

Mainers Feeding Mainers



“The Mainers Feeding Mainers program is creating business solutions to seemingly intractable social problems. It’s creating economic prosperity for our farms by contracting with them to grow food, and it’s creating a lifeline to that food for people who have no other place to get it, but from the food pantry.” Gray Harris, Director of Sustainable Agriculture, CEI

**We invite you to watch the
Mainers Feeding Mainers video:**

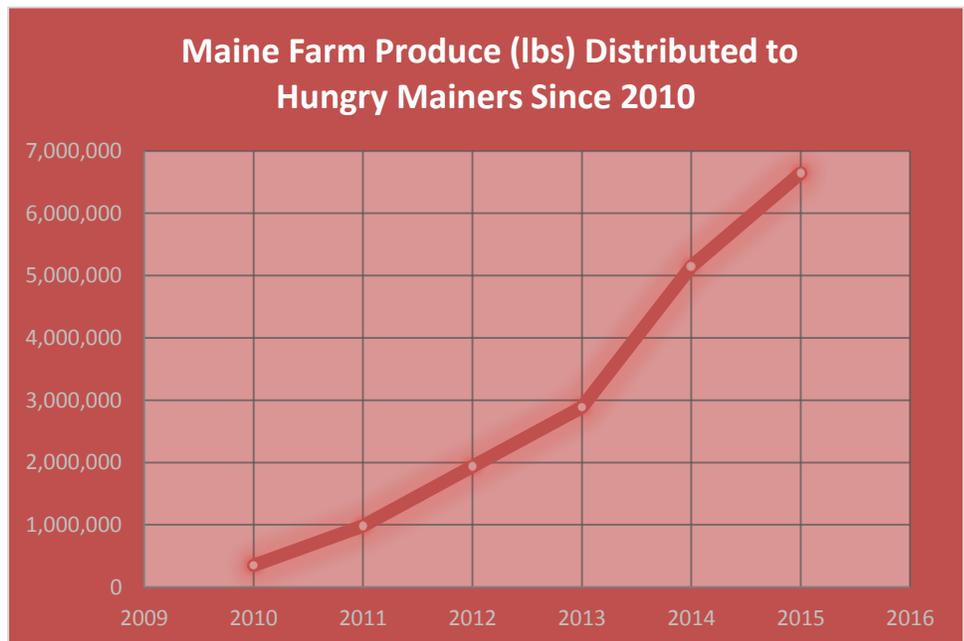
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3KOMusMKKPs>

1 – SUMMARY

Mainers Feeding Mainers is a partnership between Good Shepherd Food Bank and Maine farms, dairies, fisheries, and other local food producers to eliminate hunger in Maine. It involves opening local food channels with the help of trusted purchase partnerships, and developing strategies to assure safe and efficient distribution of nutritious food to hundreds of hunger relief programs serving in all 16 Maine counties.

The Mainers Feeding Mainers program was established in 2010. In its first year (2010), the program acquired and distributed just over **350,000 lbs** of nutritious, locally grown food.

In 2015, Mainers Feeding Mainers purchased **840,000 lbs.** of produce and received **660,000 lbs.** of donated produce from our Maine farm partners for a total of **1.5 million lbs** of nutritious Maine fruits and vegetables for hungry people of all ages in our communities.



Since 2010, Mainers Feeding Mainers has acquired (through purchases and donations) nearly 7 million pounds of nutritious fruits and vegetables from our local farm partners to help feed hungry Mainers in all 16 Maine counties.

