















community
involved in sustaining
agriculture

Letter from CISA's Executive Director and the Board Chairperson

What is it about this Valley that allows our farmers to grow some of the highest quality food and farm products in the world, even when faced with daunting weather issues and a harrowing economic recession that is only just beginning to recede? The answer is the soil beneath our feet, the talent and risk taking of our neighbors who farm, and our community's willingness to roll up its sleeves and stand by our farmers.

When Hurricane Irene wreaked havoc on farms, a community member stepped up with a \$50,000 matching gift that inspired the creation of the CISA Emergency Farm Fund.

Individuals and businesses from across the region came forward and more than met the challenge! (See page 4) Others, such as Equity Trust, Whole Foods Market and the MA Department of Agricultural Resources partnered with CISA to ensure success in this new endeavor. As a result, six farms have received no-interest loans of up to \$10,000 and will be able to continue farming despite the impact of Irene. Thanks to a visionary catalyst in our community, and hundreds of responsive donors, a critical safety net is now in place for our local farms.

When CISA's Senior FarmShare program was threatened, the community saved the program until government funding was restored in July 2011!

Community members once again stepped up to the plate with donations to keep CISA's Senior FarmShare running. As a result we were able to provide 245 low-income elders a slice of the summer harvest. Public support was critical in the restoration of government funds for this vital program, and in 2012 CISA plans to increase the number of elders participating in the program to 350 recipients.

When the economic recession struck, the community increased its purchases of locally grown food and farm products!

Since 2007, the number of farmers' markets in the Valley increased over fifty percent. During that same four year period, we have gone from the *concept* of buying local in the winter, to the *establishment* of five ongoing winter markets in Amherst, Greenfield, Northampton and Springfield. The community launch of Winter Fare in Greenfield in 2008 was key and it sparked huge interest in locally grown winter crops through workshops, barter markets



More and more people are engaged in talking and acting to change our world.

and family fun. In 2011, one-day winter fare farmers' markets in Greenfield, Northampton and Springfield generated almost \$90,000 in revenue for our farmers.

More and more people are engaged in talking and acting to change our world. When CISA issued its report, *Scaling up Local Food*, hundreds of people downloaded the publication, and attended a forum held by Pioneer Valley GROWS. The number of Local Hero farms and related food businesses increased 5% to over 315 businesses, and the number of community members belonging to CISA's membership program increased 10% to over 700.

Clearly we are hungry to grow, shop, and bring into our homes the food and farm products that sustain our local economy and environment. CISA's success is all about our farmers and you, our community. Together we are changing this world, row by row, and we are excited about what the future holds.

Thank you for standing with your region's farmers. Your support is critical to their success.

Sincerely,

Philip Korman Executive Director Rachel Moore Chair, Board of Directors

Thanks to You 2011 was a Smashing Success!

A Share of the Local Harvest for All

245 low-income elders received subsidized farm shares through our Senior FarmShare program and CISA matched the first \$10 in SNAP (food stamps) purchases at our Winter Fare Farmers' Markets, making healthy local food more accessible to low-income families.

Keeping our Farm Businesses Strong and Thriving

Our survey of over 200 of our Local Hero farmers indicates that the Local Hero Program has had a positive impact on 96% of participating farms. In 2011 CISA offered 59 workshops and one-on-one technical assistance consultations, with 454 participants.

The CISA Emergency Farm Fund

CISA and partners launched a new fund to help farmers recover from Hurricane Irene. Community members and businesses raised over \$100,000, and the fund made no-interest loans to six farms. This revolving fund will provide an ongoing safety net after catastrophic weather events for our small farms.

Seeding a New Generation of Farmers

Nineteen women participated in the Whole Farm Planning workshop series for new women farmers. Topics in this ten-class series ranged from financial planning and marketing to soil fertility and best practices for grazing.

Scaling Up the Local Food System

CISA's *Scaling up Local Food* report has been well-received locally and nationally. Many Pioneer Valley residents are engaging in the question of how to support sustainable growth in our local food system, participating in conversations like the Pioneer Valley GROWS Fall Forum in October on entrepreneurship in the food system, attended by 120 people.











We've got big plans for 2012 and we hope you join us!

Building connections between farmers and communities is the core of CISA's work. Working towards our vision of thriving farms that feed our region means helping farmers reach individual consumers through direct sales outlets like farmers' markets and CSAs, but also means strengthening wholesale outlets for local farm products and helping local food reach neighborhoods that have historically lacked access to fresh, healthy food. It means building community with our political stakeholders to ensure that policies on the ground work for farmers while meeting the needs of consumers.

As our community keeps widening and growing we hope you will continue with us on this local food journey as friends, colleagues, members and financial supporters. This work is only possible with your trusted support and guidance.

www.buylocalfood.org



Western Massachusetts isn't known for its hurricane season. Blueberry season, yes, but hurricanes? That was a shocker. So as Hurricane Irene made its way up the Eastern Seaboard members of our community prepared for the worst and hoped for the best. As the storm passed by, most of us felt like we had dodged a bullet.

