



# 2013 World PEAS Food Hub Annual Report

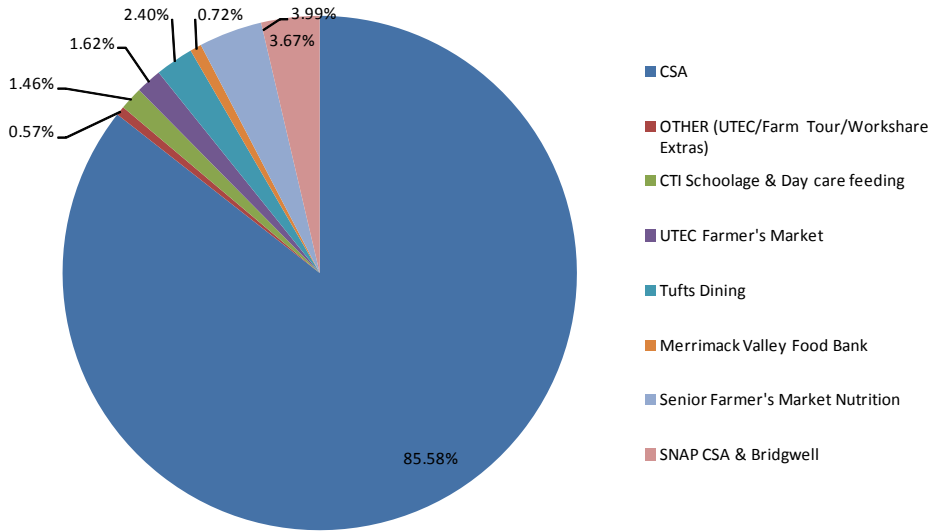


World PEAS is a program of the New Entry Sustainable Farming Project  
[nesfp.org](http://nesfp.org)

# Overview

World PEAS Food Hub, established in 2005, serves as a flexible, living wage market for limited-resource and beginning farmers who have graduated from the New Entry Sustainable Farming Project's Farm Business Planning Course. Since many farmers in our program face several barriers to accessing high value, direct to consumer markets (limited English language skills, limited production capability, lack of time/transportation, etc.), World PEAS aggregates produce from over 30 farmers every year, establishing crop production schedules in the winter and offering guaranteed marketing outlets through our CSA and sales to institutions, non-profits, and other outlets.

## 2013 World PEAS Sales



After a big transition year in 2012, during which two new staff were hired and the CSA moved into a new packing facility, the 2013 season allowed World PEAS to increase operational efficiencies and streamline processes. We retained many of our farmers and volunteers, bringing in twelve new farmers, as well as two farmers who had taken a hiatus from farming in 2012, and added six new volunteers to our share packing team. The general market for CSA programs has become increasingly more competitive, with larger retail farms introducing CSA

programs, as well as the high prevalence of farmer's markets making local food more accessible to urban populations. The World PEAS Food Hub again ran a deficit in 2013, due in part to lower than projected CSA registration that did not allow us to cover the 12-month rental costs for the Food Hub packing site. Despite the current financial situation, World PEAS and New Entry continue to scale up operations that will provide the capacity to diversify our markets and increase overall sales, both through the CSA and through restaurant and institutional sales. In 2013, the Food Hub purchased an additional refrigerated truck to be able to extend our delivery route and meet the needs of a wider consumer base.

The various market areas that World PEAS Food Hub distributes to are shown on the graph above. This past season represents the first year that traditional CSA sales did not constitute over 90% of total Food Hub sales, which indicates success in our move toward diversifying our marketing outlets. In 2013, our Community Supported Agriculture program constituted about 86 % of total sales. Our subsidized CSA program and subsidized CSA sales to the Pathfinder Homeless Shelter accounted for another 3.7% of total sales. The Tufts Farmer's Market, supplied by World PEAS and operated by a youth-services program (UTEC), constituted 1.6% of our sales in the 2013 season. The Food Hub also provides



fresh fruits and vegetables to Tufts Dining Services, the Community Teamwork, Inc. school age and daycare feeding programs, the Merrimack Valley Food Bank summer feeding program, three Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Programs, as well as other donations to non-profit partners. Overall, the World PEAS Food Hub grossed \$270,806 in revenue, and farmer income from World PEAS activities totaled \$191,348 in the 2013 season.

