

AGRICULTURE

Golden Plains Area Newsletter

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AG BUSINESS

Managing Input Prices in 2023 **Brent Young, Regional ABM Specialist**

The 2023 production year is shaping up to be a very challenging year for farmers and ranchers as they look to manage tight operating margins. The stage is being set for a squeeze to already paper thin margins from both sides of the equation as input prices rise and commodity prices soften.

There are several strategies that producers can employ to manage a margin squeeze of the magnitude expected in 2023. One strategy involves the development of accurate enterprise budgets.

Accurate enterprise budgets contain both fixed and variable costs. Fixed (overhead) cost are those expenses that are paid regardless of the type or level of production such as land payments, taxes, insurance, etc. Variable cost on the other hand include those expenses that vary based on the crop or type of livestock produced and the amount of production. Examples of variable cost are seed, fertilizer, feed, etc.

Most farmers and ranchers have a good understanding of their variable cost and can quote within a few cents their variable cost of production. Including their overhead (fixed) cost can be more difficult and requires the ability to accurately allocate those cost to each enterprise. Enterprise budgets that don't account for both variable and fixed costs can result in the calculation of cost of production estimates that are too low and encourage the acceptance of market prices that are not profitable.

A second strategy seeks to control input prices. Inflation rates not seen during the last 40 years has resulted in agricultural input prices at historic levels and placed profit margins on the defensive. Many producers are scrambling to lock in rates for fertilizer, fuel, and chemicals before prices increase. Another technique that may offer some promise is to match fertilizer rates with yields that are more economical.

In addition to rising input prices, growers are also facing increasing interest rates for operating capital. When the cost of borrowing operating capital increases, cash flow management and monitoring becomes essential. Cash flow management involves altering the timing of input purchases and when the sales of commodities take place to reduce the need of draws on an operating line of credit to reduce the outstanding balance and the amount of interest paid. Monitoring cash flow requires a producer to compare planned with actual expenditures to make spending adjustments.

In an effort to assist producers implement the strategies outlined above, the CSU Extension Agriculture & Business Management (ABM) Team has developed the Excel based decision aid known as Enterprise Profitability and Input Control (EPIC). Farmers and Ranchers can use EPIC to develop up to 5 crop budgets and one cow-calf budget. Overhead expenses can be recorded and allocated to each enterprise to determine very accurate costs of production. A separate spreadsheet allows crop producers to build up to 4 chemical applications per crop including the application rate and cost of each chemical.

All the budget information and overhead costs are incorporated into a whole farm/ranch cash flow statement. Producers can also enter non-farm/ranch income and expense items into the cash flow statement. One advantage of utilizing an Excel based template is the opportunity to develop an infinite number of "what-if" scenarios. EPIC is housed on the ABM website and can be accessed at the

following link <https://abm.extension.colostate.edu/decision-tools> under the risk management topic area.

Managing input prices in 2023 will provide many challenges for farmers and ranchers, Hopefully EPIC will be a valuable management tool for producers moving forward. If you have questions about this topic or any other agricultural business management issue, please feel free to contact me at 970-580-2204 or by email at brent.young@colostate.edu .

AGRONOMY

Pesticide Record Keeping **Ron Meyer, Area Agronomy Specialist**

Completed records when applying restricted use pesticides are necessary to remain compliant with current pesticide use regulations. While there is no standard form that is mandated, there is certain information that must be written within a farm's pesticide records. When applying restricted use pesticide, a written record must include the following:

1. Name and certification number of the applicant (must be recorded for each and every application of a restricted use pesticide).
2. Application date
3. Brand or product name of the pesticide
4. EPA registration number (found on the container, or the label)
5. Location of the application (the field name or number)
6. Crop product is applied to
7. Approximate size of area treated (or spot sprayed)
8. Amount of pesticide applied (rate and area applied)

Record within 14 days of application and keep them for two years.

2023 Wheat Field Days **Ron Meyer, Area Agronomy Agent**

Colorado State University Crops Testing is excited to announce the details for the 2023 Wheat Field Days. They are made possible by our farmer-cooperators, seed company and industry partners, and our colleagues from the CSU Dept. of Soil and Crop Sciences, CSU Dept. of Agricultural Biology, the Agricultural Experiment Station, CSU Extension, Colorado Wheat, and the USDA-ARS. We have a great set of public and private wheat varieties to show off in our field trials and characteristics of these varieties will be shared at each field day. CSU faculty and experts will share the latest information and research relating to various aspects of wheat such as breeding, variety trials, entomology, pathology, seed programs, soil fertility, and forage use. Industry representatives will provide wheat market updates and seed company representatives will share information about their varieties.

