



Fiscal Year 2023 Core Food & MassGrown Summary Report

July 1, 2022 – December 31, 2023



PREPARED BY



ON BEHALF OF



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As an organization that is working at the intersection of farming and food insecurity, we strongly support the MEFAP program, and the percentage of that funding allocated to MassGrown produce. Our partnership with The Greater Boston Food Bank to source locally grown, fresh produce has been tremendously beneficial to the growth of Boston Food Hub and has increased revenue for over 20 of our partner farms.”

– **Usha Thakrar, Boston Area Gleaners**



Highlights of Fiscal Year 2023

FOOD INSECURITY RATES REMAIN HIGH



The pandemic has had long-term effects, causing food insecurity in Massachusetts to increase by nearly **70%** since 2019.



The number of people seeking food assistance continues to increase, as demonstrated by the number of MA residents enrolled in SNAP benefits. In January 2024, nearly **1.1 million people** were enrolled in SNAP—~13,000 more than in January 2023.¹



As many as **1 in 3 adults in MA** faced food insecurity at some point in 2023.



Nearly **1 in 2 households** with children in the Commonwealth were food insecure in 2023, compared to 1 in 4 pre-pandemic.²



Over 900 emergency food programs that partner with the 4 regional food banks across the state were supported with products purchased with MEFAP funds. In 2023, these MA food bank partners collectively reported serving an estimated 826,000 people every month.



Although year-over-year inflation rates have improved, food prices are not declining. Consumers are still paying **25% more** for food than they did in January 2020.³

Massachusetts has experienced the **6th-highest grocery price increase** in the country (6.6%) in the past 12 months.⁴

Total MEFAP funding in FY23 was **\$30M**, which was level funded from FY22.



- ✓ **12 vendors** were awarded contracts to supply Core Food products.
- ✓ An **additional 28 vendors** supplied Core Food produce through the program, and **2 local vendors** supplied frozen seafood products.
- ✓ Of the **42 Core Food vendors**, Core Food vendors, 26 were Massachusetts-based companies, comprising 47% of the Core Food spend. This is a 10% increase from FY22.
- ✓ **211 different items** were purchased with Core Food funds.
- ✓ **21 Massachusetts farms** were supported by MassGrown purchases. One of those 21 farms is Pioneer Valley Growers Association, a cooperative that sources from 40 Massachusetts farms and provides MEFAP with fresh produce.
- ✓ A total of **25,191,218 meals** were provided through MEFAP, including over 9.3 million pounds of fresh produce.
- ✓ Between July 2022 and June 2023, 30,229,461 pounds of food were purchased with MEFAP funds for the 4 MA food banks.
 - ➔ Of this total, **26,893,716 pounds** were distributed through the Core Food program between July 2022 and June 2023.
 - ➔ **3,335,745 pounds** were distributed through the MassGrown program between January and December 2022.

¹ Department of Transitional Assistance facts and figures | Mass.gov

² "Opportunities to Improve Food Equity and Access in Massachusetts," Greater Boston Food Bank.

³ Aimee Picchi, "Inflation is cooling. So why are food prices, from steak to fast-food meals, still rising?" CBS News.

⁴ Mark Huffman, "The rising cost of groceries by state (2024)," ConsumerAffairs.

MEFAP Fiscal Year 2023 Summary Report

Core Food: July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023
MassGrown: January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023

About MEFAP

The Massachusetts Emergency Food Assistance Program (MEFAP) provides food products to food insecure residents in the Commonwealth. The program has consistently supplied over 900 emergency food providers with quality, nutrient-dense foods and locally grown fresh produce through the statewide food bank network. It has also recently expanded to include locally sourced seafood products.

MEFAP consists of 2 food purchasing programs:



About The Food Bank Coalition of Massachusetts

The Food Bank Coalition of Massachusetts (FBCMA) includes The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts (FBWM) in Chicopee, The Greater Boston Food Bank (GBFB) in Boston, Merrimack Valley Food Bank (MVFB) in Lowell, and Worcester County Food Bank (WCFB) in Shrewsbury. Each food bank is a private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation that distributes surplus, reclaimed, and other donated foods, purchased foods, and foods provided by the USDA through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP). U.S. Census Bureau service area population and poverty statistics, as well as clients served, are used to determine the allocation of MEFAP funds to the 4 food banks. The distribution formula for FY23 MEFAP funds and changes from FY22 percentages are detailed in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1
Allocation of FY23 MEFAP Funds within the Food Bank Coalition of MA

FOOD BANK	LOCATION	PERCENTAGE*	% CHANGE
GBFB	Boston	68.10%	↓ -1.55%
WCFB	Shrewsbury	12.14%	↑ 0.26%
FBWM	Chicopee	14.45%	↑ 0.37%
MVFB	Lowell	5.31%	↑ 0.92%

*Percentages based on U.S. Census and Feeding America statistics

When the Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen’s Alliance wanted to connect our fishing community to people facing food insecurity across the state, The Greater Boston Food Bank became our crucial partner. Together, with MEFAP support, we built a program that to date has delivered almost 500,000 pounds of haddock chowder and fish stew to every corner of the Commonwealth.”

– Seth Rolbein,
Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen’s Alliance

The statewide emergency food bank distribution network reaches every community in the Commonwealth through food distribution partners that serve individuals and families most in need of food assistance. By reducing food costs for food bank member partners and providing high-quality, nutritious food, MEFAP plays a vital role in reducing hunger and supporting nutrition in the Commonwealth. Over 900 emergency providers received MEFAP products in FY23. These programs include:

- Pantries
- Soup kitchens
- Transitional houses
- Shelters
- Health and senior centers



MEFAP-distributed food represented **23% of the overall total pounds** of food distributed by the 4 Massachusetts food banks in FY23. While the MEFAP funding level was the same in FY23 as in FY22, the food banks purchased a greater proportion of food with privately funded resources to meet increased demand. Additionally, higher prices of food purchased through MEFAP, such as eggs, contributed to a decline in MEFAP's share of overall total pounds distributed.

MEFAP remains an important and reliable buffer to the volatility of other unstable product sources. While other food sources for food banks—including donations from food retailers, manufacturers, and processors, as well as federal commodities received through the USDA—are susceptible to potentially significant price changes from year to year, FBCMA and the partners and clients they serve can depend on MEFAP as a stable source of healthy food products.

TABLE 2
FY23 Massachusetts Regional Food Banks Total Distribution*

FOOD BANK	TOTAL POUNDS FROM ALL SOURCES	% CHANGE	MEFAP % OF TOTAL POUNDS	% CHANGE
GBFB	107,297,519	↓ -3.6%	20.2%	↓ -13.2%
WCFCB	7,811,395	↑ 7.8%	40.6%	↓ -19.4%
FBWM	12,863,053	↑ 4.6%	31.0%	↓ -14.7%
MVFB	3,559,969	↑ 5.1%	38.6%	↓ -10.2%
TOTAL	131,531,936	↓ -2.0%	23.0%	↓ -13.1%

*Table includes overall pounds distributed from July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023.

