PARTNERING TO END HUNGER

Good Shepherd

FOOD BANK OF MAINE

January 27, 2016

Jessica Nixon
Director, Market Development
Maine Dept. of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
28 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear Jessica,

On Feb. 4, 2015 the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry awarded a $50,000 grant under its Agricultural Development Grant Program (RFP#201411868) to Good Shepherd Food Bank for a project entitled, "Modern Storage Facility for Year-Round Distribution of Local Farm Produce to Food Insecure Mainers."

The Year One Progress Report on this grant project is enclosed. Also enclosed is the 2015 Mainers Feeding Mainers report that provides information on how the project fits in to the larger vision for partnering with Maine's farms to eliminate food insecurity in the state.

All grant funds have been expended and we will be submitting an invoice shortly for reimbursement. However, we understand this is a three-year project involving the development of best practices for the safe and cost-effective storage of fruits and vegetables for year-round distribution to our partnering network of hunger relief programs. We intend to provide our Second Annual Report and Final Report by the dates stipulated in the grant agreement, and these will include information on operational metrics and the best practices developed through the new storage facility.

Please contact me if you have any questions relating to the attached reports. I can be reached at 207-782-3554 ext. 1124 or at bdodd@gsfb.org.

We are all so very appreciative of this truly impactful grant.

Sincerely,

Bob Dodd
V.P. of Development

Good Shepherd
FOOD BANK OF MAINE

Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Year One Report

Project Description

The Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry awarded a $50,000 3-year grant to Good Shepherd Food Bank in February 2015. The grant's purpose is to upgrade our main Auburn warehouse and add a produce storage facility there to meet the growing need for more nutritious food by Maine's low-income families and individuals and the community food pantries that serve them. The project also has the goal of understanding and implementing best practices for safe and economical short- and long-term storage of produce that will allow for year-round distribution of fruit and vegetables to Maine's food insecure people.

The construction portion of the grant project is now complete, and did not deviate from our original proposal. The grant funded parts of the total $1.45 million budget to make it possible for the Food Bank to immediately address our infrastructure needs in Auburn and avoid a costly and disruptive capital campaign. Elements of the construction project included:

- Construction of a modern, multi-zone Produce Storage Facility to add "root cellar" type long-term storage capacity (with varying temperature and humidity controls) to safely store for winter distribution fresh fruits and vegetables acquired from Maine farms and other sources;
- Installation of a cold storage facility management system and technology upgrades to substantially reduce operating costs and energy waste to keep more donated dollars directed at acquiring food for needy Maine people.

The Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry grant will impact on the next generation (and more) of Mainers seeking access to healthy, nutritious foods as a pathway out of poverty for themselves and their children. It will greatly help in the passionate efforts to ensure that no Mainer – especially that no child – faces the day seriously debilitated by hunger.

Stage of completion

All construction work funded by the grant has been completed. All work was completed by the end of November 2015. A ribbon-cutting event was held Thursday, Dec. 3 at our Auburn warehouse with officials from Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry in attendance.

Square footage of the facility

The new Produce Storage Facility is 90x40x35 and consists of 3 bays separated by solid walls with separate temperature and humidity controls, and entry doors for equipment and personnel.

Overall square- and cubic-footage: **3,532 sq. ft. / 105,960 cu. ft.**

A Giant Step toward a Bold Goal

In September of 2015, Good Shepherd Food Bank became one of six food banks nationally selected by Feeding America to lead its Opportunity Accelerator initiative to eliminate the meal gap in each food bank's service area by 2025. The intent is for each participating food bank to accelerate its strategic objectives in eliminating the meal gap, and to identify and secure the resources needed (including financial and consulting resources provided by Feeding America) to achieve what it calls the "Bold Goal"— in Maine, the total elimination of food insecurity by 2025. The new Produce Storage Facility and another one planned for our new warehouse in the Bangor area to serve the northern half of the state, pave the way for accomplishing this goal.

Projected Versus Actual Construction Costs

The original budget for the project and the actual costs are shown below.

