



2015 World PEAS Food Hub Annual Report



World PEAS is a program of the New Entry Sustainable Farming Project.

Our mission is to improve our local and regional food systems by training the next generation of farmers to produce food that is sustainable, nutritious, and culturally-appropriate and making this food accessible to individuals regardless of age, mobility, ethnicity, or socio-economic status. In doing this work, we provide critical training, career development, and economic opportunity to new farmers.

www.nesfp.org

Overview

World PEAS Food Hub, a program of New Entry Sustainable Farming Project, serves as a flexible, living wage market for limited-resource and beginning farmers, many of whom face continued barriers to accessing high value markets such as limited English language skills, limited production capability, and lack of time/transportation. World PEAS purchases the majority of its produce from 30+ farmers who have graduated from the New Entry Sustainable Farming Project's Farm Business Planning Course. World PEAS also assists farmers by establishing crop production schedules in the winter, offering a microloan program to producers and providing guaranteed marketing outlets through our CSA and sales to institutions, non-profits, and other outlets.

World PEAS continues to address ongoing food justice issues in our region by working with low-income food access partners to make fresh food affordable to low-income families. In 2015, we added two new food access partners [the Salvation Army Kroc Corps Community Center and the Merrimack Valley Food Bank] in addition to expanding relationships with existing partners. We also continued to serve a handful of restaurants and dining halls, adding one new restaurant customer during the 2015 season. We expect our sales to institutional markets, including food access partners, restaurants and dining services to increase in 2016.



Although the World PEAS Food Hub began primarily as a CSA [Community Supported Agriculture] program, we have seen our sales in the CSA market decreasing over the past several years. Between 2014 and 2015, the total number of CSA shareholders decreased from 458 to 382 – a difference of seventy-six individual shareholders. This downward pressure on CSA sales is likely due to increased competition from Massachusetts-based CSA programs as well as an increase in prevalence of farmers markets. We hope to create a strategic marketing plan for the 2016 season to increase – or at least maintain – the current number of World PEAS Shareholders. Total WPFH revenues in 2014 was \$321,213 and total revenues was \$289,560 in 2015.

Farmer Earnings

The total sales to farmers between 2014 and 2015 reflects the change in CSA size. In 2015, World PEAS purchased a total of \$191,249.30 of produce from farmers compared to \$218,388.31 in 2014. As in previous years, the World PEAS Food Hub Coordinator supplemented purchases from New Entry program farmers with produce from established farms to ensure an adequate amount and variety of produce available to customers. We continue to purchase the majority of our produce [70%] from New Entry farmers, providing them with fair compensation for their work.

2015 saw a significant decline in New Entry program farmer earnings compared to previous years [see figures 1 and 2 below]. We attribute this to a decline in CSA shareholders and relatively small growth in farm-to-institution sales. In addition, several New Entry program farmers chose to scale back their farm operations this year due to other full time commitments [school, children, second occupation, etc.]. At least two New Entry farmers faced significant growing challenges due to lack of preparation for pests and disease. We expect that technical assistance provided to these farmers by New Entry's Technical Assistance Coordinator will prevent similar incidents in the future.

While the earnings through World PEAS are insufficient to constitute a farmer’s only source of income, these earnings are an essential component of household income for many New Entry program farmers. The majority of New Entry farmers are among the 80% of American farmers who have an off-farm job. Total earnings by farmers over the course of several years, shown on the graphs adjacent, are significant.

