



# Supporting Small-Scale Poultry & Livestock Businesses

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**What does it take to operate a  
successful, small-scale poultry or  
livestock operation  
in Colorado (or anywhere)?**

***Planning!***

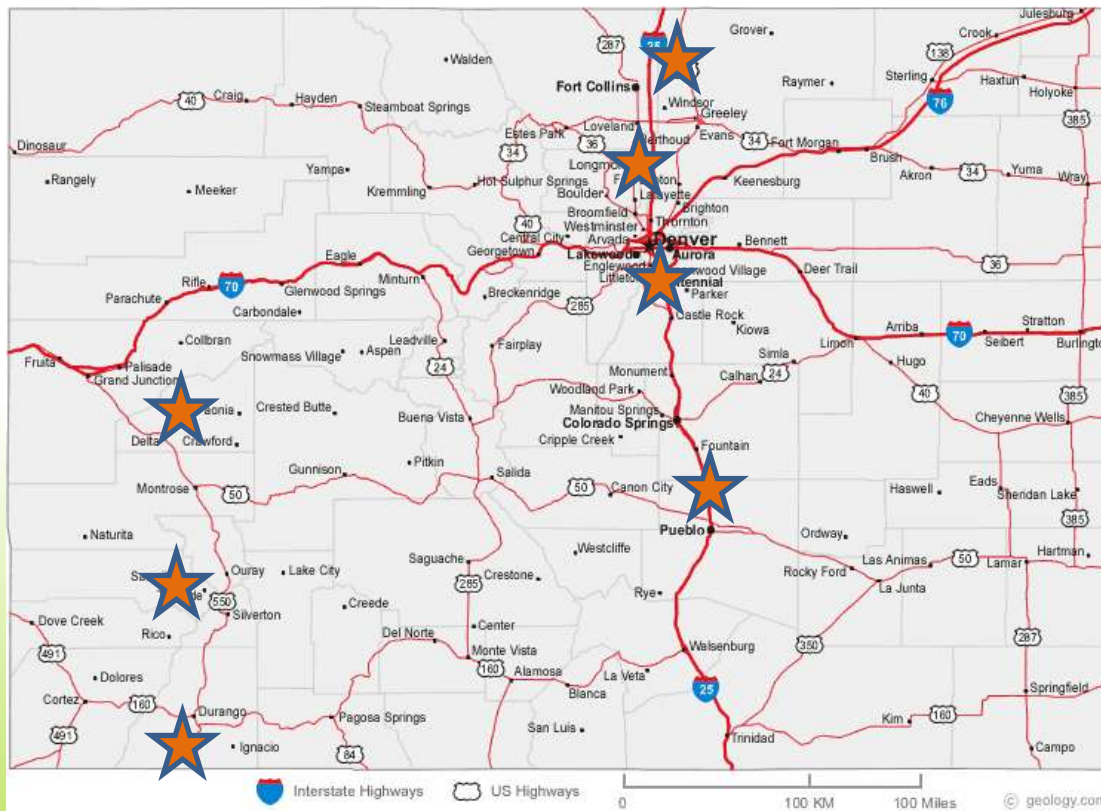
# Planning for:

1. Animal production & management
2. Business growth & development

Plans and expectations must be tailored to fit where producers' businesses are located → most of our new farmers/ranchers are located within or near urban areas

# Supporting new farmers and ranchers

- Colorado Building Farmers Program
- CO has classroom and field-based learning opportunities in 7 regions of the state



# Classroom phase -- what we teach

- **Strategic business planning**
- **Marketing**
- **Recordkeeping & financial analysis**
- **Labor, contracts, leasing land & water, equipment, ag credit, and more**

# What participants gain

- **Basic business plan**
- **Opportunity to present their business plan at the end of the program**
- **Interaction with experienced producers**
- **Network of resource providers within the ag community & producers they can contact**

# Field-based phase (experiential learning)

- **Mentorships & Internships - with an experienced producer (based on individual's learning goals)**
- **Exploring coaching groups & mini-grants for technical assistance (to help advance some aspect of business planning or development)**

# Planning for a sustainable small-scale livestock/poultry business

- Environmental stewardship
- Production practices
- Safe handling of animals & animal products
- Business licensing
- New market opportunities
- Zoning restrictions