## Community Supported Agriculture

Given the long history of operations, and the fact that the CSA program provides the most support for our farmers in terms of crop planning, the World PEAS CSA still constitutes the largest market for the Food Hub—roughly 86% of total sales. This year, however, we modified our share offerings to better meet customer need and reduce operational costs. For the past several years, registration for the Extended Season Share dropped significantly each season. This share offering, distributed in October and November, was primarily comprised of produce grown by non-New Entry farmers, as many of our core program farmers lack the infrastructure and storage space for significant extended season production. Instead of continuing this program, World PEAS staff chose to extend the regular CSA season from 18 weeks to 20 weeks. This allowed us to be more competitive with other local CSAs, and provided extra revenue to core program farmers in October. The share structure for large and small shares remained the same. World PEAS also chose to promote the Fall/Academic share, piloted in 2012, at the beginning of registration and offered it at all pick-up locations. Over 50 individuals participated in the Academic Share this past season. Given the fact that so many participants in the Academic share were not students, we have changed the name of this offering to the Fall Harvest share for 2014. In 2013, we sold 76 Large Shares, 335 Small Shares and 56 Academic shares at 28 different locations in the greater Boston and Lowell areas.



All shares included a blend of local fruit and vegetables each week, as well as herbs offered every few weeks during the season. After several years of modifying the share contents based on survey feedback, we have determined the quantity and variety that seems to be most suitable for our shareholders. This season, 80% of survey respondents indicated that they received high quality produce and over 86 % of shareholders indicated in the year end survey that the share size they purchased suited their household's needs in terms of quantity. This year, we continued to add to the crop variety in the World PEAS shares, adding local eggs, sunflowers, watercress, and summer savory. Last year, the CSA featured over 75 different crops, including Asian and African crops such as sweet potato greens, amaranth, lemongrass, and long beans, which showcases the diversity of farmers serving the Food Hub and differentiates the our brand from other CSAs.

This past season, World PEAS CSA made a conscious effort to expand partnerships with local businesses, increasing CSA registration by offering a unique service and wellness benefit to staff, and increasing the convenience factor in CSA participation (since staff can collect their shares in their office building). In 2013, World PEAS added CSA delivery to Harvard Pilgrim Health Care in Wellesley and Merck Research Laboratories in Boston.

In order to improve our customer service and integrate participants more fully into our program, World PEAS returned to our former practice of hosting shareholder information meetings prior to the start of CSA delivery. In May and June, the CSA Coordinator hosted 11 meetings, speaking directly with over 150 individual shareholders. Attendees acknowledged the benefit in having an opportunity to connect directly with World PEAS staff, as well as learn more about the farmers in our program.

## **Expanding Low-Income Household Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Access**

In order to meet our mission to expand access to healthy, culturally preferred foods to under-resourced communities, the World PEAS CSA continued to expand our low-income food access programs in 2013. The SNAP CSA program continued to operate at the Lowell Farmer's Market for a second season. In this initiative, individuals who receive SNAP benefits, or qualify as low-income based on household income levels (according to CTI metrics), can purchase a small share on a week-to-week basis for the subsidized price of \$10 (the actual value of the small CSA share is approximately \$25). Instead of needing to pre-pay for shares, as in 2012, the SNAP CSA operated on a first come, first served basis. This decreased the number of shares that were paid for in advance, but unclaimed the day of delivery—a problem we faced in our pilot year. Many customers who participated in the pilot program returned, and we also added several new customers who picked up consistently at the market. The SNAP CSA program ran for 16 weeks, and 113 shares were purchased and distributed to low-income families and individuals in the Lowell community.



