

Updated July 2025

Disclaimer: This factsheet summarizes state laws and regulations on a variety of human resource issues for dairy farms, including wages, paystubs, deductions, child labor, and more. It is not intended to provide legal advice. The factsheet is simply an overview of select issues with a high-level explanation of key requirements for each one, with links to more information and resources throughout the document. This factsheet does not include all legal requirements for dairies. It was created in July 2025, and while it will be periodically updated, it may not reflect the current state of the law on every topic covered. Dairies should also review the federal factsheet because employers—depending on size—may be required to comply with some or all of the applicable federal laws and regulations as well. Additionally, employers should review the provisions of their collective bargaining agreement(s). By using this factsheet you understand that there is no attorney-client relationship between you and the attorneys who were involved in developing the factsheet. This factsheet should not be used as a substitute for competent legal advice from a licensed attorney.

Are there Colorado state laws for dairy farms about the following?

Hiring

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Topic	Answer	Summary
Pay Notice ¹	YES	Every employer must post a <u>notice</u> specifying regular paydays and the time and place of payment. The employer must also include any changes in paydays or time and place of payment as they may occur from time to time.
Reporting ²	YES	<u>New hires</u> and rehires, including independent contractors if they provided their Social Security Number for tax purposes, must be reported to the Colorado Directory of New Hires within 20 days.

Wages

Topic	Answer	Summary			
Paydays ³	YES	month/thirty days a	ular paydays in advanc part (whichever is long and of the pay period the	ger), and the payday	needs to be within 10
Final Pay ⁴	YES	immediately. If the a hours after the start accounting unit is o		nt isn't open, then the partment's next regul er than 24 hours.	pay must be within 6
Overtime ⁵	YES	Summary Tabl	e: Weekly Overtime Re	equirements for Agric	ulture Employers
		Time Period	a) Highly Seasonal Employers	b) Non-Highly Seasonal Employers	c) Small Employers (seasonal or not)
		2024		54 hours	56 hours
		2025	56 hours for up to 22 peak weeks;48 hours otherwise	48 hours	[No separate rule for small employers; apply a) or b)]



		Diseases the Coloured Countings and Minimum Day Changelands Onder for fruitless
		Please see the <u>Colorado Overtime and Minimum Pay Standards Order</u> for further information. Must post a <u>notice</u> . Federal rules may apply, employers are encouraged to review the federal factsheet.
Minimum Wage ⁶	YES	The minimum wage for all agricultural workers is \$15.50 per hour. For livestock range workers (principally engaged in the range production of livestock), employers must pay a weekly salary of \$606.56 instead of the minimum wage, which is adjusted annually as measured by the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index. Must post notice.
Hours Worked ⁷	YES	"Time worked" means time during which an employee is performing labor or services for the benefit of an employer, including all time s/he is suffered or permitted to work, whether or not required to do so. This includes waiting, at the worksite or another prescribed location, for instructions or assignments, even if the employee is ultimately sent home without getting any work instructions. Employers should also reference the federal laws summarized in the federal factsheet.
Reporting Time Pay	NO	Colorado law does not require reporting time pay, i.e. an employee is only required to be paid for actual hours worked.
Pay Stub ⁸	YES	 Employees must be given a pay statement when they are paid their wages that contains: Gross wages earned (According to the CO Division of Labor Standards and Statistics, gross wages refers to the gross wages for the specific pay statement, not gross wages for the year-to-date) All withholdings and deductions Net wages earned The inclusive dates of the pay period The name of the employee or the employee's social security number The name and address of the employer Must retain records for at least three years.
Taxes and Withholding ⁹	YES	 You are required to withhold Colorado income tax if you are also required to withhold federal income tax. You must give your employees a statement of taxes withheld, like a federal Form W-2, 1099-MISC or 1099-R. You must pay Colorado Unemployment Insurance taxes if: You paid cash wages to farm workers of \$20,000 or more in a quarter in the current or prior calendar year; You employed ten or more farm workers for some part of a day in 20 or more weeks of the current or prior calendar year; OR, You are an agricultural crew leader who furnishes a crew to perform service in agricultural labor for any other person. Certain family employment is excluded from coverage requirements (a person employed by their spouse, or, a child under 21 employed by a parent). Unemployment taxes are paid by the employer; they are not taken out of employee



