

The Ag & Food Lab

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Reflections on Our First
Year: Building the
Foundation for Our
Future



WELCOME LETTER

Dear Friends,

Looking back on 2024, I am filled with immense gratitude for the resilience and dedication of our team: the Board, staff, partners, and supporters who are turning the Lab's vision into reality. Our first year as a nonprofit was full of big challenges and big progress. Like any startup, we've hit bumps in the road, but those obstacles pushed us to innovate, adapt, and build a strong foundation for the future. We're entering 2025 with continued commitment to co-creating a thriving, interconnected food system by helping small-scale farmers and food businesses—especially those led by BIPOC and first-generation immigrant entrepreneurs—sustain themselves, try new ideas, and grow.

Throughout 2024, we've expanded our team, improved our property in Bennett, expanded our outreach, and strengthened our finances. Taylor Jones joined us in June as Strategy and Administration Coordinator and my position as Executive Director was made permanent. We also added new members to our Board of Directors: Bertha Moran, Terrence Robinson, and Joe Garrett.

Our property in Bennett, CO, is looking much brighter after we hauled out 100+ cubic yards of waste! We're in the process of constructing new administrative areas to make working there easier. In addition to this, we're opening a SNAP-authorized farmstand in this location in 2025—stay tuned for more details!

Over the year, we grew and strengthened our finances by managing nearly \$1 million in grant funds for our partner farmers and food businesses, and raising \$238K in grants, donations, and earned income. These advances provide solid footing for healthy and sustainable financial growth in 2025, as we outlined in our 2025 Strategic Plan.

And not least among our accomplishments in 2024, we rolled out new branding and marketing and celebrated our first year with a dinner party at La Victoria Healing Kitchen! Our new logo and branding will be showcased throughout the coming year and beyond, and our new website and social media channels are already live!

As we look ahead to 2025, we're focused on securing planning grants that match our capacity, keeping a three-month financial cushion in the bank, building new revenue streams to reduce reliance on grants, and strengthening contract management to ensure smooth operations. With funding secured and development underway, we can manage grants, expand training programs, improve infrastructure, and build independent revenue streams. Investing in the Lab means investing in a just, resilient, and community-driven food system.

Your support—whether through funding, advocacy, or hands-on involvement—is essential to building a food system where farmers and food entrepreneurs are valued, paid fairly, and able to thrive, and where fresh, healthy food is accessible to all. Our first year has proven what's possible, and with your partnership, we will keep pushing forward to create lasting change. Thank you for believing in this vision—we couldn't do it without you.

With gratitude and optimism,

Eileen O'Rourke
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



OUR MISSION AND VISION

Vision: To build a resilient local food ecosystems where farmers are valued, land is honored, and nutritious food is affordable and accessible to all.

Mission: To equitably resource farmers and food businesses with land access, shared infrastructure, and wrap-around services to foster resilient local food ecosystems.



BUILDING THE FOUNDATION

2024: The Inaugural Year

Turning Chaos into Crops and Growing Dreams from Dirt! 🌱 🚜 😊

Our first year felt like wrangling a wild and weedy garden—equal parts chaos and growth. We were planting seeds, pulling weeds, and hoping it all didn't catch fire (literally and figuratively). But through the challenges, we focused on what mattered: financial stability, operational efficiency, human resources development, and building rock-solid partnerships. By turning a beautiful mess into fertile ground, we've set the stage to grow bigger, stronger, and support farm and food businesses with even deeper roots in the years ahead.

Financial Stabilization

- Secured \$238,000 in grants, donations, and earned income.

Strategic Development

- Adopted a 2025 Strategic Plan to guide organizational growth.

Human Resource Support

- Finalized and implemented a new Employee Handbook.
- Secured Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) benefits for staff.

Environmental Stewardship

- Removed 100+ cubic yards of waste from the 35 acre farm in Bennett, enhancing the agricultural business incubator site.

Communication and Outreach

- Launched a new website, branding, and social media to boost public engagement.

Operational Efficiency

- Automated administrative tasks and streamlined grant reporting for greater efficiency.