Yet before we could exhale a collective sigh of relief the scope of the devastation became clear. Western Massachusetts was spared high winds, but devastating rains and the flooding that followed caused millions of dollars in damage. Heartbreaking stories began to trickle in that many farms lost entire crops at the height of harvest, and many more suffered some form of crop loss or property damage to land, barns or machinery.

"Helpless is the best way to describe how we felt as a staff," said Philip Korman, Executive Director of CISA. In the first 48 hours CISA put out information to farmers about how and where to apply for loans, and began rounding up volunteers to help with farm clean up. "It just didn't feel like enough."

And then something quite unexpected happened.

An anonymous donor offered CISA a solution—a \$50,000 matching grant to start a local loan fund to support farms that suffered damage due to Hurricane Irene. "I was overjoyed and a bit overwhelmed," recalls Korman. "With a \$50,000 matching grant on the table I had little doubt that members of our community would meet and exceed this matching gift; the problem was, we didn't know how to start and run a loan fund."

As CISA staff began to look to the community they realized their Rolodex was overflowing with the names and numbers of those who could help. At the same time, Dave Jackson of Enterprise Farm and Whole Foods Market were conversing about how to support farmers while ensuring safe food for their customers. Both immediately jumped at the idea of starting and supporting a local loan fund. Calls went out to friends at Equity Trust who had the knowledge to guide CISA staff through setting up the fund and managing the

Individuals, businesses, and institutions sent money.

money coming in. CISA board members were generous with their time and expertise in the financial and legal management of a loan fund, as was the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources.

When the CISA Emergency Farm Fund opened its virtual doors the community responded. Individuals, businesses, and institutions sent money. "We are so grateful for every penny," says Korman. "All of us at CISA are awed by the caring and commitment of this community to our farms. This is truly a community fund."

By providing small, no-interest loans, the CISA Emergency Farm Fund adds a critical piece to the resources available to farmers in an emergency. "Some farmers need more money than we can provide," Korman notes. "USDA loans play an essential role for them. But for some farms, our loan fund will provide essential assistance in this and future disasters. Farms are using the funds to rebuild greenhouses, buy seeds, and replace plant stock that was lost to flooding. They don't have to repay the loan until after the next growing season, after they have some money coming in."

The Fund met and exceeded its \$100,000 goal. The Loan Committee has made six loans to local farms that are now on their way to their own economic recovery. And our community can rest a little easier knowing that we have put a safety net in place for our small farms, helping to ensure that we all have access to healthy food for our families now and into the future.

4 2011 ANNUAL REPORT

Opportunity of a Lifetime: Couple Finds New Life in Abandoned Easthampton Orchard

Russell Braen and Alane Hartley knew they wanted to be farmers long before they knew the location of their farm.

"We were living in Maryland, just outside of D.C., when 9/11 happened. We saw people all around us become less friendly and more reclusive." For many people 9/11 was a time to reflect. For Russell and Alane it became a time to create an action plan for a very different life. They decided to move closer to family in the Northeast, find a town with a greater sense of trust and community, and fulfill their dream of owning a farm. "We looked in Downeast Maine where we had met years ago picking blueberries, and all around Vermont," Russell recalls. Ultimately it was an internet ad for a farm in Easthampton that led the couple to explore the Pioneer Valley as a possible location for their farm, but it was the welcoming atmosphere and strong community commitment to support and buy local food that had them stay. "The ad offered 'the opportunity of a lifetime', which we thought meant a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, but actually meant the opportunity to spend the rest of your life farming," Russell remembers. In 2007, six years after their initial plans were made, the pair bought Park Hill Orchard in Easthampton where they found the community they were seeking.

Taking over an orchard that had been untended for more than a decade came with its share of challenges and opportunities. After a thorough inventory of the farm the couple realized that most of the trees were past their useful life and had to be cut down. This unexpected setback opened up new opportunities to grow varieties known for their flavor and fresh market appeal, and unlikely to show up on supermarket shelves. Compared to the standard wholesale varieties that were bred to store and ship well, "this is a different fruit," Russell explains. Wood from the old trees was sold to a local bakery as fuel for their bread oven.

The challenge of bringing an abandoned farm back to productivity made Russell and Alane particularly appreciative of the resources available in their new community. "It was serendipity. CISA found us right away and offered technical assistance and mentoring," says Russell. A Whole-Farm Planning course Alane took through CISA's Women in Agriculture network provided tools the pair needed to make



Park Hill Orchard's Alane Hartley and Russell Braen

major decisions about the direction of their farm business. Farmers and orchardists have been quick to offer their help as well. "We do a lot of sharing of ideas and equipment between the four or five farms on our street," says Russell, "and many of the orchards host UMass Extension educational meetings which are a great way to gather knowledge and get to know the other growers."