		pay. You can credit the amount you pay to Colorado in calculating how much you owe for federal unemployment taxes. <u>More details</u> .
Deductions ¹⁰	YES	Permissible Deductions
Deductions	TES	 Deductions required by local, state, or federal law. Examples include, but are not limited to, deductions for taxes, FICA requirements, garnishments, or any other court-ordered deductions. Deductions by written agreement between the employer and employee. The agreement may be for loans, pay advances, goods or services, and equipment or property. The agreement must be in writing, enforceable, and not in violation of law. Deductions necessary to cover the replacement cost of a shortage due to theft by an employee. However, must file a report with law enforcement, and subject to penalties for wrongfully withholding. Deductions that are authorized by the employee and that can be revoked. Examples include, but are not limited to, deductions for insurance benefits, savings plans, stock purchases, voluntary pension plans, charities, and deposits to financial institutions. Must be in writing between the employer and employee. Deductions for the amount of money or the value of property that the employee failed to properly pay or return to the employer. Deductions cannot bring an employee below the federal minimum wage.
		 Impermissible Deductions Deductions for property damage. In general, absent a written agreement to the contrary, employers may not deduct from an employee's wages or compensation for the cost of damage or depreciation to the employer's property. For example, an employer may not typically deduct the cost of damage to a company car from an employee's wages, unless an enforceable written agreement existed between the employer and employee that is not in violation of the law. Deductions as fines for employee behavior or actions. In general, employers may not apply fines to an employee's earned wages or compensation based upon employee behavior or performance. For example, an employer may not typically deduct from the wages of a restaurant waitperson for the cost of a meal in the event that the customer does not pay the bill. See the DOL's Interpretive Notice & Formal Option for more information.
		Wage Allowances The Colorado Minimum Wage Order that contains specific guidance around meals/lodging provided as part of wages does not cover the agriculture industry. Farms are encouraged to review the federal rules around the provision of meals, lodging, and other facilities as a form of wages.
Bonuses ¹¹	YES	Under <u>Colorado wage law</u> , the definition of wages includes bonuses earned for labor or services performed as part of any agreement between an employer and



employee. Discretionary bonuses would not be considered wages, while nondiscretionary bonuses can be considered wages and protected under wage law.

A nondiscretionary bonus is one where the amount and criteria for getting the bonus are announced in advance. For example, performance goals (like meeting somatic cell count goals) that workers know about in advance. Discretionary bonuses are ones that are not announced in advance, not expected by the employee, and not an incentive for the employee. For example, when the farm reaches a certain financial goal and decides to give all employees a bonus.

Employers should follow any written policy they have about paying bonuses as a best practice.

Recordkeeping

Topic	Answer	Summary
Payroll ¹²	YES	Must keep records that reflect the information included in an employee's pay statement (described above in 'Pay Stub') for at least three years after the wages or compensation were due. The records must be available for inspection by the Division of Labor and Employment. The employer must provide copies of the records upon request by the division or the employee.
Personnel File Access ¹³	YES	Workers may inspect their personnel files at least once per year. Upon request by a current employee, a business must make the personnel file available at the employer's office at a mutually convenient time. Former employees may make one inspection after termination. "Personnel file" means the personnel records of an employee that are used or have been used to determine the employee's qualifications for employment, promotion, additional compensation, or employment termination or other disciplinary action. It does not include documents or records required to be placed or maintained in a separate file from the regular personnel file by federal or state law or rule; documents or records pertaining to confidential reports from previous employers of
		the employee; or an active criminal investigation, an active disciplinary investigation by the employer, or an active investigation by a regulatory agency.
Unemployment Insurance ¹⁴	YES	 Employers subject to contributions must submit <u>quarterly wage reports</u>. Whether or not subject to paying Unemployment Insurance taxes, every employer in Colorado must maintain accurate business records for at least five years, including: Payroll Information. For each payroll period, the employing unit's records must show: Beginning and ending dates. Total wages payable for employment during such period and the date on which such wages were paid.



