

THE AGRO-ECO PROJECT

IMPACT REPORT 2022



This past year was one marked by a severe drought and very high temperatures for Central Massachusetts. This was a blessing and a curse. All of our irrigated crops did very well, as they basked in the hot summer sun and soaked their roots in the water provided by our drip irrigation system. We had a record year for tomatoes and peppers for example, which usually suffer our typically wet summers. On the other hand, all of our non-irrigated crops such as apples, pears, grapes and berries did not produce much of a crop at all for lack of rainfall.

Despite the drought, 2022 was a record year in terms of food production for us, and we more than doubled the previous year's output in terms of pounds of fruits and vegetables produced. All efforts this year were guided towards in-kind food donation to the three food pantries we work with: St. John's Food for the Poor in Worcester, the Rutland Food Pantry and the Charlton Food Pantry.

Our educational initiative this year consisted in the handing out of seed kits to our food pantry partners. These consisted of different vegetable varieties centered around the theme of Salsa. They included growing instructions as well as a recipe. The aim here was to provide food pantry recipients with seeds to help grow food in their own homes.

Our other two yearly food security initiatives continued as well throughout 2022. Our Local Chef program, where we team up with local chefs to produce prepared meals made with local produce to our food pantry partners, was a great success this year. We delivered upwards of 600 healthy prepared meals to St. John's Food For the Poor Program. During the winter months when our farm is not producing food, we purchase local meats and produce from local farms and deliver them to our partners. In 2022 our Greater Table initiative purchased over 3000 pounds of local produce to be distributed to community members in need.

We also continued our yearly tradition of donating holiday pies made with our own produce. 40 mixed-berry crisps and 40 pumpkin pies were donated to the Rutland Food Pantry.

This year we produced a set of small videos where we explain some of the principles that guide our farming and explore some of the science underpinning agroecology. These will be available on our website early 2023.

All of this would not be possible without the tireless work of our fantastic team. Katie Greger, our farm manager, achieved the incredible feat of doubling raw output of the farm this year. Our Outreach Coordinator Kate Gervais seamlessly coordinated our in-kind donations as well as spearheading our Greater Table and Local Chef programs. Finally, we were blessed this year to welcome our summer intern Pieter VanderBrug to the team, whose impeccable work ethic and passion for growing clean and healthy food helped us achieve our goals.

OUR FOOD DONATIONS



WHO DID WE DONATE TO?

RUTLAND FOOD PANTRY



CHARLTON FOOD PANTRY



ST. JOHN'S FOOD FOR THE POOR PROGRAM IN WORCESTER MA



PRODUCE DONATED FROM FIELD



45 lbs.



197.5 lbs.



4,538 lbs.



LOCAL CHEF INITIATIVE



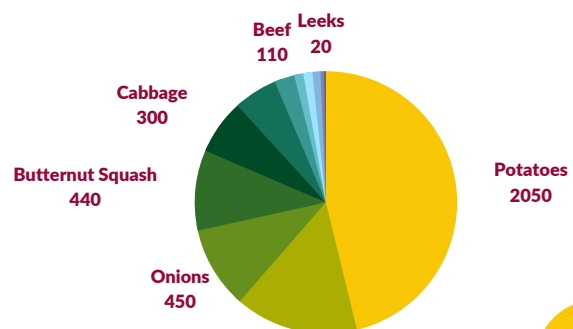
600 MEALS DONATED



GREATER TABLE INITIATIVE

PURCHASING LOCAL FOOD FOR LOCAL FOOD PANTRIES

Total Pounds Bought and Donated



EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

SALSA SEED KITS

We continued our at home educational activity this season with a salsa seed kit. Our seed packets contained a variety of seeds including: Amish Paste Tomato, Sweet Bell Pepper, Jalapeno, Cilantro and Onion. The packets, beautifully illustrated in-house by Katie Greger, contained a card including instructions on how to grow the seeds and a recipe card. We produced around 50 seed packets and distributed them through the food pantries that we serve.



The Team



From left: Katie Greger (Our Farm Manager), Pieter Vanderbrug (Our Farm Intern), Giulio Caperchi (President), Kate Gervais (Our Program Coordinator)

Holiday Pies



From Our Farm Manager

This year was a stellar season. We donated 4,780.5 pounds in fresh produce and holiday pies. We had a woospie this season and couldn't turn our 45 pounds of berries into pies but they deserve an honorable mention for the work that was put into collecting them. I could not achieve this years success without the help of my intern Pieter who was immensely useful and aided in team moral. Until this season the farm was mostly a one woman operation but having those extra pair of hands made dealing with our ever changing climate easier. Some of our stand out crops this season include Tomatoes (1027 pounds of them), Zucchini/Summer Squash (455.5 pounds), Potatoes (367 pounds) and Collards (255 pounds). This season I was able to get our succession planting figured out so much better which lead to our highest yields of greens ever. Every year we face new challenges and need to problem solve how to get around them. I love the new adventure every season brings and to watch my plants grow from seed to large wonderfully fruitful plants.

Here's to another season!
Farm Manager Katie



Our Donation