In addition to conducting individual outreach to SNAP CSA participants, World PEAS also continued its partnership with the Pathfinder program, a local emergency homeless shelter located within the Acre neighborhood in Lowell. Pathfinder directors wished to incorporate more local, fresh produce into their daily meals programs, and purchased the equivalent of 12 small shares, to be delivered in bulk, to their shelter for 16 weeks during the growing season. The increased amount of fresh produce incorporated into food services at the Pathfinder shelter was very well received among their

clients. Due to the success of the program over the past two years, Pathfinder is expanding their efforts for 2014. In addition to purchasing 21 CSA shares, the shelter will also be purchasing \$2000 worth of fresh fruits to be used for breakfast and snack items.

World PEAS subsidized half of the cost of the 12 shares delivered to Pathfinder through the “Share-a-Share” donation program, which also supported the SNAP CSA subsidy. The “Share-a-Share” program allows World PEAS shareholders and other community members to donate funds to toward the cost of a share for low-income customers. The generous donations of many of our shareholders show their commitment to food justice and increased access to healthy foods in all communities. World PEAS is committed to paying fair prices to our farmers for their produce, but understands that can limit purchasing power for limited resource individuals. We rely on the generous support of our shareholders and other generous donors to New Entry to help us serve our farmers, while also making the produce accessible to all consumers, regardless of socioeconomic status.

World PEAS has also established relationships with regional homebound senior networks to provide produce to low-income, homebound seniors. In 2013, World PEAS continued to work with two senior agencies (Kit Clark Senior Services and Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services) who receive funding from the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) to purchase produce for 225 homebound seniors. This past season, World PEAS added Springwell, based in Waltham, as a new senior services partner agency, based on a referral from the dietician who operates the program at Cambridge-Somerville Elder Services. The 80 shares purchased by Springwell, along with the 225 delivered to our existing partners, represent \$7,625 in sales for World PEAS farmers.



After working together on a fairly ad hoc basis in prior years, this past season, World PEAS established a more formal relationship with the Merrimack Valley Food Bank. The summer feeding program purchased a limited amount of produce, including green beans and cucumbers, to use as healthy snacks. The Food

Bank's Community Market Program, which sets up free farmer's markets in low-income housing communities in Lowell, purchased almost \$1000 worth of produce from World PEAS farmers. Since many of the residents in the housing communities are Asian immigrants, or of Asian descent, there was a strong demand at these sites for traditional Asian vegetables, such as Tokyo Bekana (known in Khmer as spey), mustard greens, amaranth, and lemongrass. Partnering with these programs at the Merrimack Valley Food Bank allow us to help expand access to culturally preferred fruit and vegetables in under-resourced Lowell neighborhoods.

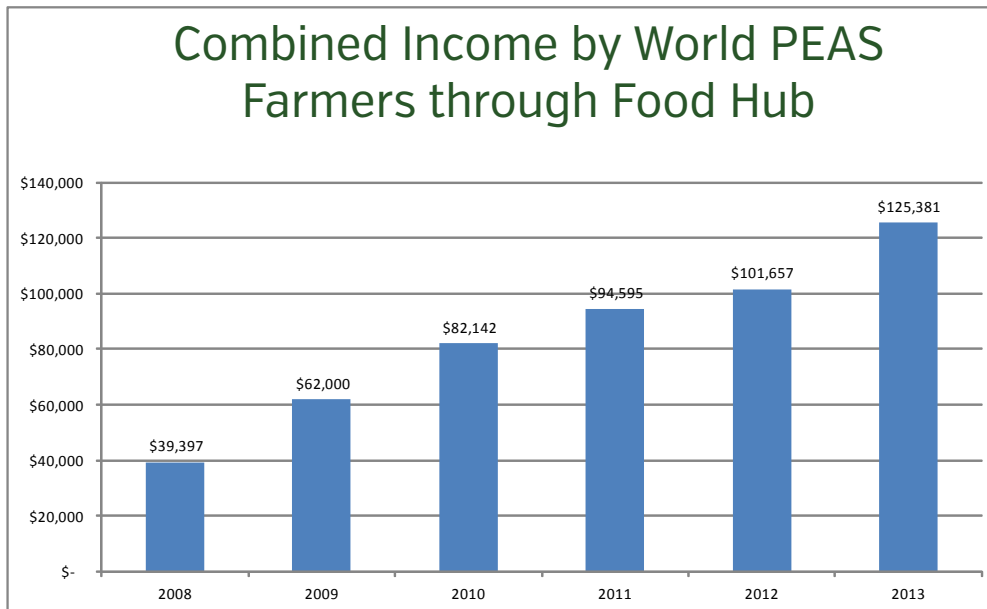
Another partner in our food access initiatives is the Lowell Women, Infant, and Children's (WIC) agency, which World PEAS has partnered with since 2010. WIC provides federal grants to states for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are at nutritional risk. In addition to partnering with WIC to supply produce and local cider to Food Day events, World PEAS also donated 136 small shares and 13 large shares from customers who were unable to collect their shares and requested that we donate their box. This amounted to \$3,596 worth of produce donated on behalf of our shareholders to clients receiving WIC services.

