

# PENNSYLVANIA VEGETABLE MARKETING AND RESEARCH PROGRAM

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## *Fresh Ideas*

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*The Pennsylvania Vegetable Marketing and Research Program is a state-wide marketing order established by a grower referendum, governed by a grower board and funded by grower assessments. The Program's sole purpose is to serve the vegetable growers of Pennsylvania by promoting Pennsylvania-grown vegetables and funding practical vegetable production research.*

## Order Your POP Materials Now

The Vegetable Marketing and Research Program will be offering the same large selection of point-of-purchase items as it has for the last several years. This year we will again have banners and binwrap with the "Simply Delicious" logo on it.

We will be offering one set of 16 different recipe cards featuring the best recipes from the 2008 and 2009 Vegetable Recipe Contests.

Restaurant signs that growers selling to restaurants can give to their restaurant customers to post advertising that they use "Fresh, Local Simply Delicious Produce" will be available while supplies last. The new clip-on 3" x 4" price cards in plastic holders for retail market displays will also be available.

The crop or message stickers for the roadside signs will again be offered separately. There are 15 different stickers available for the signs. The choices include: Sweet Corn, Tomatoes, Peppers, Asparagus, Green Beans, Cantaloupe, Watermelons, Strawberries, Pumpkins, Fall Crops, Organic, Just Ahead, Farm Fresh, and a directional arrow. A blank sticker is also available

allowing growers to letter in their own message or crop. Growers may choose to change the crop or message on the sign during the season or put a different crop on each side of the signs. The crop stickers can also be used on other signs.

Market aprons and tee-shirts with the updated "Simply Delicious, Simply Nutritious" logo in full color on the front are again available. They enable growers to give their market personnel a more professional and uniform appearance. Both compliment the "Simply Delicious" embroidered hats.

If your market is going to participate in the PA Produce Month promotion, don't forget to order those point-of-purchase materials as well.

Each grower is allowed a credit equal to 50% of their assessment payment for the year up to a maximum credit of \$25 in ordering point-of-purchase materials. If you wish to order more than your credit allowance, you may do so by paying for the additional items. For a full description of the items available, see the enclosed list on green sheet.

## Plan Now for PA Produce Month

The Pennsylvania Vegetable Marketing and Research Program will once again be celebrating August as Pennsylvania Produce Month. The purpose is to focus consumer attention on the abundant supplies of quality, fresh Pennsylvania produce that are available in farmers' markets, roadside farm markets and even supermarkets during the month of August.

The Program realizes that some Pennsylvania vegetables hit the market in May, June and July. A press release highlighting sweet corn will be mailed in late June. Point-of-purchase materials will be mailed beginning in June. But August is the month

when nearly all vegetable crops are available in plentiful supply across the state. August is also the time when an extra boost in sales would be welcomed by most marketers.

The Program will again be providing the following support to markets and growers to enable them to promote and hopefully profit by PA Produce Month:

1. Posters and price cards with "August is PA Produce Month" message will be available to all growers at a nominal cost of \$2 per kit. A standard market kit will include one large poster (about 18" x 24"), six small  
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## PA Produce Month Promotion

posters (8.5" x 11"), and twenty 7" x 11" price cards – all with the "Simply Delicious, Simply Nutritious" logo in full color. These kits can be ordered directly from the Program or purchased at most of the produce auctions in the state.

2. Produce Month graphics for use by markets in print advertising will be available by CD for a cost of \$0.50.

3. A sample press release that markets can use to both promote PA Produce Month and any special activities they will be undertaking to celebrate PA Produce Month to their local press will be sent to each participating market.

4. A general statewide press release on PA Produce Month will be issued to news media across the state along with articles on various Pennsylvania vegetable crops.

5. One or more media events will be scheduled to highlight PA Produce Month. Farmers' markets, or even roadside markets, interested in hosting one of these events, should contact the Program. The Program will be seeking to arrange events strategically located across the state during the early part of the month.

6. The Program will also make posters available to supermarkets across the state to support their sales of local produce.

In the past, the Program has run paid radio advertisements promoting PA Produce Month across the state. Last year this was dropped due to budget considerations but may be used again this year if the budget permits.

