

REAL PICKLES

FERMENTED & RAW

Year 5 as a co-op!

We've completed our fifth year as a worker co-operative, and we are thriving! As a healthy business with nearly half of our employees engaged in ownership, we know that strong partnerships with our community are central to our success. We are deeply grateful to all our partners – the talented organic farmers who supply our top-quality ingredients, our loyal customers committed to our products and mission, our distributors who share our vision for a healthy regional food system, our community investors and lenders, and so many more.



Packed With A Mission

As a co-op, we're implementing our mission more fully and in new and exciting ways. We view our enterprise as part of the larger effort to build an equitable, sustainable, and democratic New Economy. We support and promote a strong regional organic food system, we're continually working toward true living wages and benefits for our staff, and we are deeply engaged in efforts to mitigate the threat of climate change. This past year, we were the proud recipient of a Sustainable Business of the Year Award from the Sustainable Business Network of MA, honoring our long-term investments in energy efficiency and sustainable agriculture.



Staff field trip to Atlas Farm

Our Workers Own It

Over the last five years, our annual sales have doubled – and our ownership has doubled as well. In 2013, Real Pickles transitioned to a worker co-operative led by five founding worker-owners. Today, our co-op is proudly owned by ten workers, with more owners on the way. Through our board of directors, worker-owners have developed a strong culture of ownership by making the co-op's major decisions and guiding our vision for the future. We know that Real Pickles benefits from our co-op structure, and worker ownership is undoubtedly a major factor in the success we've experienced over these past five years.

Good Food, Healthy Farms

We continue to build on our work as pioneers in bringing raw fermented vegetables back to the modern diet, beginning in 2001 as one of a tiny handful of commercial producers across the country. We've grown amidst rising interest in the health benefits of probiotic foods and the flavors of fermentation. In partnership with our farmers, we continue to develop new recipes to meet the growing demand. And each year, as we buy more local and organic vegetables, our regional agricultural economy and food system grows ever stronger.

2018 ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal year ending March 31, 2018

Our Mission is to promote human and ecological health by providing people with delicious, nourishing food and by working toward a regional, organic food system.



New Small Batch Line!

This year we launched our small batch line, and we're so excited about it! For each of three products, we've teamed up with our local farmers to feature vegetables that we don't often get to use but that ferment deliciously. Working in smaller batches gives us the flexibility to experiment and be more creative with different flavors and techniques. Hakurei salad turnips from Atlas Farm, cauliflower from Kitchen Garden Farm, and fresh culinary herbs from Next Barn Over Farm and Picadilly Farm are featured in this year's line.

PRODUCT & SUPPLY

Red Pepper Hot Sauce

Our brand new hot sauce highlights FOUR chile pepper varieties grown by Tim and Caroline at Kitchen Garden Farm. Featuring a fermented mixture of fresh organic chiles, onions, garlic, tomatoes and cilantro, Organic Red Pepper Hot Sauce is a tangy and spicy addition to eggs, tacos, soups, and grain bowls. Plus, like our other products – and unlike most commercial hot sauces – it is raw, fermented, and probiotic!



Farm Highlight: Next Barn Over Farm

Ray at Next Barn Over Farm in Hadley, MA believes that everyone should have access to healthy, local, sustainably-grown food. Envisioning the farm as part of a "greater movement for food justice and food sovereignty," they participate in programs that support low-income access to organic produce. This year, among the diversity of vegetables Ray grew for us were beautiful fresh herbs for our Shallot and Herb Kraut, and lots of garlic (via seed from historic Food Bank Farm).



Distributor Highlight: Myers Produce

Annie Myers started Myers Produce in 2013 as a way to distribute organic produce from farms in Vermont to markets in New York City, and has since expanded to include Western MA farms and businesses like Real Pickles, and now distributes to Boston as well. Myers is a great example of how a strong regional food system connects rural farms with urban markets to provide local nourishing food to our neighbors in the city.



Happy 25th, CISA!

Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture has done so much over the past 25 years to support western MA farm and food businesses. Real Pickles began working with CISA in 2001 when they helped to showcase our brand new Organic Dill Pickles to local audiences. In the years since, CISA's work has contributed to our success in many ways – the pioneering "Be A Local Hero" marketing campaign, networking programs connecting us with farmers and wholesale buyers, and as a source of all-around expert advice. CISA is proudly celebrating its 25th birthday this year. Visit www.buylocalfood.org for more info.



PARTNERS

Community Cold Storage

This year, the Franklin County Community Development Corporation opened the doors to its brand new cold storage facility, right across the street. With additional refrigeration space now available to us, we can continue to grow our purchases of organic vegetables from local farmers. From the development of the Western MA Food Processing Center (where Real Pickles got its start) to this latest project, we're ever grateful for all the FCCDC's efforts in support of a strong local food system!



Thank you to all of our community partners who together are building a stronger, more resilient, and tastier food system!

Workers in the Food System

We're deeply concerned about threats to immigrants and migrant workers in the current political environment, and recognize their essential contributions to our food system. In the past year, our co-operative took action by engaging in a voluntary staff letter-writing campaign in support of state Safe Communities legislation, and submitting written testimony to a state legislative hearing on the issue. In support of a living wage for all workers in Massachusetts, we continued our advocacy efforts in conjunction with Business for a Fair Minimum Wage supporting a \$15 per hour state minimum wage.

ADVOCACY

Sharing Knowledge

Real Pickles continues to be recognized as a model for our work as a successful worker-owned fermentation business financed by community investment, and we remain committed to sharing our experience with others. Annie and Lucy recently spoke about our co-operative conversion at two public events organized by Wellspring Cooperative in Springfield, MA. Kristin spoke on "Co-ops & the Collaborative Economy" at the Slow Living Summit. Katie presented at the Pickle Packers International convention in Chicago on our success in helping to bring fermented pickles back to the American diet. Dan spoke about co-ops with Vermont Law School students learning about alternatives to the corporate form, and with business owners convened by the Vermont Employee Ownership Center considering succession options.



PICKLE PEOPLE

We Pack a LOT of Kraut

A lack of small-scale packaging equipment able to handle our raw, crunchy krauts has left us continuing to hand-pack (nearly 200,000 jars this year!) using slow methods that can be physically straining for our staff. After dreaming of a better approach for many years, in 2016 we partnered with a local inventor and fabricator shop to design and prototype a machine to speed up the process and improve ergonomics. We plan to be packing product with the new equipment soon!



New Worker Owner: Greg Nichols

Greg Nichols is involved with all aspects of Real Pickles operations. He's on the kitchen crew shredding cabbage and packing jars. He's in the office tracking inventory and talking to customers. He's also on the road at events and as your friendly local delivery driver! When you see the pickle van out and about, be sure to give Greg a wave. He's a father of two, a knower of all random factoids (especially food-related), plus his last name rhymes with pickles. We're so thrilled that he's our newest worker-owner!



“ I'm excited to join a business with people who value integrity and community. ”

NUMBERS

333k

pounds of vegetables purchased in FY'2018 from Northeast farmers, a 60% increase since co-op year 1

■ = 10

10

worker owners, doubled since co-op year 1

77

community investors, who made our co-op transition possible

539

stores around the Northeast making Real Pickles available to our customers