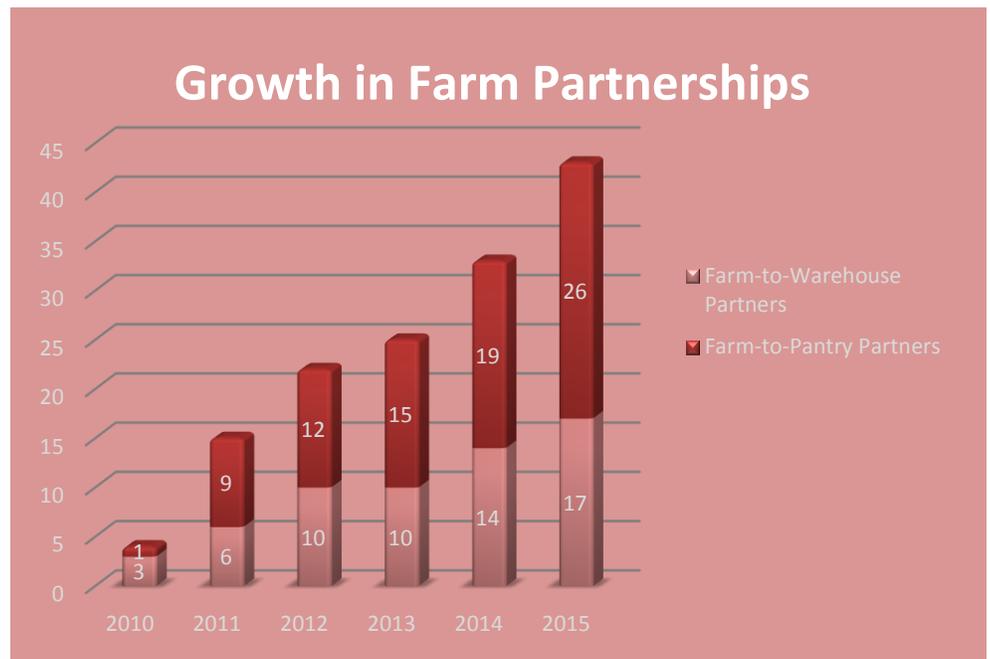
2 – GROWING OUR FARM PARTNERSHIPS

In 2010, the Mainers Feeding Mainers program began with a total of five initial partnerships with Maine farms, dairies and fisheries. **The number of farm partnerships grew to 43 in 2015.** These partnerships involve purchase agreements for produce and other Maine food products. Our partners work closely with us to determine strategies for keeping costs low while still representing a win-win situation for both the farmer and Good Shepherd Food Bank.

Direct farm-to-pantry distributions have also grown from a single operation in 2010 to 26 this year. Farm-to-pantry hubs are crucial to our efforts to move fresh food more cost-effectively, quickly and safely from the field to the shelves of hunger relief programs.

Through Mainers Feeding Mainers, farmers and other food producers are also

becoming more acutely aware of the problem of hunger in Maine. In 2014, several farm partners donated additional produce directly to the pantries they serve through the Mainers Feeding Mainers program.



3 – INCREASED ACCESS TO NUTRITIONAL FOOD

Since Mainers Feeding Mainers was launched in 2010, the program has brought about a fundamental change in the nutritional quality of the food we distribute. The Food Bank has steadily increased the pounds of healthy produce we distribute to hungry Mainers in our overall distribution (including non-Maine produce donations):

Food Category	2010	2012	2013	2014	2015
Produce Distributed (lbs)	2 million	3 million	5 million	6 million	8 million

***All produce purchased by GSFb is now purchased from Maine farms.**

4 – ECONOMIC IMPACT

In **2015**, Mainers Feeding Mainers invested **\$416,830.56** in our local agricultural and farming businesses through the purchase of **840,000 lbs.** of farm product at an average cost of **\$.49** per pound. This investment has a multiplier effect that also helps strengthen the Maine communities where the farms are located.

The program benefits our farm economies in several ways:

1. **Providing a new market for Maine farmers:** Good Shepherd Food Bank provides food for over 178,000 low-income individuals, representing a potential market that is largely unable, without assistance, to access local, fresh produce due to its costs.
2. **Pre-season contract agreements provide level of security:** Pre-season purchase agreements made in Dec-Feb are beneficial to farmers. It provides the security of a known sale, and provides the ability to take risks in opening new fields and for some the ability to ratchet up their economy of scale. For some farmers, just being able to add 1-2 acres of planted crops has a significant impact.

3. **Late-season purchases gets more of the annual yield out to market:** Mainers Feeding Mainers also purchases late in the season. This keeps costs down and helps farmers get more of their produce out of the fields (rather than plowing the produce back in) while still covering their basic production costs. As one farmer told us: “I get to sell everything I grow now.”
4. **Additional potential income for farmers:** Good Shepherd Food Bank is serving as a liaison between our Maine farm partners and the New England Cluster of Food Banks, nine food bank operations that are part of the Feeding America national network of food banks. New England food banks are currently purchasing most of their produce from Midwest and Canadian sources. For the past year, we have been meeting with the New England Cluster of Food Banks to pilot produce sourcing from Maine farmers. Our farm partners’ increased sales volumes are expected to further reduce our produce purchase costs.