Average Food Hub Sales by New Entry Program Farmers

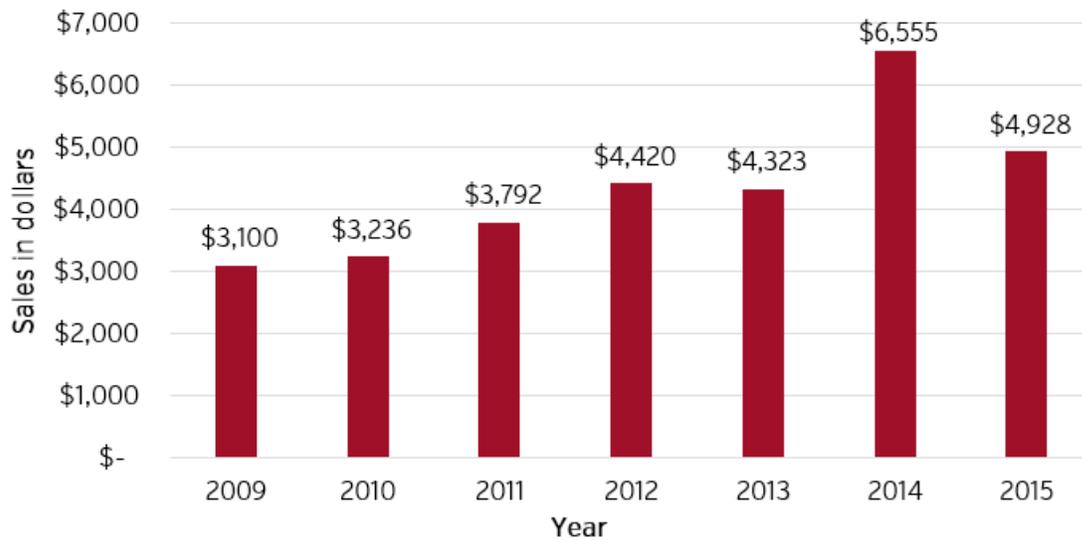


Figure 1: Average sales to World PEAS Food Hub made by New Entry program farmers (farmers who have gone through New Entry’s Farm Business Planning Course and/or Incubator Program).

Combined New Entry Program Farmer Income

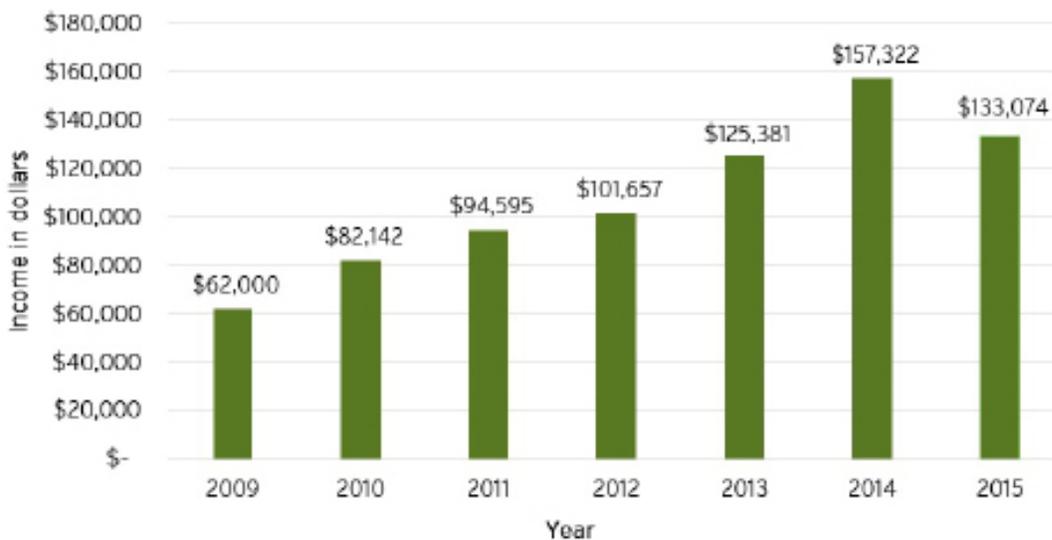


Figure 2: Total income to New Entry program farmers (farmers who have gone through New Entry’s Farm Business Planning Course and/or Incubator Program) calculated by combining all sales made by New Entry farmers to World PEAS.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

The CSA continues to be the majority of World PEAS' total sales, making up 68% of total food hub sales. Though the shareholder base has slightly decreased, the CSA model continues to be the most viable market for New Entry farmers in terms of flexibility and livable wages.

