



News from the field for our supporters • FALL 2022

Harvest



Making a Difference For Local Farms

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*Rosendo Santizo in a new tractor
purchased with grant funding.
(CISA photo)*

Massachusetts Makes its Biggest Investment in Food Security in Decades

When you’re enjoying your local salad, you probably aren’t thinking about refrigerated trucks, cold storage, wash stations, commercial kitchens, and all the other essential infrastructure that is needed to grow, distribute, and prepare local food. Thanks to a new state grant program, farmers all over Massachusetts received some of the largest investments in our food system in many years. Created in the wake of the pandemic, the Food Security Infrastructure Grant (FSIG) provided \$22.5 million in grants over the past two years for capital investments in our statewide food system. Locally, these grants are helping farmers and food businesses safely and efficiently get their product to our plates – and CISA staff was there to help them successfully apply for funding.

Rosendo Santizo, the new owner of Winter Moon Farm in Hadley, received an infrastructure grant as he was taking ownership of the farm from Michael Docter. “I feel very lucky that we got this grant right when we were buying the farm. The equipment is helping me to do a better job, more quickly, and more efficiently,” he said. “Now I have a big tractor to plow, mow, and harrow so I don’t need to rent a tractor anymore. We also got a root washer, which is a huge relief because it’s bigger and faster than our old one—and much more efficient. We also got a four-wheel drive truck that will allow me to drive in the fields without being scared of getting stuck, like I was with our old truck. It will let me move faster in the field. We worked with CISA on our application, and CISA helped us with the farm ownership transition as well. We are so grateful for their help!”

Funding for capital investments of this scale is very rare, and the process is highly competitive. As part of CISA’s assistance to farmers, we review applications and provide feedback to strengthen their chances. Over the last two years, our team helped 36 farms secure almost \$5.5 million in grants.

“I’m very glad CISA’s skilled staff was able to support so many businesses in successfully applying for this funding,” said Phillip Korman, CISA’s Executive Director. CISA is working with legislators and partners to advocate for \$20 million to continue this important program.

Farming will never be an easy job, though critical infrastructure like irrigation and hoop houses can play a huge role in maintaining farm operations in the face of extreme swings in weather. With drought conditions this year on the heels of an extremely wet growing season last year, these infrastructure investments will help in the short-term and will pay benefits for years to come. Grants like FSIG will be an increasingly important piece of the funding puzzle that is needed to strengthen our food system.

Your donations fuel CISA’s services to farms and our advocacy for these kinds of investments.



Photo: Genevieve Higgins

“I feel very lucky that we got this grant right when we were buying the farm. The equipment is helping me to do a better job, more quickly, and more efficiently. We are so grateful for this grant and CISA’s help!”

Rosendo Santizo
WINTER MOON FARM, HADLEY

Congratulations to All Farmers

All Farmers, a non-profit organization that works alongside immigrants and refugees to provide tools, training, and access to land for farming, has obtained its IRS tax-exempt status 501(c)(3). CISA had been serving as the fiscal sponsor for All Farmers since 2018. In addition to its 501(c)(3) status, All Farmers recently acquired a community garden site in West Springfield, and hopes to acquire more land in the near future.

 [Learn more at allfarmers.world](https://allfarmers.world)



All Farmers helps connect immigrants and refugees to farmland.



CISA’s technical assistance helps farmers navigate the many challenges of running a farm business.

Sharing the Love

Your ongoing support of CISA allows our staff to help farmers tackle the many challenges of running farm businesses and farmers’ markets. Below are excerpts from a recent anonymous survey of farmers about the assistance CISA provides (thanks to YOU!):

“CISA’s assistance with grant applications has been monumental! As always, their workshops are valuable resources of information, education, and networking.”

“I can’t even imagine how I would have gotten through my first season without CISA’s assistance.”

“I cannot thank CISA enough for being so helpful to farmers’ markets. The resources and support you provide are invaluable to market managers.”

Welcome Julia and Benjamin!

We're thrilled to welcome two new board members, Julia Coffey and Benjamin Bland.



Julia Coffey

In 2010, Julia Coffey established Mycoterra Farm, now in South Deerfield, which has become the largest certified organic mushroom producer in MA, and MA Food Delivery, a statewide delivery service of local food.

Julia notes, "As a farmer, CISA has been an invaluable support in the startup and growth of my farm. I'm passionate about building sustainable and resilient local food systems and thrilled to further this personal mission, while giving back to CISA by serving on the board of directors." Julia is about to launch a new product line of mycelium compost and open a new farm store.



Benjamin Lee Bland, III

Benjamin Bland was born and raised in Springfield, and is now the Mass in Motion Coordinator within the Springfield Department of Health and Human Services.

"As the child of a single teenage parent who relied throughout

my childhood on emergency food and programs such as SNAP and WIC, I stepped into food systems work striving to be intentional about the material conditions, lived realities, and quality of life issues that disproportionately impact Black, Brown, low income, and otherwise marginalized neighborhoods and communities," he reflects.

CISA's Board of Directors are active members of our community, engaged in supporting local farms and local food! They help set the strategic direction and goals of the organization.



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Catherine
Sands



Tessa White-
Diamond



Elizabeth
Wroblicka



The Local Hero radio spotlight on WRSI is one way CISA shares farmers' stories.

Don't Miss the Full Story

CISA is consistently listening to farmers and sharing their stories as well as information on other important topics, like climate change and inflation.



 You can read and listen to these stories at buylocalfood.org/pressroom