- The date in each calendar week on which the largest number of workers was employed and the number of such workers.
- A reporting pay period of not to exceed one month, if any established payroll period be longer than one month.

Employee Information. For each worker, the employing unit's records must show:

- Name.
- State of residence.
- Social security account number. If a worker has no account number, the employer shall require the worker to produce a receipt of application therefor within seven days of entering upon employment.
- Date of hire, rehire, or return to work after temporary layoff.
- Date and reason separated from employment.
- State or states where services are performed.
- If services are performed outside of Colorado, the worker's base of operations, and, if there is no base of operations, then the place from which such services are directed or controlled.
- If such worker is paid:
 - o On a salary basis, the wage rate and period covered.
 - o On a fixed hourly basis, the hourly rate and the customary scheduled days per week prevailing in the establishment for the occupation.
 - o On a fixed daily basis, the daily rate and the customary scheduled days per week in the establishment for the occupation.
 - o On a piece rate or other variable pay basis, the method by which the wages are computed.
 - o By tips, gratuities, or service charges as defined in regulation 3.2, whether in whole or in part.
- If, during any payroll period, such worker shall work less than his or her customary fulltime hours:
 - o The specific amount of time lost; and
 - o The specific reason or reasons, including his or her nonavailability for work, and, if there be more than one reason, the amount of time attributable to each.
- Wages paid during each payroll period and the date of payment thereof, with separate entries for:
 - o Money wages;
 - o The reasonable cash value of wages paid in any medium other than money:
 - o Amounts paid to a worker that exceed travel and other business expenses actually incurred or accounted for; and
 - o Tips, gratuities, and service charges.

<u>Auditors from the Division of Unemployment Insurance</u> may come to your place of business to examine your books and account records. A complete payroll audit



		involves an inspection of subsidiary records, including the examination of cash- disbursement records of money paid to workers for services performed that you did not classify as employment or wages.
	YES	Report the injury to your workers' compensation insurance carrier within 24 hours if the injury results in death or if three or more employees were injured in the same accident. The Division of Workers' Compensation customer service unit must also be notified via telephone within 24 hours.
Workers'		All other worker-related injuries or occupational diseases must be reported to the Division of Workers' Compensation within 10 days of the injury.
Compensation ¹⁵		Employers must keep a record of all injuries that result in fatality, permanent physical impairment, lost time of three days/shifts or more, or contraction of an occupational illness.
		For covered employers, all books, records, and payrolls showing or referring to the amount of wage paid must be open for inspection by the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment for the purpose of administering Workers' Compensation.
OSHA	YES	Employers must comply with the federal OSHA recordkeeping standard. See the federal factsheet for details.
Federal	YES	There are numerous federal rules about recordkeeping. Employers should review the federal factsheet.

Working Conditions

working Conditions		
Topic	Answer	Summary
Bathrooms ¹⁶	YES	Colorado has incorporated the federal Pasteurized Milk Ordinance (PMO). The PMO specifies that dairy farms have one or more toilets that are conveniently located, properly constructed, properly operated, and maintained in a sanitary manner.
Working Hours	NO	No max hour or day requirements for adults. See Child Labor (below) for maximum hours for minors.
Rest and Meal Breaks ¹⁷	YES	Employers must authorize and permit paid 10-minute rest periods for each 4 hours of work, or major fraction of that time (i.e., more than 2 hours). Agricultural workers are entitled to an uninterrupted and duty-free meal period of at least a thirty-minute duration when the agricultural worker's shift exceeds five consecutive hours. An agricultural employee engaged in hand-weeding and hand-thinning is entitled to an addition, five-minute rest period, which, as practical, must be in the middle of each work period.
Labor Relations ¹⁸	YES	Employees have the right of self-organization and the right to form, join, or assist labor organizations, to bargain collectively through representatives of their own free choosing, and to engage in lawful, concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection.