The field days will be held on Thursday, June 1st at Walsh, Lamar, and Brandon; June 2nd at Burlington and Genoa; June 5th at Wiggins, Roggen, and Orchard; and June 6th at Julesburg, Yuma, and Akron. Please visit www.csucrops.com/wfd for the full schedule and directions.

Pesticide Use Information

Ron Meyer, Area Agronomy Agent

Practical and important resources for pesticide use information.

- Contact information for Lisa and Sarah, CSU Pesticide Safety Program: pesticidesafety@colostate.edu
- Neal Kittelson, Certification and Training Manager, Colorado Department of Agriculture: neal.kittelson@state.co.us
- Immediate family exemption: <https://pesticideresources.org/wps/guide/famexempt.html>
- Info on Sunset of Pesticide Applicator Act Bill (SB23-192): <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb23-192>
- WPS Worker and/or Handler Training: <https://pesticideresources.org/wps/temp/training/index.html>

Herbicide MOA presentation:

Herbicide Resistance Action Committee Website: <https://www.hracglobal.com/>

HRAC Active Ingredient Lookup: <https://hracglobal.com/tools/classification-lookup>

HRAC Best Management Practices document: <https://hracglobal.com/prevention-management/best-management-practices>

Take Action Herbicide Mode of Action Chart: <https://iwilltakeaction.com/resources/herbicide-classification-chart>

Protecting Pollinators and Endangered Species presentation:

Colorado Beekeeping clubs lookup: <https://coloradobeekeepers.org/resources/bee-associations/>

UC IPM Bee Precaution Rating website: <https://www2.ipm.ucanr.edu/bee-precaution/>

Driftwatch: <https://co.driftwatch.org/map>

BeeCheck: <https://co.beecheck.org/map>

Bulletins Live! Two: <https://www.epa.gov/endangered-species/bulletins-live-two-view-bulletins>

Bee Identification Field Guide: [The Beginner's Field Guide to Identifying Bees](#)

UC IPM Website: http://ipm.ucanr.edu/mitigation/protect_beneficials.html

Reducing Drift during Pesticide Application:

Temperature and relative humidity. When is a good time to spray?: <https://sprayers101.com/spraying-weather/>

Sprayer Calibration:

Practice your calibration math: <https://pested.unl.edu/math>

Personal Protective Equipment:

Hierarchy of Controls: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/hierarchy/default.html>

Source: Sarah Hirnyck (she/her/hers/ella)

Pesticide Outreach Specialist and

Pesticide Regulatory Education Program (PREP) Educator

Colorado State University

Department of Agricultural Biology

LIVESTOCK

Fly Control for Beef Cattle **Scott Stinnett, 4-H Youth Development and Livestock**

As the temperatures begin to slowly warm, it is time to start thinking about warm weather parasite control. Controlling external parasites on beef cattle can provide a benefit not only to cattle comfort but also benefit the bottom line. Controlling flies can help prevent decreased gains, added expenses, and prevent disease.

Of external parasites, flies are the most prevalent. Horn flies, stable flies, face flies and heel flies can be extremely harassing and annoying to cattle. When flies become bad, we see cattle bunch up and use group swatting to keep the flies stirred up and off of their bodies. Unfortunately, this also means cattle are not grazing or ruminating comfortably and using energy to combat these pests. This can especially have an adverse effect on weight gain in growing calves and stockers.

Horn and stable flies are blood feeding flies. Horn flies tend to be found on the back, shoulders and belly of cattle. Stable flies tend to be found on the legs. These flies can have a negative impact resulting in calf weaning weights reduced 4% to 15%. Stocker cattle and replacement heifers may have weight gains lowered by up to 18%.

Although they are not blood feeders, face flies can also cause significant annoyance to cattle. Face flies congregate around areas of animal secretions and can be seen around the eyes, mouth and nose of cattle as well as around in cuts or scratches where blood or fluid is present. Being around the eyes is the most significant issue as face flies can irritate the tissue around the eyes making cattle susceptible to pathogens which cause pinkeye, a contagious inflammation of the cornea and conjunctiva. Treating pinkeye is costly in medication and labor.

Heel flies are not inherently a pest to cattle, but they lay their eggs on the lower legs of cattle. When the eggs hatch, the larvae enter under the skin of the host animal and move through the body. They typically take 9 months to migrate through the body until reaching the back of the animal and then cause a wound when they finally exit the body to fall to the ground and pupate.

