

2007 Annual Report



OUR MISSION

Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA) links farmers and communities to strengthen agriculture and enhance the economy, rural character, environmental quality, and social well-being of western Massachusetts and partners with other organizations in its region and around the country to sustain agriculture.

Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture
One Sugarloaf Street, South Deerfield, Massachusetts 01373
413-665-7100 • www.buylocalfood.com

CISA is an equal opportunity service provider and employer.

Dear Friends,

During two days in the spring of 1995, a very young organization called CISA invited a group of dedicated supporters of local agriculture to talk about their visions for a strong agricultural economy. It was my honor to be among those present.

The report from those two days in March, "Sustainable Food and Farming in the Connecticut River Valley: A Vision" read, in part:

We envision a Valley food and farming system that is economically, environmentally and socially sustainable, and that:

Fosters economic viability for all farmers engaged in the commercial production of agricultural products;

Nurtures and sustains a healthy natural resource base;

Is supported by a strong, vital community informed about sustainable food and farming issues;

Values and promotes healthy food and a healthy environment;

Offers and supports opportunities for farming and agriculture-related enterprises;

Respects and supports farmers and farmworkers and assures food security.

CISA will celebrate its fifteenth birthday in 2008. The vision is the same now as it was in 1995, but the list of names is longer. More farmers are involved with CISA. More community members support CISA. More partnering organizations reach out to CISA for collaboration. We have become a Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture. Citizens are buying more local food and farm products, and are eating more seasonally. Low income seniors and school children are eating more fresh, local food.

Hospitals, workplace and college cafeterias are buying from local farmers.

Let's keep growing. Let's keep making our region's agricultural economy stronger and stronger. Let's protect our environment and our food supply.

Let's make sure that CISA celebrates another fifteen years of vision and leadership. I will be there for the next adventure.

I hope you will be there too.



Annie Cheatham
Annie Cheatham
Executive Director

Participants in the original "Future Search Conference," March 16-18, 1995

Tom Akin	Paul Maiewski
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Alex MacPhail	Mark Zenick



Ben Barnhart

To Market, to Market...

The local food movement surged in 2007. Farmers' markets expanded, food blogs multiplied, and food and farming books were national bestsellers.

When you see a list of local greens featured on the chalkboard at the Black Sheep Deli or learn that Baystate Medical Center is serving local ground beef each week, do you wonder how these products made their way from pastures and cropland to the kitchen? For some producers, the path to the marketplace is relatively easy. For others, supplying the demand can be a challenge. The journey may be complicated by regulatory requirements or by limited options for processing, packaging, and distribution.

As more people seek local food, farmers are reaping the benefits of joint marketing with CISA. The challenge today is to shape and supply that demand to ensure that farmers' capacities, community resources, and customers' expectations are in synch.

As new markets evolve, such as large retailers, institutions, and busy restaurants, both the volume and the type of demand are changing. These consumers may require quality certifications, seek greater affordability, or ask for attractive packaging.

In recent decades, food production and processing have been consolidated and industrialized. The result? Our local infrastructure

—the systems, skills, and facilities needed to get agricultural products to our tables—has eroded. There are few remaining skilled butchers; milk processing facilities have consolidated; and area farmers must

now transport their products across the Northeast to create finished products from their livestock or add value to their locally grown vegetables.

CISA works with farmers to research and test on-farm systems and processing options that can help make the farm-to-table journey a smoother one. Along the way, we're asking these questions;

What is required to process salad greens according to institutional food safety standards, and does it make sense for local growers?

How can local livestock and poultry farms process their animals when they need to, and with the care they expect?

How can dairy farmers add the most value to their milk products?

As we work with local farmers, we hear many responses to these challenges. They voice clear concern about the limitations they face in processing products and meeting customer needs, but express decided optimism about the growth potential in these new markets.

*It takes
community
support and
innovative
infrastructure
options to keep
our agricultural
heritage alive.*



Gloria and George Holmes

Bud Shuback

Senior FarmShare Program Builds Community

The Senior FarmShare program supplements senior diets ... it also offers farmers reliable income, and enriches the community.