	Estimated ($)	Actual ($)
Construction	466,000	537,416
Curtain system/walls	40,000	40,000
Plumbing for refrigeration	10,000	48,000
Racking and equipment	80,000	117,362
Refrigeration and mechanical upgrades	145,000	145,000
Heating upgrades	150,000	150,000
Roofing replacement	239,600	250,200
Electrical	19,400	62,517
IT upgrades	100,000	100,000
Total project	1,250,000	1,450,495

Grant Project Timeline & Highlights

Please see next pages.

Grant Project Timeline

November 2014 – Next Generation Foundation $1 million grant awarded

February 2015 – MDACF grant awarded

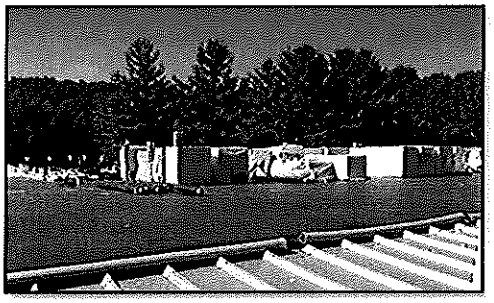
March – Building design finalized & sections ordered

April – Site work begins

May 20 – Groundbreaking ceremony

July – Concrete foundation poured

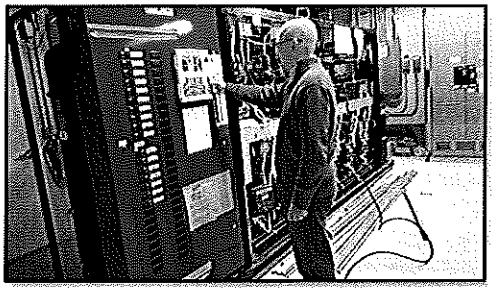
July - Erection of steel building begins



August - HVAC / Refrigeration installed

August - November – New roof completed

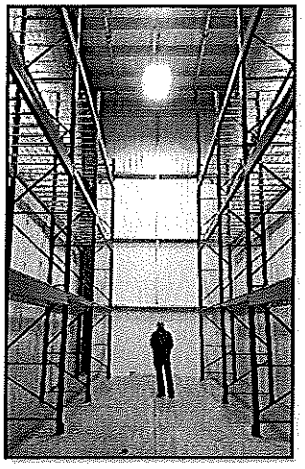
September – Warehouse access cut into new facility



September – Interior electrical-plumbing work begins

September – Door and shelving installation begins

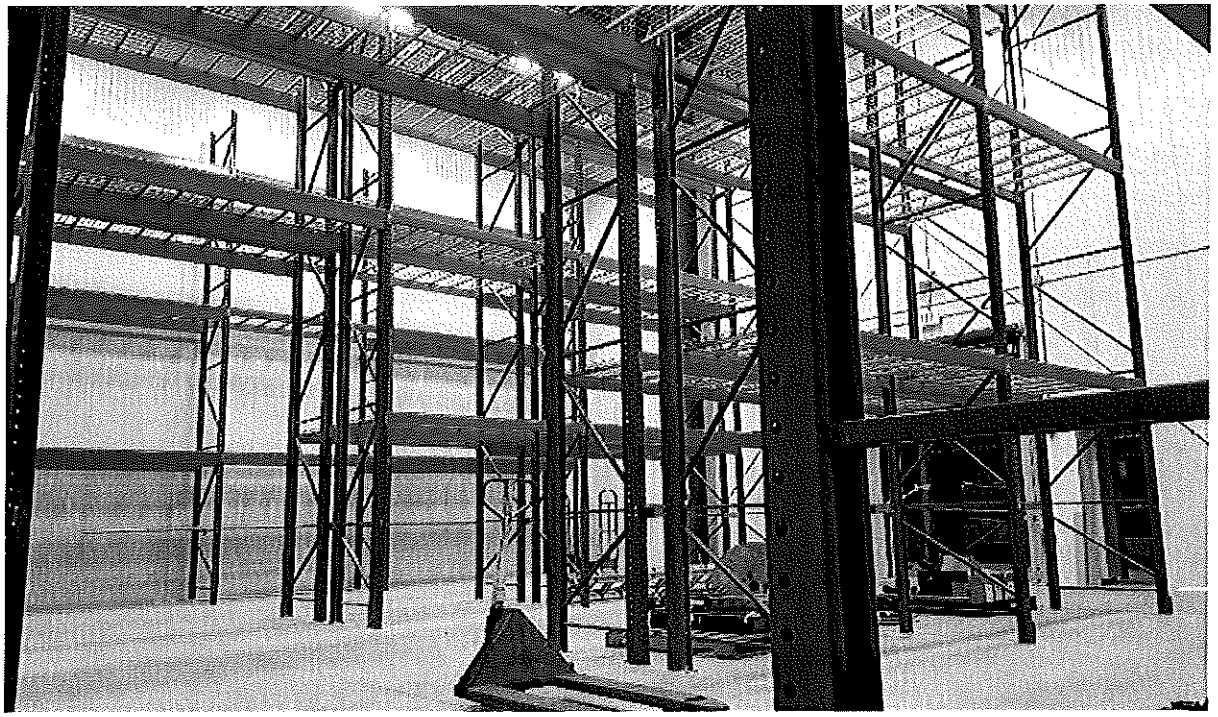
November – Start-up & testing of new compressors begins