New Entry Staff, including the World PEAS Food Hub Coordinator, Beginning Farmer Resource Coordinator and Technical Assistance Coordinator worked together in 2015 to provide quality feedback to New Entry program farmers in the area of crop production. As a result, 89% of shareholders reported that crop quality was either consistently good or generally good. Shareholders also reported that our newsletter, weekly recipes, and variety of produce set us apart from other CSAs. Shareholders were attracted to the fact that fruit is included in the price of any size World PEAS CSA share, something often charged as "extra" in other CSA's. World PEAS and New Entry staff members also provide farmers with a significant amount of assistance in crop planning, allowing farmers to plan their harvests alignment with the needs of the food hub.



Shareholder Testimonials



"I have been a World PEAS CSA member for 4 years and I love it! There is a good variety of vegetables every week, and great information provided on selections that may be a bit unfamiliar. The newsletter has recipes and storage information that is useful. The program is well run, the produce is excellent quality and I love the fact that people are learning to make a living at organic farming through the program."

"World PEAS was my first CSA experience and it was lovely, an interesting variety of veggies never tried and old favorites were frequently available, getting to help folks is such a great perk too!"
"This was my first CSA. It will not be my last. The produce was excellent and some was new to me. Loved the whole experience and especially the food!"

"We organized a CSA Farm Share Program at our office and not only was it a great experience to receive fresh organic produce each week, it brought together several people from different departments and business groups that otherwise wouldn't. The comraderie between co-workers as we shared recipes and cooking stories was very special."



Increasing Food Access

In 2015, World PEAS worked with a dozen organizations serving low-income clientele that we categorize as our “Food Access Partners.” These organizations graciously distribute World PEAS produce to their clients through farmers markets, produce featured in meals cooked on-site, homebound senior CSA deliveries, and more. The World PEAS Food Access sales grew significantly in 2014 (by 224%) and that growth continued in 2015 (by 7.6%). In total we distributed \$88,606 worth of produce to our Food Access Partners and contributed \$14,913 in subsidy to leverage their purchasing power. In total, we served low-income and low-access clientele through 14 separate distribution channels [see Figure 3]. In 2015, World PEAS introduced the “Fair Share” option where customers can choose to contribute \$6.50/week to fund low-income food access programs. A total of 31 Fair Shares were sold, representing 8% of total shareholder purchases.

Population Served

In 2015, World PEAS produce reached the tables of approximately 1,800 low-income people through farmers market style distributions, meals cooked on-site, and homebound CSA deliveries. The majority of clients were served through meals cooked on-site using World PEAS produce for the meal. Weekly “farmers’ markets” were extremely successful at five senior center distribution points. Participants were able to pick up \$15-\$22 of vegetables along with a newsletter featuring storage instructions and recipes. Seniors participating in a weekly farmers market self-reported that they ate more fresh vegetables due to the market and will continue to do so in the future.