Growers or farmers' markets who want to participate in PA Produce Month can do so by using any of the following suggestions:

1. Order the poster and price card kit. While supplies last, markets may order up to three kits each.

2. Use the PA Produce Month graphics in your print advertising during August. Order the CD to give to your printer.

3. Run a special coupon in your advertising for use at your market during PA Produce Month. Don't forget to include the PA Product Month graphics on the coupon. Make it a percentage off coupon or a given dollar amount discount. Or you could make the coupon a frequent buyer offer where the customer receives the specified discount if they visit the market every week or four times during August. These could be handed out at your market during the end of July and early August.

4. Offer a PA Produce Month special during August.

For example:

- Pick 5 Get 10 - Buy 5 different vegetables and get a 10% discount

- 15 ears of sweet corn for the price 12

- Free tomato with a \$5 or \$10 purchase

- Free cantaloupe with \$10 or \$15 purchase

Be creative and offer a different special each week of the month. If your peppers are overproducing, make them the giveaway item. Use any special that has worked for you in the past.

5. Hold a PA Produce Month special event – like a Sweet Corn, Tomato, Watermelon, or Cantaloupe Festival. If you already have special event planned for August,

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incorporate PA Produce Month into your plans and publicity for that event. If you would like your special event to be considered for one of the Program's media events, contact the Program.

The key to the success of Pennsylvania Produce Month is the support and participation of growers and markets across the state. We hope growers will use this campaign to highlight the availability of their crops during August.

## 7th Annual Vegetable Recipe Contest Set

The Pennsylvania Vegetable Marketing and Research Program is sponsoring its seventh annual Pennsylvania "Simply Delicious, Simply Nutritious" Vegetable Recipe Contest this summer. Pennsylvania residents, including growers or spouses, are eligible to enter one or more of their best vegetable recipes using Pennsylvania vegetables to compete for \$100 prizes in four categories at a state-wide cook-off.

**Growers who would like brochures about the Recipe Contest to give to their customers should call the Program at 717-694-3596. Entries are due June 30, 2010.**

The cook-off is tentatively set for August 6 at Harrisburg Area Community College as part of the PA Produce Month promotion.

A panel of four judges will review the written recipe entries and select sixteen finalists to prepare their recipes at the cook-off. Four recipes will be chosen in each of the following four categories:

Tomatoes/Peppers/Eggplant

Melons/Cucumbers

Summer Squash

Winter Squash/Pumpkins

Recipe entries must contain as a major ingredient one of the vegetables in the category entered. Fresh, canned, frozen or dried vegetables can be used in the recipe.

Recipes will be chosen on the basis of creativity, nutrition/healthfulness, ease of preparation, and overall appeal. A \$100 prize will be awarded to the winner in each category. Other finalists will each receive a \$25 gift certificate for the farm market of their choice.

Recipes must be created or modified by the contestant or a member of the contestant's family. Recipes previously published in a copyrighted publication will not be eligible.

Entries must be entered by June 30, 2010, by one of three methods:

emailed to: [pvmrp@embarqmail.com](mailto:pvmrp@embarqmail.com) (preferred method)

faxed to: 717-694-3596

mailed to:

PA Vegetable Marketing and Research Program

815 Middle Road, Richfield, PA 17086-9205

Hardcopy entries must be printed (by hand or otherwise) or formatted on a sheet of 8 1/2" x 11" plain white paper with the contestant's name, mailing address, and

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## Fourteen Research Projects Funded for 2010

The Vegetable Marketing and Research Board voted to help fund 14 vegetable research projects in 2010. These vegetable projects will be funded in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association. The Program will be contributing just over \$25,000 in assessment monies towards these projects while the Association will contribute \$30,000. The Association's research funds are earned by the members at the Farm Show and Ag Progress Days Food Booths. The approved projects total over \$55,000.

The projects approved for funding and their objectives are listed below. Projects marked with an asterisk "\*" were only approved for partial funding.

### Tomatoes

#### Tomato Blight Forecasting: Delivery through the Pennsylvania Pest Information Platform for Extension and Education (PA-PIPE)

- Beth K. Gugino and Michele Mansfield, The Pennsylvania State University, Ken Martin, Furmano Foods, and Joe Russo, ZedX, Inc. \$4,925
- Continuing to validate the early blight disease forecasting models used to calculate disease risk ratings by correlating them to field observations from commercial fields.
  - Continuing to evaluate early blight development using different fungicide timing programs based on disease severity values calculated using RTMA high resolution weather as well as in field weather stations.
  - Further develop the interactive platform for dissemination of spray recommendations using the Pennsylvania Pest Information Platform for Extension and Education (PA-PIPE; <http://pa-pipe.zedxinc.com>).

