

**Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP)  
Final Performance Report**

The final performance report summarizes the outcome of your LFPP award objectives. As stated in the LFPP Terms and Conditions, you will not be eligible for future LFPP or Farmers Market Promotion Program grant funding unless all close-out procedures are completed, including satisfactory submission of this final performance report.

This final report will be made available to the public once it is approved by LFPP staff. Write the report in a way that promotes your project's accomplishments, as this document will serve as not only a learning tool, but a promotional tool to support local and regional food programs. Particularly, recipients are expected to provide both qualitative and quantitative results to convey the activities and accomplishments of the work.

The report is limited to 10 pages and is due **within 90 days** of the project's performance period end date, or sooner if the project is complete. Provide answers to each question, or answer "not applicable" where necessary. It is recommended that you email or fax your completed performance report to your assigned grant specialist to avoid delays:

LFPP Phone: 202-720-2731; Email: [USDALFPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov](mailto:USDALFPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov); Fax: 202-720-0300

Should you need to mail your documents via hard copy, contact LFPP staff to obtain mailing instructions.

<b>Report Date Range:</b> <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	October 1, 2014 - September 30, 2016
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<b>Recipient Organization Name:</b>	Franklin County Community Development Corporation
<b>Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:</b>	Western MA Food Processing Center Expansion
<b>Grant Agreement Number:</b> <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-LFPPX-MA-0075
<b>Year Grant was Awarded:</b>	2014
<b>Project City/State:</b>	Greenfield, MA
<b>Total Awarded Budget:</b>	\$100,000

LFPP staff may contact you to follow up for long-term success stories. Who may we contact?

Same Authorized Representative listed above (check if applicable).

Different individual: Name: \_\_\_\_\_; Email: \_\_\_\_\_; Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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1. State the goals/objectives of your project as outlined in the grant narrative and/or approved by LFPP staff. If the goals/objectives from the narrative have changed from the grant narrative, please highlight those changes (e.g. “new objective”, “new contact”, “new consultant”, etc.). You may add additional goals/objectives if necessary. For each item below, qualitatively discuss the progress made and indicate the impact on the community, if any.

i. **Goal/Objective 1: To offer fair prices to regional farmers.**

a. **Progress Made:** Over the course of this project we purchased approximately 55,000 pounds of vegetables directly from regional farms (primarily carrots, potatoes, squash, peppers and broccoli). We continued to pay farmers the price they requested using our operating funds. In addition, we had more farmers bring their berries and produce to our facility where we processed and froze it for them. They kept ownership and sold them at farm stands and through CSAs during the late fall and winter seasons when they didn't have sufficient fresh product to offer. This resulted in them getting higher and more consistent prices for their harvest over a longer portion of the year.

Through this project we were able to pay farmers fair prices for their vegetables for two main reasons:

- **Marketing and Awareness:** The LFPP funds helped support the Harvest of the Month program, coordinated by our partners at the MA Farm to School program. This made schools aware of the value of purchasing local and the true costs of food. School lunch programs are on a tight budget but many of them do understand that high quality local food are worth more. They adjust their budgets, or use discretionary funds to accommodate it. This translates directly to higher farmer income.
- **Efficiency and Training:** The LFPP funds helped support trained, consistent staff so they could handle more vegetables per shift while expertly operating equipment for efficiently. This leads to a high quality product quickly and consistently. The Individual Quick Freeze (IQF) machine that we purchased in 2014 with a state grant is efficient and provides a high quality product that the customers want, while maintaining the nutritional integrity of the products.

b. **Impact on Community:** Farmers have communicated that in addition to being paid fairly, they also have fewer expenses than if they sold through other distribution channels. They drive fewer miles to deliver to us than their other customers and we accepted product in bulk so they were able to avoid packaging costs that add up quickly. Each 20lbs cardboard box cost about \$1.50, but we are able to take the produce in 400lbs bins which they could reuse. This reduced their expenses and unnecessary waste. The FPC also utilizes a 30 day payment cycle, which is significantly preferable to typical 60-90 day cycle from other market channels.