**Significantly  
influence  
business  
growth and  
development**



# Good Stewardship Leads to Better Business Management

## Minimizing:

- Animal and manure odors
- Dust
- Insects & predators



&

## Using best management practices to:

- Dispose of dead animals
- Mitigate runoff



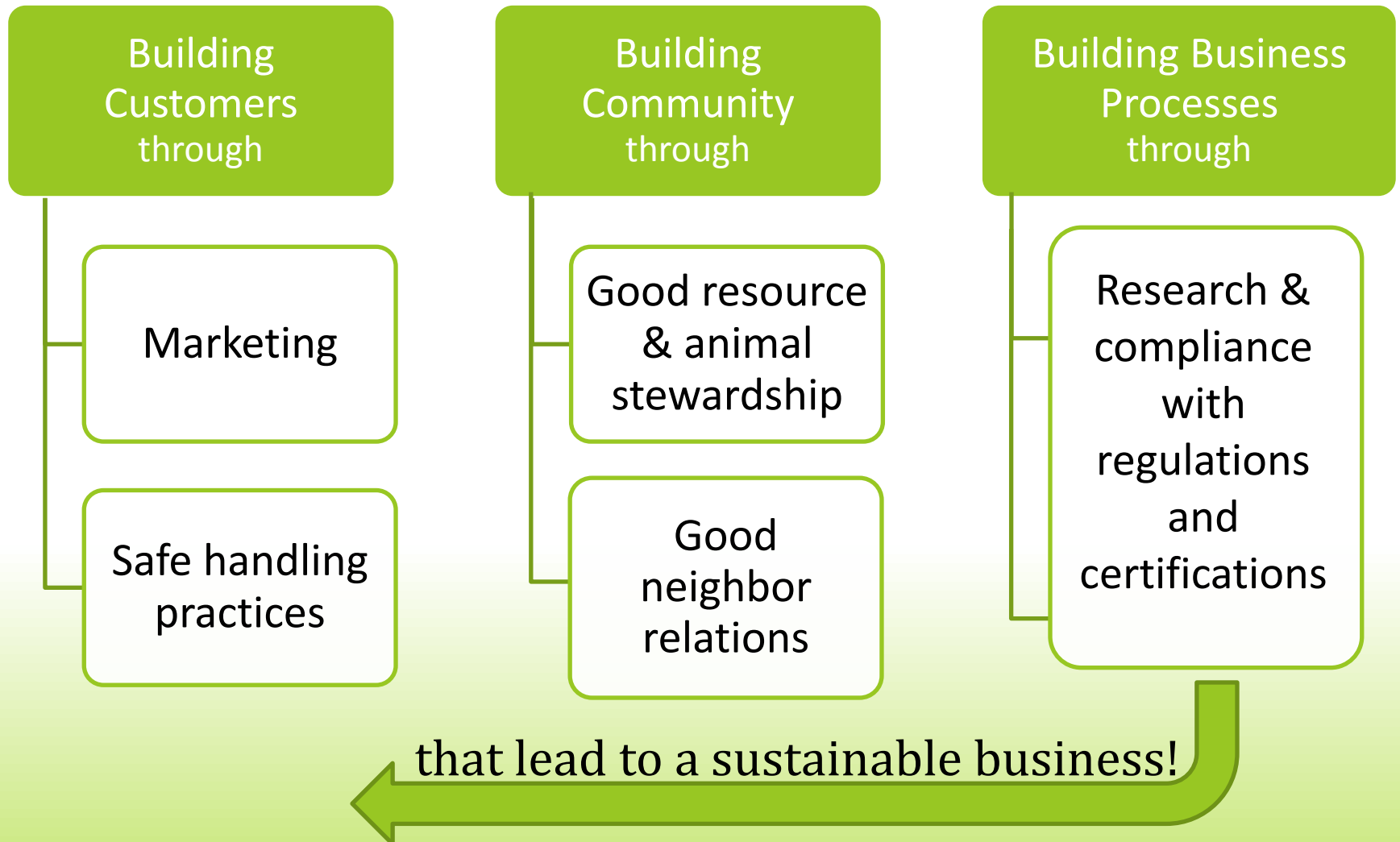
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## Leads to a:

