



*Growing Sustainable Businesses and Communities Since 1979*

Since 2001, The Western Mass Food Processing Center has helped growers and food entrepreneurs add value to food grown in our region. In 2009, the FPC launched the Extended Season program in order to increase our region's capacity to lightly process fruits and vegetables (freezing and canning) in order to make local food accessible year-round.

In addition to adding new equipment to our processing line, we are working closely with farmers and wholesale and retail purchasers to develop a regional value-chain for frozen and canned products that offers a fair price to farmers and a competitive price to purchasers.

Our first, and perhaps most important, purchasers have been local schools and hospitals, as we believe that healthful food should be accessible to everyone. We have been working closely with Massachusetts Farm to School program to build on their successes. We also work with local C.S.A.s to process produce for winter shares and markets.

With assistance from The Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts, CISA, MDAR, and USDA Rural Development, we have begun to purchase new, efficient equipment specifically designed for freezing fruits and vegetables. We anticipate freezing up to 100,000 lbs of regional produce for schools and hospitals in the 2011 growing season for consumption in the 2011-2012 school year.

To make a contribution to this project, [please click here](#).

To see articles written about this project and the FPC, [click here](#).

If you are a grower interested in participating in the Extended Season Farm to Institution Project, you can [find more information here](#).

If you would like to read our [2011 Extended Season Farm to Institution Freezing Project report, you can download it here](#).