

2021

HERBAN FRESH SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT



HERBAN FRESH
FROM THE CITY
FOR THE CITY

WELCOME

Plenus Group, Inc. (PGI) is a family-owned food manufacturer in Lowell, MA that is known and respected for our philosophy of handmade, small-batch cooking using fresh, high-quality ingredients. Since opening our doors in 2002, PGI has manufactured a wide variety of foods, but soup has always been at the core of what we do. Soup seems to have a particular ability to provide comfort and nourishment for both the body and the soul. When we launched the Herban Fresh brand in 2019, our vision was not just to create a line of premium soups, but also help nourish the communities where our soups are sold. **We do that by donating two percent of our Herban Fresh revenue to support urban agriculture.**

Urban agriculture and the larger cause of Food Justice are incredibly important, as access to quality, healthy, culturally appropriate foods is critical for urban communities to truly thrive. Our donations through Herban Fresh support such vital activities as community gardens, food education, and mobile markets. The positive impacts of community gardens go beyond providing access to healthy fruits, vegetables and herbs—they also strengthen neighborhoods by reducing crime, raising property values and improving air quality.

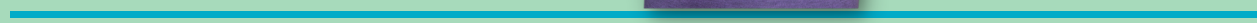
Our initial partner for Herban Fresh was Mill City Grows, an organization based in our hometown of Lowell, Massachusetts. Rooted in a post-industrial, working-class New England city, PGI recognizes the challenges and struggles people face. Since 2019 we've contributed over \$100,000 to Mill City Grows and their efforts to support food justice in our community.

The market has responded positively to Herban Fresh with our delicious, on-trend flavors, attractive packaging and strong social mission. The line has seen incredible growth in the past year, allowing us to increase and expand our social impact. We're excited to share the ways Herban Fresh is making a difference in our inaugural Herban Fresh Social Impact Report.

This report covers March 2021 to March 2022, our most recent fiscal year.



“Coming to work feels good when you know that you are contributing to the wellbeing of others. We are motivated and committed to making Herban Fresh a national brand.”
- Joe Jolly, PGI Co-Founder and CEO.

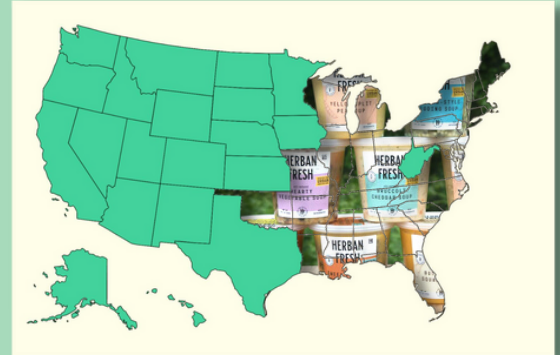


2021 GROWTH

2021 was a tremendous year of growth for Herban Fresh with new markets and new varieties resulting in increased sales which allowed us to expand our social mission.

NEW MARKETS

Herban Fresh added more than 780 new stores between March 2021 and March 2022. The soups are now available in 30 states across the US. New retailers added in the past year include Whole Foods, The Fresh Market, Market Basket, Shaw's, Acme, Safeway & Star Market. A current list of retail locations is available at <https://herbanfreshfoods.com/where-to-buy-store-locator>.



