I had the opportunity to complete a 500 hour internship with the Weld County Department of Health and Environment. This experience has provided me with a wealth of knowledge in the field of Environmental Health and has been a great way to transition from my senior year in college to the working world.

I was hired by Weld County to perform level one and two, low risk retail food establishment inspections. Level one and two establishments are places such as gas stations and fast food restaurants, where they usually have strict internal or corporate regulations and therefore do not pose as great of a risk to public health. I was trained by other inspectors in the department and got to shadow them as they did their inspections. I then completed semi-independent inspections where I completed an inspection under the supervision of a trained inspector. Soon enough I was out on my own and with the help of my inspection kit I was a restaurant inspector!

I have gone to over 100 restaurants and have cited about 200 violations in total. The most common violations that I have seen include a buildup of mold in ice machines, improper glove use and handwashing, and either cold hold or hot holding violations. The health department works to enforce the Colorado Retail Food Establishment Rules and Regulations, in an effort to help to ensure that the public is protected from foodborne illnesses.

This experience has taught me a lot of valuable information regarding public health, food safety, and government enforcement. I was also able to learn more about other aspects of this department which included septic system inspections, lab work, and air quality monitoring.