Partnership and Collaboration

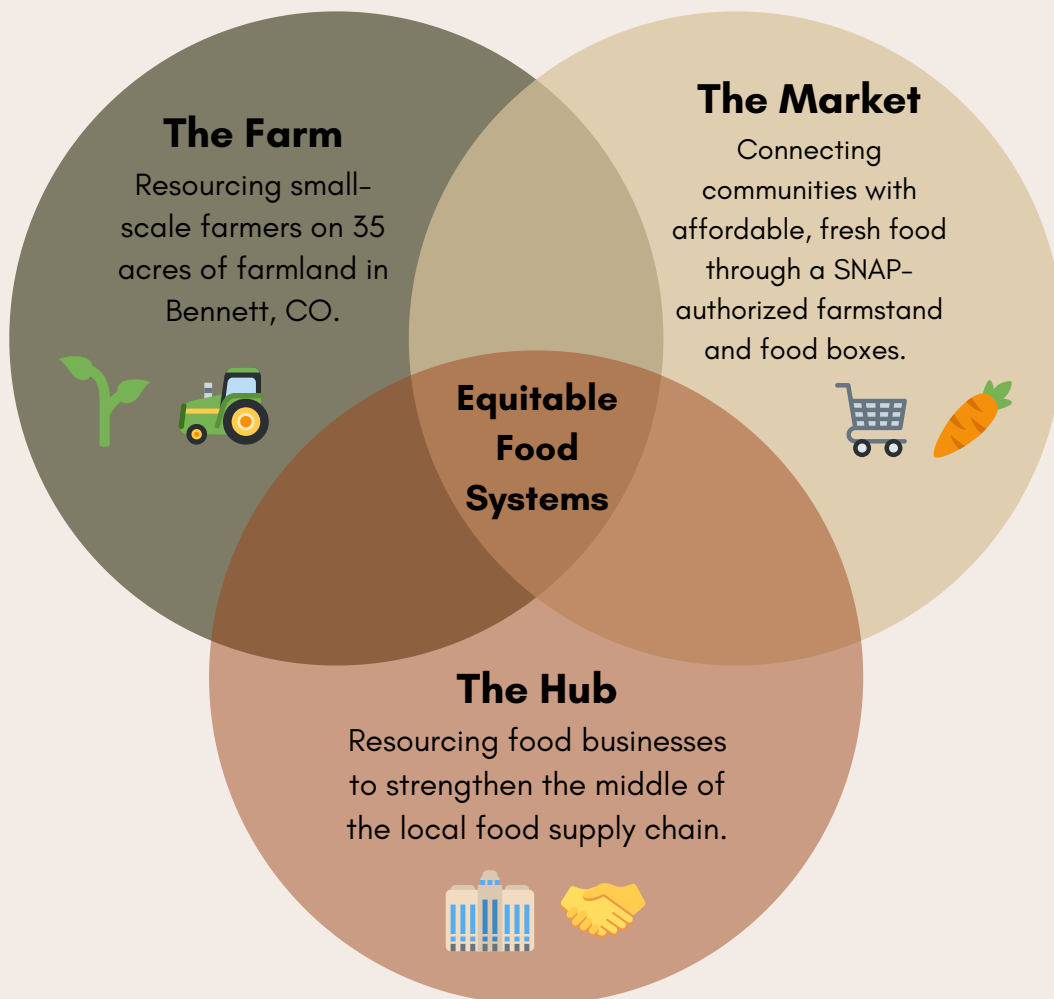
- Strengthened key partnerships to amplify impact across farm and food business ecosystems.

OUR PROGRAMS

A Farm Fresh, Locally Strong Food Supply Chain

The Lab operates three interconnected programs—**The Farm**, **The Hub**, and **The Market**—to fill gaps and address barriers to growth and sustainability across the local food supply chain. **The Farm** provides farmers with access to land, tools, and training to grow food sustainably. **The Hub** connects farmers and food businesses to essential infrastructure, such as storage and distribution, enabling them to reach larger markets. **The Market** ensures that fresh, locally grown food is accessible and affordable for the communities that need it most.

Together, these programs support farm and food businesses, strengthen local economies, and improve food access, fostering a thriving, equitable food system for all.



COMMUNITY IMPACT

Transforming Lives, Strengthening Communities

**6 FARM BUSINESSES
AND NONPROFITS**
accessing land in Bennett

OVER 1 MILLION
in grant dollars managed
for farm and food
businesses

**1 SNAP-AUTHORIZED
FARMSTAND**
to provide access to fresh
produce in Bennett. Look
for our Grand Opening in
Spring 2025!

**10 GRANT
APPLICATIONS**
submitted on behalf of
farm and food
businesses

**8 FARM & FOOD
BUSINESSES**
co-warehousing in the
Denver warehouse space

**2 SMALL
FARMERS**
connected to
business planning
services

8 FARM & FOOD BUSINESSES
supported through consulting services

2024 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

In our first full year of operations, the Ag & Food Lab successfully raised **\$198,000** in grants and donations, demonstrating strong support for our mission. Additionally, we generated over **\$40,000** in earned revenue through consulting, outreach, community engagement, and product sales—an important step toward long-term sustainability.