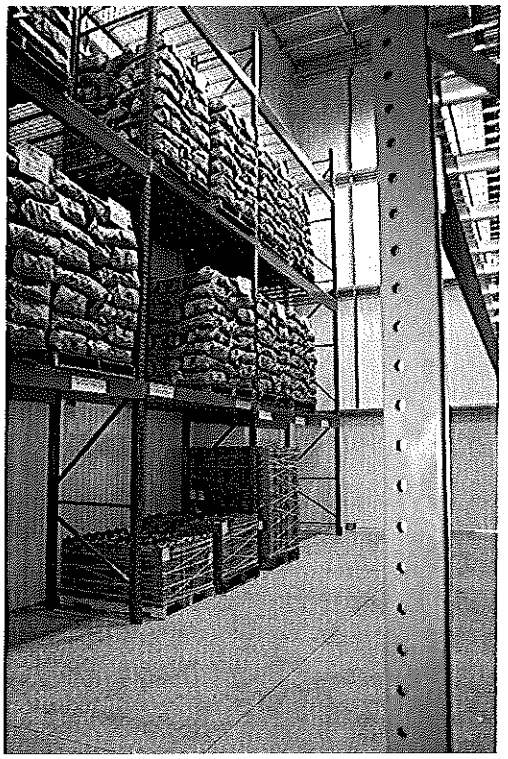
Dec. 1 – Operation of new facility & systems begins