- Cleaner production operation
- Healthier herd
- Good neighbor relationships



# Building a Profitable Business Involves



**1. Understand new market opportunities and how they fit into your business plan**

# Certification and Marketing

- **Consumers are interested in how livestock are raised, handled & processed**
- **Certification may allow you to secure a premium for product or expand market reach**
  - **Such as specialty food stores and restaurants that require that their animal products be sourced from humanely raised animals**
- **How you manage your flock (your stewardship practices) can influence your marketing opportunities**

# Animal Welfare Certification Programs

- Distinguish livestock products as coming from humanely treated animals
- Certified production systems often are more expensive than non-certified
- Be sure to keep in mind the production costs and marketing benefits of following a certification program

Animal  
Welfare  
Approved

USDA  
Organic

American  
Humane  
Certified

Food  
Alliance

Global  
Animal  
Partnership

Certified  
Naturally  
Grown

# Evaluating Certification Programs

## Goals

- Make sure program goals align with yours

## Certification

- Understand the certification process & animals covered

## Fees

- Understand the program's fee structure

## Time Commitment

- Calculate the time required to achieve and maintain certification

## Production Costs

- Estimate how your production costs may change under certification

# Evaluating Certification Benefits

Access to new markets that seek certified products

Possibility of charging higher prices for products

Ability to connect with customers based on their values

Access to marketing materials and support from certifying organization

Certifier may help grower improve safe production and handling techniques

# Evaluating Certification Costs

More pasture area may be required for each animal enrolled in the certification program → You may need more land

Changes to animal health care → You may need to remove from your program sick animals that you vaccinate or medically treat

Changes to animal feeding → You may need to use feed from specific sources or follow certain ingredient guidelines

Changes to animal housing → You may need to build additional facilities to allow more space per animal

More detailed record-keeping on animal health and raising → You may need to allow more time or hire someone to do this



## **2. Work with your planning and zoning officials**

# County & Municipal Zoning Regulations-what to consider

- Larger livestock (including sheep and goats) typically prohibited in non-agriculturally zoned county & municipal districts
- Your Homeowners' Association may also have restrictions on livestock & poultry
- Many counties & municipalities allow private ownership/production of a small number of sheep, goats & poultry in agricultural districts. However, animal slaughter may be prohibited.



Always verify the types & numbers of animals legally allowed on your property before starting your business