World PEAS established a partnership with Community Teamwork Inc.'s (CTI) feeding programs beginning in 2010. Typically, we sell produce for their school-age and daycare feeding programs, along with a federally-funded summer feeding program which provides free, nutritious meals and snacks to disadvantaged school-aged children during the summer. Unfortunately, CTI did not receive funding to operate a summer feeding program in 2013. Despite this funding issue, World PEAS and the Food Services manager for CTI were able to work collaboratively and incorporate more products into their menu, with \$2,788 in total revenues for the school-age and daycare programs, up from the total sales of \$1,725 in 2012 (which included summer feeding).

The Food Hub is planning to expand food access work further in 2014. In an effort to reach a captive client base and be able to support nutrition services in the Lowell Area, World PEAS Food Hub will be partnering with the Lowell Community Health Center to host the distribution of SNAP CSA shares. Project Bread is providing support to this new pilot initiative to distribute subsidized CSAs to low-income clients through community health centers. Another goal for our low-income food access work is to be able to assess health outcomes of the target population in our programs.

## Farm to Institution

In an effort to maintain diversity among the World PEAS markets and to increase the amount of produce we can purchase from program farmers, the Food Hub has partnered with Tufts Dining Services to provide fresh vegetables for their dining halls. After identifying produce that is price competitive for Tufts food service operations, we projected September and October orders with Tufts Dining Services. Large volumes of bok choy, swiss chard, and kale were purchased on a weekly basis. During the “Local Food Week,” Tufts Dining also ordered significant volumes of sweet corn and heirloom tomatoes. In winter planning sessions, World PEAS and Tufts Dining management