With a total income of **\$238,000**, we were able to offset the costs of launching our programs—The Farm, The Market, and The Hub—while covering essential administrative and fundraising expenses. Strategic investments in payroll, professional expertise, and direct community support ensured that we could provide essential resources to farm and food entrepreneurs.

2024: A Solid Foundation for Future Growth



FIVE KEY GOALS FOR 2025

Farm Development & Expansion: Complete infrastructure projects and secure funding for farm development.

Revenue Generation: Secure consistent funding through grants and unrestricted funds, while generating earned income.

Market & Community Growth: Launch the farmstand, expand market reach, and engage with the community through events and a food box program.

Operational Excellence: Improve financial management practices and ensure cash flow stability.

Partnership Development: Build and strengthen local partnerships to support farm and food initiatives.

2025: Building on the Foundation

GET INVOLVED

Why Your Support Matters

Our work is just beginning. As we scale our programs and deepen our impact, additional funding will allow us to expand our assistance to farmers and food entrepreneurs and increase local food access. Every dollar invested in the Ag & Food Lab fuels a more equitable, resilient local food economy—one that supports local farmers, enhances food security, and creates lasting economic opportunities.

Join us in 2025 as we continue to grow. Your donation powers innovation, equity, and sustainability in our food system. Let's build a future where fresh, local food is accessible to all.

Other Ways to Get Involved

- Volunteer: Lend your time and skills to support farm, market, and community initiatives.
- Join the Board: Be a strategic partner in guiding our mission by joining our Board of Directors.
- Partner Opportunities: Collaborate with us through partnerships that support local food systems, economic development, and community wellness.

Contact Us

- Email: admin@agfoodlab.org
- Website: www.agfoodlab.org
- Social Media
 - YouTube: @AgFoodLab
 - Facebook: The Ag & Food Lab
 - Instagram: @AgFoodLab
 - Threads: @AgFoodLab
 - Bluesky: @AgFoodLab
 - Mastadon: @AgFoodLab
 - LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/the-ag-food-lab/



**Your involvement can help drive meaningful change
in your community!**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Abel Poultry
Adams County Office of Strategic Partnerships & Resilient Communities
Adams County Planning and Development
Adams County Public Health
AJL Foundation
Alliance for Collective Action
Altitude Produce
Amy DePierre
AnthroVox
Becky Friedkin and David Jones
Big Green DAO
Charles Jones and Sandra Rhodes
Chef Daniel Asher
Chef Nathan Mencini
Chef Andrea Murdoch
Cindy Soleil
City of Wheat Ridge | Parks & Recreation
Colorado Housing and Finance Authority
Colorado Department of Agriculture
Colorado Fresh Enterprise
Colorado Gives Foundation
Colorado Health Foundation
Collective Potential
Commún
CSU Spur
David Demerling LLC
Denver Food Rescue
Denver Foundation
Denver Department of Public Health & Environment
Denver Urban Gardens
Ela Family Farms
Emerald Gardens
Feedback Labs
Food Bank of the Rockies
Foundation for Intentional Communities
Frontline Farming
GreenReap LLC
Growing Justice
Halcyon Advisers
Hearty Provisions
Impact Finance Center

Jack's Solar Farms
Jefferson County Food Policy Council
Jefferson County Public Schools' Food and Nutrition Services
John Jaramillo
Kaizen Food Rescue
Lala's Bakery
La Victoria Healing Kitchen
Lisa Reynolds
Lindsey Loberg
Local Futures
Loretto Special Needs Committee
Mad Agriculture
Maiker Housing Partners
Miguel Angel Produce
Mile High Farmers
National Resource and Conservation Service
Nancy Nevle
Northwest Rocky Mountain Regional Food Business Center
Nourish Colorado
Office of Economic Development and International Trade
Plenty Enough
Pivotal Ventures
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Rocky Mountain Farmers Union
Rose Community Foundation
Sandlot Developments, LLC
Sector Law Office
Spirit of the Sun
The Colorado Trust
The Three Sisters
Tracey and Ed Rutherford
USDA Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development Program
USDA Local Food Promotion Program
Votexx, Inc.
Wendy Peters Moschetti
What Chefs Want
Yana Ludwig Training and Consulting
Zero FoodPrint