# Regulations in districts where commercial livestock production is permitted may include:

Commercial or agricultural permit requirements



Permit fee often required



Size and type of animal structures; location on your property

Limited number of animals allowed; pasture specifications



Standards for odor, noise, dust



Limited or no allowable slaughter on premises

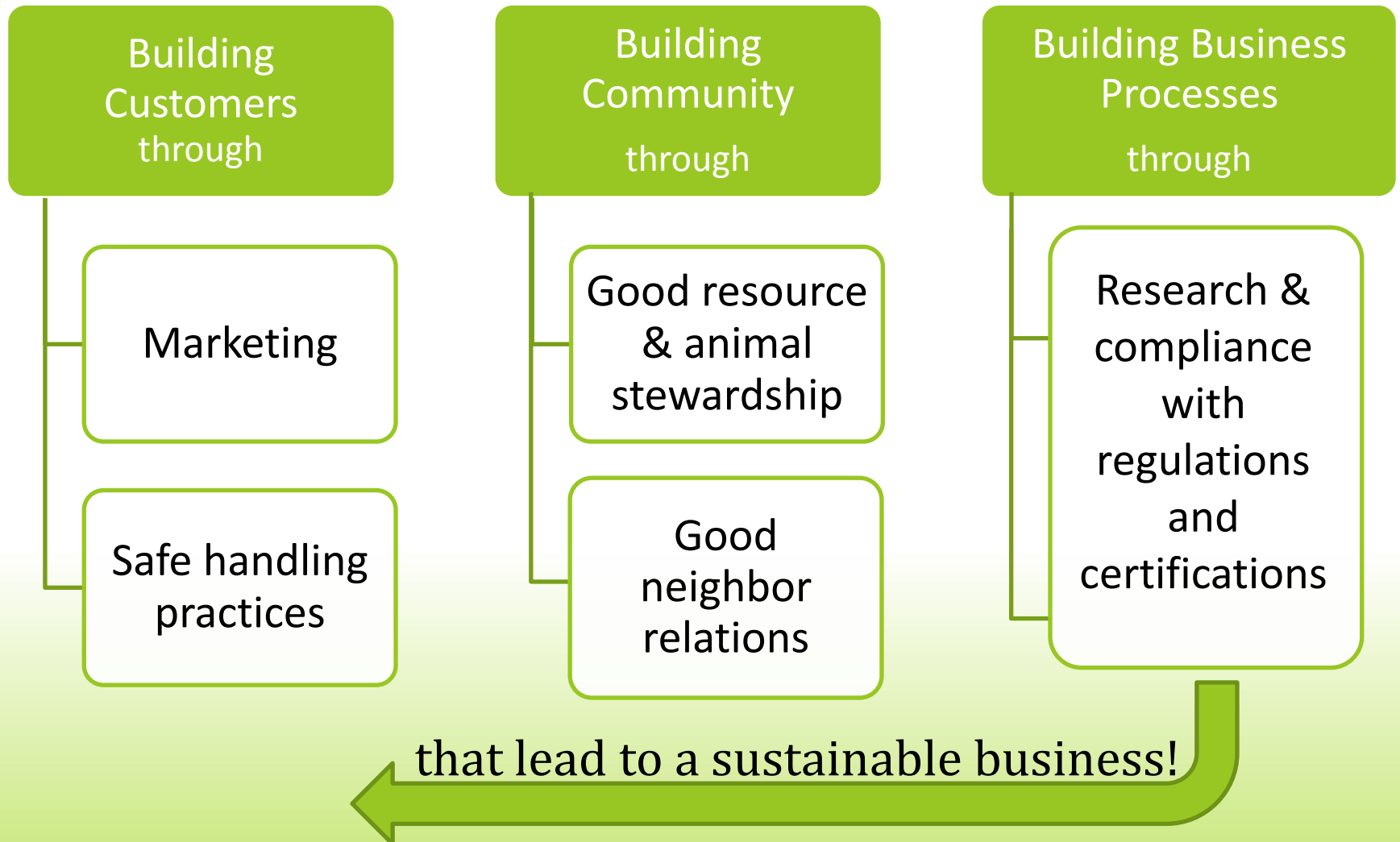
# Examples from Colorado

	Livestock types by district				
Municipality	Poultry/fowl	Pigs	Small ruminant (sheep, goats)	Horses	Cattle
Fort Collins	All types (6 chickens, no roosters)	Non ag: R-R district only	Ag only: not specified	Non ag: ½ acre lot min.	Non ag: No
Greeley	Chickens (roosters permitted)	2 per acre	2 per acre	1 per acre	1 per acre
Longmont	Non-ag: 4 hens, no roosters	Ag only: 5 acre min.			
Brighton	Non-ag: 4 hens, no roosters	Ag only: Min 20,000 sf in RE			
Aurora	Non-ag: Fowl	Ag only: Min 4 acre lot for RR			
Denver	8 ducks/chickens total (no roosters or drakes)	No	Female goats only	No	No
Lakewood	Yes, unlimited	Non-ag: No	Ag only: Min lot size & setback		
Castle Rock	6 chickens in all zones	No	No	No	No
Colorado Springs	Non-ag: 10 fowl total, no roosters	None in non-ag or ag	Ag only: 5 acre min.; no restrictions on animal density		
Pueblo	Non-ag: 10 fowl total, no roosters	Ag only: Min lot reqs			
Grand Junction	6 chickens	Ag: only in RR	Ag: setback reqs	Non-ag: ½ acre min	Non-ag: ½ acre min

# County & Municipal Zoning Regulations

- Present your plans early—your local planning and zoning board may have ideas to make your business more viable or to protect your resource base
- Once you are in operation, remember to consult local officials before making any changes to your business (to structures or to products you sell)

# Building a Profitable Business Involves



# Resources

- View the curriculum and other small farm/ranch resources at <http://www.coopext.colostate.edu/ABM/smallfarm.shtml>
- Check produce and meat prices at [www.coopext.colostate.edu/ABM/marketreports.htm](http://www.coopext.colostate.edu/ABM/marketreports.htm)
- Research market regulations at [www.cofarmtomarket.com](http://www.cofarmtomarket.com)

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