TABLE 3
FY23 MEFAP Distribution*

FOOD BANK	MEFAP CORE FOOD	% CHANGE	MEFAP MASSGROWN	% CHANGE	MEFAP TOTAL POUNDS	MEFAP TOTAL MEALS	% CHANGE
GBFB	19,373,025	↓ -16.9%	2,322,748	↓ -11.1%	21,695,773	18,079,811	↓ -16.3%
WCFCB	2,842,426	↓ -15.7%	327,580	↑ 18.1%	3,170,006	2,641,672	↓ -13.1%
FBWM	3,434,749	↓ -13.0%	553,637	↑ 5.8%	3,988,386	3,323,655	↓ -10.8%
MVFB	1,243,516	↓ -7.1%	131,780	↑ 10.6%	1,375,296	1,146,080	↓ -5.6%
TOTAL	26,893,716	↓ -15.9%	3,335,745	↓ -5.5%	30,229,461	25,191,218	↓ -14.8%

*Table includes Core Food pounds distributed from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023 and MassGrown pounds distributed between Jan 1, 2023 & December 31, 2023.

Fiscal Year 2023 in Review

Background

Inflation presents dueling challenges for food banks: greater demand at food pantries, and some of the highest prices our food purchasing teams have seen to date.

Recent statewide data reveals that as many as 1 in 3 people in Massachusetts were food insecure at some point in 2023, and that the persistent need our partners are experiencing has doubled over the course of the pandemic. Based on this significant need, the FBCMA has responded with increased purchasing to distribute more food. MEFAP plays a vital role in this response, enabling the food bank system in Massachusetts to provide a consistent and reliable supply of quality, nutrient-rich foods, locally grown fresh produce, and staple items to food pantries and other feeding programs across the state.

Between July 2022 and June 2023, the FBCMA collectively distributed 131.5 million pounds of food across all food sources, including MEFAP. While the rising cost of food led to a decrease of 2% over the prior year, it was still 17% greater than the 2020 distribution. A key driver of this increase was the significant rise in MEFAP funding for FY21 to FY23. This additional MEFAP funding, alongside sustained elevated purchasing levels through private funding, has allowed food banks to continue to elevate and sustain food distribution to meet the historical levels of need for food assistance in the Commonwealth. Accounting for nearly ¼ of statewide food bank distribution volume in FY23, MEFAP remains a significant and critical player in the statewide effort to combat food insecurity.

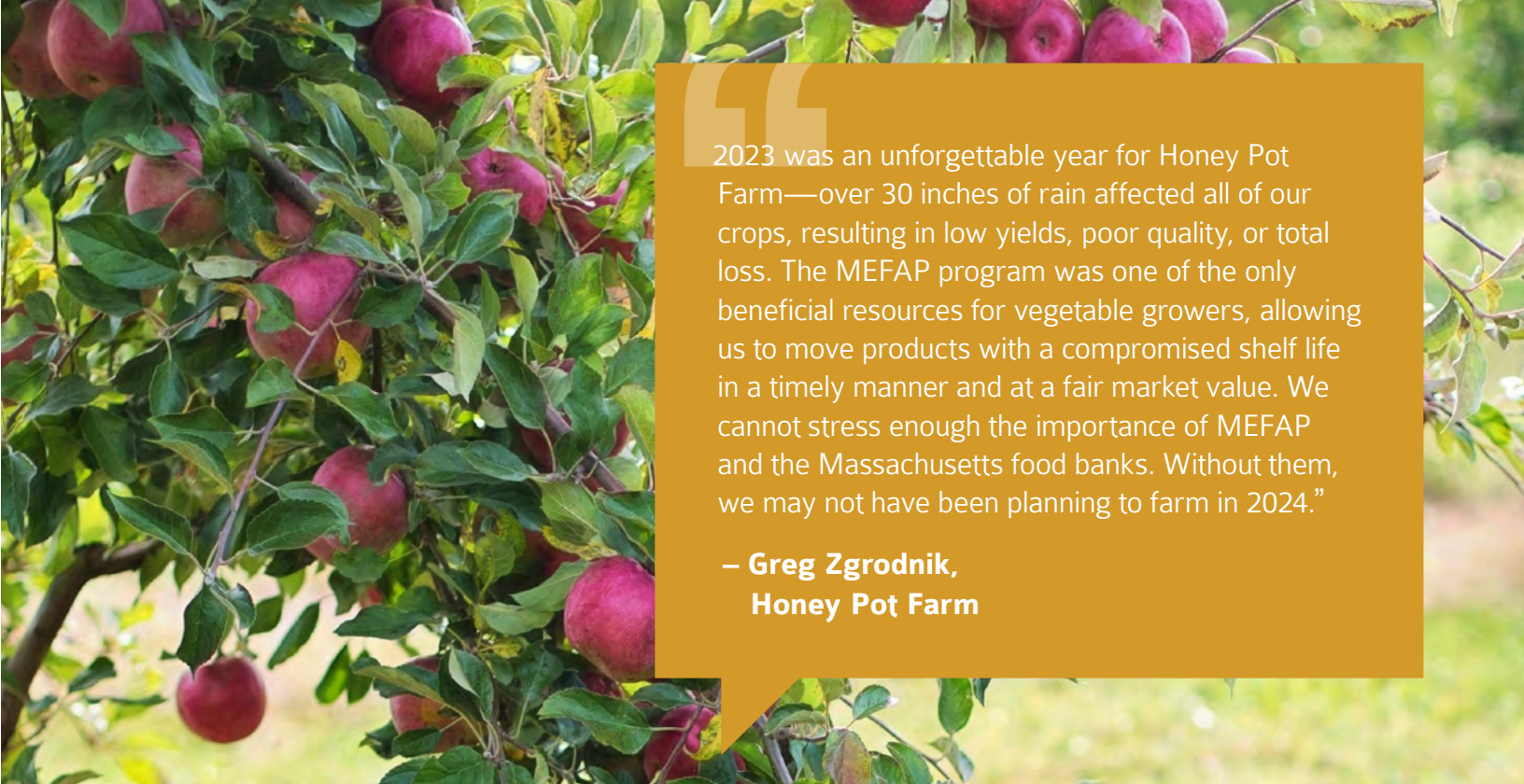
In FY23, 30.2 million pounds of food were distributed through MEFAP. This was a decrease of 14.8% from FY22, with no change in funding. This decrease was primarily driven by 2 key factors:

- 1 Significant cost inflation across many existing food categories
- 2 Increased prioritization of local seafood purchases, leading to a higher average cost per pound
 - The cost per pound for Core Food increased by 16.1%, from \$0.87/lb. in FY22 to \$1.01/lb. in FY23.
 - MassGrown purchases saw an increase in cost per pound of 5.0%, from \$.64/lb. to \$.67/lb. This is mainly a result of poor weather conditions that impacted crops and led to higher prices.



In FY23, FBCMA faced an overall increase in average food pricing, with a 16% increase for Core Food purchasing and a 5% increase for MassGrown purchasing.





