



“Western Mass Feeding Western Mass...and Beyond”

Thanks to input from farmers, community members, other organizations, board, and staff; CISA now has a new road map for engaging communities in an exciting vision of “Western Mass Feeding Western Mass... and Beyond.” Over the next three years, CISA will:

Strategy 1: Connect more people to local farms

- Engage in market research to expand the Local Hero campaign in Hampden County;
- In cooperation with partners, open new business markets for farmers in the three counties;
- Strengthen farmers’ markets in the three counties by helping them reach broad sectors of their communities; and
- Increase restaurant and institution purchases of locally-grown food.

Anticipated impact:

- Provide urban residents with more access to local food and farm products;
- Increase the visibility and viability of farms (and the restaurants, retailers and institutions that purchase locally);
- Serve as an economic driver for the local economy; and
- Provide a national example of the power of connecting farmers and communities.

Strategy 2: Ensure that more local farm products are available for all, including low-income residents

- Identify and prioritize the most urgent infrastructure needs and bring new business expansion to fill the gaps;
- Market the Valley as the “breadbasket” for Massachusetts and as a model for the nation;
- Expand the Senior FarmShare program to reach 350 low-income elders and solidify its funding; and
- Partner with organizations whose missions are to alleviate hunger.

Anticipated impact:

- Strengthen the local food system as local gaps in dairy or meat processing, salad greens, etc., are bridged;
- Expand markets to accommodate more local agricultural products;
- Increase flow of outside investments to the area;
- Improve access to fresh local food for low income residents as processing and distribution needs are filled; and
- Effect an immediate positive impact on low income residents by directing investments in food access programs.

Strategy 3: Promote excellence in farm business practices and advance sustainable farm business models

- Expand the Local Hero program through increased enrollment to a total of 220 farms and more than 100 restaurants, retailers and other businesses;
- Increase the number of technical assistance programs and services offered to farmers; and
- Establish a new farmer mentor program.

Anticipated impact:

- Farms will become more viable and farmers will grow more local food and farm products; and
- Farm practices will be more economically and environmentally sustainable.

Strategy 4: Educate and inspire people to become more involved in local agriculture

- Increase visibility of agriculture and local food-related activities in all three counties;
- Educate the public through community membership, special events, interactive website features, compelling content in our print and electronic communications, and increased media exposure; and
- Meet and educate our local officials.

Anticipated impact:

- Increase community involvement;
- More schools and other community institutions buying locally;
- More farmland protected for agricultural use; and
- More town and state policies supporting local farming.

If you have any questions or would like to be involved in helping CISA turn this vision into reality, please contact Pamela Barnes, Development Director, 413-665-7100 or pamela@buylocalfood.org.