ABSTRACT

TITLE:	A New Generation of Resilience: Analysis of the Challenges Facing Young Farmers in the West
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ABSTRACT: Beginning farmers in the western United States are faced with multifaceted challenges that inhibit their access to management systems intended to subsist with the available resources. Water in this arid environment is at the root of most obstacles experienced by farmers, both psychological and soil-related. This research is intended to give a voice to those farmers involved in the dialogue of resiliency. Using a focus group and interviews conducted in the Southwest area of Colorado, I identified the concerns of beginning farmers and also sought out responses to potential solutions. I concluded that there is an urgency for policy makers to create more engagement and easier access to sustainability grant programs for small, beginning farmers. Additionally, the necessity to prepare a cooperative grant opportunity for beginning farmers is key to creating accessibility to proper funding due to their small size. Although beginning farmers are utilizing some of these support programs, the results are often short lived and don't suffice for sustainable continuity of farm and resource management. With this in mind, policy makers, agency staff, and other farm organizations must consider the requests of the beginning farmers who are facing these challenges and act on them promptly. In order to generate future food security in the West, the issues of beginning farmers must be addressed so their resiliency can be developed.