Dec. 3 – Ribbon-cutting event

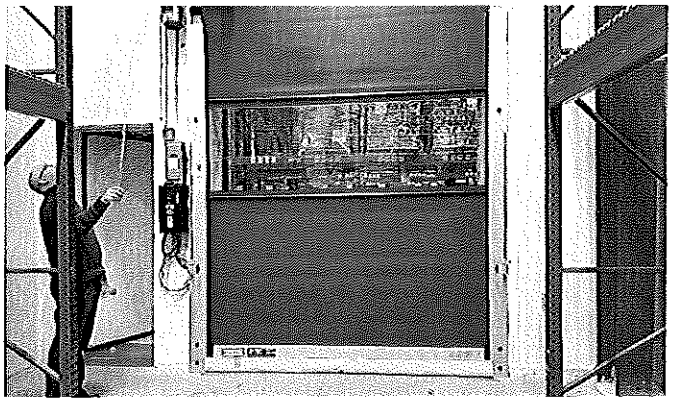
Project Highlights

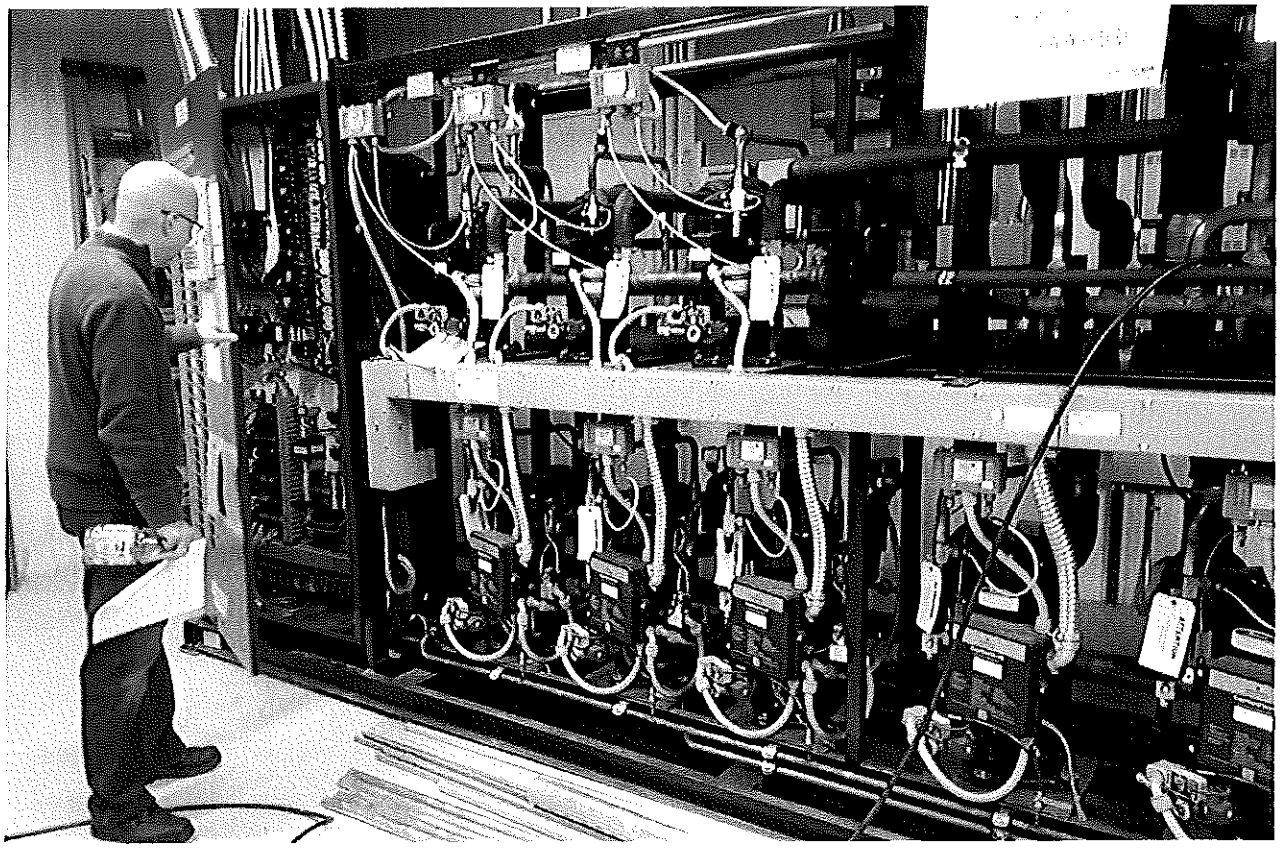


The multi-zoned, computer-controlled Produce Storage Facility consists of three bays to hold produce for long and short periods. This will allow us to store more for year-round distribution, especially in winter when Mainers struggling on low-incomes have little or no access to nutritious fruits and vegetables. The large Bay B is shown above. Bay C (right) is the same size as Bay A.

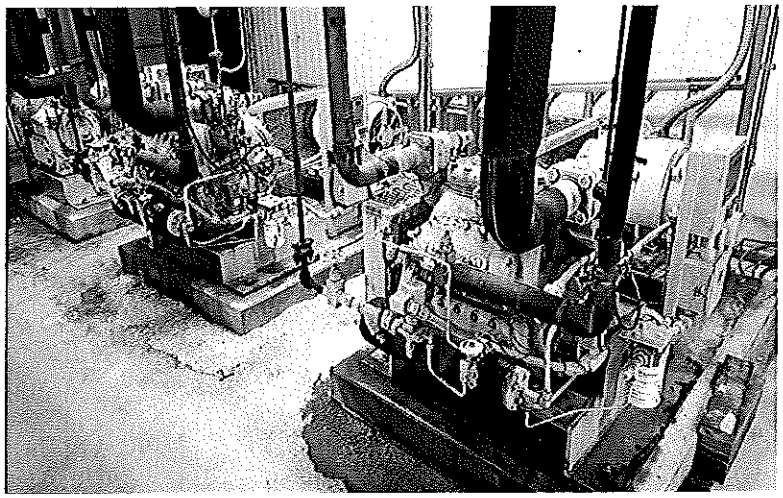


The three bays are each sealed off by safe, quick sealing high efficiency over-head doors (below).