Fly controls can be used easily and successfully to reduce flies. Beginning with good environmental management, fly numbers can be reduced by eliminating conditions which favor flies. Damp and shaded areas, manure and neighboring cattle with flies can contribute to higher numbers of flies on cattle. Removing them can have a significant impact on fly numbers.

Insecticides can be used in various forms to control flies. The most important two factors for successful fly control are timing of the use of fly controls and rotation of the insecticide to prevent any type of resistance.

Insect Growth Regulators (IGRs) are insecticides that work by eliminating flies in their early stages of life and therefore breaking the life cycle of fly populations. Most IGRs are delivered to cattle in feed or mixed into free choice supplement products.

Fly tags can be used as a passive fly control. Tags are embedded with insecticide and last 60 to 90 days. As cattle congregate and rub on themselves and others the insecticide is spread throughout the herd. Fly tags do require labor to tag cattle and to remove tags later after they have lost effectiveness.

Rubs and oilers can be used to passively deliver insecticide to cattle. Most are placed around an item cattle need and want access to such as water or supplements. As cattle go for the water or supplements, they brush against the rub or oiler and receive insecticide on their hide. Cattle must become conditioned and accustomed to rubs and oilers as at first they are seen as an obstacle to avoid while trying to get to water or supplements.

Fly sprays are some of the oldest forms of insecticide delivery. Many are water based and can be easily sprayed on cattle using hand powered or machine powered sprayers depending on herd size. The down side is many spray products have short durations of effectiveness or can be diluted by rain and wading in water. Time and labor to reapply fly sprays is a major consideration.

Pour-on products deliver insecticides, which are absorbed into and through the skin, with various lengths of effectiveness. Some products deter flies from landing on cattle. Others perform similar to IGR products and can eliminate fly egg viability or kill flies in larval stages. Many pour-on also deliver products to control internal parasites. Producers like these products due to the dual purpose. Pour-on products must be delivered in calibrated amounts based on cattle weight. To do this, handling is required to effectively administer proper dosages to each animal.

As with most animal health management decisions, working with your veterinarian to develop a parasite control plan will give you the most effective and economical options. In the end you will have more productive and less annoyed cattle.

Total Ranch Analysis for Colorado Report is Released: How Does Your Operation Compare? Scott Stinnett, Livestock and 4-H Youth Development

The Total Ranch Analysis for Colorado (T.R.A.C.) report was recently released. The purpose of this report is to describe production and financial benchmarks for cow-calf operations in Colorado. With the T.R.A.C. Program, three main goals were:

- (1) Develop a comprehensive ranch scorecard that can be used internally by individual operations to set targets and track performance in all areas of ranch management.
- (2) Develop a robust database to generate regional benchmarks that can be used by producers to help make more informed ranch management decisions.
- (3) Improve ranch family livelihoods through a dedicated partnership around continual analysis and integration of animal-, human-, and resource-oriented program pillars.

In this initial report, the program benchmarked over twenty different production, financial, and cost of production key performance indicators (KPI). Many of the results were then broken into the Top 30%, Bottom 30% and Median of operations based on information gathered from the first set of data provided from producers across the state of Colorado.

A quick overview of some of the KPIs include Total Cow Costs, ranging from \$799 per cow in the Top 30% to \$1,326 per cow in the Bottom 30% with a Median of \$1,013 per cow. The KPI for Price Received Per CWT was \$169.33 for the Top 30%, \$145.95 for the Bottom 30% with a Median of \$156.50. Net Ranch Income KPI was one of the most telling. The Top 30% had net incomes of \$121,825 compared to the Bottom 30% with a -\$69,913 with a Median of \$3,592.

The T.R.A.C. is slated to continue into the future with producers able to sign up and take part in the program. Look for advertising from CSU Extension when that opportunity is open. To read the T.R.A.C. report follow this link: <https://abm.extension.colostate.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/61/2023/01/TRAC-2022-Beef-Business-Benchmarks.pdf>



Cold and Snowy Weather: Fertility Test Your Bulls

Travis Taylor, Area Livestock Specialist

The past few months in the Golden Plains have been much colder and with more snow cover than in recent years. Producers have been busy feeding cows and calving, but it is time to pay some attention to the bull battery before breeding season. Less dry places to lie down, increased cold temperatures and more wind chill can be seen as lowered fertility or even frost bite on the scrotums of the bulls during the winter season. It is important to schedule a Breeding Soundness Exam for your herd sires 45 to 60 days prior to breeding.

