Mountain Ag Conference go to: <https://www.monterevistachamber.org/ag-conference-2021.html>



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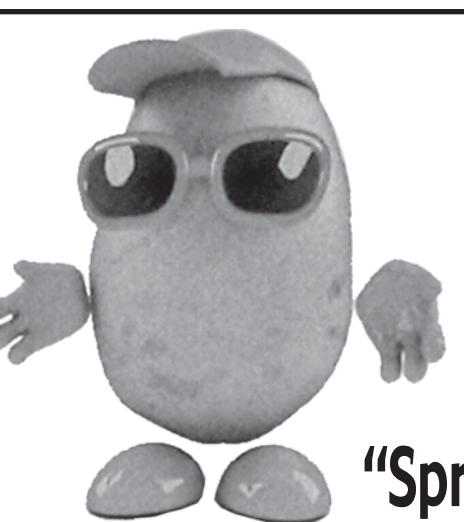
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Courtesy photo

## Henderson elected VP of Colorado Farm Bureau

BY REBECCA COPLEY

**LA JARA** - James Henderson of La Jara was recently elected vice president of Colorado Farm Bureau. Henderson is a fifth generation farmer and continues to run their family farm on a daily basis with his wife Kiley who is a sixth generation farmer. Henderson says that they would love to create an opportunity for their children to continue that legacy as well.

Their family farm primarily consists of the cow calf business. They breed cattle and raise the calves to 10-12 months old before they sell them to feed yards. In addition to their cattle operations they also grow alfalfa for daily use and raise all of their own feed for their cows. They also grow oats and barley in their rotation.

For his educational background Henderson is a Centauri High School Alumni. He went on to graduate from the College of Natural Resources at Colorado State University with a Bachelor of Science degree.

Henderson has been involved in Farm Bureau for nine years and has been very involved with leadership development programs in both Colorado Farm Bureau and American Farm Bureau. "It's been an absolute great experience and has taken me from coast to coast and from the State Capital to the White House to advocate for Colorado's farm and ranch families," said Henderson.

When asked what made Henderson want to become vice president of Farm Bureau Henderson answered saying, "I wanted to become VP of Colorado Farm Bureau to serve the farming and ranching families of Colorado in a more direct and dedicated manner. Our members are some of the best people you could imagine. When I think of the tremendous challenges we face in agriculture I'm comforted by knowing that we have Farm Bureau to protect our way of life. I feel that we owe that charge, our best efforts and attention and that's exactly what our leadership team gives."

When asked what his goals are as vice president Henderson had this to say, "All of our policy positions are initiated from the kitchen tables of our membership, protecting that process is critical to our success. We need farmers and ranchers to step in to develop the policies that will guide our work both at the state and federal capitals and regulating bodies. Keeping that process grassroots and working is my responsibility. We also have the tremendously important work of informing both policymakers and voters about the positive work agriculture has done on the sustainability front as well as the positive impact we have on the state economy."

Henderson also sharing another goal of his is to make sure they are making a positive impact in the arena of rural business policy. "Farmers need our thriving small towns as much as small towns need the farmers, ensuring our rural citizens can receive a quality education,

health care, and jobs is of critical importance to agriculture," said Henderson.

COVID-19 has had a huge impact on agriculture. Henderson sharing some of the ways COVID-19 impacted his own farming operations this year saying, "We definitely saw a huge market decline on our feeder cattle we marketed in March. The CARES act provided critical support to bridge us over. The combination of low prices and drought have had long lasting effects on farmers and ranchers across the state."

When asked what challenges and lasting impacts from the pandemic are facing Colorado farmers Henderson answered saying, "The impact of COVID in agriculture will have a relatively long tale. I don't think that anyone can say with confidence what post COVID consumer habits will look like. However, bringing restaurants back online will be critical for Colorado agriculture. The recovery will be concurrent to a change in presidential administrations, which will likely cause a shift in policy which will further uncertainty for a time. The great news is the Farm Bureau with be speaking into the policy conversation on behalf of our members to bring forward the best possible outcome."

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# Contracts trickle in for water Subdistrict 4

BY PATRICK SHEA

**SAGUACHE COUNTY** — During their final meeting of 2020 on Dec. 1, board members picked through contracts for next year and analyzed a tight budget for the water subdistrict along San Luis Creek in the upper San Luis Valley.

Subdistrict 4 (Special Improvement District 4) is part of the Rio Grande Water Conservation District, a self-governed collection of members cooperating to manage water usage to meet state standards.

The board had a full quorum with President David Frees, Pete Stagner (Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer), Managers Jan Waye and Jeremy Uhlenbrock and Ex Officio Member Peggy Godfrey in attendance.

In addition to voting to maintain the same positions for 2021, the board reviewed and considered Participation and Well Injury Payment (WIP) contracts.

Program Manager Chris Ivers discussed adjustments to the fee structure before introducing the contracts. Each meter carries a fixed Administrative fee of \$643.63 in addition to a well-specific Stream Impact Fee, Sustainability Fee and Total Groundwater Withdrawal Fee. For inactive well owners, only the administration fee is assessed.

John Mattingly joined the meeting to hear the decision on his participation contract submission for four wells.

"Currently, I can't see a financially rational reason to use the wells," Mattingly said in the meeting. "I prefer to wait for the opportunity to grow something worth the price of the water."

Mattingly said he routinely saw 800 gallons per minute when he first started with his free-flowing wells. Operations irrigated roughly 1,000 acres with four wells in the 1940s and 1950s. But as the aquifer has declined, his wells are dry until hydrostatic pressure is enough to release 20–50 gpm in wet years.

In his conclusion to a letter for board members, Mattingly notes, "Bottom line, after consideration, I want to participate in the Subdistrict effort, even if I do not pump water for several years going forward, and I commit to supporting the effort with required financial participation as well as attending meetings to solve problems and move forward."

The board approved all participation contracts and continues to pursue WIP contracts with 62 well owners in the subdistrict. The board approved the budget with recalculated fees and discussed flat-rate fees and reimbursements for the future.

## USDA announces commodity credit corporation lending rates for January 2021

**WASHINGTON, Jan. 4, 2021** — The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) today announced interest rates for January 2021, which are effective January 4–January 31. These rates are used for a variety of farm credit options available through USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA).

The CCC's borrowing rate-based charge is 0.125%, same as December.

The interest rate for crop year commodity loans less than one year disbursed is 1.125%, same as December.

Interest rates for Farm Storage Facility Loans are the same as they were for December:

- 0.250% with three-year loan terms;
- 0.375% with five-year loan terms;
- 0.625% with seven-year loan terms;
- 0.875% with 10-year loan terms; and
- 1.000% with 12-year loan terms.

The interest rate for 15-year Sugar Storage Facility Loans is 1.250%, up from 1.125% in December.

FSA loan programs provide low-interest financing to producers to build or upgrade storage facilities and other structures. They also help producers with interim financing to meet cash flow needs. More information on loans can be found at [fsa.usda.gov](http://fsa.usda.gov) or by contacting your local USDA Service Center.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.



Photo by Patrick Shea

**Subdistrict 4 includes this cemetery north of the Mirage ghost town where antelope roam the Cotton Creek drainage.**

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