Part of the construction project included installation of the new nerve center for our cold storage areas (above), a high technology rack containing nine high-efficiency compressors. The computerized control-panel can set temperature and humidity based on the optimum storage environment for various types of produce.



The new system replaces our aging and costly compressors (right) and allows us to take a giant step toward our goal of eliminating hunger in Maine by 2025.

Good Shepherd
FOOD BANK OF MAINE

2015
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

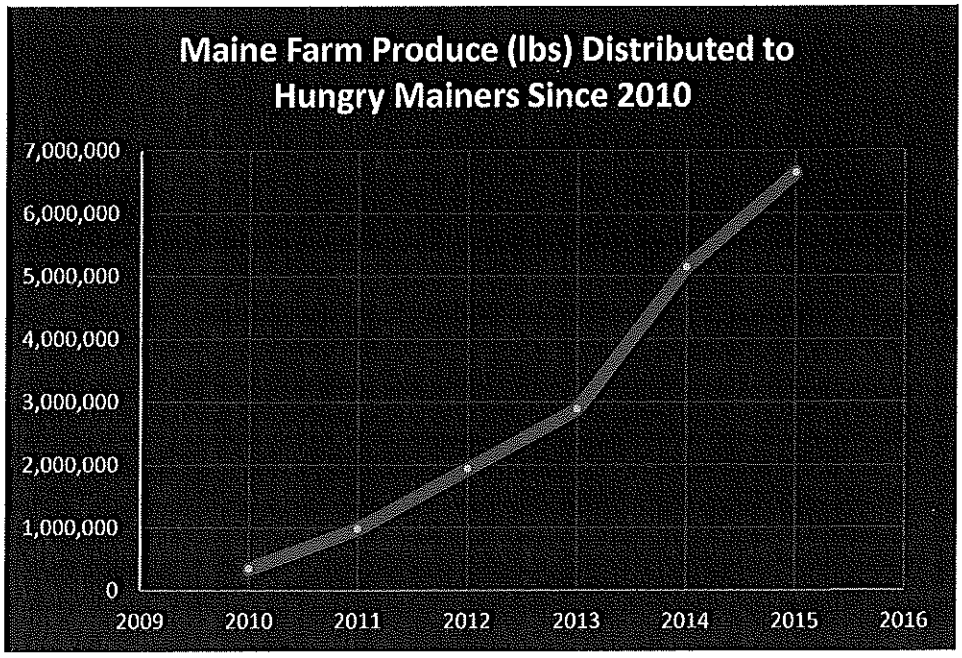
We invite you to watch the Mainers Feeding Mainers video:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3KOMusMKKPs

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.