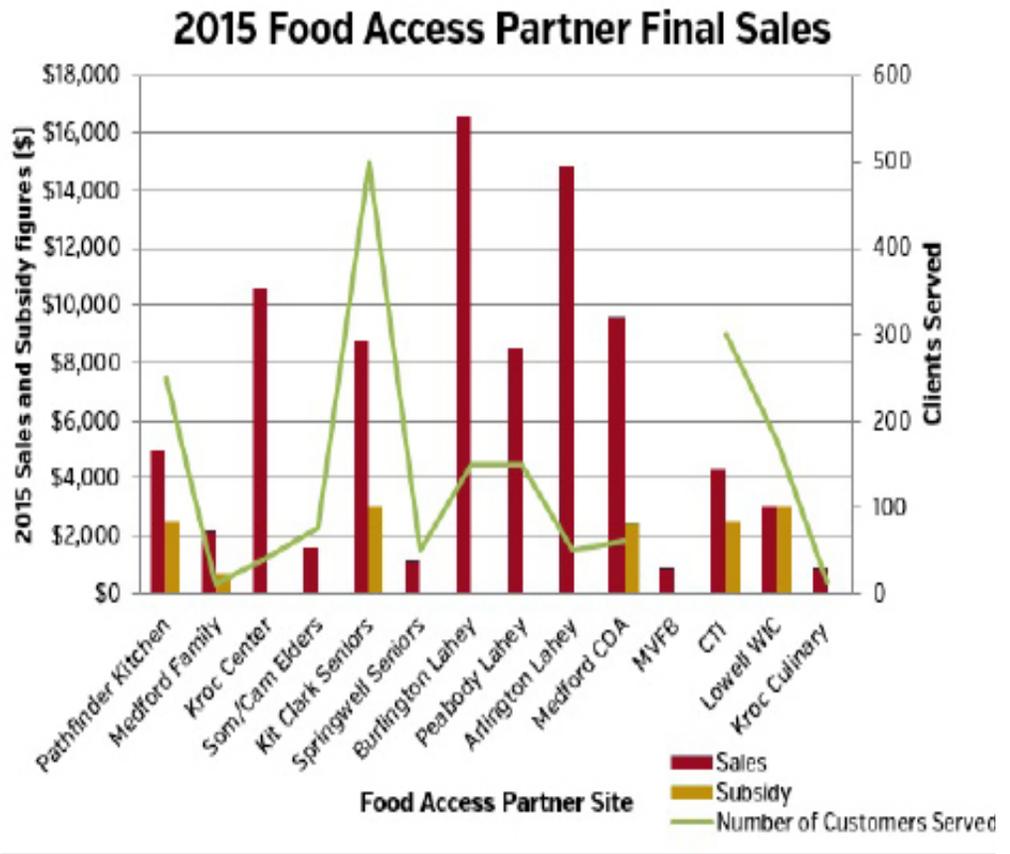


Figure 3: 2015 sales and subsidy figures compared to number of clients served at each food access partner site.

The success of a particular site is very dependent on our Food Access Partner’s staff capacity and how committed staff are to the World PEAS mission and serving their clients fresh local food. Overwhelmingly, the most positive feedback came from sites operating a farmers’ market-style distribution, suggesting that this may be a high-impact way to connect clients to produce.

In order to measure program impact, World PEAS staff sought customer feedback at food access sites through a paper survey tool. In total, 124 responses [33% response rate] were recorded from six separate partner sites. Respondents cited a number of barriers that prevented them from eating more fresh fruits and vegetables, with the largest being physical disabilities (Figure 4).

Outcomes of Fresh Produce Program

- 94% of participants ate more fruits and vegetables
- 90% of participants self-reported that they would purchase/consume fresher produce in the future
- 94% of participants will cook more fresh items in the future

Trends

The impact assessment data exposes trends that can be relevant for future decisions regarding our food access work. Most importantly, the data suggests that clients would be consuming more fresh produce on a regular basis if barriers to access were decreased. Specifically, physical disabilities and cost are the greatest barriers for respondents.

Transportation was also a limiting factor, which may be related to physical disability and age. Overall, clients overwhelmingly felt that the fresh produce program helped them eat more vegetables and clients will continue to eat more fresh items even after the distribution ends. Greater consumption of fresh produce is ultimately the goal of the food access program so data verifying the goal is extremely promising.

Selected Testimonials

"I thoroughly enjoy everything you gave me. I also enjoy the history about the farmers and where the produce comes from. I also like your recipes. I hope they do it again next year. Thank you again."

"I actually enjoy trying the new and unfamiliar items because it forces me to think outside of the box and try new things."

"Some items are strange to me but I cooked with them. The newsletter is very helpful with info on veggies, farmers and recipes. This week I made lemongrass tea and used leeks in potato soup."

"Very excellent program. It has helped me keep up good nutrition through the summer and I have enjoyed the produce I did not know about."