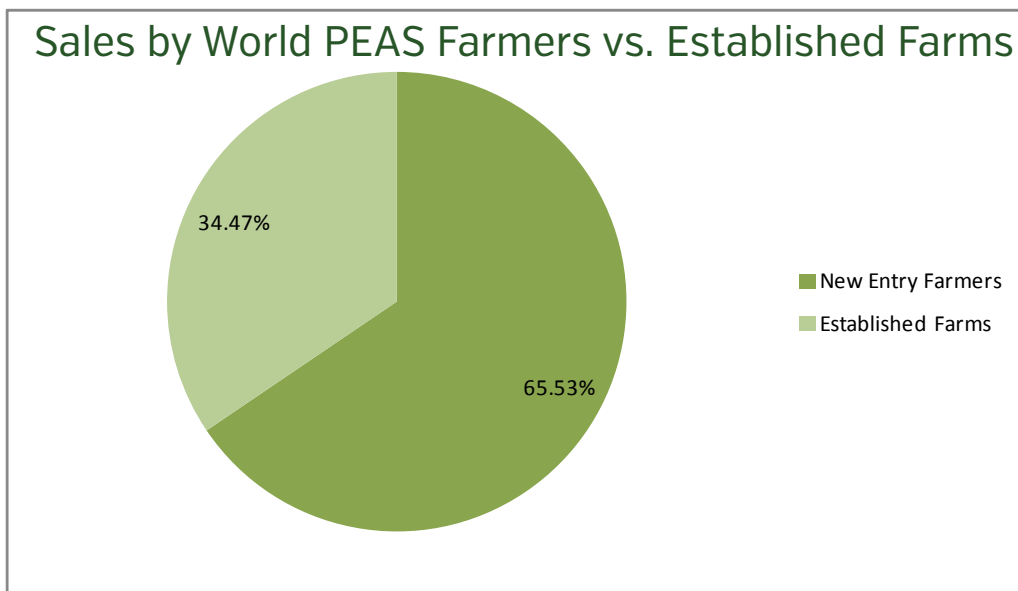
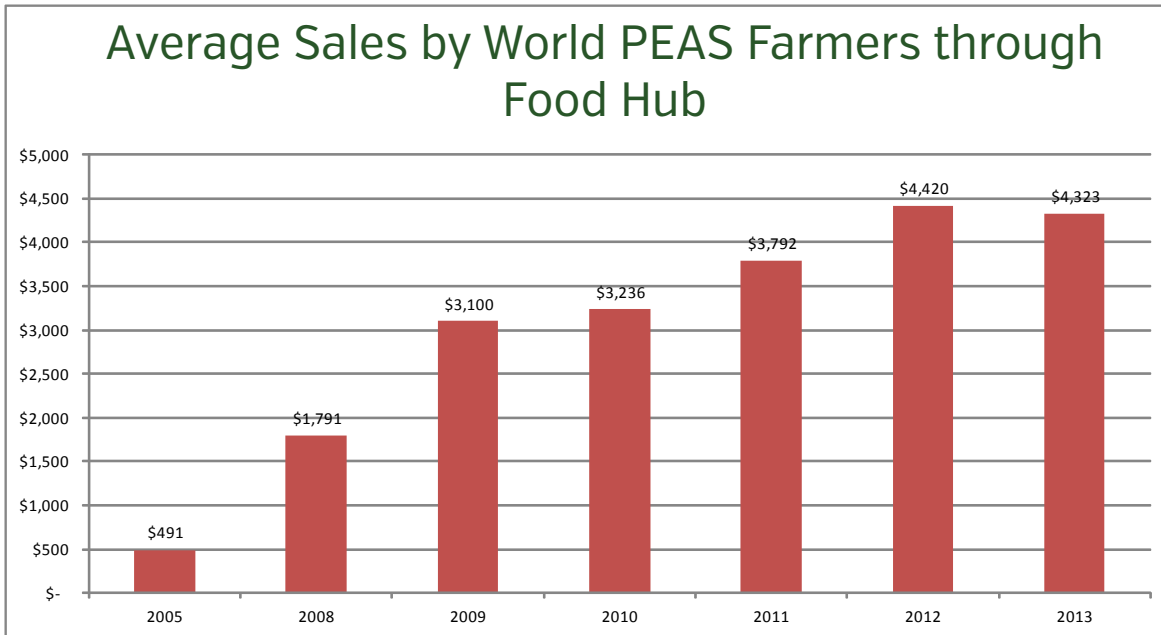


also discovered that the World PEAS prices for fresh herbs were very price competitive with fresh herbs Tufts typically purchased through wholesale distributors. Dining services planned to purchase significant amounts of basil on a weekly basis to use for fresh pesto. Unfortunately, this plan was not able to be realized for various reasons, primarily due to wide spread cases of

downy mildew in our incubator fields that caused significant crop loss for basil planting. Despite this issue, World PEAS and Tufts streamlined ordering and operations and were able to almost double sales to Dining Services in 2013, with \$4,597 in total institutional sales, compared to \$2,350 in 2012. Part of this success was due to changes in menu language. Instead of citing a specific variety of Asian greens in their menus (i.e. tatsoi, komatsuna, etc), Tufts instead used the more vague term “Asian greens” and was able to purchase a wide variety of tender, baby Asian greens. This increased ordering flexibility with farmers and expanded their potential markets.

In addition to using our local produce in their dining operations, Tufts also worked again this year with World PEAS and UTEC to offer a farmer’s market on their Medford campus. Sales for 2013 were just slightly below 2012 sales, which may be due to reduced student and faculty interest in the market. Lack of some fresh herbs and late summer squash plantings, again due to downy mildew, also likely accounted for the slight drop in sales, as these were consistently marketed in 2012, and World PEAS did not have the availability this year. However, the market continues to be a great way to build on local community partnerships in Lowell, and promote World PEAS on the Tufts campus to individuals who choose not to participate in the CSA program.