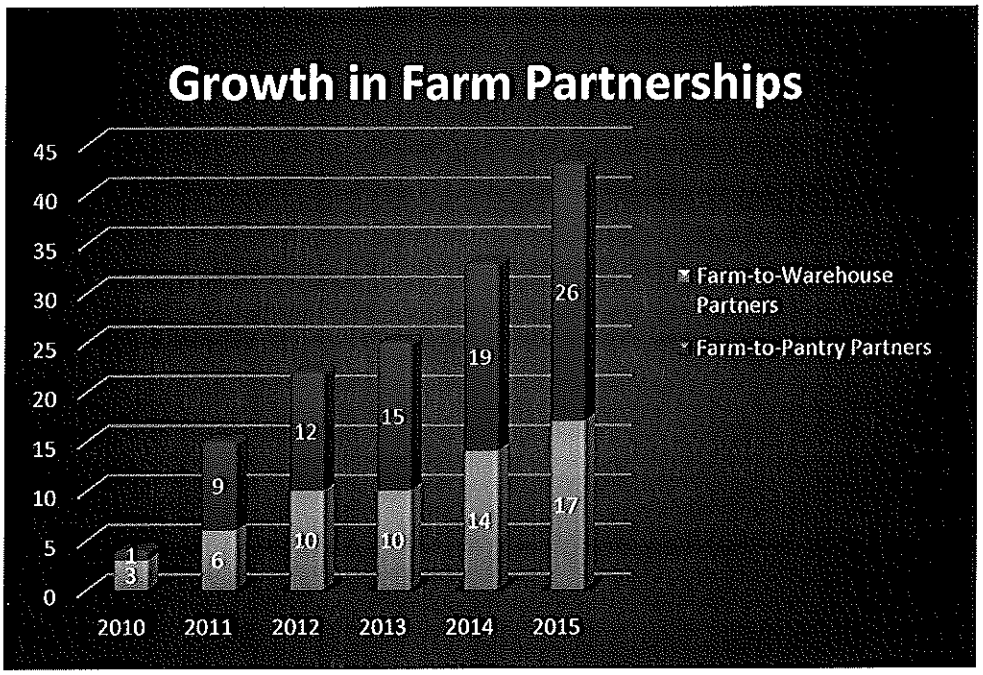
In 2015, Mainers Feeding Mainers purchased **840,000 lbs** of produce and received **660,000 lbs** of donated produce from our Maine farm partners for a total of **1.5 million lbs** of nutritious Maine fruits and vegetables for hungry people of all ages in our communities.



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:

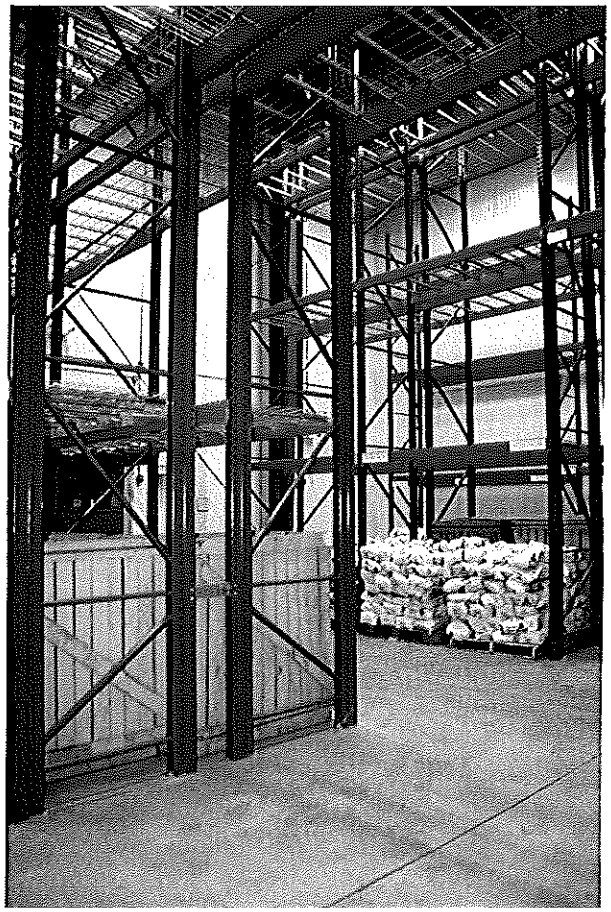
Sandy River Charitable Foundation	Elmina B. Sewall Foundation
Sam L. Cohen Foundation	John Merck Fund
New Balance Foundation	Betterment Fund
Walmart Foundation	Wescustogo Foundation
Thomas W. Haas Fund	USDA/Local Foods Promotion Program