States that sell Herban Fresh soups as of April 2022

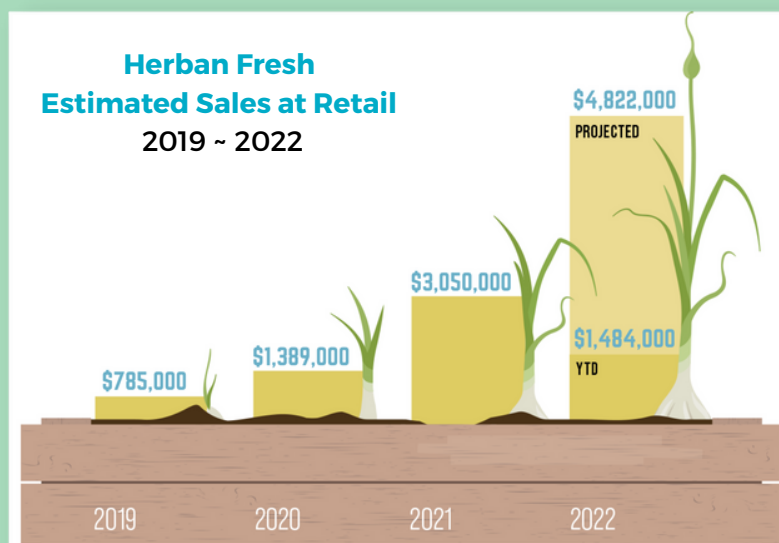


FRESH FLAVORS

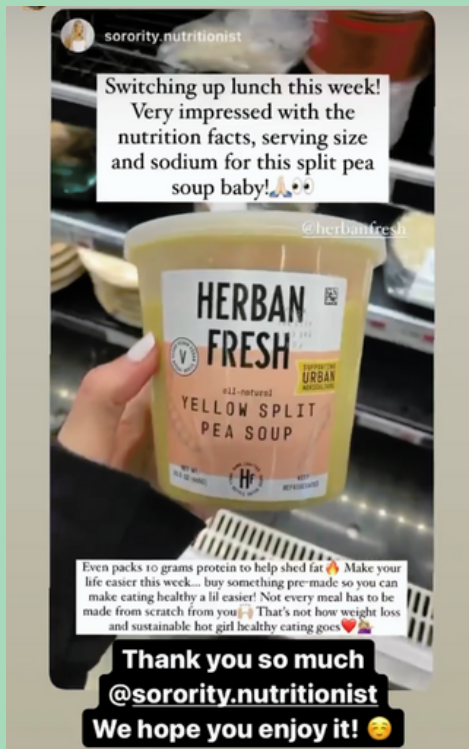
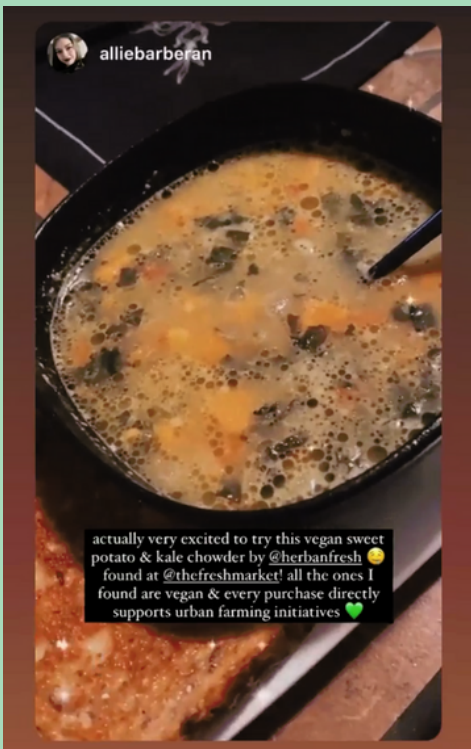
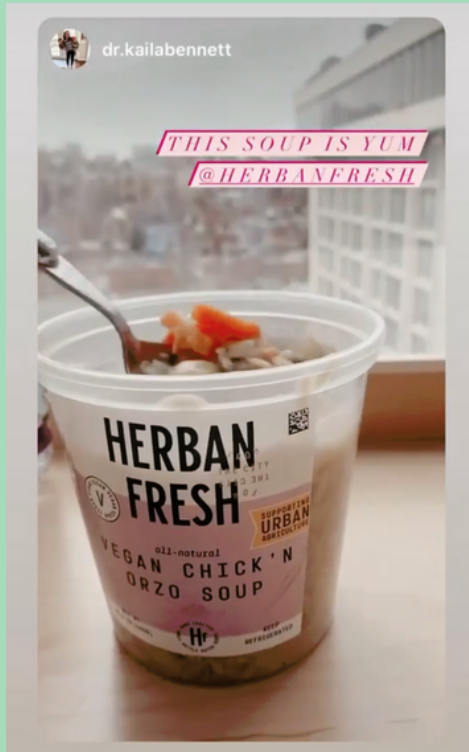
In keeping with our focus on satisfying vegan soups, Herban Fresh brought two new soups to the market in January 2022: a hearty Red Lentil Chili with Farro and a colorful Roasted Corn and Red Pepper Chowder.

SOARING SALES

Total sales grew from \$1.389 million in 2020 to \$3.05 million in 2021, representing a 120% increase year over year.



SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT



2021 SOCIAL IMPACT

Mill City Grows, launched in 2012 in Lowell, MA, was a natural first partner for Herban Fresh. To date, PGI has contributed more than \$100,000 to Mill City Grows to support their food justice programs.



“Our partnership with PGI is important to us in so many ways, not least of which is knowing that they share our values of strong staff and community support and sustainability. Their consistent financial support has allowed us to grow our food justice and urban agriculture programs Lowell, while their willingness to share their technical know-how and resources with us has brought our staff and programs to the next level.”