A Breeding Soundness Exam (BSE) can give insight into the reproductive readiness of a bull. A BSE includes an evaluation of structure and locomotion, but the focus is on the bull's reproductive ability. A BSE will include an evaluation of semen quality examining the motility and morphology. To pass a BSE, a bull needs to have a cell motility above 30% and a morphology of 70% or more normal cells. Remember that these percentages are the minimum required, and that excessive cold damages normal cells and decreases motility, thus reducing fertility. Measurement of scrotal circumference is taken as well, and the measurement should fall into an acceptable range based on a bull's age. Bulls who do not meet all the minimums of the BSE may be re-examined at a later date, or if they are deemed unsatisfactory, should be culled. Remember, if you choose to retest a bull, it takes 60 days for a bull to produce and mature normal sperm cells. Thus it is important to not wait till turnout to ensure your bulls can pass a BSE.

Economically, it is important to have highly fertile bulls. For example, if you sell your calves at weaning, a marginal untested bull might settle 20% less cows on the first service. Using 1 bull to 25 cows would equal 5 calves born 21 days later than normal. Assuming 2.5 pounds a day gain that is 52.5 pounds less at weaning to sell per late conception. Five calves born even one cycle later totals 262.5 pounds, and at \$2.00 per pound is a \$525 decrease in revenue. In theory an infertile bull at turnout could cost you \$2,500 in lost income, or much more if you have a significant number of open cows in the fall. Don't delay, call your vet today and schedule the BSEs for your bulls. It won't be long before turnout.

Orf Virus

Jessie Stewart, 4-H Livestock & Youth Development Specialist

As spring season progresses, more livestock producers will be hosting various club lamb and show goat sales. As animals from different producers come together for the first time at their new homes, the opportunity for disease transmission increases greatly. However, one infectious disease that might be overlooked by sheep and goat owners is Orf Virus, better known as Sore Mouth. Orf Virus is one disease that can be transmitted to humans, and it affects 15 percent of sheep and 8 percent of goats in the world. The disease is caused by a virus from the Poxviridae Family and has been reported by sheep and goat producers since the late nineteenth century.

Sheep and goats that are infected with Orf Virus will develop scabs and sores on their muzzle, lips, and inner mouth. Early into the infection, the sores will appear to look like blisters and then will develop into crusted scabs. Infections will clear up within a month and do not typically cause any major issues. However, if the sores are inside the mouth, the lamb or goat may reduce food intake causing slower gain. Initial gain can really impact the animal's success at spring shows and can impact their likelihood for making weight at county fairs.

Orf Virus is easily transmitted between animals through any direct contact with a bodily fluid that contains virus whether it be nose-to-nose or body-to-body. Waterers, feed-buckets, blankets, muzzles, and halters are easy sources for contamination. As the scabs on the mouth and body heal, the scabs will dry up and fall off as the skin below the scab heals. The scab can fall off and the virus can enter the soil or bedding in the environment. The virus is extra hardy when it is in the scab and can live in the environment for months or even years. This means that pastures, bedding, waterers, feed troughs, and halters that have scab materials on them can be dangerous for uninfected animals for long periods.

Since Orf Virus is mostly contracted through open wounds, it is important to reduce the likelihood of cuts to the mouth where the virus can enter. This can be done by removing thistle or abrasive brush from grazing areas. Frequently disinfecting feed troughs and buildings where animals frequently gather is another important measure to take. And like with many other diseases, it is always important to quarantine new animals to ensure that an infection is not present. Humans should also wear gloves and wash their hands frequently when caring for an animal that has visible sores on their muzzle, lips, or inner mouth to avoid Orf Virus transmission to themselves.

When the virus is spread to humans, it will appear in the form of sores or wart like bumps on the hands. It is commonly transmitted to humans through common practices that come with owning sheep and goats. Tube or bottle feeding, sheering or clipping, and handling infected equipment like a feed pan or harness are all common sources of transmission to humans. Infections in humans are not serious in most cases and tend to clear up within six weeks. A mild fever and fatigue may also accompany the sores. It is very important for people with sores to keep them covered and clean to avoid a further infection.

Although Orf Virus is not a life-threatening disease, it is important for sheep and goat owners to still be aware of the disease to avoid the discomfort that is associated with the infection for both themselves and their animals. One of the greatest responsibilities of livestock producers is to ensure that disease does not enter their herd or leave their farm and pose a risk to other operations. If your animal has sores be sure to avoid going to shows or encountering other animals. Spring shows and sales can be a fun time for 4-H and FFA members and their families. It also can be a risky time for disease transmission. Being aware of threats, big or small, is a great way to protect animals and people everywhere.