2023 was an unforgettable year for Honey Pot Farm—over 30 inches of rain affected all of our crops, resulting in low yields, poor quality, or total loss. The MEFAP program was one of the only beneficial resources for vegetable growers, allowing us to move products with a compromised shelf life in a timely manner and at a fair market value. We cannot stress enough the importance of MEFAP and the Massachusetts food banks. Without them, we may not have been planning to farm in 2024.”

– Greg Zgrodnik,
Honey Pot Farm

Additionally, due to supply chain disruptions, including port congestion, packaging shortages, labor disruptions, transportation/driver shortages, and unpredictable weather patterns, supply volatility and price increases (particularly for items like eggs, poultry, ground beef, and fresh produce) have persisted.

Supply challenges brought on by COVID-19 persisted during the FY23 year, and the stability of MEFAP contracts and supplier relationships underscored the unique and critical role MEFAP plays in the state’s hunger relief and food systems. During periods of limited availability in the supply chain, vendor contracts in Core Food ensured a steady supply of food items to agencies, including eggs, milk, cheese, peanut butter, pasta, 100% juice, and poultry. Core Food funds set aside for produce offered additional flexibility—increasing produce variety for agencies and providing a secondary support stream for Massachusetts farms when needed.

Prioritizing Nutrition

Nutrition continues to be a foundational priority for MEFAP purchases. The FBCMA’s purchasing through this program reflects the desires of neighbors we serve, and prioritizes quality, nutrient-dense products, including produce, proteins, and dairy products.



In FY23, **97.6% of MEFAP distributed pounds** met the coalition’s standards for nutrition based on saturated fat, sodium, and sugar content.

Prioritizing Local

While the main objective of MEFAP is to provide food products for food-insecure populations by balancing cost, variety, and nutrition, care is taken to prioritize local purchasing and support Massachusetts industry where economically and logistically feasible.



In FY23, **51%, or \$14.6M, of all MEFAP dollars** were spent with Massachusetts-based suppliers in an effort to support local industry and economy. Of Core Food purchases, 47% of funding was spent with Massachusetts-based vendors. This is a 10% increase from the prior year.

Program Funding

At \$30M, MEFAP funding in FY23 (July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023) was the same amount as the prior year. A breakdown of the funding is contained in Table 4 below and a summary history of MEFAP funding and meals distributed is contained in Table 9 on page 18. In FY23, the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) managed both the food purchasing funds, including funding for the Massachusetts Grown Initiative, and operation funds.

TABLE 4
FY23 MEFAP Funding

PROGRAM	FY23 FUNDING
Core Food Funding	\$26,176,698.53
Massachusetts Grown Initiative	\$2,243,301.47
Operation Funding	\$1,000,000.00
DAR Administrative Fee	\$580,000.00
TOTAL FUNDING	\$30,000,000

MEFAP Food Purchases

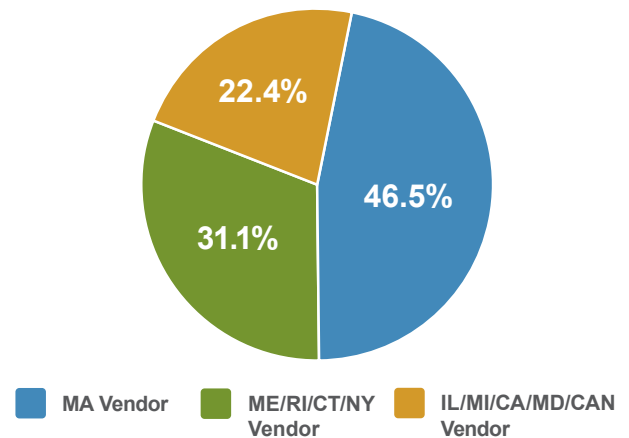
MEFAP consists of two purchasing programs: Core Food and the Massachusetts Grown Initiative. Core Food purchases and distribution statistics are for the period of July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023. Due to the seasonality of the Massachusetts growing season, MassGrown purchases and distribution statistics are for the period of January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023.

Core Food

FBCMA purchased and distributed 26.9 million pounds of food through the Core Food program, accounting for 88.9% of total MEFAP distribution in FY23. The Core Food program supports purchases across a wide variety of product categories, allowing the FBCMA to consistently distribute a broad and sustainable assortment of key nutritious products to clients in need through distribution sites. In FY23, 46.5% of all Core Food funds were spent with Massachusetts-based vendors. See Chart 1 below for a breakdown of Core Food spend by vendor location.

CHART 1

FY23 MEFAP Core Food Spend by Vendor State*



*Vendor state indicates location of company headquarters.

“We, as a company, are totally aligned with the mission of fighting hunger in Eastern Massachusetts. Participation in the MEFAP program is integral to our core mission as a company in giving back to the community to those in need. As a major employer in Eastern Massachusetts, Teddie peanut butter has an intense obligation to our employees in support of their livelihoods and their ability to support and provide for their families. The MEFAP program allows Teddie Peanut Butter, as a local supplier, to keep our production lines running during down periods. The MEFAP orders keep our production lines running and our employees working during those periods”

– **Mark J. Hintlian,**
The Leavitt Corporation

Core Food FY23 Bid and Contracts

The majority of food purchased through the Core Food program is sourced from vendors selected through a competitive bid process. Annual contracts for all items (excluding produce and seafood) are awarded to vendors whose submitted bids offer the best value to food banks and the state based on a combination of factors, including the following:

- Product pricing
- Price time frames
- Product quality and nutritional value
- Logistical capabilities (service all 4 locations)
- Local vendor location vs. out-of-state vendor location
- Company service record and past performance

Food safety documentation is an important Core Food Bid requirement to safeguard populations served by FBCMA and remain aligned with the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act. Bidders must provide letters of material guarantee from all manufacturers represented and third-party food safety audit certificates for all food processing facilities. All 4 food banks were very satisfied with the customer service supplied by the 12 awarded Core Food vendors. Table 5 below summarizes the awards by vendor.

TABLE 5
FY23 Core Food Bid Vendors

VENDOR	LOCATION	ITEMS AWARDED	FY22 SPEND	FY23 SPEND	% CHANGE
Port Royal Sales	Woodbury, NY	Canned Fruit & Vegetables, Spaghetti Sauce, Tuna, Quick Oats, Pasta	\$3,817,937.06	\$3,645,159.52	↓ -4.53%
Broccoli Associates	Utica, NY	Poultry, Pork, Frozen & Canned Vegetables, Mac & Cheese	\$2,766,512.70	\$3,026,389.86	↑ 9.39%
Performance Food Group	Springfield, MA	Cheese, Yogurt, Oatmeal	\$2,600,100.07	\$2,681,889.07	↑ 3.15%
Hillandale Farms	Bozrah, CT	Fresh Eggs	\$1,173,132.85	\$2,155,580.25	↑ 83.75%
Galot Inc.	Carlsbad, CA	Cereal, Canned Chicken, Rice	\$1,738,452.78	\$1,925,984.02	↑ 10.79%
Feeding America	Chicago, IL	Canned Vegetables, Cereal, Shelf Stable Milk, Soup	\$2,580,520.29	\$1,743,731.91	↓ -32.43%
B & B Trading Corporation	Boston, MA	Poultry	\$931,434.24	\$1,018,647.18	↑ 9.36%
Burnette Foods	Elk Rapids, MI	Applesauce & Canned Beans	\$1,002,918.62	\$997,484.68	↓ -0.54%
CEBEV	Chicago, IL	Fruit Juice	\$693,852.16	\$836,136.40	↑ 20.51%
New England Food Brokerage	Stoughton, MA	Ground Beef	\$1,100,553	\$798,747.10	↓ -27.42%
The Leavitt Corporation	Everett, MA	Peanut Butter	\$879,441.02	\$750,388.80	↓ -14.67%
DFA Dairy Brands/ Garelick Farms	Franklin, MA	Fresh Milk	\$336,217.71	\$310,238.88	↓ -7.73%