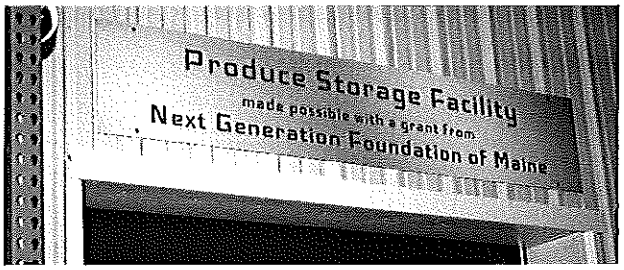
6 – NEW PRODUCE STORAGE FACILITIES AT THE FOOD BANK

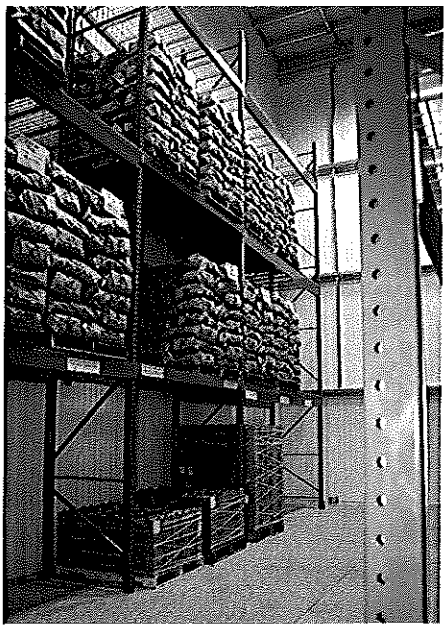
Southern Maine Facility: In the fall of 2015, we completed construction of a technologically cutting-edge produce storage facility at our Auburn warehouse (**see photos, next page**). The 115,000 cu. ft. produce storage facility includes computer-controlled temperature and humidity settings in four distinct controlled-environment zones. The Auburn facility was made possible in large part thanks to a $1 million grant from the Next Generation Foundation and other key funding resources. The facility allows 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, central and eastern 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)

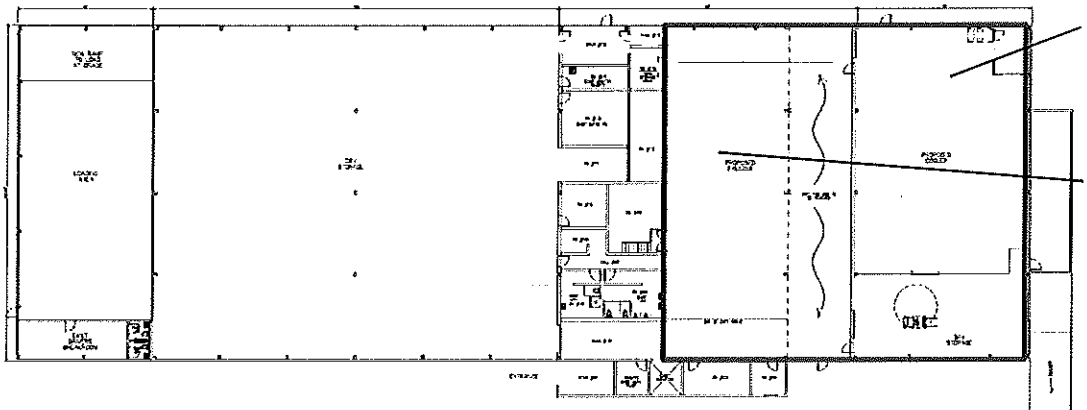




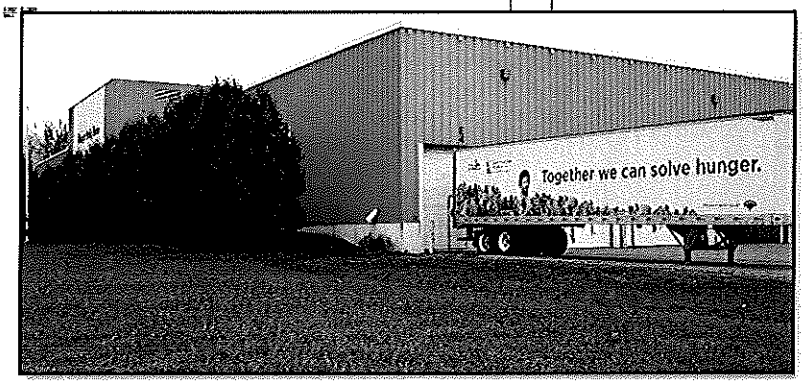


Our new Southern Maine Produce Storage Facility in Auburn makes it possible to acquire, safely store and distribute produce to hungry Maine children, seniors and families year-round.

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.