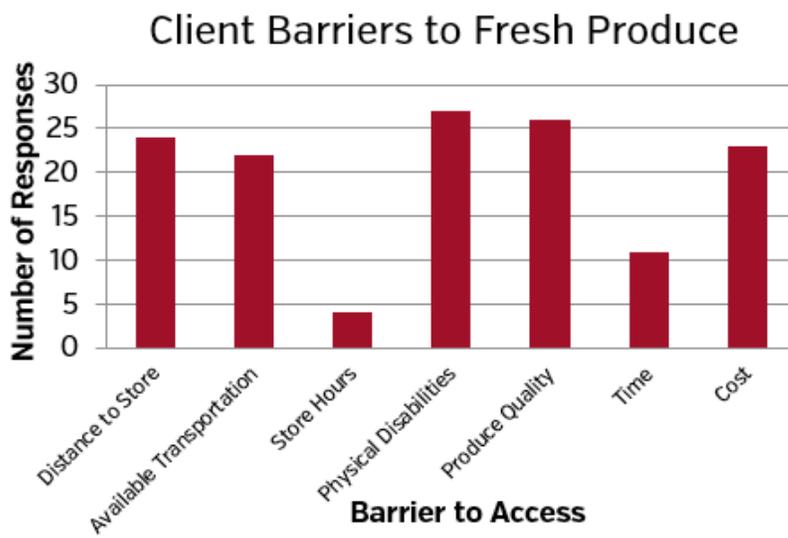


Figure 4: Perceived barriers to fresh produce, based on a survey of 124 individuals who received fresh produce via World PEAS' food access partners.



Farm to Institution

In 2015, World PEAS increased sales to restaurants and dining halls. We continued to deliver fresh, local produce to Artistry Inn on the Green and to Tufts Dining Services. In addition, we supplied produce to a farmers' market on the Tufts University campus in Medford. We also added a new restaurant account, Tamper Café, close to the Tufts campus in Medford. The Café was interested in sourcing local produce and heard about World PEAS through increased marketing efforts in the area.

World PEAS would like to increase sales to restaurants and dining halls in 2016. A group of Harvard University Business School students will be researching marketing strategies for World PEAS to help achieve this goal.

Staff, Intern, and Volunteer Experience

The World PEAS Food Hub could not function without the help of our invaluable volunteers! volunteer sharepackers assist the World PEAS staff in packing shares and bulk orders each morning, sorting and aggregating produce that will eventually feed CSA shareholders, restaurant customers and beneficiaries of food access partners across the greater Boston area. Without volunteer sharepackers, our farmers' produce would not reach so many mouths and bellies!

Volunteer cluster coordinators enable World PEAS to establish pick-up locations in eastern Massachusetts and are responsible for maintaining the cleanliness and functioning of each pick-up location. Both sharepackers and cluster coordinators are compensated with a free Small Share for their efforts.

In a survey distributed to all 2015 World PEAS volunteers, 75% of participants reported that learning about sustainable agriculture and food systems was a motivation for volunteering with us. These same participants also stated that they wanted to "gain experience in the sustainable food sector," indicating that volunteering at World PEAS may be a way for individuals to explore a new career field and potentially build their resumes. The World PEAS staff was very pleased to note that 100% of survey participants stated that they were either "very likely" or "extremely likely" to recommend this volunteer opportunity to friends and family.



World PEAS Income Statement

The World PEAS Food Hub experienced a deficit in 2015. The Food Hub continues to experience deficits, primarily due to its activities around food access, from which limited earnings are absorbed. The Food Hub deficit is covered through grants and donations, mainly funding our food access work. The deficit increase for 2015 can be attributed to a decrease in CSA sales, an increase in expenses related to low-income food access work, and an increase in indirect costs due to additional fees charged by our new fiscal sponsor for farmer payments. Our prior fiscal sponsor, Community Teamwork, Inc (CTI) did not charge indirect costs on farmer payments since farmer payments were considered to be passthroughs under CTI's organizational structure.

