

Food for Thought

People • Products • Purpose

February 2023

"I wanted to bring attention to my culture and country through my food, and express its complicated beauty."

— Pakistani Chef Fatima Ali in *Savor*
"I believe in ingredients — let them speak. And remember, happiness is the goal." — Local Chef Supansa Banker

San Luis Valley spuds

Ranch Foods Direct potato supplier Sheldon Rockey and his brother Brendon farm in the San Luis Valley, where they are known for innovative soil health practices such as rotational cropping and planting pollinator strips.



HOW'S BUSINESS?

There's more demand than supply this year so we had to change our pricing structure. We added a 10 percent increase.

One aspect is labor: we are seeing increases in the minimum wage in Colorado. Obviously we all know why production costs are up. There's fertilizer and fuel. But you also have to look at getting the product processed, packaged and shipped. Obviously there's been a freight increase on top of everything else.

IS TEN PERCENT ENOUGH TO COVER ALL THAT? We don't know yet. We'll find out at the end

of the season. We're just trying to control our supply so we don't run out. We've also had to make upfront investments in the additional infrastructure

needed to handle specialty potatoes like fingerlings. They take a third longer to harvest compared to traditional russet potatoes. It requires specialized equipment, plus more time and labor.

YOU'VE PIONEERED THE ADOPTION OF QUINOA, A SUSTAINABLE ROTATIONAL CROP.

HOW'S THAT GOING? We had a 14-month gap when

COVID was in the way. We're slowly gaining momentum, but it's taking longer than we anticipated. We're now where we thought we would be two years ago, in terms of new product development. There's a lot of demand out there, but we still have to work on introducing it to the next generation.

HOW'S DROUGHT IMPACTING THE VALLEY?

The water situation is pretty dire right now. Farmers are pumping 30 percent less for irrigation than 20 years ago, but we are anticipating we'll have to cut another 10 to 15 percent to gain anything in the aquifer. We'll probably see the same amount of potatoes and quinoa being grown, but higher water use crops will disappear, like alfalfa and barley. That land will just go fallow, which is the sad part. It hurts rural communities economically.

WHAT CAN CONSUMERS

DO? Just support local. Part of sustainability is on the consumer to support local regenerative farms, understand their challenges and buy higher value products to help them find a path forward.

LOOK FOR Colorado-grown quinoa in the bulk bins on the south wall of the Fillmore store, \$3.49 per lb. Learn about other heritage grains at UCCS Grain School Online, starting Feb. 2 ([SWELL.UCCS.edu](https://swell.uccs.edu).)

**Crafted with
care**



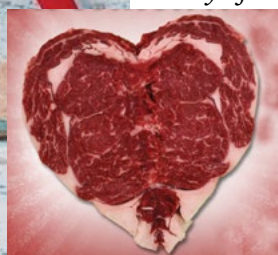
FLOWERS ARE NICE,
CANDY IS SWEET,
IF YOU WANT TO IMPRESS,
WE RECOMMEND

Beef



Did you know...

Retail butchers Luis and Joanna, who both learned their craft from Roger, the highly experienced head butcher who ran the fresh meat case up until just recently, are looking forward to cutting lots of pretty "sweetheart steaks" for customers this month (see the butterflied ribeye shown below.) "I cook one for my wife every year and she loves it," Luis says, adding that her favorite dessert to end the meal is creme brulee. Joanna also looks forward to cutting a Valentine steak of her own and preparing it along with sauteed mushrooms and brussels sprouts and — if she had her choice of any dessert — a luscious pie made by Steffi's Confections (Stephanie stocks a rotating variety of handmade treats in the center island of the store.) For more ordinary winter days, Luis recommends the ready-to-heat-and-eat pot roast, perfectly preseasoned and accompanied by colorful root vegetables. Easy to prepare and delicious.



Ranch Foods Direct sells beef fat in bulk for grinding with lean game meat, making summer sausage or feeding the birds; inquire at the counter, \$3.29 per lb.

The fresh case cuts meat to order. Have a special request? Just ask!

Coming soon... James Original A2 Greek yogurt in blueberry, sweetened with local raw honey, \$12 for a 16-ounce container

Winter special continues... 20-pound bundle of ground beef in convenient one-pound packages, \$3.99 per lb.

Customer snapshots



Glenn Bush shops Ranch Foods Direct for fresh beef cuts from the butcher case and to stock up on high quality ground beef. Another favorite is the beef bacon. As for Valentine's day, he and his wife have a tradition of eating out at the Waffle House every year. So is he related to the famous Bush family from Texas? Indeed. "My aunt did the geneology thing and found out our families both started out in the Carolinas 150 years ago."



Rick Runyan, left, got to know Ranch Foods Direct owner Mike Callicrate while serving as general contractor for the renovation of the former Ranch Steakhouse and Market, located in the old Hungry Farmer restaurant on Garden of the Gods Road, an iconic building that was later scraped to build a Chick-Fil A. He and his wife Charlene have been buying meat from the store ever since. "We went to the soft opening of the restaurant and I still remember the carpaccio," Charlene recalls. "All of the food was really, really good." For them, Valentine's Day isn't anything out of the ordinary, since they typically enjoy steaks every weekend. They usually get filets or a T-bone. As Rick says, "I love the meat and I like knowing who produced it."



Mike and Jane Drew first heard about RFD from Jane's brother, Doug Clausen, owner of Clausen Books, which specializes in rare titles. On a recent shopping trip, they were buying ground pork, soup bones and trying the buffalo for the first time. "When I'm here I just want one of everything," Jane says. And for Valentine's day? "Steak. That's always his first choice." Their dream is to finish a calf of their own on pasture surrounding their home in Black Forest. Ranch Foods owner Mike Callicrate offered to provide one to help make the project a reality.



Marc Olmsted of Woodland Park is a long-time pastry chef and baker (his dad was too.) He now works as director of research and development for Nepra Foods in Denver. While he helps to create many plant-based gluten-free items that include trendy ingredients like hemp and tofu, he's a meat eater himself and has been shopping at RFD for about three years. His favorites include the brisket for barbecuing and bones for making his own stock. "I've heard the spiel about the beef, and where it comes from, and I was impressed. It's a good product," he says. "We have two dogs, and they eat well too."

New water filtering station

Now available... Fill up your water bottle at the Fillmore store using the newly installed water filtration station. Avoid the purification chemicals and off-flavors in municipal water and enjoy freshly filtered water while you shop.

Artesian Water offers touch-free bottleless water coolers that clean and purify existing tap water with a multi-stage process that removes particulates like dirt, rust, lead, chlorine, and other harmful chemicals. Reducing the use of plastic bottles benefits the environment. DrinkArtesian.com



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Mon - Fri 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. Sat 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

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