Notes from the Field
Our farmers can feel the crisp, autumn air in their fields and are starting to think about what cover crops they will be planting in the next month or two. Tomato production is starting to slow down, while winter squash get large in the fields or are already curing in the greenhouse. It’s the end of the season for local stone fruits, but more and more apple varieties are maturing every day. Fall is officially here!

Farmer Profile: Tim Carroll
By Matthew Lavigne, shareholder and intern
There’s a certain kind of gratitude that comes from giving to other people. When we create, especially healthy and delicious produce, the best thing to do is share. Tim Carroll has been gardening in his backyard for over 20 years and sharing his creations along the way. It just made sense to supply his friends and family with delicious, fresh food straight from his garden. Last year, Tim decided to pursue his passion for growing food and sharing it with his community on a much larger scale and enrolled in New Entry’s Farm Business Planning Course. Armed with small scale growing experience and a business background in his professional career, Tim learned the nuances of farm business planning and was ready to pursue his first farm endeavor. In his first season growing with New Entry and selling to World PEAS, Tim has learned a lot about planting on a commercial, rather than home, scale and is continually assessing and evaluating new ways to grow his produce or tackle different pest and weed problems.

Tim now farms at Smith Farm, located in Dracut, MA- one of New Entry’s three incubator farm sites. In his first year, Tim is renting a quarter of an acre plot, which may seem small, but can produce an amazing amount of food. Tim planted 9 rows, each 200 feet long. Tim jokes and says, “200 feet doesn’t seem long until you’re planting one plant per foot.” Just last year, while gardening at home, Tim used to plant 10 basil plants, maybe 20 if he was feeling ambitious. This season, Tim planted 500 basil plants to be able to meet his crop plan he developed with World PEAS.

In addition to basil, Tim is growing cabbage, arugula, mint, basil, cucumbers, beets, baby salad greens, swiss chard and kale. In addition to working for Merck in Boston, Tim tends his crops and harvests and delivers produce to World PEAS at least once a week. His first season has been very productive, and “Farmer Tim” has learned many ways to keep his fields healthy and to combat pests. Like many New Entry farmers, Tim laid biodegradable, black plastic over the beds to control weeds and used row cover to keep out cucumber beetles from his plants while they matured. In a creative effort to keep pesky bunnies out of his baby greens, Tim used row cover to create a border around his quarter-acre that has been keep most of the rabbits away from his arugula.

Tim acknowledged the wonder of putting a small seed in the ground and producing healthy, vibrant fruits and vegetables. It was this mentality that drove Tim into the New Entry program. He knew that farming would be really rewarding and maybe someday he’d be willing to do it full time. The problem with the jump from his business job to a farming job is the great risk. New Entry helps develop farmers like Tim by mitigating the large capital investment most farmers need through programs like tractor rental, land leasing, etc. As Tim states, being able to rent the land, farm for a few seasons, and then assess how you really feel about farming is a wonderful opportunity that New Entry gives to its students. Tim says that, “Growing more farmers that are growing good food is always a win.” We here at World PEAS agree, and couldn’t be happier to have Farmer Tim with us!
Potatoes

Starchy potatoes (Idaho or Russet) make the best baked and mashed potatoes and good fries. Low starch potatoes (or “new” potatoes) are thin-skinned and are suitable for boiling or roasting. It is thought that the potato was first brought to the United States in the early 18th century by Irish immigrants who settled in New England. People in this country were slow to adopt the “Irish potato” and large scale cultivation of potatoes did not occur in the U.S. until the 19th century. Fingerling potatoes are small, stubby, long potatoes, which can be one of a variety of heirloom potato cultivars. These potatoes should not be confused with new potatoes- they are bred to be small and long when full mature. Popular fingerling varieties include the yellow-skinned Russian Banana, the red/orange-skinned French fingerling, and the Purple Peruvian. Due to their size and heirloom status, these potatoes are more expensive than other potato varieties and are commonly either halved and roasted in a side dish or used for salads.