Whistleblower Protection ¹⁹	YES	Colorado law prohibits discrimination based on workplace violations of government health or safety rules, or about an otherwise significant workplace threat to health or safety, to the principal, the principal's agent, other workers, a government agency, or the public if the principal controls the workplace conditions giving rise to the threat or violation. Colorado courts also have protected an employee's refusal to perform an illegal act, and topic-specific laws (like wage discrimination, wage laws, etc.) may protect employees that report unlawful practices. And specific employee disclosures (for example, OSHA-related violations) are protected from retaliation.
Paid Vacation or Sick Leave ²⁰	YES	All employees earn 1 hour of paid leave per 30 hours worked ("accrued leave"), up to 48 hours a year. Up to 48 hours of unused accrued leave carries over for use during the next year. Up to 80 hours of supplemental leave applies in a public health emergency. Must post notice.
Breaks for Nursing Mothers ²¹	YES	Employers must make reasonable efforts to <u>accommodate employees</u> choosing to express milk at work. Employers must provide reasonable unpaid break time, or allow an employee to use existing paid break time, meal time, or both, each day to express milk for a child for up to two years after its birth. The employer must make reasonable effort to provide a room or other private location close to the work area that is not a toilet stall.
Pregnancy Accommodations ²²	YES	Disabilities caused by pregnancy, miscarriage, abortion and childbirth are considered temporary disabilities for all job-related purposes. Employers must treat pregnancy-related disabilities the same as other temporary disabilities with respect to such matters as leave duration, leave extensions, job reinstatement and health insurance coverage. If requested by an employee, an employer must provide reasonable accommodations to allow a pregnant employee or applicant to perform the functions of the job, unless it would impose undue hardship. "Reasonable accommodations" may include, but is not limited to, the provision of more frequent or longer break periods; more frequent restroom, food, and water breaks; acquisition or modification of equipment or seating; limitations on lifting; temporary transfer to a less strenuous or hazardous position if available, with return to the current position after pregnancy; job restructuring; light duty, if available; assistance with manual labor; or modified work schedules as long as the employer is not required to do any of the following: • Hire new employees that the employer would not otherwise have hired; • Discharge an employee, transfer another employee with more seniority, or promote another employee who is not qualified to perform the new job; • Create a new position, including a light duty position for the employee, unless a light duty position would be provided for another equivalent employee; or



		 Provide the employee paid leave beyond that which is provided to similarly situated employees.
Family, Parental, and Pregnancy Leave ²³	YES	Covered Colorado workers may receive up to twelve weeks of leave per year to: • Bond with a new child, including adopted and fostered children. • Care for themselves, if they have a serious health condition. • Care for a family member's serious health condition. Section 8-13.3-505, C.R.S., amended the paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) Act to provide additional leave for parents of children in neonatal intensive care units (NICU). Specifically, it extends the duration of leave by an additional 12 weeks, allowing eligible individuals to take a total of 24 weeks of paid leave (12 weeks of bonding leave and 12 weeks for NICU care) for claims arising on or after January 1, 2026. Federal law requiring unpaid leave may apply depending on the size of the
		employer. Employers should refer to the federal factsheet.
Jury Duty and Witness Leave ²⁴	YES	An employer must pay an employee regular wages up to \$50 per day for the employee's first three (3) days of juror service, unless the employer and employee have agreed otherwise. An employer may not discharge, penalize, harass, threaten, or coerce an employee for responding to a jury summons or serving on a jury.
Crime Victim Leave ²⁵	YES	Employees can request or take up to three working days of leave from work in any twelve-month period, with or without pay, if the employee is the victim of domestic abuse, stalking, sexual assault, or any other crime related to domestic abuse. This leave law applies only to employers who employ 50 or more employees and to employees who have been employed with the employer for 12+ months. Colorado Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) may provide employees additional job-protected time off to attend to their needs if they or a family member have experienced domestic violence, stalking, abuse, sexual assault, or other situations.
Military and Military Spouse Leave ²⁶	YES	Colorado law prohibits employers from discriminating against employees because they are members of the state National Guard and from preventing a National Guard member from performing a required military duty. Employees who belong to the state National Guard or the U.S. reserves are entitled to up to 3 weeks of unpaid leave per calendar year for training with the U.S. Armed Forces without loss of vacation, sick leave, bonus, advancement, or other advantages of employment. Employees are entitled to use any paid leave available or take the leave unpaid. Employers should also refer to the federal factsheet. The FAMLI benefit is available for family members to support them through the service member's duty to the state and country. See here for more information.
Voting Leave ²⁷	YES	Colorado law requires employers to provide employees with up to two (2) hours of paid leave to vote, unless: 1) an employee has not requested the leave at least one day prior to the vote date, or 2) the employee has three (3) or more hours after the opening or before the closing of the polls during which the voter is not required to