A pilot project involving the purchase of one million pounds of Maine produce has been arranged with the Greater Boston Food Bank. Brokered agreements between Maine farmers and other food banks are expected in the coming year.

5. **Increased access for farmers to economic development funds:** Our partnerships with farmers also present the benefit of opening up low-interest loans and other economic development resources for farmers. We work closely with our farm partners to help find, through programs such as offered by CEI, the technical support and financing they need to expand their operations to grow and store food for the Food Bank at costs that are win-win for us and the farmer.

5 – THE FUNDING COLLABORATIVE

The growth of the Mainers Feeding Mainers program to provide nutritious hunger relief to Maine families has been and continues to be sustained through a major funding collaborative that includes the following:

Sandy River Charitable Foundation	Elmina B. Sewall Foundation
Sam L. Cohen Foundation	John Merck Fund
New Balance Foundation	Betterment Fund
Walmart Foundation	Wescustogo Foundation
Thomas W. Haas Fund	USDA/Local Foods Promotion Program
Next Generation Foundation of Maine	

6 – NEW PRODUCE STORAGE FACILITIES AT THE FOOD BANK

Southern Maine Facility: In the fall of 2015, we completed construction of a technologically cutting-edge produce storage facility at our Auburn warehouse (**see photos, next page**). The 115,000 cu. ft. produce storage facility includes computer-controlled temperature and humidity settings in four distinct controlled-environment zones. The Auburn facility was made possible in large part thanks to a \$1 million grant from the Next Generation Foundation of Maine. The facility will also allow us to field test new techniques for improved short and long-term storage of various Maine-grown produce and produce varieties, and to help pass this knowledge on to the Maine farm community.

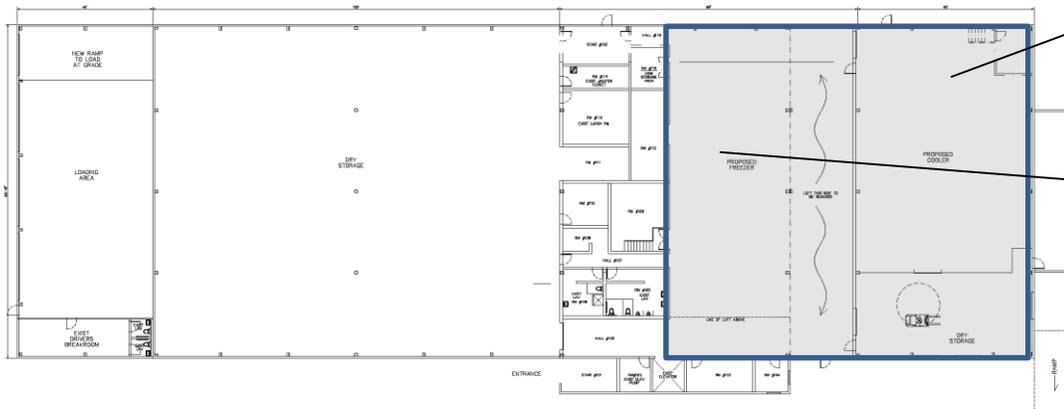
Northern Maine Facility: A similar produce storage facility is planned within our recently purchased warehouse space in Greater Bangor to assure equitable access to nutritious local produce by low- and lower-income families in highly rural northern and Down East Maine regions. Large grants from the Elmina B. Sewall Foundation and Jane’s Trust allow us to begin working on this facility in 2016. **Other funding partners are being sought to help complete this vital project.**

Southern Maine Produce Storage Facility (completed in 2015)



Our new Southern Maine Produce Storage Facility in Auburn makes it possible to acquire, safely store and distribute produce to hungry Maine children, seniors and families year-round.

Northern Maine Produce Storage Facility (planned by end of 2016)



- Three temperature-humidity zone cooler for long- and short-term produce storage
- Freezer for long-term storage of lightly processed produce and other perishables

The Northern Maine Produce Storage Facility will be located in our new warehouse in the Greater Bangor area purchased in the fall of 2015.

