



seed+harvest

SUMMER 2023 NEWSLETTER

An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. In the foreground, there are several agricultural fields with different colors of green and brown, indicating various crops or stages of growth. A dirt road cuts through the fields. In the middle ground, there is a cluster of buildings, including a barn and some houses, surrounded by trees. The background shows a range of mountains under a clear sky.

Looking Ahead for Our Local Farms and Our Community

Equity Work in Action
Helping Farmers Adapt to Climate Change
More Local Food to More Seniors
Welcoming Three New Board Members

Meadows in Deerfield

PHOTO BY ALLISON BELL

Equity Work in Action

At CISA, we're working to create a local food system that is resilient, inclusive, and just. In recent years, we've added skilled Spanish-speaking staff members who can communicate directly with the many Spanish-speaking people in our food system. CISA staff helped seven Holyoke-based farmers, who farm with the support of our long time partner Nuestras Raíces, to improve their local visibility and marketing. CISA helped the farmers develop farm logos and branded material. Program Coordinator Zoraia Barros, over some long farm walks, interpreted for the designer as the farmers shared their background and farm visions. "Zoraia ensured that we were able to engage in a collaborative process despite the language barrier, which allowed us to create designs that were meaningful and useful to each individual farmer," said Alessandra Corbett of Homegrown Studio. "With Zoraia's help, we met with each of the Spanish-speaking farmers individually and listened to their stories, as Zoraia translated for us with great care, enthusiasm, and respect."



CISA staffer Zoraia (left) prepares for a day of helping farmworkers apply for the frontline worker stipend at a food distribution event hosted by the Pioneer Valley Workers Center.



Holyoke farmer Benito Torres and his family model t-shirts with the farm's new logo created with CISA's help.

PHOTO BY THE HOMEGROWN STUDIO

Zoraia and Stephen Taranto, our current Spanish speaking staff members, have also been busy this year helping farmworkers access federal pandemic relief funding for front line workers. They worked with the Pioneer Valley Workers Center to enroll farmworkers during their free food distribution events and visited ten farms to help workers access these funds. "Breaking the language barrier was essential to building trusting relationships with this audience," said Zoraia. They are continuing to help farmworkers fill out their paperwork and this spring the CISA team helped 400 farmworkers sign up for this program, which will distribute \$600 to each person for their service during the pandemic—that's \$240,000 in the hands of farmworkers! "This funding will be incredibly helpful to the farmworkers who receive it. Our farming community has been supportive of helping farmworkers access this funding—we have helped several farm owners learn about the program so that they can share it directly with their workers too," said Zoraia.

This important work is funded by you and a federal grant received by a sister organization in Pennsylvania, PASA Sustainable Agriculture. Your ongoing support gives us the ability to invest in talented and dedicated staff who can jump in and help build a better food system, one local farm and farmworker at a time.

Your Support is Helping Farmers Adapt to Climate Change

Thanks to your support, CISA helps farmers with the many challenges of running a weather-dependent business—from managing an immediate crisis to diversifying their business model. Increasingly, climate change is weighing on farmers' minds, and factoring into every conversation we have about the future of farming.

Your support and CISA's grant funders made it possible for CISA to provide small climate adaptation grants to six farm businesses and organizations to take proactive steps to make their land and business more resilient. One of those businesses, Reed Farm in Sunderland, used funding to go to Maine Compost School last fall. With their new knowledge, they are implementing an on-farm composting operation that will transform their byproduct waste into nutrient-rich compost and provide a new product for the farm. "We certainly hope it will generate income for us," said Kat Chang Laznicka, the co-owner of Reed Farm, "but the best part is that it closes a loop on our farm, making use of chicken manure and spent bedding, and keeps organic matter local."



Your support helped send Reed Farm's Kat and Peter Laznicka to the acclaimed Maine Compost School to learn about starting a new compost operation from Mark King (center), the Director of the school.

PHOTO BY REED FARM

Composting for Business Diversification and Climate Change Adaptation

September 21, 4-6 pm

Reed Poultry Farm, 136 Russell St, Sunderland

Come learn firsthand about what your support made possible at this "Climate Change & Farming Week" event about on-farm composting for climate adaptation.

Register at buylocalfood.org/events



Thanks to you, CISA's Senior FarmShare expanded to 700 elders this summer.

More Local Food to More Seniors

Thanks to your ongoing support, CISA has expanded our Senior FarmShare program to 700 people, up 40% from last year. Through this program, low-income seniors receive a 10-week summer farm share that is coordinated through community partners like senior centers and Councils on Aging. "With the community stepping up to support this program, we were able to add the Westfield Senior Center and Veterans Park Apartments in Holyoke as Senior FarmShare distribution points, which are helping 200 more seniors access locally grown food throughout the summer," said Philip Korman, CISA's Executive Director.

The program is a win-win, providing needed income to farmers at the beginning of the season, and ensuring that more people get to enjoy healthy, delicious food grown nearby. "Last year, the farm share made a huge difference in eating healthier. Not to mention, the veggies were so much fresher than what we see at the grocery store," said Zoe, one of the participants. "It's really nice to see programs specifically for the health of folks 60+."

CISA's goal is to further expand this valuable program to 1,000 seniors. Working together, we'll help more people enjoy the local harvest!

Welcome New Board Members!

We are thrilled to welcome three new people to CISA's Board of Directors.



Hameed Bello

Hameed is the owner/operator of Agric Organics in Wilbraham. He is a community-oriented farmer and pharmacist with a background in biotechnology and business.



Samaita Newell

Sam is the owner/operator of Fruit Fair Supermarket. Her mission is to feed her neighbors with fresh, nutritious foods and to improve food access across Chicopee and Springfield.



Jeremy Werther

Jeremy Werther is the chef and owner of Homestead in Northampton, where he makes all the pasta from scratch and maintains a seasonal, inventive menu with an emphasis on local.

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.



Shawn Robinson,
Chair



Jenny Ladd,
Vice Chair



Al Griggs,
Treasurer



Myra Marcellin,
Clerk



Hameed
Bello



Benjamin Lee
Bland, III



Glenroy
Buchanan



Kat Chang
Laznicka



Julia Coffey



Wally
Czajkowski



Samaita Newell



Caroline Pam



Catherine
Sands



Jeremy Werther



Tessa White-
Diemand



FIELD NOTES is online!

In case you missed the live event, you can enjoy these one-of-a-kind stories from farmers and people in the food system online today at buylocalfood.org!

Your support is essential to building a better local food system for everyone!

"We appreciate the solid support CISA gives to local farmers in so many ways, the focus on food justice and environmental health and sustainability, and more. We are glad to support an organization that is such an important part of our local communities."

- Jean Krogh, CISA Supporter

CISA

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Questions or feedback?

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