## Farmer Earnings

The 2013 season represented a landmark year for farmer earnings through the World PEAS, as it was the first year that over 65% of produce distributed through the Food Hub came from New Entry program farmers. While the percent of total product grown by program farmers has been modestly growing, it typically represented about 55-60% of total produce sales. Part of the reason for this increase is the great success and high crop yield of a few of our new program farmers this season, as well as the diversification of produce that program farmers chose to grow this season. Two of our first-year incubator farmers, for example, chose to bid for crops in the 2nd cycle in order to bid solely on crops that other farmers had not incorporated into their business plans. In 2013, crops that has often been difficult to source from program farmers, such as carrots, sweet potatoes, beets, and baby greens, were grown in much larger volumes by a wider group of New Entry farmers. The ratio of produce sourced from earnings by World PEAS farmers and independent farmers in 2013, is displayed in the pie chart above.

The number of farmers, as well as their individual and collective earnings through the World PEAS Food Hub, continued to increase steadily since 2007. In 2013, the number of farmers participating in the Food Hub increased significantly, from 23 participating New Entry farmers to 29. Part of this was due to increased participation at the incubator farm plot, as well as farmers who had not participated in 2012 returning to farm in 2013 after finding suitable land to lease for their farm business. In 2013, New Entry program farmers sold \$125, 381 worth of produce to the World PEAS Food Hub. For the majority of our New Entry farmers, Food Hub sales account for over 60% of their entire farm earnings. An additional 9 independent farms, filling gaps in World PEAS farmers' production, generally at wholesale rates, earned a combined income of \$65, 967.

Earnings among our program farmers through the Food Hub average \$4,323 in 2013, a 2% decrease from 2012. This slight decrease is most likely due to the larger cohort of farmers selling to the Food Hub, since combined income by program farmers increased about 23%, from \$101, 657 in 2012 to \$125,381 in 2013. However, depending on years of experience, time available to dedicate to farming, and to a smaller extent, acreage, the individual farmer earnings do vary significantly. Five farmers, with several years of experience farming with World PEAS, earned over \$8,000 through sales to World PEAS, while many of the more recent graduates of the Farm Business Planning Class earned within the \$1,500-\$3,000 range. Three first year farmers actually sold over their initial crop bid value, showing the success of our technical assistance at our incubator farm plots.

While the earnings through World PEAS are insufficient to constitute a farmer's only source of income, for many of the World PEAS farmers, they are an essential component of household earnings. The majority of World PEAS farmers are amongst the 80% of American farmers who have an off-farm job. Cumulative earnings by farmers over the course of several years, shown on the graph above, are significant. It is important to note that this income does not reflect the monetary value or health benefits of produce to be consumed by the farmers and their families, nor the potential benefits gained when the produce can be used to barter for other goods or services

## Food Hub Infrastructure Improvements

In 2012, World PEAS made significant investments in infrastructure, moving to a new indoor facility. After having a year to develop systems, and learn how to adapt the space to our needs, we were able



to use time this past season to invest in small details to improve the facility. The primary improvement this season was the creation of several large murals of fruits and vegetables in the packing site, painted by our UMass Lowell student intern, a Fine Arts major.

The other significant investment this past season was the purchase of a second refrigerated delivery vehicle. Having two vehicles greatly enhanced operations and allows us to have the capacity to deliver to communities, restaurants, and institutions in multiple geographic areas on the same day. Unfortunately, we

experienced greater infrastructure costs this year due to vandalism at our Food Hub site. There were multiple instances of graffiti tagging and smashed windows on our delivery trucks. Despite working with local law enforcement, this problem continues to persist and we may need to invest in more lighting and potentially install security cameras in the parking area.