World PEAS Food Hub Actual and Projected Operational Profit/Loss

	Projections					Projections	
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
	302 Sm. Shares, 124 Lg. Shares, 137 Ext.	332 Small Shares, 80 LG. Shares, 94 Ext.	335 Sm. Shares, 76 Lg Shares, 56 Student	356 Sm. Shares, 50 Lg Shares, 52 Fall	264 Sm. Shares, 32 Lg Shares, 55 Fall, 31 FAIR Share	265 Sm. Shares, 32 Lg Shares, 80 Fall, 55 FAIR Share	265 Sm. Shares, 32 Lg Shares, 90 Fall, 65 FAIR Share
Price Per Share	Lg= \$705 Sm= \$465 Ext. = \$125	Lg= \$710 Sm= \$470 Ext. = \$130	Lg= \$795 Sm= \$525 Fall = \$225	Lg= \$805 Sm= \$540 Fall = \$235	Lg= \$815 Sm= \$545 Fall = \$240 FAIR= \$675	Lg= \$825 Sm= \$555 Fall = \$245 FAIR= \$685	Lg= \$835 Sm= \$565 Fall = \$250 FAIR= \$695
CSA Earnings							
Food Hub Commission + membership earnings	\$91,615	\$71,070	\$75,000	\$102,825	\$98,311	\$107,634	\$112,679
Total CSA Earnings	91,615	71,070	75,000	102,825	98,311	\$107,634	\$112,679
Total CSA Personnel	59,591	70,491	66,942	70,285	84,053	102,945	105,313
Total Improvements	610	862	129	548	105	108	110
Total Vehicles	1,465	0	1,759	8,102	13,427	8,000	8,184
Total Expenses for Travel	4,028	1,743	2,883	5,604	4,925	5,048	5,174
Total Other	17,350	19,724	22,290	25,039	25,909	26,557	27,221
Indirect Expense	7,416	8,152	8,446	11,671	31,149	36,056	37,465
Total Expenses	90,460	100,972	102,449	121,249	159,568	178,713	183,466
Retained Earnings (I)	1,155	-29,902	-27,449	-18,424	-61,257	-71,079	-70,787
Funding from Grants covering Marketing and Low-Income Initiatives	0	30,000	41,574	45,874	54,716	68,202	
Tufts Donation Account	13,921	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
Net Gain/Loss	15,076	15,098	29,125	42,450	8,459	12,123	-55,787