## Vegetable Recipe Contest

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if available, on one side. Recipe is to be printed or formatted on the other side of the sheet of paper in upper and lower case letters.

Recipes should be formatted in the following manner:

Category

Name of dish

Number of servings

Ingredients list – List in order of use using the following abbreviations: T. for tablespoon; tsp. for teaspoon; c. for cup; oz. for ounce; and lb. for pound. Give the quantity, the name of the ingredient and then any descriptive terms. Example: 2 c. Bell Peppers – red and green, finely diced

Instructions – List in order in complete sentence form.

Entry of a recipe in the contest will authorize the use of the recipe, with credit given to the contestant, by the Program in its press releases, recipe cards, brochures or other published materials. The Program reserves the right to copyright such publications.

For further information about the contest, contact the Program at 717-694-3596 or [pvmrp@embarqmail.com](mailto:pvmrp@embarqmail.com)

#### Breeding for Early Blight and Late Blight Resistance in Tomato

Majid R. Foolad, The Pennsylvania State Univ. \$4,000\*

- To continue our research directed toward development of early blight and late blight resistant tomato cultivars with adaptation to PA conditions.

#### Enhancement of Tomato Fruit Quality: Maximizing Lycopene and Solids Contents and Minimizing Ripening Disorders

Majid R. Foolad, The Pennsylvania State Univ. \$2,300\*

- To develop processing and fresh-market tomatoes with enhanced fruit lycopene, sugar and vitamin contents.
- To develop processing tomatoes with reduced ripening disorders (yellow shoulder, etc.)
- To develop high yielding tomato cultivars adapted to PA conditions.

#### High Tunnel Fresh Market Slicer Tomato Variety Trial 2010

Steve Bogash, Penn State Coop. Ext. \$3,972

- Identify tomato cultivars that have promise as successful market varieties.
- Identify those cultivars that are both resistant and susceptible to yellow shoulders based on an intensive tissue testing program.
- Identify cultivars that are considered superior in flavor and appearance.
- Produce saleable yield date (size, avg. weight, etc.) for the cultivars in this program in order to allow growers to select varieties that meet their marketing criteria.
- Increase local market share for fresh market tomatoes by local growers by assisting them in the selection of tomato cultivars that are considered superior by tasting panels.
- Determine the maximum potential yield and packout for selected varieties through intensive tissue analysis and subsequent nutrient application.

#### Biological Control of Tomato Root Diseases

Steve Bogash, Penn State Coop. Ext. \$2,000\*

- Evaluate the biological inoculants Rootshield, RootMate, Companion, and Actinovate for their ability to control tomato root-borne diseases under field conditions.
- Evaluate the biological inoculants Rootshield, RootMate, Companion, and Actinovate for their ability to enhance nutrient uptake.
- Develop a set of recommendations for growers in order to facilitate adoption of biological inoculants if warranted to enhance disease control, yield and fruit quality.

### Sweet Corn

#### Kixor® Herbicide: A Potentially New Sweet Corn Herbicide

Dwight Lingenfelter, Penn State Department of Crop and Soil Sciences; Mark VanGessel, University of Delaware; Tim Elkner, Penn State, Lancaster County Cooperative Extension \$4,500

- To examine various Kixor-containing herbicide programs in sweet corn to determine their effectiveness on weed control.
- To compare the activity of these programs with different residual grass herbicides, with and without atrazine, and industry standards.
- To evaluate these herbicide programs on sweet corn injury and yield impact.

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## 2010 Research Projects *continued*

### Addressing the Sweet Corn Trapping Infrastructure

Shelby J. Fleischer, Scott Smiles, and John Tooker, Penn State University \$5,032

- Upgrade sheet metal-working equipment so that we can fabricate and deliver wire cone traps to cooperating Extension Educators in the vegetable-growing regions of the Commonwealth. Structure this so that trap replacements and repair can be accomplished with minimal effort and cost.
- Studies to develop a more specific pheromone lure for Western bean cutworm.

