

MAINE MEP ASSISTS LETTUCE PRODUCTS MANUFACTURER IN GROWTH

ABOUT SPRINGWORKS. Springworks Farm employs highly advanced organic aquaponics to grow and convert lettuce into many products including salad mixes of many types. With multiple acres of greenhouse space, precisely controlled atmosphere, and lighting coupled to advanced production, conversion, and packaging system, Springworks is a major provider of organic lettuce and lettuce-based products throughout New England. Today, Springworks Farm employs 25 people growing 1 million heads of lettuce per year.

THE CHALLENGE. To meet growing demand, Springworks Farm has experienced rapid growth. Along with this growth came the need for increased capital and strategic planning. Springworks Farm has big ambitions and is currently engaging in a major investment round of several million dollars for additional facilities expansion and production efficiency enhancements. Trevor Kenkel the founder and visionary leader of Springworks needed mentorship and guidance in capital planning, engineering, and production planning as he entered this new phase of his business.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. John Karp, a Maine MEP growth coach, was introduced to Kenkel through Maine Technology Institute where he serves to cross-connect between MTI's manufacturing clients and Maine MEP, part of the MEP National Network™. John met with Springworks President Trevor Kenkel regarding an MTI funding opportunity. A walk-through of the facilities revealed opportunities to increase production efficiencies as well. John brought in Wayne Messer and Forest Wentworth of Maine MEP and John Belding of the University of Maine's Advanced Manufacturing Center, who made suggestions on ways to improve efficiencies, enhance production flow, and layout key production parameters. Beginning with a manufacturing analysis, several ideas were formulated to semi-automate the production processes. This successful support led to an ongoing business consulting relationship between John Karp and Trevor Kenkel.

Knowing Springwork's needs, John made them aware of a major funding program for business infrastructure, which led to a \$300,000 award from the Maine Technology Institute in August 2020. This will assist Springworks in engaging additional investment for facilities expansion and production efficiency enhancements. Springworks is also currently engaged in a planning process with Maine MEP including new products, automation, production volumes, and how those would be handled within the new space as well as in conjunction with the existing greenhouse operations. A combination of lean principles and systemic layout planning SLP methodologies will be used to achieve the maximum benefit.

"John Karp has been critical in introducing us to relevant economic development partners as well as contacts to engineer improvements to our system. We are very fortunate to have his guidance as we continue to grow."

-Trevor Kenkel, Owner

RESULTS



\$300,000 grant led to further matching investments allowing major expansion of the business



400% change in production capacity



Production technology enhancement

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