		be on the job. An employer may specify the hours an employee may take leave to vote, but the period must fall at the beginning or end of the work period if the employee so requests.
School Activity Leave	NO	Colorado law does not address leave for private sector employees to attend a child's school activity.

Human Rights

Topic	Answer	Summary
Employment Discrimination ²⁸	YES	Colorado law prohibits employment discrimination based on disability, race, creed, color, sex, hair texture, hair type, or hairstyles commonly or historically associated with one's race, pregnancy, childbirth and related conditions, sexual orientation (including transgender status), physical or mental disability, marital status, marriage to a co-worker, religion, age, national origin, or ancestry. People who engage in protected activity (opposing a discriminatory practice, raising concerns of discrimination or retaliation in good faith, or participating in an employment discrimination proceeding) are also protected. Employment discrimination means bias in hiring (including during interviews), promotion, job assignments, firing, pay, and other terms of employment. In Colorado, it also includes harassment (see below). Employers cannot pay men and women different wages for comparable work on jobs that have virtually the same requirements in terms of skills, effort, and responsibility. Wage differences based on seniority, merit, quantity or quality of production or other factors other than sex are permitted. It is illegal to retaliate against employees for filing or otherwise aiding with a complaint. As of January 1, 2024, there are new disclosure requirements under the Equal Pay for Equal Work Act (EPEWA), including, but not limited to: Providing notice to employees for each "job opportunity," the date the application window for each job opportunity is anticipated to close; information about selected candidates.
Harassment / Sexual Harassment ²⁹	YES	Colorado employment discrimination law includes protections against harassment in the workplace for the same classes described above (race, creed, color, etc.). "Harass" means to create a hostile work environment based upon an individual's race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion or marital status. Harassment is not an illegal act in Colorado unless a complaint is filed with the appropriate person/authority at the workplace and such authority fails to initiate a reasonable investigation of a complaint and take prompt remedial action if appropriate. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:



		 Engaging in such conduct is made an implicit or explicit term or condition of employment. Example: A newly hired milker is told that sexual jokes, touching and nude posters are just part of farm life and she should try to ignore it. Acceptance or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for an employment decision affecting an employee. Example: A manager tells a worker applying for a promotion that the job would be his if he just "treated her right." The conduct interferes with an employee's work or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. Example: One worker experiences repeated advances from another asking her for dates or "just to go out for drinks after work." The worker says she isn't interested, but the co-worker won't take 'no' for an answer. Unlawful harassment includes unwelcome physical or verbal conduct or any written, pictorial, or visual communication that is: directed toward an individual or group of individuals on the basis of a protected class, subjectively offensive to the individual alleging harassment, and objectively offensive to a reasonable individual who is a part of the same protected class. Must preserve records of complaints related to discrimination for at least five years. All NDAs entered into or renewed on or after August 7, 2023, are subject to new stricter requirements. It is illegal to retaliate against employees for filing or otherwise aiding with a complaint.
Forced Labor ³⁰	YES	Human trafficking is illegal in Colorado. Trafficking for labor means: selling, recruiting, harboring, transporting, transferring, isolating, enticing, providing, receiving or obtaining of a person by any means for subjection to forced labor, forced services, debt bondage, or slavery. More details.
		Employers should ensure they are carefully following all visa requirements or work agreements to avoid any inadvertent violations.

Child Labor

Topic	Answer	Summary
		<u>Colorado child labor laws</u> do not apply to minors employed by a parent or guardian. Work permits not required in Colorado.
Child Labor ³¹	YES	Minimum age: • During school hours: 16 • Outside school hours: 12



 Max hours: Under 16: No more than 6 hours on any school day or day before a school day. No more than 40 hours per week and no more than 8 hours in any 24-hour period. No work between 9:30pm and 5am. Exceptions apply for seasonal employment paid on a piece basis. 16 or over: No maximum specified There are restricted and prohibited occupations for workers under 18. Additionally,
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must follow <u>federal restrictions/prohibited</u> occupations for agricultural work.