Using a Bud Box

Scott Stinnett, Livestock and 4-H Youth Development

Over the spring, summer and fall, there will be several times cows, bulls and calves will need to be handled for animal health processing. If you need a simple upgrade to facilities or a portable option for temporary facilities, consider a Bud Box. The Bud Box was originally designed by stockmanship author and clinician Bud Williams. It works using a few basic cattle stockmanship principles.

- Stress causes cattle to react. Handling stress is created by the pressure of the handler entering or exiting the cattle's flight zone. The increase and release of pressure by the handler entering and exiting the flight zone creates movement or can stop movement.
- Cattle like to stay together. Moving groups of cattle is easier than individuals and less stressful on the cattle. They are herd animals and prefer to be in a group when separated from the herd.
- Cattle like to keep one eye on the handler. A handler represents a stress to the cattle. When the cattle can see the handler, they can react to the handler's position and pressure on their flight zone.
- Cattle like to go around. Cattle in confined space prefer to circle a handler as it allows for the greatest flight zone distance from the pressure of the handler and keep an eye on the handler.
- Cattle like to go back to where they came from. They like to go where they know they have been with less stress or where they last remember other cattle being.

Using these principles, the design and use of a Bud Box is simple. It is a small rectangular pen, long enough cattle can enter and stop, be turned around and pass by the handler and into an alleyway. A few things must be kept in mind when putting together and using a Bud Box.

- The box should be big enough for cattle and handler to be in together without endangering the handler or not having enough room for the cattle to pass by the handler.
- The box should not hold more cattle than the chute or alleyway they are exiting into can hold. The minimum chute length is 30 feet for 3 or 4 head of 1,200 pound cows. This allows for approximately 8 to 10 feet of chute length per animal. The Bud Box does not work effectively as a holding pen. Cattle must enter and exit the box quickly.

A Bud Box can be used to have cattle enter allies that lead up to working chutes, sorting areas, load outs or to turnouts. The alley can be a single or a double. The key is cattle must keep moving when exiting the box. If cattle balk when exiting, they can then decide to turn back and disrupt the proper flow of the Bud Box.

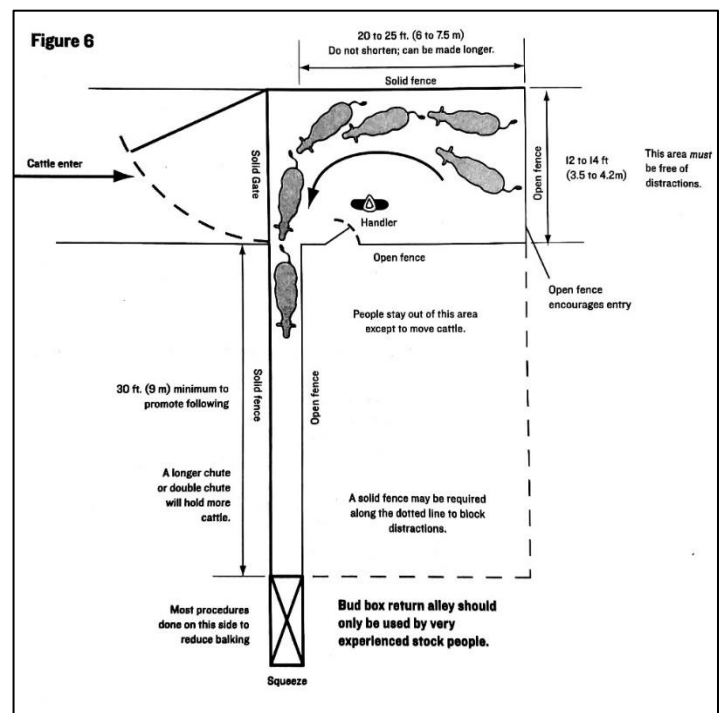


Figure 6 from page 214 of *Humane Livestock Handling: Understanding Livestock Behavior and Building Facilities for Healthier Animals* by Temple

When building a Bud Box, eliminating distractions is important to keeping cattle focused on what the handler is asking of them. Having all visually solid walls is best but at a minimum the gate that closes behind them and the wall opposite the handler needs to be solid. Also keep other distractions away from the Bud Box such as other cattle, people, dogs, equipment or anything possibly distracting.