Just a few years ago, a friend suggested that Gloria Holmes check out CISA's Senior FarmShare program in Turners Falls. Now, she and her husband George enjoy fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables—and lend a hand to others at the distribution site.

In over twenty communities, seniors whose needs are met by the program become shareholders at a local western Massachusetts farm. In return, they receive delivery of the farm's varied harvest at no cost, for ten weeks during the peak of the growing season. In Turners Falls, fifty people take part in the program at the Powertown Apartments.

As volunteers, George helps unload the delivery truck every week and Gloria bags and distributes the organic produce from Red Fire Farm, in Granby. "Everyone thinks I'm the farmer!" jokes George.

For this couple, it's a great benefit. They clearly relish retirement. High energy people with full lives, they both enjoy volunteering. In his spare time, George snowshoes, camps, and teaches rifle and handgun skills—and both are avid readers.

Before retiring, George owned and managed Manny's Sport Shop, where hunters, trappers, and camping enthusiasts bought supplies and equipment. Gloria worked in the offices of the duMont

Company in Greenfield. With a sizable vegetable garden, Gloria canned and stored much of their produce. "She'd make 21 pies in a day!" George recalls. He still cares for their fifty-acre property in Gill, cutting "about 10 cords of wood a year."

Since 2004, CISA's Senior FarmShare program has offered a free share of the harvest to low-income seniors, with over 850 shares distributed to date. Local farmers have benefitted as well, receiving almost \$100,000 for their produce.

The Senior FarmShare program is clearly a success. It feeds seniors nutritious food, and in Franklin County, it also brought together families, volunteers and farmers at a spirited Harvest Supper. "If it weren't

for the program, a lot of these people wouldn't get fresh vegetables. I think CISA's doing a great job," says Gloria.

*Food is nourishing
in so many ways.
Seniors and farmers
appreciate the
chance to socialize,
to share experiences,
and to trade recipes
and cooking tips.*



Ben Perrault, Liz Adler, and their daughter, Olivia

Jeffrey MacMillan for U.S. News & World Report

On Learning to Farm

Like many young farmers today, Ben Perrault didn't come from a farming background. He wasn't sure if he could make a living as a farmer, but he had an ardent desire to work the land.

At 18, he began to work on farms in Vermont and Massachusetts, learning many approaches to growing food and closely observing the business of farming. Eager to own a farm of his own, Ben weighed his options. He developed a business plan and soon began to farm on leased land. He purchased the business operations of Ol' Turtle Farm in Easthampton. With his wife, Liz Adler, he started Mountain View Farm, a small community supported agriculture (CSA) farm, in 2005.

Today, Ben sells produce to families who pre-purchase the vegetables and fruit before he even plants them, supporting the farm with an early infusion of capital each year. As part of an admittedly aggressive business plan, Ben joined CISA's Local Hero campaign a year after launching Mountain View. His involvement with the program helped connect him to other farmers in the area and increased the number of shareholders in his farm—which now includes two other Local Hero businesses, Apollo Grill, a restaurant in Easthampton, and Abbondanza, a personal chef.

Through his participation in the Local Hero campaign, Ben made a highly productive connection with Baystate Health Systems, in

Springfield. Unlike the typical CSA arrangement in which shareholders visit the farm, Ben delivers vegetables to hospital employees. The new shares allowed Ben to double the size of his business—

previously impractical, since parking was limited at Mountain View. But more important, Ben tapped into a new market without risking his current operations. And he grew his business without putting pressure on other farms.

Today, Ben farms nearly 40 acres of land in Easthampton and Hadley, managing the logistics of moving equipment and staff to the appropriate fields. During the growing season, he employs two full-time and three part-time workers. Ten years into his career, he is proud of his accomplishments.

Ben knows that growing his business would have been harder and more time consuming without CISA. "CISA allowed

me to hit the ground running ... with my aggressive growth goals," he states. He also appreciates the connection CISA offers to the larger agriculture community. His wife Liz emphatically notes, "CISA makes the culture of farming more visible in the Pioneer Valley."