Health and Safety

Topic	Answer	Summary
OSHA	YES / NO	Colorado falls under federal OSHA jurisdiction. See the federal factsheet for more information.
Workers Compensation ³²	YES	Colorado employers must have <u>workers compensation coverage</u> . The law <u>requires an employer to notify the insurance company</u> of a work-related injury/illness within 10 days of receiving notice from the employee or learning about the injury, no matter how minor the injury. This is done by filing an Employer's First Report of Injury form. In addition to the FROI form, employers must notify the Division within 24 hours of any fatality or an accident in which three or more employees are injured.
Housing ³³	YES / NO	Colorado law does not explicitly address standards for permanent agricultural housing, though general landlord/tenant or public health laws may apply. Employers should follow best practices when providing housing – which includes, at minimum, a written housing agreement and properly maintaining the facilities. The FARM HR Manual has guidance around best practices for agricultural worker housing. There is a Colorado law governing employer housing provided under a license agreement. In such situations, employers may require a former employee to vacate the premises according to certain conditions. (See 'Lodging' in the Advisory Bulletin.)

¹ Colo. Rev. Stat. § 8-4-107

² Colo. Rev. Stat. § 26-13-125

³ Colo. Rev. Stat. § 8-4-103

⁴ Colo. Rev. Stat. §§ 8-4-108, 8-4-109

⁵ 7 CCR 1103-1-1

⁶ Colo. Rev. Stat. § 8-6-101.5

⁷ 7 CRR 1103-1-1.9

⁸ Colo. Rev. Stat. § 8-4-103(4)

⁹ Colo. Rev. Stat. § 39-22-604; § 8-70-120; § 8-70-129

¹⁰ Colo. Rev. Stat. § 8-4-105

¹¹ Colo. Rev. Stat. § 8-4-101



- ¹² Colo. Rev. Stat. § 8-4-103(4.5)
- ¹³ Colo. Rev. Stat. § 8-2-129
- ¹⁴7 CCR 1101-2-VII-7.1.3; 1101-2-VII-7.1.4; 1101-2-VII-7.2.4; Colo. Rev. Stat. § 8-72-107
- ¹⁵ Colo. Rev. Stat. § 8-43-101; § 8-47-208; 7 CCR 1101-3
- ¹⁶ 6 CCR 1010-4-4.3
- ¹⁷ 7 CCR 1103-1-2(2.3.3); 7 CCR 1103-1-5; Colo. Rev. Stat. § 8-6-101.5.2(a).
- ¹⁸ Colo. Rev. Stat. § 8-3-106
- ¹⁹ Colo. Rev. Stat. § 24-114-102; Colo. Rev. Stat. § 8-14.4-102
- ²⁰ Colo. Rev. Stat. § 8-13.3-4
- ²¹ Colo. Rev. Stat. § 8-13.5-104
- ²² 3 CCR 708-1:80.6; Colo. Rev. Stat. § 24-34-402.3
- ²³ Colo. Rev. Stat. § 19-5-211(1.5); Colo. Rev. Stat. § § 8-13.3-501 to -524
- ²⁴ Colo. Rev. Stat. § 13-71-126 and § 13-71-134
- ²⁵Colo. Rev. Stat. § 24-34-402.7
- ²⁶Colo. Rev. Stat. § 28-3-609
- ²⁷Colo. Rev. Stat. § 1-7-102
- ²⁸ Colo. Rev. Stat. § 24-34-401; § 24-34-402; § 24-34-402.3, 8-5-101
- ²⁹ See above; and 3 CCR 708-1-80.8
- ³⁰ Colo. Rev. Stat. § 18-3-503
- ³¹Colo. Rev. Stat. § 8-12-104; § 8-12-105; § 8-12-107
- ³²7 CCR 1101-3-5-2
- ³³ Colo. Rev. Stat. 8-4-123