Some farmers chose to keep ownership of their crops but contracted us to freeze it for them. They then sold their frozen products in their CSAs, at Winter Farmers Markets, local cooperatives and retail locations during the winter to conscious consumers who value access to local year round. These were able to be sold at a value added premium, meaning higher farmer income.

ii. **Goal/Objective 2: To increase the amount of Farm to Institution sales through the FPC.**

a. **Progress Made:** We sold approximately \$30,000 of frozen local vegetables to schools and colleges. Primarily, this grant supported personnel and allowed us to do more research and development. Last year, we increased operational and equipment efficiencies in the facility. The quality of the frozen vegetables from the Individual Quick Frozen machine was greatly improved through trial runs and it was well received when our Food Business Development Specialist showed it to institutional buyers. Change in leadership in our anchor buyer, Chartwell's Management Company, created an unexpected challenge to selling to K-12 educational institutions and highlighted the significance of personal passion in shifting the supply chain to a more local, sustainable model. This ultimately led to a decrease in

sales, but allowed for the team to think more strategically on long term solutions to local food access. For example, the importance of contracts and agreements, multi-stakeholder buy in, and long term relationship facilitation came up as tactics for continual success. Outside of our efforts to integrate our product into the existing supply chain, we sold directly to several private schools and colleges in the area. One of the farmers we worked with kept ownership of his vegetables and sold the frozen product directly to Public Schools and Colleges in our region. While this was not the exact model envisioned at the beginning of the project, we were able to assist in the facilitation of frozen, farmer-owned produce to a large network of schools and colleges across Massachusetts.

During the period we started a new partnership with Just Roots, the Greenfield Community Farm. We developed and tested recipes and made large quantities of 5 different types of soup, utilizing local produce. We froze the soup and distributed it to K-6 schools in Greenfield as a way to test student interest, feasibility, and logistics in the kitchen. This has been well received and will expand to other schools. In addition to area schools the soup is also served at the local community soup kitchen, Stone Soup) on Saturdays. This pay-what-you-can café has increased from serving 40 low-income people to about 120 each week.

**b. Impact on Community:** Students of K-12 and Colleges and Universities had direct and easy access to local vegetables during the winter through soups and/or frozen produce utilized in menus from December to April. The soups and frozen produce are only a piece of the puzzle as they provide a way to educate students on local food systems, the importance of whole ingredients, and how healthy and delicious do not need to be mutually exclusive. The idea is to raise a generation of food conscious consumers. The grant has supported staff salaries to allow us to focus on relationship building and networking and we have had extensive discussions with the local Hospital and County Jail about procuring local foods, in tandem with providing educational opportunities on food systems and health.

iii. **Goal/Objective 3: To provide good tasting, healthy, nutritious, locally grown food to students and consumers throughout the year.**

a. **Progress Made:** This objective is similar to the number ii. In addition to institutions we were able to provide frozen vegetables and soup to other consumers as well. The soup, made from local vegetables, was also served at the farmers market during the fall and people as a way to begin marketing for the cold season.

b. **Impact on Community:** Our frozen produce was served at schools that have a high percentage of students that receive free or reduced price lunches and are less likely to eat healthy local vegetables outside of school. We were also able to sell to a distributor who is delivering our frozen vegetables to Springfield Public Schools. Springfield is one of the lowest-income areas in our state. In New England, and other northern states, healthy local vegetables are only available for a short season so being able to freeze them at peak freshness and distribute them in schools throughout the year is becoming more important.

iv. **Goal/Objective 4: To diversify the sales of the FPC by processing for the institutional market and the specialty food market.**

a. **Progress Made:** We made progress diversifying into the retail market. We developed 11lb pack sizes with an interesting, professional, simplistic label. We have focused our sales and marketing on three local markets. Green Field's Market, a natural food cooperative, commits that they will replace some of the frozen organic vegetables with our local, nonorganic ones as we have found that consumers value local first. Another natural food cooperative in the region, Quabbin Harvest, stocked 4 varieties of frozen vegetables. They were a big hit with their customers and sold out almost immediately. Foster's Supermarket is a family-owned local grocery store that plans to do special promotions around our 11lb

bags of vegetables once we obtain and implement UPC codes. These locations said they can pay almost twice the price of institutional clients because they know their customers will pay more. The retail size packages does entail higher packaging cost but will still provide a higher margin. This will be able to offset some of the pricing barriers for institutions, bringing down prices and creating more accessibility.

b. **Impact on Community:** With support from this LFPP grant our staff was able to conduct the necessary research and development for retail packs to learn more about pricing, packaging, and frequency of sales. Customer demand was overwhelming and many customers have reached out asking when and where they can purchase more. Phase 2 of this initiative will take place in the fall and winter of 2017 once we are able to incorporate feedback and produce more supply.