Again, a Bud Box is a simple design and a rather simple concept to learn to use. It can be worked on foot, or with a minor increase in size, on horseback. It is low stress on the cattle, possibly portable and compared to crowding tubs, easier to install and lower cost.

Horticulture

Vegetable Gardening: Ready, Set, Go! **Linda Langelo, Area Horticulture Agent**

You can have both annual and perennial cool season crops in your vegetable garden. If you are interested in annual crops, radishes are the first root crops to harvest. Then comes beets, carrots, turnips, and rutabagas. Parsnips are also a great crop to have. But they will not be ready until right before the ground freezes. The perennial cool season crops are rhubarb, asparagus, chives, and horseradish. They still need proper watering, fertilization and weed control to keep providing each year.

Besides annual and perennial cool season crops, pay attention to the families they are grouped into because planting the same crops in the same family's year-after-year causes the same diseases. Beets are in the same family as spinach and Swiss chard. If you planted beets this season in the same place you planted Swiss chard last season, then your crop might attract the same diseases and insects. Here is a link to help you: <https://growgive.extension.colostate.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/63/2022/12/CO-Vegetable-Guide-Updated-for-Print-Dec-2022.pdf>

The next thing to consider is making sure you start off by cleaning out any debris from the vegetable garden if you did not do that in the fall. Insects and diseases overwinter under leaves and other debris. Adult and nymph squash bugs will overwinter under leaves. Here are some resistant varieties Lemon Squash, Butternut Squash, and Zucchini Rampicante Squash. Other squash varieties include 'Early Summer Crookneck,' 'Royal Acorn,' 'Butternut 23,' and 'Improved Green Hubbard' according to <https://leafyplace.com/squash-bug/>. If you do not plant a resistant variety for summer squash, you could start your squash and cucumbers later in the season. Squash bugs are not as prevalent in the late summer and fall. Smooth criminal, Superpik take 45 and 55 days, respectively. Black beauty zucchini takes 60 days and if you plant it in mid to late June, you have plenty of time to harvest.

Soil temperature is another thing to consider. Having a soil thermometer is helpful. But if you do not, rhubarb will start poking its stems out of the ground at 45 degrees Fahrenheit. Cool season grasses start growing around 50 degrees. Does that mean it is time to start planting the tomatoes? Wait until the nighttime temperatures reach a dependable 50 degrees Fahrenheit. If you cannot wait, even with a protective cover you can still set their growth back. There is no substitution for the proper temperature. The ideal size of tomato, pepper and eggplant transplants are about eight inches tall. Their roots have just the right development in balance with top growth. Happy gardening!

Water Conservation Program **Linda Langelo, Area Horticulture Specialist**

During these times of increased rates for our utilities, come and join us to learn more about watering and designing your landscape to utilize water more efficiently. The water conservation program will be held on April 8 in Yuma at the Orphanage from 10 AM to noon. If you cannot make that date, then come April 22 and join us at the WRAC from 10 AM to noon. Brunch is included at both program sessions.

Have you heard about the seven principles of water wise gardening? Come learn about some of the simple changes you could incorporate into your gardening skills to conserve water and become more efficient at plant care. The first part of the program will focus on best practices of watering and how we utilize water in the landscape. I will go through specific varieties of alternative grass for turf. The second part of the program will cover the seven principles of water wise gardening and how to apply them along with specific plants to use in your landscape. I will also present the Turf Replacement Bill that was approved in 2022.

Please RSVP to either date to reserve your seat and brunch. Seating is limited at both venues. We look forward to sharing this important information to help you have a healthy landscape that does more than survive in a drought. Please call Linda Langelo at (970)474-3479 in the Sedgwick County Extension Office to RSVP and if you have any other questions.

Caregiver Workshop Series **Ginger Williams, Regional Health Specialist –Eastern Region**

Questions: Contact Ginger at 970-491-6720



Save The Date!
Caregiver Workshop Series

CSU Extension is partnering with Jane Barton, founder of Cardinal, LLC, to share a series of life-changing FREE webinars for caregivers of aging family members or friends, or anyone who will be called to care. The monthly workshop series will cover topics such as: aging solo, age-friendly health care, spiritually and health, and THE conversation.


Virtual Workshop Wednesdays

10:30am - 12:00pm

- The Challenges of Aging Solo - 3/29
- Plotting & Planning - 4/26
- Age-friendly Health Care - 5/24
- Spirituality and Health - 6/21
- The Consequences of Caring - 8/30
- Your Final Act - 9/27
- THE Conversation - 10/25
- Resources for Caregivers - 11/29



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