



PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the sugar beet industry played a significant role in the agricultural history of Colorado, particularly in the twentieth century, when it became the most important agricultural activity in the state and by 1909, the largest sugar-producing state in the United States; and

WHEREAS, area farmers relied on sugar beets as a vital cash crop, requiring intense labor of thousands of nonunionized fieldworkers, leading farmers and sugar companies to recruit Mexican and Chicano workers who toiled from sunup to sundown to meet the demands of each harvest and became an integral part of the agricultural workforce in Colorado; and

WHEREAS, by the late 1920s, the sugar beet industry had become the largest employer of Hispanics in Colorado, with these individuals performing essential, yet often overlooked, labor that contributed significantly to the prosperity of the industry; and

WHEREAS, the short-handled hoe, a common tool in sugar beet cultivation, symbolized the exploitative working conditions endured by agricultural laborers, resulting in long-term physical consequences for many, this plight prompting organizations such as the United Farm Workers who brought attention to these injustices culminating in the outlawing of the short-handled hoe in 1975; and

WHEREAS, it is essential to honor and recognize the contributions of all those who labored in the sugar beet fields, acknowledging their vital role in shaping Colorado's agricultural landscape and history.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jeni Arndt, Mayor of the City of Fort Collins, do hereby proclaim October 9th, 2025, as

THE HAND THAT FEEDS DAY

in recognition of the invaluable contributions of agricultural laborers in the sugar beet fields and to honor their legacy of hard work, resilience, and determination. I encourage all residents of Fort Collins to reflect on this history of agricultural labor in our community and to celebrate the contributions of those who have worked tirelessly to feed our state and our nation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and the seal of the City of Fort Collins this 16th day of September 2025.

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk