We truly hope this finds you healthy and well. So much remains up in the air as we move into the fifth month of our challenging new reality, but there are a few things that are certain: we all need to eat and local farmers have stepped up to get more food to more people. CISA staff are working to help farms adapt, adhere to changing safety regulations, and get food to customers as safely as possible.

We’ve done an incredible amount of work for and with farms since closing our office and switching to working remotely in mid-March. The sheer volume of questions and challenges that farms have had since this began has tested our staff’s capacity, and your continued financial support has meant we can really focus all our efforts on ensuring farms have the best information available.
March
CISA helped two farm collaboratives to launch, providing deliveries right to the doorstep.
A newly created COVID response resource page on our website became a go-to source of information for farms.
Consumers were able to get up-to-date info on new purchasing options and closures at farmers’ markets, farm stands, and restaurants on CISA’s website.

April
The community donated over $90,000 to reopen the Emergency Farm Fund to provide farms impacted by the pandemic with zero-interest loans up to $25,000 in partnership with the Franklin County CDC.
Reviewed and disseminated changing government regulations and programs on loans, workplace safety, and employee benefits to hundreds of farms and related businesses.

May
CISA held our first ever virtual Annual Meeting. A panel of farmers and board members talked about how COVID-19 has impacted their work.
Our 2019 annual report was released online detailing the past year and what we’re moving forward with in 2020.
Advocated for increases in HIP funding to help ease demand.
The Springfield Farmers’ Market at Forest Park, Greenfield Farmers’ Market, and the Tuesday Market in Northampton opened up with technical assistance from CISA.

June
CISA champions free testing for all farm workers in western Massachusetts at the Big E with support from State Senator Comerford and Representative Blais.
CISA collaborated with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, the Franklin County Chamber, and others to provide bulk purchasing for PPE for all farms in Franklin, Hampden, and Hampshire counties.
Over $250,000 in Emergency Farm Funds have been loaned to local farms!
We need to acknowledge the powerful and necessary Black Lives Matter movement that has swept the country. There are several Black-led organizations in the area who are working in the agriculture space that we encourage you to support:

Gardening the Community
gardeningthecommunity.org

Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust
nefoclandtrust.org

Springfield Food Policy Council
springfieldfoodpolicycouncil.org

Where can you get local food?

Local farms and food businesses have stepped up in truly superhuman ways to keep safely feeding our communities. We’re keeping track of local farms, farmers’ markets, and farm stands that are open for the season, and the ways they’ve adapted to the pandemic. Visit buylocalfood.org/farmguide to learn if your local market is open!

Because of demand and need we’re thrilled to run our Senior FarmShare program for the 16th year! We’re working closely with senior centers and community centers to help over 450 vulnerable low-income seniors access a 10-week vegetable share.

We’ve worked with partners to advocate for increases in HIP funding in response to the dramatic rise of food insecurity driven by the pandemic. We’re keeping an up-to-date list of HIP vendors on a dedicated HIP/Pioneer Valley Facebook page as farms continue to get added.

Events

We’d usually be able to tell you about our upcoming events to engage with farmers, local food lovers, and CISA staff and board. We know that the Fall Harvest Celebration at Valley View Farm will not take place in September as planned, though we’ve already reserved our date for 2021. Our priority is ensuring safety for staff and supporters; we will continue to think through in-person and remote event options.
2019 Financial Summary

Revenue and Support

- Other Income: $45,712
- In-Kind Donations: $14,882
- Program Support: $128,934
- Donations: $406,166
- Foundation and Government Support: $818,112

Total Revenue and Support: $1,413,806

Expenses

- Fundraising: $157,656
- Administration: $62,998
- Program and Community Education: $1,154,099

Total Expenses: $1,374,753

Read the full Annual Report at: buylocalfood.org

Golanka Farm, Whately
Photo by Leslie Lynn Lucio