- Jessica Wilson, Executive Director, Mill City Grows

OUR SOCIAL IMPACT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

In 2021, Herban Fresh launched the Social Impact Partnership program in order to grow our network of grassroots food justice and urban agriculture initiatives, and give back to the communities where Herban Fresh is sold. When an SIP partners with Herban Fresh, we commit to providing:

- ❖ Annual contribution of 2% of regional sales of Herban Fresh (min. \$2,500 per year)
- ❖ Marketing on digital platforms, print materials, and Herban Fresh product labeling
- ❖ Technical Assistance support (food production, kitchen design, etc.)
- ❖ Hands on volunteerism
- ❖ Donations of Community Batch soups, made from 100% local ingredients
- ❖ A partner with shared values, and a vision of sustainable, equitable food systems



2021 COMMUNITY BATCH



In 2016, PGI made our first Community Batch soup and served it at Mill City Grows' annual Harvest Festival. Since then, we've been producing and distributing this special seasonal soup every fall, with ingredients sourced at peak freshness from Massachusetts farms. We donate dozens of cases of Community Batch to our Social Impact Partners and other local and regional food security organizations, who then distribute it within their communities, serve it at events and programs, and sell it at markets to raise funds.

Our Community Batch soups are made with 100% seasonal, MA-sourced ingredients. We are proud of supporting local farmers and supporting local food justice initiatives in one delicious batch of soup.



NEW PARTNERSHIPS

This year we welcomed Harlem Grown in New York City as our newest SIP. With 11 gardens and farm sites at schools, housing developments and in the community, Harlem Grown is inspiring young people to lead healthy and ambitious lives through their hands-on farming and mentorship programs. We are excited to grow, together!



PGI CORE VALUE STATEMENTS

The following Core Values were created by PGI team members at three staff training meetings in the spring and summer of 2021. Members of the sales, admin, and management teams participated and contributed.

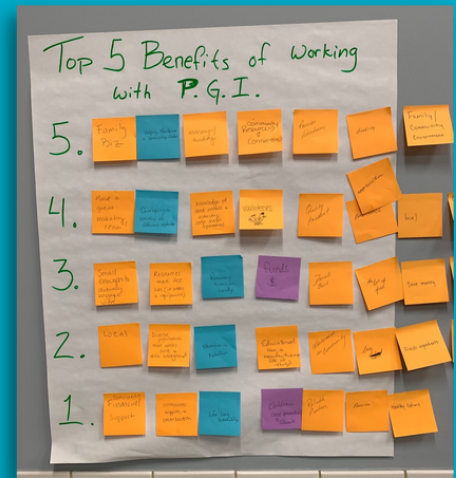
OVERARCHING CORE VALUES

We are more than just soup. We bring our creative selves to the table each day, with respect for each other, our customers, and our community. We approach challenges from a place of plenty: our network of talented and experienced people, with our consistently expanding infrastructure, makes it possible for us to do things right.

INTERNAL CORE VALUES

We value collaboration, communication, and hard work as we provide excellent products through innovation, flexible problem solving, and data-driven research.

We value the wellbeing of each team member and commit to an inclusive environment where employees feel respected, appreciated, and supported through access to leadership, educational opportunities, and collaborative processes.



EXTERNAL CORE VALUES



We value and respect our customers, and honor their trust in us through our commitment to honesty, accountability, and integrity.

We value our local community and the communities where our products are sold. We are committed to giving generously to support food sovereignty, healthy people, and healthy food systems.

We value the planet and strive to be stewards of the Earth's resources. We embrace sustainable practices, products, and producers in our supply chain.

A BRIGHT FUTURE: 2022 & BEYOND



HERBAN FRESH FARM FUND

This year we worked diligently with a cross functional team from Tops Friendly Markets to launch the Herban Fresh Farm Fund. This contest will award \$5,000 (accrued from sales of Herban Fresh soups to Tops) to a community organization, school or non-profit which can use the funds to build or enhance a new or existing community garden. Stay tuned, we will announce the lucky winner in May 2022.

"Tops is thrilled to be able to partner with Plenus Group, Inc. on the Herban Fresh Farm Fund initiative that will help a local non-profit enhance their community garden which in-turn will help our communities thrive," said Pam Saxon, Category Business Manager of Prepared Foods for Tops Friendly Markets. "This project was also a natural fit as it aligns seamlessly with Tops' mission to help eradicate hunger and improve the quality of lives of children."

2022 PROJECTIONS

In the first quarter of 2022 our sales are already over \$1M. At this growth rate, we expect 2022 sales to reach around \$4.8 million. And that is only retail sales. We are developing an Herban Fresh Food Service program to roll out at our college and university customers this fall. We believe that the Herban Fresh brand aligns well with the sustainability and health values of Gen Y and Z.

As we continue grow Herban Fresh in both sales volume and geographic reach, we'll be looking to establish new social impact partnerships in 2022. If there are local initiatives that align with our mission in your area—please let us know!

We're excited at how far the Herban Fresh brand has come in just a few short years, and we're energized by what we can accomplish in the future. We believe that everyone deserves to eat food that is nourishing, delicious, and fresh – whether it's our soup or the daily harvest from the community garden.

Thank you.

For questions or more information contact:
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plenus group inc



PGIfoods.com

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