v. **Goal/Objective 5: To develop informational and educational materials for students, their families and for the public in general.**

a. **Progress Made:** The MA Farm to School staff developed outreach and educational materials through the Harvest of the Month program to promote the use of Pioneer Valley Vegetable Venture (PVVV) branded products in school, college and hospital cafeterias across Massachusetts. In partnership with the Franklin County Community Development Corporation (FCCDC) staff, they conducted direct and group outreach to food service staff within these institutions and distributors about the opportunities of sourcing local frozen produce through PVVV. MA Farm to School and FCCDC also provided technical assistance for farmers and institutional food service providers as well as promotional and educational programs to encourage the consumption of locally-grown foods in school meals. We used the Harvest of the Month carrots posters and cards to promote local frozen carrots throughout the year.

b. **Impact on Community:** MA Farm to School reaches hundreds of school dining staff and thousands of students statewide as facilitators and experts in the regional food system. During this grant period they continued to increase interest and demand for our vegetables. They were especially helpful in matching us up with the Springfield Public School and with Sodexo Management Company which is very interested in expanding this offering. Sodexo works with many schools and institutions. Therefore, once frozen local vegetables are in their catalogue, they could theoretically be offered to many other regional outlets.

vi. **Goal/Objective 6: To document progress made and disseminate the lessons learned widely so other regional food business enterprise can benefit.**

a. **Progress Made:** As one of the oldest Commercial Kitchen Incubators in the country (15 years in operation), the FPC receives frequent inquiries from newer facilities and from people wanting to start a similar facility. We have always felt that in order to build a healthier, more just and sustainable food system that has more equity for farmers, workers and consumers, we need to play our role in sharing the information we have and our lessons learned. With the LFPP grant we have been able to do more of that.

- We have been a leader in the Processors Community of Practice through Farm to Institution New England (FINE). We share information constantly back and forth with other FINE members and in particular the other 6 processors around New England. In March 2016, we hosted a 2 day meeting with people from 6 Food Processing Facilities in New England. We have been able to share information about working agreements, vendor contracts with distributors, processing equipment, operational and safety issues, distribution, institutional relationships, funding and pricing.
- The FCCDC's Executive Director (ED) and Food Business Development Specialist (FBDS) presented workshops during the Farm to School Conference in April at the University of Massachusetts and our Food Center Manager gave a tour as part of that conference, as well.
- We have presented workshops at the annual Harvest New England Conference and the annual North East Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (NESAWG) conferences.

- In Massachusetts, we have stepped up our role in improving the food system with the FCCDC Executive Director being appointed by the Governor to the State Food Policy Council and the Food Business Development Specialist has been the lead person for the MA Food Plan organizing the Processing sector.
- In December 2015, the state selected our Food Center to make the official announcement of the adoption of the MA Local Food Plan. The Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs, the Commissioner of Agriculture, many legislators, other dignitaries and stakeholders toured our facility and held a press conference to announce the Plan and highlighted our role.
- We organized a Food Day at the local YMCA and promoted healthy local vegetables.
- We have hosted 2 Product Development courses, taught with an Instructor from the University of Massachusetts Food Science Dept.
- The Executive Director presented at a workshop in Boston titled - Health, Community Development, and the Food Economy.
- The Executive Director was a guest speaker at a regional USDA Rural Development workshop.
- We recently completed a Case Study on our experiences so far in Freezing Local Vegetables that will be shared throughout the Food Hub network.
- We have held monthly informational sessions on the offerings of the FPC, including technical assistance, lending, and processing.

**b. Impact on Community:** On average we provide three tours each month of the Western MA Food Processing Center to groups from all over who are interesting in setting up similar operations elsewhere. In addition, we have become a learning center for students from area colleges. Greenfield Community College has brought several classes here, students studying Business and Sustainable Agriculture. Several University of Massachusetts classes have visited, students studying Food Science and Sustainable Agriculture. In a rural area of the state, these connections are vital to a thriving local economy.

We have done a great deal of marketing and generally raised awareness of the value and availability of local healthy vegetables. Our partners at the MA Farm to School program introduced us to the Springfield Public School dining service team. They use Sodexo as their Management Company and Sodexo is interested in the Harvest of Month marketing program. Even though school lunch programs are on a tight budget, many of them understand that high quality local food is worth more and they adjust their budgets to accommodate it. Springfield Public Schools and Sodexo are on track to open a new, state of the art facility for their food service programs. This shows their commitment to innovation and healthy food and the frozen product the FPC provides is a perfect fit for what they are hoping to achieve regarding healthier, more whole foods.