Plans for 2016

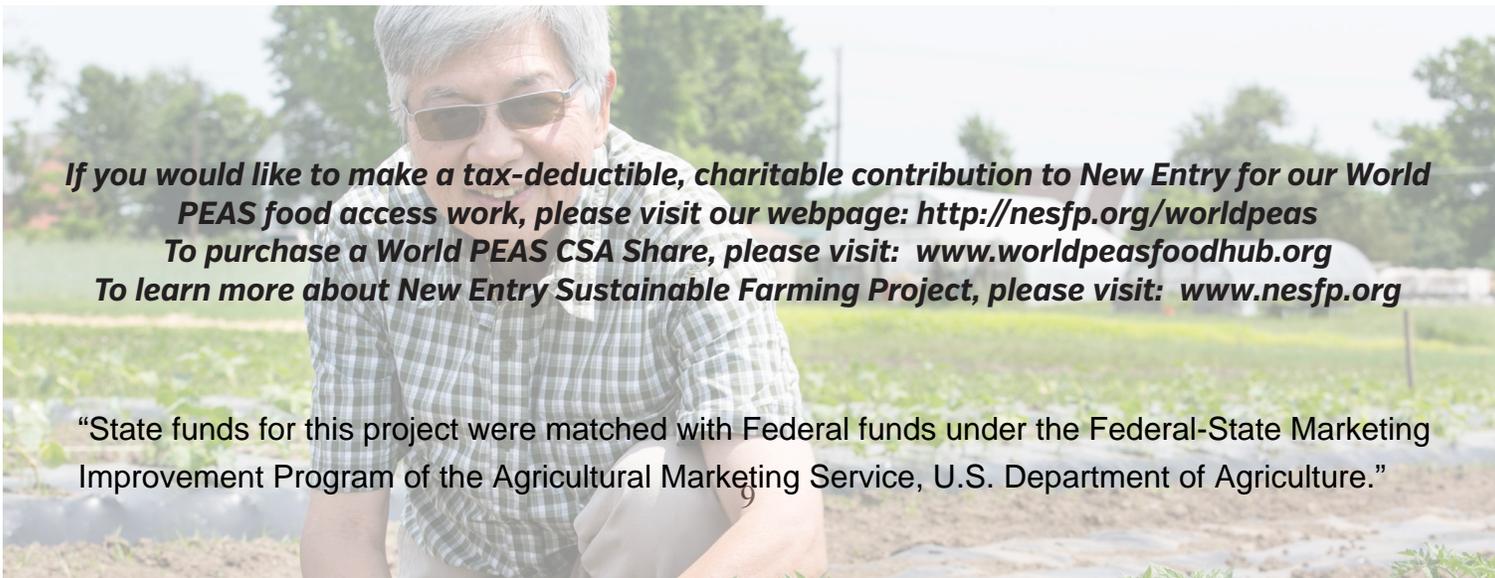
As we increase our food access work, World PEAS will continue to focus on the CSA program. We hope that more strategic marketing efforts will increase the number of shareholders in 2016. World PEAS will also be offering a new share option in the coming year. Our new Specialty Share will feature a wide variety of multicultural produce grown by New Entry's Cambodian and African farmers. The items included in this share will be grown organically and locally, unlike the majority of multicultural produce sold in Asian and African grocers. As with all World PEAS' products, beginning farmers will receive 79% of every sale. We hope that this Specialty Share will help boost our shareholder numbers as it provides high quality, organic, locally grown niche products directly to customers.

World PEAS will continue to expand our work with low-income food access partners and expand our restaurant and dining hall accounts. The market for farm-to-institution sales has increased by over 220% since 2013, and we expect it to become an increasingly important part of our food hub sales in coming years. Though New Entry's original mission was to support beginning farmers, serving low-income, food-insecure communities has become an equally important aspect of our mission-based organization. Ensuring that all neighborhoods have access to fresh, healthy food is critical in fostering a sustainable local food system.

Added staff capacity from three Americorps VISTA positions will relieve duties previously relegated to the World PEAS Food Hub Coordinator and allow more focused communication with food access partners, cluster coordinators, shareholders, and farmers. World PEAS will also be hiring a new full-time Food Hub Manager and second part-time driver who will be essential in providing staff capacity to cover our expected growth in 2016.

New Entry Sustainable Farming Project has been selected as a recipient of the Urban Agriculture Grant Program, distributed by Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources. This grant will allow World PEAS to purchase new infrastructure such as a walk-in cooler, replacing a refrigerated box unit for our delivery truck, and pack tables to improve the functioning of the Food Hub in 2016. These improvements are much needed as World PEAS has outgrown much of the original infrastructure purchased in 2005. Damage to one of our existing trucks prevented World PEAS from optimizing our transportation capacity.

The World PEAS Food Hub looks forward to addressing the challenges and opportunities presented in 2015. We thank all of our CSA shareholders, community partners, institutional customers, share packers and farmers for a wonderful 2015 season. With your help and generosity, we look forward to a fun, engaging, and bountiful season in 2016!



***If you would like to make a tax-deductible, charitable contribution to New Entry for our World PEAS food access work, please visit our webpage: <http://nesfp.org/worldpeas>
To purchase a World PEAS CSA Share, please visit: www.worldpeasfoodhub.org
To learn more about New Entry Sustainable Farming Project, please visit: www.nesfp.org***

“State funds for this project were matched with Federal funds under the Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program of the Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.”