### **Snap Beans**

#### Evaluating Potential of Mesotrione Carryover to Snap Bean

Mark VanGessel, University of Delaware; Dwight Lingenfelter, Penn State Univ. \$4,000

- Provide date to reduce the rotation between applications of mesotrione-containing products and planting snap beans to less than twelve months.

#### Breeding White Mold Resistant Snap Beans

Phillip D. Griffiths, Cornell University NYSAES, \$3,000\*

- To greenhouse and field evaluate and advance breeding lines for resistance to white mold, yield and quality.
- To screen and cross white mold resistant field selections and advanced breeding population in the greenhouse, and advance the generation with further screens to determine resistant types with good horticulture.

### **Cucurbits**

#### Shipper Cantaloupe and Round Melon Variety Evaluation 2010

Steve Bogash, Penn State Coop. Ext. \$3,783

- Identify cantaloupe cultivars that have promise as successful market varieties.
- Rate cultivars as to their resistance and susceptibility to powdery and downy mildew in a standard disease management program.
- Identify cultivars that are considered superior in flavor and appearance.
- Produce saleable yield date (size, avg. weight, etc.) for the cultivars in this program in order to allow growers to select varieties that meet their marketing criteria.
- Increase the diversity of melons in regional production beyond the current focus on three varieties (Athena, Aphrodite and Atlantis). These limited varieties expose our regional industry to major crop failures from diseases.

#### Keeping PA Vegetable Growers Profitable: Statewide Cultivar Trials – Winter Squash and Pumpkins

Elsa Sánchez and Mike Orzolek, Penn State Univ.; Tim Elkner, Tom Butzler, Steve Bogash, Lee Young, and Eric Oesterling, Penn State Cooperative Ext. \$10,000\*

- To evaluate several cultivars of vegetable crops – various types of winter squash in 2010-2011, in three field locations to provide Pennsylvania growers with up to date recommendations based on how each cultivar performed regionally and state-wide.

#### Disease Resistant Pumpkin Variety Evaluation

Timothy Elkner, Penn State Coop. Ext. \$2,000

- To evaluate yield and fruit quality of commercially available pumpkin varieties in a replicated trial. Powdery mildew tolerant/resistant varieties, conventional selections as well as any available varieties with other desirable traits (virus resistance, etc.) will be grown.

### **Other**

#### Further Elucidation and Management of Bacterial Diseases Occurring on Onion in Pennsylvania

Beth K. Gugino and Michele Mansfield, The Pennsylvania State University; Jeff Stoltzfus, Eastern Lancaster School District; Timothy Elkner, Penn State Cooperative Extension. \$2,500\*

(PVGA Simply Sweet Onion Committee will contribute another \$4,650.)

- Screen imported transplants as well as locally grown transplants for bacterial pathogens using cultural and molecular multi-plex PCR techniques.
- Conduct a second survey of onion field across the state to further identify and characterize the bacteria that are causing and/or associated with the symptoms observed in the field.
- Further evaluate the effect of bare soil, and different colored plastic mulches by comparing them to the standard black plastic mulch on crop canopy temperature and bacterial disease incidence and severity at the SE Research Center in the same location as to 2009 trial.
- Incorporate results into grower newsletters and presentations at summer twilight and winter meetings.

#### On-Farm Evaluation of Cucurbit Powdery Mildew Fungicide Resistance using a Cucurbit Seedling Bioassay

Beth K. Gugino, The Pennsylvania State University; Meg McGrath, Cornell University – LIHREC; Andy Wyenandt, Rutgers University; Steve Rideout, Virginia Tech – ESAREC; Kate Everts, University of Maryland – LESREC; Bob Mulrooney, Univ. of Delaware \$3,000

- Determine the sensitivity of the powdery mildew pathogen to the active ingredients in the fungicides currently recommended fungicides in PA, NY, NJ, MD, VA & DE.
- Incorporate results into fungicide recommendations that can be used in 2010 on later season cucurbits.
- Disseminate results and recommendations to growers via newsletters as well as summer and winter field meetings.