"CISA makes the culture of farming more visible in the Pioneer Valley."

—Liz Adler

2007 Local Hero Members

CISA's *Be a Local Hero, Buy Locally Grown* public awareness campaign has resulted in increased sales of local farm products at supermarkets, farmers' markets, farmstands, restaurants and institutions.

Look for CISA's Local Hero logo and display materials at our member establishments:

FARMS

Apex Orchards
Apple Valley Galloways/
Ashfield Stone
Atlas Farm
Austin Brothers Valley Farm
Australis Aquaculture
Barstow's Long View Farm
Bashista Orchards
Bear Mountain Farm
Bloody Brook Farm
Blue Heron Farm
Bostrom Farm
Bree-z-knoll Farm
Brookfield Farm
Brook's Bend Farm
Burnt Hill Berries
Calabrese Farm
Chase Hill Farm
Chester Hill Winery, Inc.
Chestnut Farms
Ciesluk Farm Stand
Clarkdale Fruit Farms
Cold Spring Chicken Ranch
Common Wealth CSA
Couch Brook Farm
Cowls Lumber and Sawmill
Cozie Nook Homestead Farm
& Florist
Crabapple Farm
Craigieburn Farm Alpacas

Crescent Moon Farm
Czajkowski Farm
Dancing Bear Farm
Dave's Natural Garden
Deerfield Farm
Devine Farms
Diemand Farm
Downhill Farm
E. Cecchi Farm
East View Farm
Echo Hill Orchards
& Country Market
Fini's Plant Farm
Flavors of Cook Farm
Food Bank Farm
Foxbard Farm
Foxfire Fiber & Designs
at Springdelle Farm
Freeman Farm
Full Bloom Market Garden
Garden of Delights
Gardenscapes
Goat Rising/The Farmstead
at Mine Brook
Godard's Red Hen Farm
Golonka Farm
Goosefoot and Garlic Farm
Gould Maple Farm, Inc.
Gran Val Scoop
Green Valley Produce
Hager Bros. Farm

Hamilton Orchards
Hanging Mountain Farm
Hardwick Sugar Shack
Hardwick Vineyard & Winery
Hartman's Herb Farm
Harvest Farm of Whately
Hawthorne Farm
Heyes Forest Products
Hickory Dell Farm
Intervale Farm
J & J Farms
J.M. Pasiecznik Farm
Johnson Hill Farm
Justamere Tree Farm
Kelso Homestead
Kenburn Orchards Bed
& Breakfast
King Creek Farm
Koran's Farm
LaSalle Florists
Linda M. Fuchs Greenhouse
Long Plain Farm
Louise's Old Glory Gardens
Manda Farm
Maple Corner Farm
Mapleline Farm
Martin's Farm

Massachusetts Woodlands
Cooperative, LLC
McKinstry's Market Garden
Mountain Orchard
Mountain View Farm
Muddy Brook Farm
Natural Roots
New England Wild Edibles
New Salem Preserves, Inc.
North Hadley Sugar Shack
Northwoods Forest Products LLC
Nourse Farms
Nuestras Raices
Old Friends Farm
Our Family Farms
Outlook Farm
Pine Hill Orchards
Pitchfork Collective



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& Greenhouse
Raspberry Patch Farm
Ravenwold Greenhouses, LLC
Red Fire Farm
Rice Fruit Farm
River Maple Farm
River Rock Farm
Riverland Farm
Robinson Farm
Rock Ridge Farm
Running Fox Farm
Sangha Farm
Sapowsky Farms
Seeds of Solidarity Farm
Shattuck's Sugarhouse
Shoestring Farm
Sidehill Farm
Simple Gifts Farm
Small Ones Farm
Smiarowski Farm Stand
and Creamy
Sojourner Sheep
Songline Emu Farm
Steady Lane Farm
Stockbridge Farm
Stone Meadow Gardens
Sullie's Vegetable Farm
Swartz Family Farm,
Diamond Fresh
Szawlowski Potato Farm
Teddy C. Smiarowski Farm
The Atherton Farm
The Bars Farm
The Benson Place
Twenty Acre Farm