Handling: Wash potatoes. Peel if necessary; remove the “eyes” or green spots.

Storing: Potatoes should be stored at room temperature, away from light. Refrigerate baby new potatoes if not used within 2-3 days. Late-season potatoes store well in a cellar once they have been cured: let the skins toughen, otherwise the potatoes could shrivel and become soft shortly after storage. An ideal storage temperature is 45—50 degrees. If the temperature is too high, potatoes tend to soften, shrivel, and sprout. Temperatures that are too low cause the starch in the potatoes to turn to sugar, giving them a sweet taste. Should this happen, hold the potatoes at 70 degrees F for a week or so, and the sugar will convert back to starch, making the potatoes edible again. Potatoes properly stored should last all winter long. It is a good idea to layer the potatoes with newspapers so if one turns bad, it won’t spoil the whole lot.

Braised Baby Fennel

From Williams Sonoma

**Ingredients**

12 to 16 baby fennel bulbs  
5 Tbs. olive oil  
1 small yellow onion or 4 shallots, cut into thin rings  
1 long, slender carrot, peeled and sliced  
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped  
2 tomatoes, peeled, seeded and cubed  
1 scant tsp. tomato paste  
5 Tbs. water  
Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste  
Chopped fresh chervil or flat-leaf parsley for garnish

**Directions**

Trim off the feathery tops and the stalks from each fennel bulb, leaving about 1 1/2 inches of the stalks intact. Discard the stalks and tops or reserve for another use. In a large, wide saucepan or deep fry pan over medium heat, warm the olive oil. Add the onion and carrot and sauté for about 2 minutes. Add the fennel bulbs, stir to coat with the oil, then add the garlic and bell pepper. Toss the vegetables, then add the tomatoes, tomato paste, water, salt and pepper. Stir well, cover; reduce the heat to low and simmer gently until the fennel bulbs are tender when pierced with a knife, 12 to 15 minutes. If the saucepan is deep, it is wise to butter a piece of parchment paper the diameter of the pan and place it, buttered side down, over the vegetables to keep the steam in and lessen the chance of scorching.

Transfer the contents of the pan to a warmed serving dish and sprinkle with the chervil. Serve immediately.

Fennel Frond Pesto

From Melissa Clark, Food Writer blog

**Ingredients**

1 small fennel bulb with lots of bushy fronds  
2 garlic cloves, minced  
2 tablespoons pine nuts or sliced or slivered almonds  
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper  
4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil  
2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese

**Directions**

Chop off fennel fronds and coarsely chop enough to measure 1 cup (discard the rest of the fronds). Put the chopped fronds in a food processor or blender. Add the garlic, nuts, 1/2 teaspoon salt and a generous pinch of pepper to the food processor and process until finely chopped. Add 4 tablespoons of the oil and cheese continue to process until the mixture looks like pesto. Season with more salt to taste.

Spicy Eggplant and Green Bean Curry

From Bon Appetit

**Ingredients**

8 ounces green beans, trimmed, cut into 1/2-inch sticks  
1 eggplant, peeled, cut into 2 x 1/2 x 2 inches  
4 garlic cloves, chopped  
1 tablespoon chopped peeled fresh ginger  
5 Tbs. water  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint  
1 cup canned unsweetened coconut milk  
1 teaspoon Thai green curry paste  
1/2-inch pieces  
1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro

**Directions**

Heat 4 tablespoons oil in large skillet over medium-high heat. Add garlic and ginger; stir 30 seconds. Add eggplant and green beans. Cook until almost tender, stirring often, about 10 minutes. Cover and cook until completely tender, about 3 minutes longer. Transfer vegetables to bowl.

Add 1 tablespoon oil, lime peel, and curry paste to same skillet; stir 15 seconds. Add coconut milk; bring to boil, whisking until smooth. Return vegetables to skillet; toss until sauce thickens enough to coat vegetables, about 3 minutes. Season with salt. Mix in onions, cilantro, and mint.