Ultimately, price is the biggest barrier for getting value added produce into institutions and this reflects a large, systemic challenge. Many food service directors express an understanding in the value for the product we offer but face incredible budgetary restrictions. We have learned that the small victories are to be celebrated and used as success stories to push for greater change. If we wish to continue to pay fair prices to workers and farmers, we will need to continue to find creative solutions to making local, sustainable food more accessible.

**2. Quantify the overall impact of the project on the intended beneficiaries, if applicable, from the baseline date (the start of the award performance period, September 30, 2014). Include further explanation if necessary.**

- i. Number of direct jobs created: 4 production assistants in the FPC
- ii. Number of jobs retained: With the additional equipment in the FPC several of our businesses have expanded and hired additional staff.
- iii. Number of indirect jobs created: On farm jobs are created and retained when the farm grows more to sell for freezing.
- iv. Number of markets expanded: We sold frozen vegetables to 14 different buyers including 6 distributors, direct to 4 schools and 7 CSAs/farm stands,
- v. Number of new markets established: 3 markets with grocery stores and cooperatives are starting 2017, 4 markets within affordable housing developments will start next year.
- vi. Market sales increased by \$13,659 and increased by 91%.
- vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 13 farmers and 18 other food producers.
  - a. Percent Increase: 62.5% increase in the number of farmers.

**The following is a list of businesses that use the Food Processing Center and utilize local ingredients during this grant period:**

1. Alicias Homemade	10. Horse Listeners Orchard
2. Artisan Beverage Cooperative	11. Just Soup
3. Autumn Hill Orchard	12. KimChi Fusion
4. Backyard Food Company	13. Maple Craft Foods
5. Drew's All Natural	14. Relish the Harvest
6. Fortunate Son	15. Snows Ice Cream
7. Goldthread	16. Try A Taste
8. Ron Hess	17. Ugly Fruit
9. Hill Orchards	18. Kitchen Garden

**The following list is the Farm who have used FPC during this grant period:**

1. Book and Plow Farm	8. Plainville Farm
2. Joe Czajkowski	9. Atlas Farm
3. Old Friends Farm	10. Long Plain Farm
4. Outlook Farm	11. Harlow Farm (VT)
5. Red Fire Farm	12. Wysocki Farm
6. Simple Gifts	13. Mokrzecki Farm
7. Stillman Farm	

**3. Did you expand your customer base by reaching new populations such as new ethnic groups, additional low income/low access populations, new businesses, etc.? If so, how?**

In addition to reaching schools with high enrollment in free and reduced lunches, we have started working with the regional hospital and the County Jail. These institutions involve several levels of administration – in addition to the Food Service person we have to work with the procurement people and business managers. We are on track to sell to them next fall.

During the past year, we also provided frozen vegetables to 2 non-profit community meal programs for holiday meals and special events:

- The Springfield Rescue Mission utilized 50 cases pepper, 50 cases coined carrot and 20 cases butternut squash for a total of 3,000lb.
- Stone Soup Café utilized 15 cases butternut squash and 4 cases pepper for a total of 475lbs.

We are proud to have been able to donate these 139 cases to homeless and low-income residents of our community.

During the course of this LFPP project we have developed a new project that we intend to implement in 2017 working with residents of 4 Affordable Housing Developments in the town of Greenfield. The project will provide a mobile market to these residents because they lack transportation options that limit their ability to obtain healthy local food. The mobile market will stock local fresh produce in season, as well as shelf stable products from our local natural food cooperative and our frozen vegetables and soups during the months that fresh vegetables are not available. The mobile market will also act as a way to test kid-friendly food items that would be easy to implement into Greenfield Public Schools.

#### **4. Discuss your community partnerships.**

##### **i. Who are your community partners?**

Having been involved in the regional food system for 15 years we already had many community partnerships. This LFPP grant allowed us to strengthen some of them and, as noted above, helped with the facilitation of partnerships with the county jail and the affordable housing developments. Our main partners have been the **Massachusetts Farm to School Project, Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture, Pioneer Valley Grows, Just Roots Community Farm, Farm to Institution New England, and Franklin County Food Council.**

##### **ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the LFPP project?**

**MA Farm to School** does continuous outreach and education about the importance of knowing where your food from and informing Dining Service staff about our local vegetables that can be served in the schools during the off season when fresh vegetables are not available. They also prepare materials that students and schools appreciate. They continue to send buyers and distributors to us.

**Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture** conducts outreach to regional farmers and connects to them to us so we can process their produce. They also help connect us to retail outlets in the area because they have a great reputation and we can be part of their Buy Local campaign which is a great success among consumers in western MA. Their Local Hero sticker is widely recognized region wide.

**Pioneer Valley Grows** is network of over 900 people involved in food and farming in western MA and they help with outreach and networking us with farmers as well as potential buyers. A network with a wealth of knowledge in all facets of the food system, a question does not go unanswered in this group.

**Just Roots Community Farm** is our partner in the local soup project. They do outreach to school and in the community. They are starting a soup CSA which will sell more of our products and raises more awareness about local food.

**Farm to Institution New England** connects us to other processors through the larger region where we can share and learn and continue to improve.

**Franklin County Food Council** was set up 3 years ago with the assistance of a USDA – NIFA Community Food Projects grant. There are approximately 25 member organizations and individuals and they have assisted this project with outreach and education.

##### **iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this LFPP grant?**

We have a good relationship with all these organizations and we will continue to work with them whenever we can. The FCCDC Executive Director is on the Advisory Council of MA Farm to

School and we will continue to do presentations at their annual conferences. The CISA Assistant Director is on the FCCDC Board of Directors. FCCDC is the Administrator of the PVGrows Community Investment Fund and FCCDC staff recently participated in the PVGrows Racial Equity in the Food System workshop. FINE recently received another LFPP award (through their fiscal sponsor Third Sector New England) to help Food Hubs in southern New England increase sales and we will be an advisor to that work. Our Food Business Development Specialist is on the Steering Committee of the Franklin county Food Council. Just Roots Community Farm, along with the Green Field's Market and Franklin County CDC will continue working together to provide healthy food to the residents of affordable housing developments that don't have currently have much access to it due to socio-economic barriers. The FCCDC is proud that it is an integral part of the local food system.

**5. Did you use contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the LFPP project?**

MA Farm to School has been a contractor on this grant and as mentioned above they did the majority of the outreach into schools. They have been around for more than 10 years and have developed meaningful relationships with School Food Service Directors so their connections gave us avenues into school systems. They have also been instrumental in advising the state legislature to develop new guidelines for schools to use more local foods. At each of their annual conferences we have had an opportunity to present the PVVV project to over 400 attendees.

This grant also helped us increase our cold storage capacity and prepare for a much needed 2,800 square feet of new cold, freezer and dry storage space. We contracted with an Architect and Engineer, Austin Design and Vreeland Design Associates, to complete the plans and developed specification for energy efficient mechanicals. The specs were finalized in early October 2015 and put out to bid. We had been awarded a USDA Rural Development loan in the amount of \$250,000 and a grant of \$50,000 for this project. With the work on this project we were able to show the necessity of this cold storage facility in the way of storage and aggregation and the MA Department of Agricultural Resources awarded us \$250,000 to build it. We have already contracted with the General Contractor to start construction in the spring and plan to have it operating by June 2017.

**6. Have you publicized any results yet?\***

- i. **If yes, how did you publicize the results?** We send press releases about our work and highlight the farms and businesses that we work with. In each of our monthly e-newsletters we inform our stakeholders about our projects and highlight business success stories.
- ii. **To whom did you publicize the results?** Local newspapers, Radio, Legislators, Regional Networks such as Farm to Institution New England.
- iii. **How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?** 3,000 people regularly that receive our e-newsletter. 15,000 people in our region read about us in the regional newspaper – the Recorder.

\*Send any publicity information (brochures, announcements, newsletters, etc.) electronically along with this report. Non-electronic promotional items should be digitally photographed and emailed with this report (do not send the actual item).

**7. Have you collected any feedback from your community and additional stakeholders about your work?**

- i. **If so, how did you collect the information?**
- ii. **What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?**

Dining Service Managers have told us they like the quality of our frozen vegetables and it would be a seamless transition in their menus. They have also said the price is higher than fits their

budget. Several of them told us they will plan ahead in the future and purchase enough product to serve occasionally. Farmers communicated that they liked the fact they we can co-pack their product for them and they can then sell it at their farm stands and farmers market. We will continue to increase this service and expect more farmers this coming season. We will also work to plan ahead more effectively by working with food service directors and farmers in advance to anticipate supply and demand. If we know what will work for our institutions, we can work with farmers to plant for a guaranteed market while also working to get the price of the final product down.