Twin Oaks Farm
Valley View Farm
Valonen's Farm
W & W Farms
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West Branch Farm
West County Hard Ciders
Wheel-View Farm
Whitney Acres
Wilder Brook Farm
Wilder Hill Gardens
Williams Farm Inc.
Winterberry Farm

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Andrew's Greenhouse
Annie's Garden and Gift Store
Carol Pope
Glenbrook Gardens
Hadley Garden Center
New England Wild
Flower Society
Pine Nook Daylilies

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Big E's Super Markets
Big Y World Class Markets
(Amherst, Chicopee, East
Longmeadow, Greenfield,
Longmeadow, Ludlow, Palmer,
South Hadley, Southampton,
Southwick, Springfield, Ware,
Westfield, and West Springfield)

Blue Moon Grocery
Cornucopia Foods
Foster's Super Market Inc.
Green Fields Market
Greenfield Farmers Cooperative
Hardwick Farmers
Co-Op Exchange
Maple Farm Foods
McCusker's Market
Serio's Market
Squash, Inc.
State Street Fruit Store/
Cooper's Corner
Stop & Shop Supermarket
(Feeding Hills, Greenfield,
Hadley, Northampton,
and Westfield)
The Old Creamery
Whole Foods

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Bart's Homemade
Hedgie's Hot Stuff
Real Pickles
Richardson's Candy Kitchen

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Black Sheep Deli
Blue Heron Restaurant
Bottega Cucina
Bridgeside Grille
Butternuts Eatery

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Cup and Top Cafe
Del Raye Bar & Grill
Earthfoods Café
Eastside Grill
Fitzwilly's
Great Wall Restaurant
Hillside Pizza
Holy Smokes
Mama Iguana
Panda East
Paul & Elizabeth's
People's Pint Brewpub
Pizzeria Paradiso
Ristorante DiPaolo
Spoleto Group
Sylvester's Restaurant/Roberto's
Tabella Restaurant
The Night Kitchen
Union Station Restaurant
Wagon Wheel Drive-In

INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERS

Amherst College
Baystate Dining Services
Cooley Dickinson Hospital
Franklin Medical Center
Lathrop Retirement Communities
Mary Lane Hospital
Northfield Mount Hermon
Smith College
University of Massachusetts
Amherst Dining Services

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CISA appreciates every gift large or small. The most common way to support CISA is through an unrestricted gift of cash, securities, or personal property. Such gifts are immediately available for use in our programs and operations. *The following individuals and businesses contributed \$100 or more to CISA's Annual Fund:*

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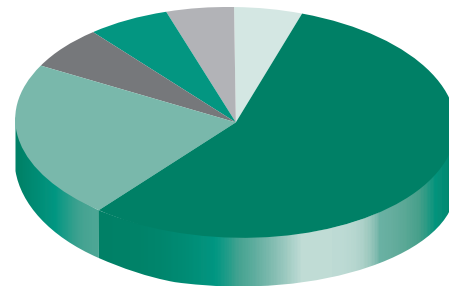
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CISA 2007 Year-End Income Sources



■ Grants and government contracts
■ Individual and business contributions
■ Local Hero membership dues
■ Rental income and program fees
■ Advertising and merchandise sales
■ Interest and other

Total income: \$821,333

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Back cover photograph by Betsy Feick
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Mirrored Lisianthus —a bouquet from the Northampton Farmers' Market

CISA gratefully acknowledges Annie Cheatham's tenure as Executive Director from November 2001 through January 2008, and wishes her well in all future endeavors.



*“One of CISA’s great strengths is that it involves
producers, consumers, and everybody in between.”*

Steve Goodwin, Dean of the College of Natural Resources
and the Environment, University of Massachusetts, Amherst;
CISA board member



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