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**First Southwest Community Fund Continues To Invest In Rural Colorado With \$25,000 Grant Given To Colorado Quinoa**

*Colorado Quinoa Is A Collaborative Business Venture Dedicated To Producing Nutritious and Delicious Quinoa Sourced Right Here In Southern Colorado.*

ALAMOSA, COLO., (August 7th, 2018) – First Southwest Community Fund (FSWCF) recently received a Rural Business Development Grant for [Colorado Quinoa](#), a unique business that sources its quinoa from a collective of small, organic and conventional quinoa farmers throughout the San Luis Valley. By working with multiple farmers, they are able to offer many selections of quinoa with amazing amounts of protein, antioxidants, vitamins and minerals.

The New Family brought Quinoa production to North America, and Mosca, Colorado, in 1982. In the past three decades the New family and White Mountain Farms, has perfected their crop, and in 2015 they partnered with Rockey Farms to create Colorado Quinoa. Because quinoa uses between 30 to 50 percent less water than most other crops, the arid desert and high elevation of the San Luis Valley (7,500 feet and the highest elevation of farming in the United States) is a unique location for quinoa production, much like its South American origins of Bolivia and Chile. Further, this makes it an excellent rotation crop for local farmers. With steady growth over the last few decades, Colorado Quinoa was ready to expand sales beyond the San Luis Valley, but was in need of some assistance for amplifying their entrepreneurial endeavors.

This year First Southwest Community Fund, a 501c3 nonprofit, had the opportunity to apply for the US Department of Agriculture's Rural Business Development Grant on behalf of Colorado Quinoa. Open to applicants nationwide, the Rural Business Development Grant issued through the United States Department of Agriculture, is an extremely competitive grant. Applications for the grant must demonstrate economic need in the area, job creation and consistency with local priorities.

The grant was awarded this summer and with the grant money, Colorado Quinoa plans to hire seven new full time employees, increase processing capacity safely and efficiently, expand their online sales, and research more sustainable and efficient agricultural practices.

"We believe that aiding Colorado Quinoa's growth will have a significant effect on the larger valley community, including increasing jobs, promoting sustainable farming practices, and furthering locally minded business models in the San Luis Valley," says Kent Curtis, First Southwest Community Fund President. "The Colorado Quinoa group is comprised of knowledgeable farmers and successful businessmen who have had lasting success with their agricultural endeavors and we anticipate Colorado Quinoa will be no different. We're excited to see how the funding from the Rural Business Development Grant positively impacts their continued growth and impacts the community."

For more information on this grant and potential 2019 grant opportunities for your rural Colorado business, please contact First Southwest Bank's Community Development Director, Roxanne DeMarco, [roxanne.demarco@fswb.com](mailto:roxanne.demarco@fswb.com). As always, grants are subject to Congressional approval.



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### **About First Southwest Community Fund**

As a 501c3, First Southwest Community Fund supports the dedicated entrepreneurial spirit of rural Colorado, by investing in the people, culture, and ideas that fuel innovation and financial knowledge in our community, with an emphasis on areas of greatest need. First Southwest Community Fund achieves this by providing low-cost business and agricultural lending, supporting educational programs that prepare people to participate in the mainstream economy, enhancing early learning and development opportunities, and augmenting technology and other public amenities. Please find more information about First Southwest Community Fund at [fswcf.org](http://fswcf.org).

### **About First Southwest Bank**

Serving the San Luis Valley and rural Colorado for more than 100 years, First Southwest Bank offers personal and business banking at their seven branches, with an emphasis on businesses supporting rural communities. First Southwest Bank and their employees actively live-in and give back to our communities, volunteering with more than 40 local organizations, and donating to 115. As a CDFI bank, First Southwest Bank is focused on cultivating valuable relationships, investing in economic and social doers, and fostering a well-lived rural culture. More information about First Southwest Bank is available at [fswb.com](http://fswb.com). Member FDIC, Equal Housing Lender

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