## Staff, Intern, and Volunteer Experience

After having a season to adapt to operations and creating new systems for Food Hub operations in our new packing facility, World PEAS staff members were able to increase efficiencies and handle new challenges with greater ease this year. The CSA & Food Access Coordinator is a year-round, full time position and is responsible for managing day to day operations for farmers, volunteers, CSA shareholders, and other sales accounts. The Assistant CSA Coordinator handles infrastructure needs, supervises volunteers, and is responsible for pick-ups and deliveries. Strategic planning, accounts receivable, farmer payments, and management of the pilot SNAP CSA are coordinated by the CSA manager.



Again in 2013, World PEAS was fortunate to be able to partner with UMass Lowell's Co-op Scholar program and hired a rising sophomore who received a stipend from the university to serve as an intern with our Food Access initiatives. She conducted outreach to SNAP recipients, followed up with customers on a weekly basis, and distributed shares each week at the Lowell Farmer's Market. Also, our intern helped pack and

deliver shares on a weekly basis, which provided valuable assistance in order to be able to deliver over 150 shares each Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday in a timely manner.

Most importantly, the World PEAS Food Hub could not operate without the dedication and energy of a team of volunteer share packers. Fifteen individuals contributed to our weekly packing operations, contributing a total of 1,240 hours of service. Using the Independent Sector's value of volunteer service, estimated at \$22.14 per hour, our share packers contributed \$22,160 of in-kind service to World PEAS (the total value of their volunteer hours less the value of their complimentary CSA shares). World PEAS farmers contributed significant volunteer time to the management of a greenhouse for seedling production, and the coordination of a bulk order of supplies, compost, etc. through NOFA. World PEAS also collaborated with the Spindle City Corps, a summer youth service program in Lowell. In the past, Spindle City Corps members volunteered on an ad hoc basis, but this year, Corps members volunteered each share packing day during their summer service period. This allowed the Corps members, many of whom had not been exposed to the produce we purchase from our local farmers, to learn more about types of local produce, how they grow, and how to assess quality.

Also, as in past years, World PEAS Food Hub hosted volunteers from the Boston University First-Year Student Outreach Project, to help out with prep at the CSA packing site and to assist farmers at our incubator sites with field work.



# Annual & Projected Profit & Loss

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Percentage Purchased from New Entry Farmers	54.0%	54.0%	57.0%	59.0%	65.0%	66.0%	67.0%	68.0%
No. of Reg. Season Shares	286	304	426	412	411	485	515	540
						Projections		
	217 Reg. Shares 136 Reg + Fr. Shares 60 Ext. Shares	108 Sm. Shares, 196 Lg Shares, 132 Ext. Shares	302 Sm. Shares, 124 Lg. Shares, 137 Ext.	332 Small Shares, 80 LG. Shares, 94 Ext.	335 Sm. Shares, 76 Lg Shares, Student	370 Sm. Shares, 85 Lg Shares, 80 Student	390 Sm. Shares, 95 Lg Shares, 95 Student	420 Sm. Shares, 100 Lg Shares, 115 Student
Price Per Share	Reg=\$550, Reg. + Fr=\$710, Ext=\$75	Lg = \$695, Sm = \$450, Ext. = \$120	Lg=\$705 Sm=\$465 Ext =\$125	Lg= \$710 Sm=\$470 Ext. =\$130	Lg= \$795 Sm=\$525 Fall =\$225	Lg= \$805 Sm=\$535 Fall =\$230	Lg= \$815 Sm=\$540 Fall =\$235	Lg= \$825 Sm=\$550 Fall =\$240
Food Hub Commission + membshp. Fee	\$59,834	\$79,954	\$101,643	\$74,069	\$75,000	\$93,033	\$98,642	\$103,884
Total CSA Earnings	59,834	79,954	101,643	74,069	75,000	\$93,033	\$98,642	\$103,884
Total CSA Personnel	52,976	53,256	59,591	70,491	67,535	69,224	70,954	72,728
Total Other Expenses - Gas, Vehicle Expense, Printing, Pay-pal Fees, Boxes, Lease for Packing Space, Cluster Coord-	9,619	13,626	23,453	22,329	24,891	26,510	27,339	28,156
Indirect Expense	5,960	5,977	7,416	8,152	8,291	8,590	8,814	9,040
Total Expenses	68,555	72,859	90,460	100,972	100,717	104,324	107,107	109,924
Retained Earnings (1)	-8,721	7,095	11,183	-26,903	-25,717	-11,291	-8,464	-6,040