Core Food Produce

Core Food produce orders are placed based on weekly availability and pricing from a wide pool of in-state and out-of-state farms, produce sheds, suppliers, and brokers. In addition to the \$21.8M in Core Food awarded spending through the 12 awarded vendors and 2 Massachusetts seafood vendors detailed above, an additional \$4.5M of Core Food funds were spent on produce.

To increase the volume of fresh produce in the program and help keep overall costs per pound low, GBFB coordinated purchases of Grade A produce items from a large pool of vendors throughout the year.

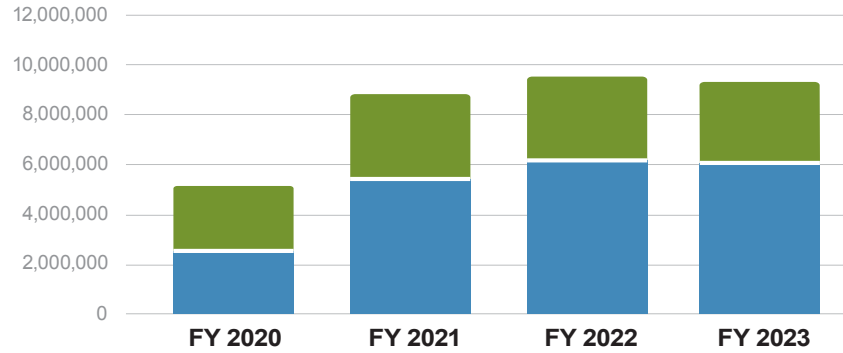
Table 6 provides a breakdown of the spending of these Core Food produce funds. Special attention was paid to these produce purchases so as to not interfere with MassGrown initiative ordering; items sourced were either not available through MassGrown or were ordered off-season.

TABLE 6
FY23 Core Food Produce Vendors

VENDOR	LOCATION	ITEMS PURCHASED	FY22 SPEND	FY23 SPEND	% CHANGE
Tourtellot & Co.	Warwick, RI	Bananas, Berries, Grapes, Citrus, Cooking Greens (Collards/Kale), Cooking Veg, Corn, Exotic Fruit, Melons, Yucca, Plantains, Onions, Pears, Peppers, Pineapple, Potatoes, Root Veg (Carrots, Parsnips, Turnip), Salad Veg, Squash, Stone Fruit, Tomatoes	\$934,521.10	\$1,064,362.50	↑ 13.89%
New England Banana	Chelsea, MA	Yucca, Plantains, Avocado, Mango, Pineapple	\$3,120.00	\$844,056.25	↑ 26,953.1%
DiSilva Fruit	Chelsea, MA	Apples, Cabbage, Citrus, Exotic Fruit, Melons, Onions, Potatoes, Squash	\$730,294.55	\$812,703.44	↑ 11.28%
S. Strock & Co.	Chelsea, MA	Salad Veg	\$698,532.80	\$386,587.81	↓ -44.65%
Northeast Produce	Plainville, CT	Peppers, Salad Veg, Tomatoes	\$405,579.00	\$241,909.50	↓ -40.35%
Joseph P. Sullivan & Co.	Ayer, MA	Apples	\$471,960.00	\$220,657.50	↓ -53.24%
Del Monte Fresh Produce	Chicago, IL	Bananas, Exotic Fruit, Melons, Pineapple	\$534,750.50	\$160,155.00	↓ -70.05%
Boston Area Gleaners, Inc.	Acton, MA	Apples, Cabbage, Cooking Greens (Collards/Kale), Cooking Veg, Potatoes, Root Veg (Carrots, Parsnips, Turnip), Squash	\$20,526.00	\$155,305.00	↑ 656.63%
Farmer Dave's	Dracut, MA	Apples, Cooking Greens (Collards/Kale), Squash	\$13,536.00	\$150,721.00	↑ 1,013.48%
McKinstry Market Garden, Inc.	Chicopee, MA	Cabbage, Cooking Greens (Collards/Kale), Cooking Veg, Squash	N/A	\$97,300.00	N/A
Pioneer Valley Growers Association	South Deerfield, MA	Apples, Cabbage, Cooking Greens (Collards/Kale), Cooking Veg, Potatoes, Root Veg (Carrots, Parsnips, Turnip), Squash	\$36,528.00	\$87,979.00	↑ 140.85%
P. Tavilla Company, Inc	Chelsea, MA	Bok Choy, Cooking Veg, Peppers, Salad Veg, Squash, Cucumber	N/A	\$81,449.00	N/A

CHART 2**MEFAP Fresh Produce Pounds**

Core Food Mass Grown

**FY23 Core Food Produce Vendors (continued)**

VENDOR	LOCATION	ITEMS PURCHASED	FY22 SPEND	FY23 SPEND	% CHANGE
Honey Pot Farm, LLC	Hatfield, MA	Cabbage, Peppers, Squash	N/A	\$49,537.50	N/A
Melon1 Sales Corporation	Brooklyn, NY	Melons	N/A	\$34,950.00	N/A
New England Apple Products Company	Leominster, MA	Fresh Cider	N/A	\$34,896.00	N/A
Ward's Berry Farm	Sharon, MA	Bok Choy, Cooking Veg, Root Veg (Carrots, Parsnips, Turnip), Squash	\$28,502.00	\$23,150.00	↓ -18.77%
Hungry Harvest	Landover, MD	Exotic Fruit, Potatoes, Squash	N/A	\$21,930.40	N/A
Atlas Farm	Deerfield, MA	Root Veg (Carrots, Parsnips, Turnip)	N/A	\$16,780.00	N/A
Michael Davidian dba Davidian's Farm Market LLC	Northborough, MA	Apples	N/A	\$12,740.00	N/A
Irving Farms, Inc	Caribou, ME	Potatoes	N/A	\$8,533.00	N/A
Community-Suffolk	Everett, MA	Root Veg (Carrots, Parsnips, Turnip)	\$22,958.00	\$5,720.00	↓ -75.08%
Lookout Farms, LLC	South Natick, MA	Apples, Pears	N/A	\$5,648.00	N/A
Coast to Coast Produce Company	Cheshire, CT	Melons	N/A	\$4,123.50	N/A
Hapco Farms, LLC	Riverhead, NY	Cooking Veg	\$65,520.00	\$3,264.00	↓ -95.02%
Szawlowski Potato Farm Inc	Hatfield, MA	Potatoes	\$72,047.50	\$2,250.00	↓ -96.87%
Western Harvest	Quebec, CAN	Squash	\$149,014.80	\$1,825.00	↓ -98.77%
Mark Wendolowski Farm	Hatfield, MA	Onions	N/A	\$1,440.00	N/A
Plainville Farm	Hadley, MA	Squash	N/A	\$571.32	N/A

Core Food Seafood

FBCMA continues to support the local seafood program established in FY21. The seafood program consists of a continued partnership with 2 Massachusetts-based seafood organizations. In addition, in FY24, we are working with additional vendor partners to collaboratively identify items that would fit MEFAP and food bank specs, while providing an additional source of nutritious protein products to food-insecure populations.



