



World Farmers

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World Farmers – A Year In Review

This year has been the hardest year ever experienced by the farmers at Flats Mentor Farm. With a prolonged pandemic continuing to affect our small businesses and supply chains, and the wettest season on record resulting in three severe flooding events at Flats Mentor Farm, it is more important than ever that we build community and support for each other.

In our effort to further World Farmers' mission -- to honor the dignity and passion of immigrant and refugee farmers to grow food important to their culture and our communities, and to provide the required support to each farmer in their endeavors to do so -- we accomplished a great deal this year. We have taken some time to acknowledge and share what success looked like for us in 2021. Below is a small highlight of some of our achievements this year.



Success in Numbers

- 354 immigrant and refugee farmers in World Farmers' Flats Mentor Farm program
- 70 new Flats Mentor farmers entered into the program
- 34 Farmers connected to increased land for 2021 production
- 22 Acres of farmland newly acquired by FMF farmers
- 135 Farmers supported with production assistance in IPM, soil health, and seeds access
- 28 Retail markets with Flats Mentor Farm as a vendor
- 34 Farmers utilized World Farmers' aggregation, sales, and distribution services
- 49 Cultural crop varieties sold and distributed across Massachusetts by FMF farmers
- 43 Farmers engaged in crop planning with World Farmers
- 31 Farmers gained access to external programs offering financial assistance

45 Farmers signed up as Massachusetts Farm Bureau Members

6 Farmers traveled to Washington DC to engage in national advocacy efforts

Over \$50,000 raised for our Farmer Food Relief, distributed directly to FMF farmers



Program Highlights

Land & Farm Sites

World Farmers operated our Flats Mentor Farm program on five land sites in 2021 and secured an additional three parcels of land through leases with Massachusetts Department of Agriculture – one operated by World Farmers, and the other two operated independently by FMF farmers. World Farmers is also in talks with other landowners to discuss leasing options for the 2022 season. These land expansion efforts afford FMF farmers the opportunity to grow their businesses and further establish themselves as key players in the Massachusetts Agricultural community.



Climate Impacts on Flats Mentor Farm & Farmers



Farmers across Massachusetts felt the full effects of climate change this season. Flats Mentor farmers experienced three devastating floods, on top of an already wet season resulting in near total crop loss several times over. In an attempt to compensate for these losses, World Farmers launched a Farmer Flood Relief, where 100% of proceeds raised were distributed across the 354 immigrant and refugee farmers in our Flats Mentor Farm program, so that they may attempt to recover and return next year to grow our food.

Soil Health and Conservation efforts

World Farmers assisted 13 farmers in applying for NRCS' Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), which provides farmers with financial and technical assistance in implementing conservation practices that lead to a healthier soil while improving farmers' agricultural operations. FMF farmers performed soil tests on their land to assess the health of the soil and advise on proper soil amendments in preparation for the season's production; and World Farmers provided cover crops free of charge, to assist FMF farmers in building soil health and to help prevent soil erosion from spring flooding.



Farmers' Markets



FMF farmers had to take multi-week hiatuses from their markets this year, while some never made it to market at all. Despite their multiple attempts at planting and harvesting, many farmers closed out the year with little production and profits to show for their hard work. Market managers were understanding when informed of our climate-related production issues, and farmers and customers alike are looking forward to being back at market in 2022.

Wholesale Operations

World Farmers' wholesale operations were significantly hampered by the reduced production at Flats Mentor Farm this season. Our aggregation, sales, and distribution efforts primarily serve FMF farmers, so when there is no product to sell we shift our efforts to other areas of support for FMF farmers. World Farmers did however perform a Food Safety Commonwealth Quality Program (CQP) audit through MDAR, and Flats Mentor Farm received our CQP certification for 2021.



World Farmers CSA Program



In our fifth season of our Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, World Farmers partnered with five non-profit organizations and businesses to offer pick-up locations for our CSA. New this year, World Farmers took strides to make our CSA share more financially accessible by implementing a sliding scale payment, and was authorized to accept SNAP, and to offer HIP benefits. World Farmers continued to build on our partnership with [Springfield Food Policy Council](#) (SFPC), where we delivered 100 shares per week, paid for by independent funding raised fully by SFPC, for distribution to

hungry families in Springfield. We continued this partnership with two bulk share deliveries, one in November and another in December, complete with frozen meat proteins.

Farm to Family CSA Program

World Farmers forged a new partnership with [Just Roots](#), a non-profit based in Greenfield, MA who has worked for a decade to develop a CSA model that is accessible to people who would traditionally be marginalized from participating in a direct farm-to-table program. This year, World Farmers became a key partner in Just Roots' Farm to Family program, a clinically proven CSA program which partners with Accountable Care Organizations (ACO) to reach food insecure patient populations, offering year-round access to local fruits and vegetables, proteins, recipes, and cookware, through farm to doorstep delivery. World Farmers partners with Just Roots to ensure this program is accessible to ACO patients and communities in Eastern Massachusetts.



Value-Added Efforts



World Farmers completed construction of our Mill House and opened the space for production of the first milled products by FMF farmers – corn and millet. These grains were produced by FMF farm in 2021, and the milled products went out for consumption for the very first time this year. This season's weather limited the amount of product FMF farmers could produce, however we see potential in a sustainable market in the future. Additionally, several farmers utilized the commercial kitchen this season, which allowed FMF farmers to extend their market. The main efforts FMF farmers undertook were peeled and cut winter squash and dehydrated greens and herbs; both of which were included in our CSA shares.

Youth Development

World Farmers hired three seasonal staff and three interns for the season, all of whom were recruited from within the Flats Mentor Farm community. These staff and interns were a critical part of our programming this year, and supported farmers at the markets, in the fields, and with crop sales. After their time with us this season, interns went back to complete their Sophomore and Senior years of High School, and seasonal staff went back to college and onto Graduate School, and one stayed on with World Farmers as full-time, year-round staff.