## World PEAS Income Statement

Due to investments in infrastructure and lower than projected CSA sales, the World PEAS Food Hub experienced a deficit this year. Also, the increased percent of sales from New Entry program farmers also contributed to the reduced retained earnings for the Food Hub. New Entry program farmers receive 80% of the retail price of each crop sold, versus the prices paid to wholesale farmers, which is generally closer to 60-70% of the retail price. The increased percent of product sold on behalf of program farmers is an achievement for the mission of the Food Hub, but does have serious financial consequences for the overall retained earnings for the operation.

In looking at our long term planning for the Food Hub, we will need to develop a balance between the mission of our program and the financial realities of sourcing more and more product from program farmers. It is likely that with the goal of increasing the percent of food grown by program farmers, along with our continued efforts to expand our food access programming, World PEAS may need to use one or two small grants to fund our programs in order to best meet our mission.

World PEAS sold 411 full price, full season shares in 2013, just one less than the total as sold in 2012. In addition, 56 fall shares were sold, a significant increase from the 12 distributed in 2012. CSA sales generated \$75,000 in earnings through our commission on produce and membership dues to cover overhead and administrative costs.



Total expenses in 2014 are expected to be similar to 2013. We are also applying for funding through the Wallace Center at Winrock International to make critical connections to build new institutional and wholesale markets and improve training and technical assistance for New Entry farmers to help them scale up and better meet the produce needs and conform to the specific demands of new institutional and wholesale markets.

## Plans for 2014

In 2014, World PEAS is hoping to continue its CSA program, with the same general offerings as 2013, and is looking to expand total sales by about 25%, with a target goal of 500 shareholders. Rather than concentrating on increasing registration at existing community sites (instead, we are focusing on retention of existing shareholders through quality customer service and consumer engagement), we are looking to expand CSA partnerships with Boston area workplaces. These sites offer a captive audience that can be reached directly through their company's wellness or sustainability working groups, and offer the added convenience for shareholders to simply collect their share at work, rather than making an additional stop to a community pick up location on their way home. In 2014, we have been conducting outreach at four new workplace locations, and are exploring the prospect with another four facilities. In order to be able to reach all of the new locations and expand our geographic reach to capture a wider shareholder base, World PEAS will be hiring an additional part-time seasonal delivery driver this coming season.

For 2014, World PEAS Food Hub is looking to continue to diversify its sales outlets as the CSA market becomes increasingly competitive in the Boston-area market. This winter, we are in the process

of identifying interested restaurant operations, which would receive a product availability list from World PEAS on Friday afternoons and would submit their orders by Monday morning. This would allow our staff and farmers, who generally struggle with the swift turnaround times demanded in restaurant sales, to have another flexible marketing outlet. A few restaurants, including Artistry Bistro in Lexington, have expressed interest in working with our program, despite our slightly wider time frames for availability, ordering, and delivery. World PEAS is a unique model and restaurants and institutions are eager to collaborate with our beginning, immigrant, and refugee farmers and receive high quality, diverse crops.

Additionally, World PEAS is also looking to collaborate with Somerville Public Schools Farm-to-School Initiative. The farm-to-school coordinator and food services manager are eager to be able to connect their diverse group of students with the healthy, local product offered by New Entry's diverse group of farmers.

The World PEAS Food Hub is looking forward to taking on the challenges and opportunities involved with significant expansion in 2014. We thank all of our CSA shareholders, community partners, institutional customers, share packers and farmers for a wonderful 2013 season. With your help and generosity, we look forward to a fun, engaging, and bountiful season in 2014. If you would like to make a tax-deductible, charitable contribution to New Entry for our World PEAS food justice/low-income food access work, please visit our webpage: <http://nesfp.nutrition.tufts.edu/about/support>  
Thank You!

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*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.*