Since the local seafood purchasing program began, the **FBCMA has tripled its overall spending on local seafood.**

TABLE 7
FY23 Core Food Seafood Vendors

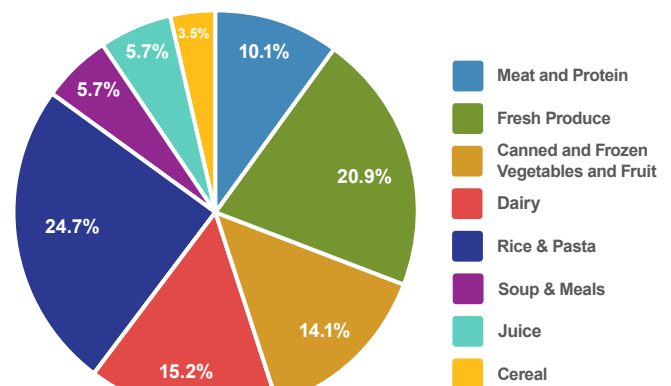
VENDOR	LOCATION	ITEMS PURCHASED	FY22 SPEND	FY23 SPEND	% CHANGE
Boston Sword & Tuna	Boston, MA	Pollock, Salmon Tails	\$1,244,415.30	\$1,260,575.60	↑ 1.30%
Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Association	Wellfleet, MA	Haddock Chowder, Provencal Stew	\$436,930.00	\$528,710.00	↑ 21.01%

Core Food Product Categories and Cost per Pound

The core food assortment is intentionally selected each year to ensure a consistent supply of highly nutritious staple products with a focus on produce, protein, and dairy. Adjustments to the assortment are made annually based on feedback from FBCMA distribution sites, past year suppliers, and item performance. FBCMA continues to strike a balance between maximizing the meals distributed through the program while meeting the needs of those served by our member agencies.

The percentages by product category remained largely the same from FY22, with meat and protein, produce, canned/frozen vegetables and fruit, and dairy comprising almost 60% of total distribution volume. See Chart 3 for a breakdown of MEFAP Core Food items distributed by product category.

CHART 3
FY23 Core Food Product Category Mix by Pounds Distributed



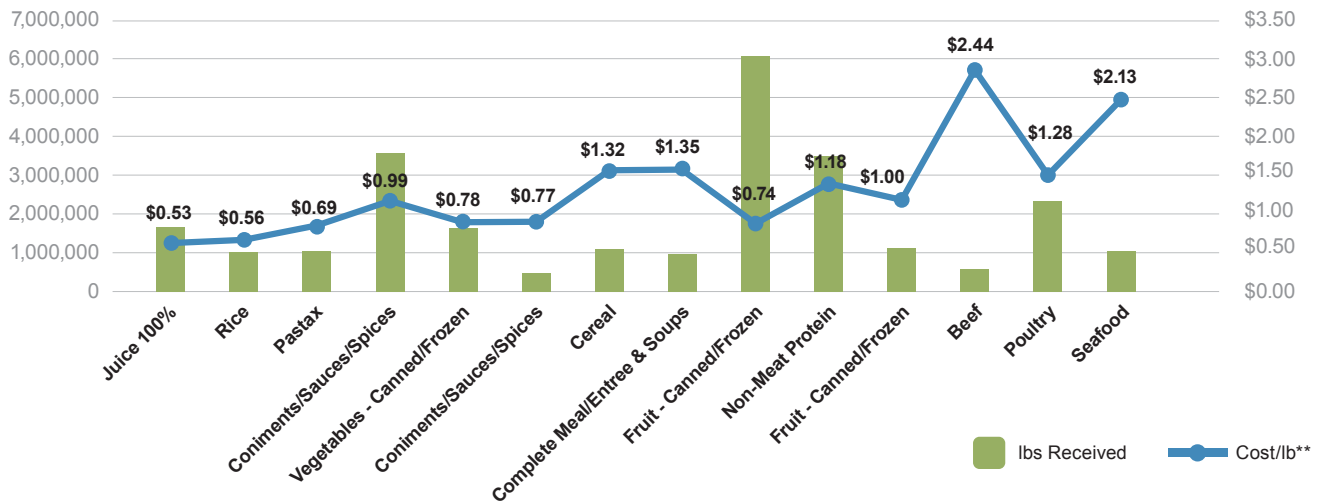
In FY23, the FBCMA purchased **13,700 turkeys** to distribute over the Thanksgiving holiday season with MEFAP Core Food funding.

While the quantity purchased remained unchanged from FY22, the cost per pound increased by **25%** due to supply chain challenges caused by the avian flu (bird flu). The cost of turkeys increased from \$1.25/lb. in FY22 to \$1.56/lb. in FY23.

As shown in Chart 4 below, beef, poultry, and seafood continue to be some of the highest cost per pound categories in the program, while remaining an area of focus for FBCMA and the agencies we serve. Additionally, dairy, egg, and meat items can be subject to volatile pricing changes during the year. These higher costs are in part off-set by the lower cost per pound of fresh produce and non-meat protein categories that are also priorities.