The new trees at Park Hill Orchard are set up for organic and low spray growing with rows spaced widely apart to improve air flow and reduce disease problems. The trees are planted on dwarf rootstock and managed intensively on trellises. Trees planted in this way are ideal for pick-your-own harvesting, produce fruit more quickly after planting, and have a higher yield per acre than older standard-size trees.

Russell and Alane are making good use of production research done at UMass and other research institutions. New weather-based models allow farmers to predict pest life cycles with razor-sharp precision, which allows much softer pesticide use. Breeding programs have yielded hardier trees that produce more apples and withstand pest pressure without sprays. Energy is becoming more precious, and Russell hopes their farm will be uniquely positioned to thrive in a world where energy conservation is paramount.

The "farm of the future," as Russell and Alane see it, stewards both the land and the community, making full use of these new management tools while affording neighbors and customers a strong connection to the land where their food is grown. The Massachusetts Cultural Council recently awarded Russell and Alane a *Gold Star* award for blending commercial agriculture with the arts. Their *Art in the Orchard* sculpture installation drew thousands of new visitors to the farm, suggesting that they are well on their way to achieving their twin goals. Now that's a farm with a future!

Whether you want to pick your own or just pick up some fresh fruit at your local orchard the options are abundant!

Apex Orchards, Shelburne
Atkins Farm, Amherst
Bashista Orchards, Southampton
Bear Path Farm, Whately
Bear Swamp Orchard, Ashfield
Calabrese Farms, Southwick

Clarkdale Fruit Farms, Deerfield
Cook's Farm Orchard, Brimfield
Dickinson Farm
& Greenhouse, Granby
Godard's Red Hen Farm, Florence
Hamilton Orchards, New Salem

Kosinski's Farms, Westfield Lanali Farm, Ashfield Mountain Orchard, Granville New Salem Preserves, Orchards & Cider Mill, New Salem Outlook Farm, Westhampton Park Hill Orchard, Easthampton
Pine Hill Orchards, Colrain
Quonquont Farm, Whately
Sentinel Farm, Belchertown
Small Ones Farm, Amherst
Springwater Farm, Ashfield

2011 Staff

Philip Korman Executive Director

Pamela Barnes Director of Development (January-May)

Stacy Carkonen
Director of Development
(June - December)

Margaret Christie Special Projects Director

> Kelly Coleman Program Director

> > Gina Gigante Bookkeeper

Claire Morenon Program Coordinator

Sam Stegman Program Coordinator

Devon Whitney-Deal Local Hero Membership Coordinator

> Jennifer Williams Office Manager

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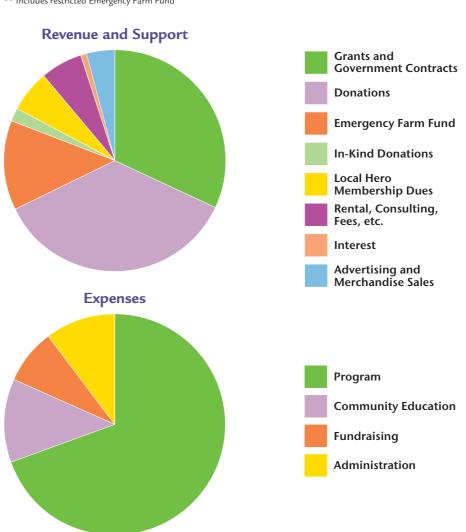
Paul Shoul, Jason Threlfall and CISA Staff

2011 Financial Summary

	2011*	2010
Revenue and Support		
Grants and Government Contracts	\$304,288.98	\$438,758.00
Donations	\$335,704.37	\$259,332.00
Emergency Farm Fund	\$121,488.00	\$0.00
In-Kind Donations	\$21,482.00	\$31,461.00
Local Hero Membership Dues	\$53,966.00	\$50,205.00
Rental, Consulting, Fees, etc.	\$58,650.00	\$34,468.00
Interest	\$355.00	\$283.00
Advertising and Merchandise Sales	\$41,629.27	\$29,100.00
Total Revenue and Support	\$937,563.62	\$843,607.00
Expenses		
Program	\$497,411.31	\$578,388.00
Community Education	\$87,902.46	\$59,368.00
Fundraising	\$59,650.92	\$35,290.00
Administration	\$71,785.62	\$101,816.00
Total Expenses	\$716,750.31	\$774,862.00
Change in Net Assets	\$220,813.31	\$68,745.00
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	\$271,916.00	\$203,171.00
Net Assets, End of Year**	\$492,729.31	\$271,916.00

^{*}Unaudited figures. Audited figures are available upon request.

^{**} Includes restricted Emergency Farm Fund



CISA is grateful to the following individuals, businesses, foundations and government agencies whose generous contributions in 2011 provided critical support for our programs and operations.

Community Members

Anonymous (5)

Mark and Wendy Abramson

Thomas Accomando and Jeffrey C. Stone

Martha Ackelsberg

Ron Ackerman and Cleo Gorman

lesse Adams

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Emma Adler Golden

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