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Methamphetamine Costs Colorado Communities

November 14, 2002

Research Summary

During the last two years, the use and production of methamphetamine has cost communities in Northeastern Colorado nearly \$1 million, the [Fort Morgan Times](#) reported Nov. 12.

According to a study by the Colorado State University (CSU) Cooperative Extension and the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, government costs related to methamphetamine increased by \$916,850 from 1999 to 2001 in Morgan, Logan, Washington, Yuma, Phillips, Sedgwick, and Kit Carson counties.

"Rural areas have become a target for methamphetamine labs because the chemicals necessary for its production, such as those in fertilizers, are readily available in farming communities," said Liliias Jarding, a CSU Cooperative Extension community-development specialist. "The labs can be located in isolated areas which help manufacturers hide the associated traffic and manufacturing process. The monetary costs to these counties, not to mention the emotional costs or loss of human potential to drugs, are significant and relatively new."

The study analyzed the direct and indirect costs of methamphetamine-related problems on agencies associated with drug use, including child abuse and neglect, substance abuse, mental health, family violence, emergency-health services, law enforcement, court costs, fire, and property damage.

According to the report, direct costs increased 31 percent and indirect costs rose 94 percent during the two years studied.

"The methamphetamine problem in our area is not going to go away," said Tom Westfall, chairperson of the 13th Judicial Meth Task Force. "In fact, it is sure to increase in the coming months and years unless we take steps now to do something about it."