CHART 4

FY23 MEFAP Core Food Cost per Pound by Category

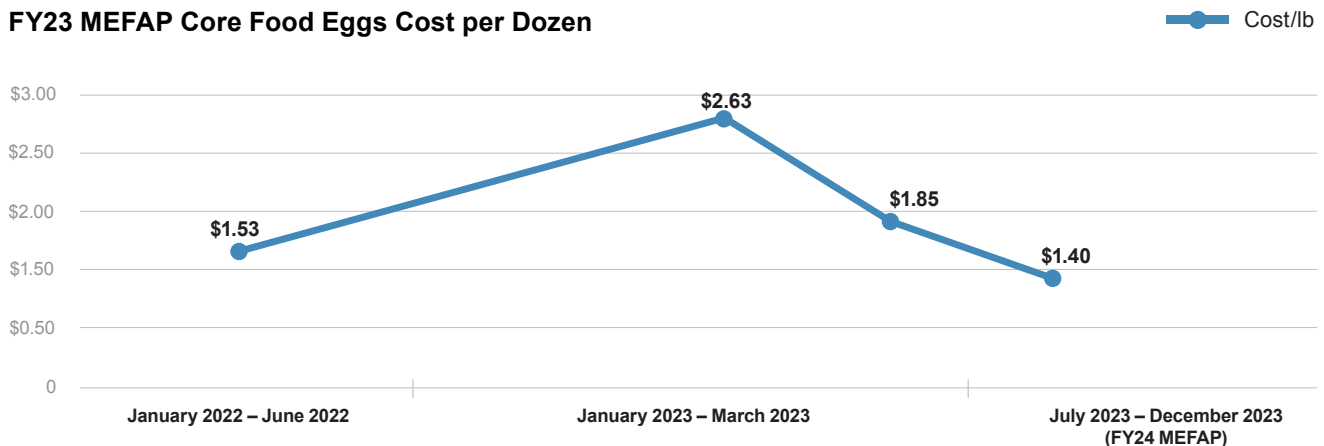


Core Food Eggs

The cost of eggs increased substantially in FY23, growing from an average of \$1.53/dozen in the second half of FY22 (January-June 2022) to an average of \$2.63/dozen in the third quarter of FY23 (January-March 2023). This was a 71.9% increase. Pricing did come down over the last quarter of the MEFAP year, with an average cost of \$1.85/dozen. As we briefly look at the first half of FY24, our pricing has started to stabilize a bit, with a cost per dozen of \$1.40 on average over the first 3 months of the FY24 MEFAP year. As we continue into FY24, we are seeing a steady increase as supply chain challenges and significant avian influenza outbreaks continue to impact pricing.

CHART 5

FY23 MEFAP Core Food Eggs Cost per Dozen



Massachusetts Grown Initiative

The Massachusetts Grown Initiative (MassGrown) within MEFAP is intended to give food-insecure individuals access to fresh local produce while simultaneously opening a new market for local farmers. The program has successfully re-invested MEFAP funds into Massachusetts' agricultural industry since its introduction—and wrapped up its 25th year in December 2023. MassGrown aids the 4 regional food banks in their efforts to maximize the nutritional value of distributed food. As these food banks continue to focus on increasing the volume of fresh produce and nutrient-rich food acquired and distributed, the MassGrown initiative provides a vital opportunity to source top-quality products from local farms. In FY23, the MassGrown year ran from January 1 through December 31, 2023.

MassGrown Spend and Partner Farms

MassGrown funding was \$2.24M in FY23, an increase of \$43K over FY22. The MassGrown allocation comprised 7.9% of the total food purchase funding, which was a slight increase over FY22, but from the same food purchase funding of \$28.42M. Each food bank selects its own percentage of total funding for food to apply towards MassGrown. In FY23, FBWM allocated 8.5% of their food purchase funding to MassGrown, while GBFB allocated 8.25% and both WCFB and MVFB allocated 6.0%. The FBCMA will continue to prioritize the allocation of funding towards the MassGrown initiative as more farms come on board and we advocate for increased MEFAP funding.



In FY23, the regional food banks distributed **3,338,177 pounds of Massachusetts-raised produce, dairy, and poultry.**

Despite receiving the same amount of funding in FY23 as in FY22, MassGrown distribution decreased by 5.4%. This was due to supply challenges caused by the floods that damaged crops in July 2023. Because of these persistent challenges, the FBCMA continues to seek additional MEFAP funding in the state budget.



Operating a family farm can be complex, and your commitment to supporting local agriculture enables us to continue to do what we love to do—grow healthy food for others. Our long-standing relationship with GBFB provides us with additional access to market for our locally grown peaches, pears, and apples and helps make it possible for us to continue to employ and support our eleven full-time orchard staff. Picked and packed to order, we take pride in the fruit we grow and are honored to provide fresh local produce to help feed our shared community.”

— Jay Mofenson,
Lookout Farm

Food bank hunger-relief member partners appreciated the variety and quality of the local fresh produce available during the most recent MassGrown season. FBCMA continued to expand its MassGrown partnerships in FY23, with additional farms signing contracts to sell their products to the FBCMA.

Our largest MassGrown partner continues to be Pioneer Valley Growers Association, which sources from 40 partner farms across western Massachusetts. The spend has continued to move away from a concentration on the top 4-5 partner farms and larger local brokers toward independent family farms such as Szawlowski Potato Farm, Honey Pot Farm, and McKinstry Market Garden. We have also continued to build on our partnership with the Boston Area Gleaners, which sources from many Massachusetts farms that may not have the means to meet our capacity standards on their own. We hope to continue this trend of broadening participation in the program. Table 8 below is a listing of all partner farms that provided products to FBCMA during MassGrown FY23.

TABLE 8
FY23 MassGrown Farms

FARM	LOCATION	FY22 SPEND	FY23 SPEND	% CHANGE
Pioneer Valley Growers Association	South Deerfield, MA	\$445,760.10	\$278,067.00	↓ -37.62%
Honey Pot Farm, LLC	Hatfield, MA	\$208,515.00	\$276,759.00	↑ 32.73%
Szawlowski Potato Farm Inc	Hatfield, MA	\$192,512.50	\$265,497.50	↑ 37.91%
McKinstry Market Garden, Inc.	Chicopee, MA	\$152,562.00	\$243,380.00	↑ 59.53%
Michael Davidian dba Davidian's Farm Market LLC	Northborough, MA	\$219,630.80	\$242,755.52	↑ 10.53%
Boston Area Gleaners, Inc.	Acton, MA	\$170,017.50	\$236,004.80	↑ 38.81%
Farmer Dave's LLC	Dracut, MA	\$221,183.00	\$225,448.40	↑ 1.93%
Ward's Berry Farm	Sharon, MA	\$140,021.00	\$155,829.00	↑ 11.29%
Atlas Farm LLC	Deerfield, MA	\$70,578.00	\$65,987.60	↓ -6.50%
Matthew Manheim	South Deerfield, MA	\$41,804.00	\$49,268.00	↑ 17.85%
Mapleline Farm LLC	Hadley, MA	\$56,376.00	\$36,699.21	↓ -34.90%
Harrison W. Bardwell	Hatfield, MA	\$18,570.00	\$28,647.00	↑ 54.26%
Lookout Farms, LLC	South Natick, MA	\$45,768.00	\$24,960.00	↓ -45.46%
Reed Farm, LLC	Sunderland, MA	\$35,123.50	\$24,149.22	↓ -31.24%
Plainville Farm	Hadley, MA	\$22,069.94	\$23,422.50	↑ 6.13%
John J Bysiewski	South Deerfield, MA	\$27,140.00	\$21,416.00	↓ -21.09%
Mark Wendolowski	Hatfield, MA	\$27,044.00	\$20,421.00	↓ -24.49%
Sidehill Farm	Hawley, MA	N/A	\$12,654.72	New Vendor
Joseph P. Sullivan & Co., Inc	Ayer, MA	\$32,200.00	\$8,925.00	↓ -72.28%
Ryan Voiland dba Red Fire Farm	Montague, MA	\$9,395.00	\$1,570.00	↓ -83.29%
Benjamin Mark Perrault	Easthampton, MA	\$2,877.00	\$1,440.00	↓ -49.95%

Produce, Dairy, and Poultry

Non-produce pounds sourced through MassGrown have declined slightly compared to FY22, as the food banks focus on purchasing lower cost per pound produce items with MassGrown funds to maximize the impact of the funding.



