



## Mobile Farm Workforce: Prospectus 2019

**Challenges:** The fruit and vegetable growing sector in Colorado contributes nearly \$485 million to the state in production—across a total of more than 90,000 acres—with sales multiplied as crops proceed through the distribution chain. Yet, statistically, there are two available jobs in the U.S. agricultural sector for every one job seeker, with farmers in the Rocky Mountain West feeling the effects of a snowballing national trend in agriculture.

**Solution:** The decline in efficient labor available to Western producers and growers was the impetus for Rocky Mountain Farmers Union (RMFU) to hold listening sessions throughout Colorado and New Mexico from late 2017 through early 2018 to seek feedback from farmers and ranchers on a proposed mobile farm workforce (MFW) pilot project. In 2018, RMFU enlisted Rachel Landis, director of The Good Food Collective, and David Laskarzewski, co-director of UpRoot Colorado, and the organization Veterans to Farmers to set up and coordinate two separate MFW pilot programs—in the Durango area and along the Northern Front Range (NFR), respectively.

**Vision:** A worker-owned cooperative that supplies Colorado farmers and ranchers with on-demand (i.e., mobile) efficient labor year-round to supplement Colorado’s agricultural labor needs.

### Social Impact (2018):

- 21% of the NFR MFW pilot was comprised of veterans
- The NFR pilot harvested approximately 200,000 pounds of crops for farmers’ economic benefit
- On-farm duties also ranged from weeding to pulling drip tape and agricultural plastics, to the removal of t-posts, to the removal and stacking of several miles of irrigation pipe, to harvesting and tying decorative corn stalks, to moving hay bales
- The NFR MFW totaled nearly 2,000 working hours across the nine-week pilot
- There is a national and state recognition of Colorado’s efforts to bridge on-farm labor gaps
- View the [FOX 31 story](#) on the MFW

### Financials:

Mobile Farm Workforce: Budget Projections		2019
Personnel	Coordinator	\$13,500
General Admin	HR/payroll application: subscription	\$612
Program Expenses	Vehicle: Rent; Fuel; Carbon offsets (12 weeks)	\$8,000
	Tools; gloves; etc.	\$250
	Filtered water; snacks for workforce	\$100
RMFU	Financial support	(\$4,000)
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$18,462</b>