Recent feedback via e-mail:

“I buy a lot of frozen vegetables this time of year and just came home with about \$20 worth of them, all in 16 oz bags, all presumably from very far away. I can't wait for them to be from the local Pioneer Valley area harvest. I'm glad to hear about the 25 lb bags for institutions. I knew about your big freezing machine as I saw it this spring when I toured the food processing facility. Good to hear that it is getting some use!

Be well, be in peace”

-Diane J.

#### **8. Budget Summary:**

- i. As part of the LFPP closeout procedures, you are required to submit the SF-425 (Final Federal Financial Report). Check here if you have completed the SF-425 and are submitting it with this report:**
- ii. Did the project generate any income?**
  - a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?**

The Food Processing Center generates income from the fees people pay to use it. This fee income goes into paying the many operational expenses of the facility such as: supplies, maintenance, utilities, partial salaries, equipment, cleaning, insurance, rent, and others. This project – the expansion of the freezing operations- has greatly enhanced by the continuing operation of the FPC because without the normal operations of the FPC and its producers we could not add the freezing operation, which greatly benefits the food system in this region.

#### **9. Lessons Learned:**

- i. Summarize any lessons learned. Draw from positive experiences and negative experiences**
  - Purchasing and operating the IQF machine made the quality of our frozen vegetables 100% better than previous years. Everyone who saw it or used it was very happy with the quality and appearance. Since the frozen vegetables were loose in the 25lbs. boxes schools could use part of the box and save the rest easily.
  - We also learned that some farmers want to sell us their produce and have us own it, while others – the ones that have CSAs or farm stands – want to keep ownership of the vegetables but have us wash, chop, blanch, freeze, pack and store it. They then sell it later during the winter.
  - Our test marketing of the 1 lbs. retail pack of frozen vegetables went well. We learned that it does involve more expenses than packing in 25 lbs. boxes, but the stores are willing to pay more. We also learned that marketing, including the packaging and the label, is very important for retailers. The larger grocery store requires UPC label and Best Buy dates and all the stores felt that their customers wanted to know what farm the vegetables came from right on the front label.

The challenges that provided lessons learned are in the next section

- ii. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving:  
The main outcomes that were not achieved were the amount of vegetables we purchased from farmers, froze and sold to schools. This was due to a few factors.
  - 1. The lack of cold storage made it more costly to operate, and
  - 2. The K-12 schools have very little room in their budgets for food that cost more than they can get through the commodity program. We knew schools have tight budgets but past experience showed that they will purchase local occasionally to educate the students, and also to show parents they are doing something. Knowing that schools will only purchase a limited amount helps us realign our expectations so we do not over produce. In the future we are asking schools to pre-order so we know that whatever we process we can sell.
- iii. Describe any lessons learned in the administration of the project that might be helpful for others who would want to implement a similar project:  
Everything went smoothly on the administrative end of this project. The contractors we worked with were ones we had worked with in the past which made these relationships easier.

**10. Future Work:**

- i. How will you continue the work of this project beyond the performance period? In other words, how will you parlay the results of your project's work to benefit future community goals and initiatives? Include information about community impact and outreach, anticipated increases in markets and/or sales, estimated number of jobs retained/created, and any other information you'd like to share about the future of your project.
  - The activities of this project will continue to grow for the foreseeable future. We had a track record prior to this grant and then we learned even more during the past 2 years. Hands on experience is the only way we could have learned this much. Farmers are prepared to grow more vegetables for the extended season, schools are looking for more ways to incorporate them into their menus and pay for them and retailers are now ready to make space for local frozen vegetables on their shelves because consumers are looking for them.
  - Another exciting outcome of this project has been the collaboration between the Food Center, the Community Farm and the local natural food cooperative. By working together in the coming years, we will get more healthy food to low-income people that live in the Affordable Housing Developments that don't have access to it now.
  - From our previous fifteen years operating the Food Processing Center we know that success often happens slowly over time, like the Pickle Company we helped launch and now has 18 full-time employees and purchases hundreds of thousands of pounds of local vegetables. We will continue to monitor the impact of our activities over time.
- ii. Do you have any recommendations for future activities and, if applicable, an outline of next steps or additional research that might advance the project goals?

We remain a part of the New England Food Processors Community of Practice and we participate in the USDA sponsored Google Group for Food Hubs. These and other networking opportunities are a great way for us to learn more and advance our project goals as well as help other learn from our activities.