Of the 3.3 million pounds of food distributed through MassGrown in FY23, **98.2% was fresh produce, while 1.8% was local milk, yogurt, and locally raised poultry.**

Product Variety Mix

The variety of produce offered by Massachusetts farms has been instrumental in supplementing other food bank produce sources, offering food bank agencies a selection of fruits and vegetables to choose from. It is crucial that food banks are able to source staple crops, such as potatoes, apples, onions, carrots, and cabbage, through MassGrown.

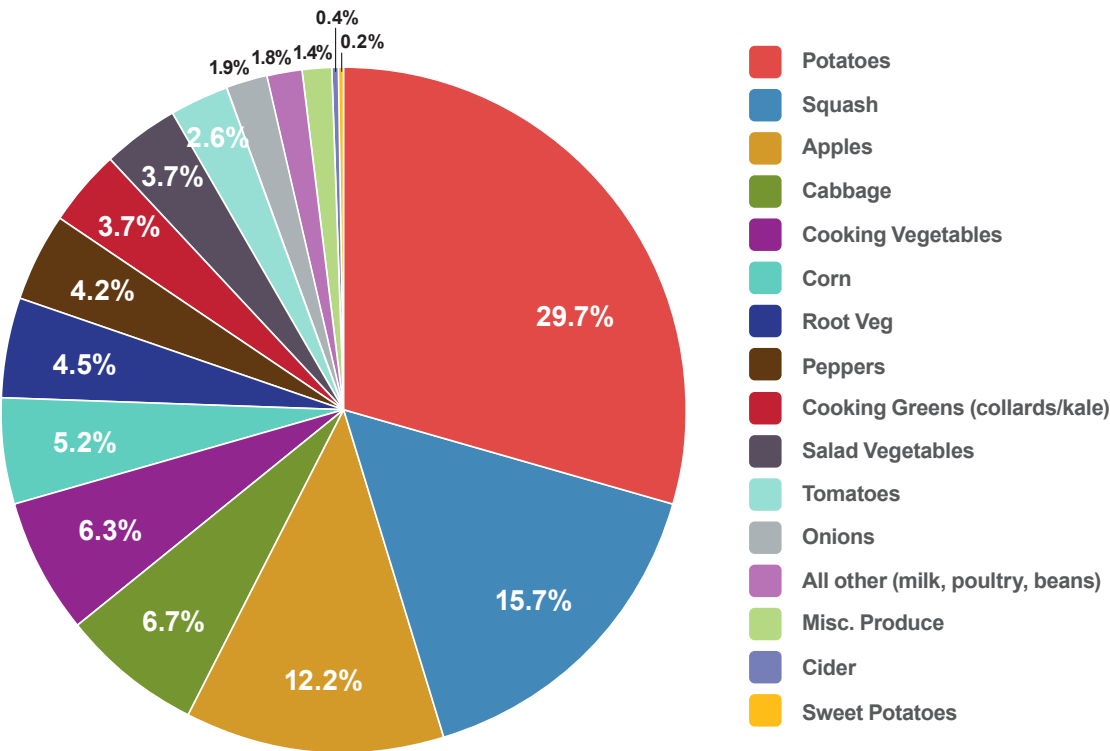
FBCMA works closely with participating farms, meeting prior to the growing season to collaborate with them on their growing plans. This effort ensures that desired products will be available to the food banks and that farms are not left with excess product. As food bank ordering priorities shift, it is important that these changes are shared with farms, as MassGrown purchasing is a significant portion of some of the participating farms' annual sales.



Potatoes were the highest volume category in 2023, accounting for close to 30% of the MassGrown distribution. **Squash and apples were the second- and third-highest categories**, at 15.7% and 12.2%, respectively. Together, these 3 categories make up more than half of the MassGrown produce pounds distributed.

Chart 6 below details pounds distributed by category.

CHART 6
FY23 MEFAP MassGrown Pounds by Category



As we move into 2024, we appreciate the opportunity to supply GBFB and the other Massachusetts food banks again this year. As a 114-year-old family farm, we understand that growing potatoes is only one aspect of our business—we must also have a reliable home for these spuds. The work that your organization does to purchase, receive, and distribute this product daily is incredible, and it's so rewarding to know that our potatoes are feeding thousands of families in need. As local farmers, much like those you serve, we rely on and appreciate your amazing organization."

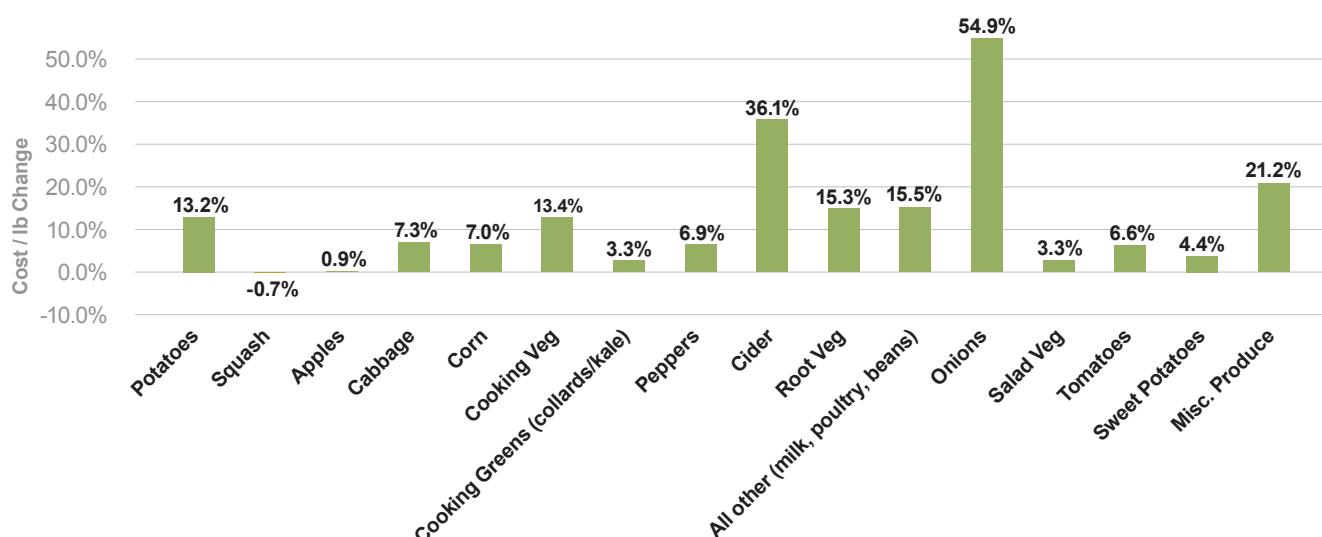
– Diane Szawlowski Mullins,
Szawlowski Potato Farms, Inc.

MassGrown Cost per Pound

There was an overall increase of 25.5% in the cost paid per pound across all categories procured through the program. This increase was driven by a variety of factors impacting the agricultural sector, including labor shortages, transportation challenges, and weather issues—all of which impacted supply and drove up pricing. The overall cost per pound increase and decrease in MassGrown distribution exemplifies the need for additional funding. Chart 7 below details changes in costs by produce category compared to last year.

CHART 7

FY23 Cost per Pound Changes by MassGrown Produce Category



*The cost per pound of squash decreased by 0.7% in FY23 due to significant flooding in July.

Operating Funding Supports Distribution

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) manages operating funds to support the distribution of food and retains a fee of no greater than 2% to administer the program. The food banks use the percentages in Table 2 (see page 5) to equitably allocate operating funds according to poverty statistics for the population served by each food bank. Food bank operating funds remained level, at \$1M in FY23. The operating funds are applied to the costs of labor associated with receiving, warehousing, transporting, and distributing MEFAP product. Table 9 details the funding history for the program. FBCMA continues to raise additional private funds to cover the full cost of distribution.

TABLE 9
MEFAP Funding History

FISCAL YEAR	TOTAL FUNDING	OPERATING FUNDING*	ADMIN. FEE RETAINED BY MDAR	MASSGROWN INITIATIVE FUNDING	CORE FOOD FUNDING	MEALS DISTRIBUTED THROUGH MEFAP
		DOE 7051-0015		DFA 2511-0105	DFA 2511-0105	
1995 & 1996**	\$1,000,000.00	\$142,000.00	\$17,160	-	\$858,000.00	-
1997	\$1,000,000.00	\$142,000.00	\$17,160	-	\$858,000.00	1,176,128
1998	\$3,448,000.00	\$448,000.00	\$60,000	-	\$3,000,000.00	3,748,435
1999	\$7,430,000.00	\$1,000,000.00	\$128,600	\$260,000.00	\$6,020,000.00	5,176,882
2000	\$7,430,000.00	\$1,000,000.00	\$128,600	\$300,000.00	\$5,980,000.00	4,972,956
2001	\$7,430,000.00	\$1,000,000.00	\$128,600	\$300,000.00	\$5,950,000.00	6,261,695
2002	\$7,360,000.00	\$1,000,000	\$128,600	\$330,000.00	\$5,950,000.00	6,408,176
2003	\$7,185,600.00	\$830,600	\$127,100	\$330,000.00	\$5,950,000.00	6,038,672
2004	\$7,027,000.00	\$747,000	\$125,600	\$330,000.00	\$5,950,000.00	7,036,356
2005	\$7,027,000.00	\$747,000	\$125,600	\$330,000.00	\$5,950,000.00	6,927,565
2006	\$7,027,000.00	\$747,000	\$128,865	\$330,000.00	\$6,113,252.00	6,927,565
2007	\$13,250,000.00	\$1,247,000	\$240,000	\$600,000.00	\$11,400,000.00	12,770,887
2008	\$12,137,000.00	\$1,247,000	\$220,000	\$550,000.00	\$10,340,000.00	12,482,075
2009	\$13,127,000.00	\$1,309,350	\$240,000	\$600,000.00	\$11,280,000.00	11,535,297
2010	\$12,509,518.00	\$1,239,518	\$230,000	\$575,000.00	\$10,695,000.00	13,219,524
2011	\$12,500,000.00	\$1,000,000	\$230,000	\$690,000.00	\$10,580,000.00	14,122,817
2012	\$12,500,000.00	\$1,000,000	\$230,000	\$690,000.00	\$10,580,000.00	12,641,443
DFA 2511-0105						
2013	\$13,000,000.00	\$1,000,000	\$240,000	\$720,000.00	\$11,040,000.00	13,838,476***
2014	\$14,000,000.00	\$1,000,000	\$260,000	\$780,000.00	\$11,960,000.00	16,089,423
2015	\$15,000,000.00	\$1,000,000	\$280,000	\$840,000.00	\$12,880,000.00	16,697,380
2016	\$17,000,000.00	\$1,000,000	\$320,000	\$1,088,704.00	\$14,591,296.00	18,819,628
2017	\$17,000,000.00	\$1,000,000	\$320,000	\$1,222,048.00	\$14,457,952.00	20,979,361
2018	\$17,413,831.00	\$1,000,000	\$328,277	\$1,229,065.04	\$14,856,489.34	22,356,343
2019	\$18,000,000.00	\$1,000,000	\$340,000	\$1,284,027.85	\$15,375,972.15	22,653,636
2020	\$20,000,000.00	\$1,000,000	\$380,000	\$1,437,519.86	\$17,182,480.14	23,404,229
2021	\$30,000,000.00	\$1,000,000	\$580,000	\$2,190,698.86	\$26,229,301.14	29,353,645
2022	\$30,000,000.00	\$1,000,000	\$580,000	\$2,201,129.00	\$26,218,871.00	29,579,198
2023	\$30,000,000.00	\$1,000,000	\$580,000	\$2,201,129.00	\$26,218,871.00	25,191,218
2024	\$35,500,000.00	\$1,000,000	\$690,000	\$2,726,609.88	\$31,083,390.12	TBD

**Meals data not available for FY1995 and FY1996.

***The formula for calculating meals distributed was adjusted in FY13 from 1.3 lbs. of food/meal to 1.2 lbs.

Note: Nutrition Education Funding was provided within MEFAP at \$150K from 1999-2002 and at \$75K in 2003.

Conclusion

FBCMA continues to find creative ways to stretch funding dollars, maximize meals distributed with program funds, respond strategically to challenging market and supply chain conditions, and reinvest in Massachusetts by partnering with and prioritizing in-state vendors—all while providing an assortment of commodities to emergency food providers and the populations they serve.



In FY23, FBCMA distributed more than **30.2 million pounds of MEFAP food**—representing over **25 million meals** statewide—to those in need throughout the Commonwealth.

FY23 was a challenging year as food prices rose across many key core food categories. The weather also negatively impacted our MassGrown program in FY23, as many farms lost crops due to floods in July and a late frost in May, which severely impacted the state's apple orchards.

As we work toward bridging the meal gap in the Commonwealth, FBCMA relies on continued MEFAP funding. While FY23's MEFAP funding was flat compared to our FY22 program, pricing had a negative impact on the total pounds distributed and meals served in FY23. MEFAP remains a critical piece of the response to food insecurity in the Commonwealth. Without MEFAP, FBCMA would not have been able to distribute an unprecedented 131.53 million pounds of food over the past year.

FBCMA and their teams would like to acknowledge the support of MDAR, the Governor's Office, the Lieutenant Governor's Office, and the Legislature for their commitment to helping end hunger in Massachusetts. For more information on the specific programs and activities of FBCMA, note the contact information on the right side of this page.



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