## Produce Food Safety Comments Still Sought

On April 7, 2010, about 200 or more growers, mostly from Pennsylvania's plain communities, attended a Stakeholder's Discussion on Produce Safety in Hyattsville, Maryland. On May 13, 2010 about 100 persons, including Pennsylvania produce growers and food processors, shared their input on the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) new produce handling rule at the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex & Expo Center in Harrisburg.

The FDA is preparing to develop a produce food safety regulations. Now is the time for growers to give their input before the rules are written rather than complain afterwards.

The FDA has extended its deadline for electronic or written comments on produce food safety to July 23, 2010. Submit electronic comments to <http://www.regulations.gov> at docket no. FDA-2010-N-0085. Submit written comments to the Division of Dockets Management (HFA-305), Food and Drug Administration, 5630 Fishers Lane, Rm.1061, Rockville, MD 20852. For further information, contact:

Michelle A. Smith, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (HFS-317), Food and Drug Administration, 5100 Paint Branch Pkwy., College Park, MD 20740-3835  
301-436-2024.

## We'd Like to Know More to Serve You Better

Enclosed with this newsletter is your Production Verification Statement for 2010. Like last year, this year's form includes several questions that will enable the Program to serve you better, especially if you are a fresh market grower. The questions ask whether your operation is certified organic, sustainable or conventional, if you sell your produce retail or wholesale, what form of retail sales you use, and what forms of wholesale outlets you use.

This information will serve two purposes. It will allow the Program to determine how many growers use different growing and marketing methods. This will help us to plan our promotion and marketing activities better. Second, the Program will be better able to inform you as a grower when new marketing opportunities that might interest you are available. We are also asking you to include your email address if you have one. Obviously, that is quickest and most cost-effective method of contacting you. The Program does not plan to publish the information about individual farms but rather use it internally. The aggregate marketing information from the 2009 statements were as follows:

### Fresh Market Marketing Information

		<u>% of all</u>	
Total Responses	971		
Sell Retail	726	75%	
Sell Retail Only	316	33%	
Sell Wholesale	621	64%	
Sell Wholesale Only	211	22%	
			<u>% of</u>
Retail Outlets		<u>% of all</u>	<u>retail</u>
Roadside Market	581	60%	80%
Comm. Farmers Mkt	227	23%	31%
CSA	30	3%	4%
Other	71	7%	10%
			<u>% of</u>
Wholesale Outlets		<u>% of all</u>	<u>whsle</u>
Auction	447	46%	72%
Chainstore Warehse	56	6%	9%
Direct Store Delivery	183	19%	29%
Wholesaler/Broker	108	11%	17%
Restaurant	54	7%	9%
Cooperative	33	3%	5%
Other	64	7%	10%
Certified Organic	20	2%	

### 2010 Assessments Now Due

The assessment for the 2010 growing season is now payable and can be paid directly to the Program through the mail or through a collecting sales agent.

Growers who plan to sell their produce through a produce auction should plan to pay their assessment by June 30, 2010, to assist the auctions in the collection process. Auctions are required by law to participate in the collection process and may require that growers pay the assessment before they sell produce through the auction.

Collecting sales agents are required to deduct the assessment from their payments to the growers unless the grower can show proof that they have already paid the assessment. Most collecting sales agents, particularly the produce auctions, strongly encourage growers to pay the assessment on their own rather than have it deducted.

For general information about the assessment and the crops to which it applies, see the back of the pink Production Verification Statement. The assessment is **not** due on small fruits like strawberries, brambles or blueberries **nor** on white potatoes.

If you are growing less than an acre of vegetables this year (or less than 1,000 sq. ft. of greenhouse vegetables), please indicate at the bottom of the form which statement best states your circumstance and return the form. This will enable us to update our records.

Please keep the pink copy of the form in your records for three years. Return just the white copy. Payments are due by October 31 at the latest. However, growers who sell their produce through collecting sales agents may be required to pay earlier in the year. Growers are encouraged to pay the assessment and order any point-of-purchase materials by June 30, 2010.

### You Have a Choice

Growers have the opportunity to designate on their Production Verification Statement how much of their assessment they want to see used for marketing activities and how much they would like to see used for research. Marketing activities include sponsoring PA Produce Month, printing and shipping of point-of-purchase materials, distributing press releases and sponsoring the recipe contest. Over the past five years, the Program has spent about 55% of grower assessment dollars on research and 45% on marketing activities. It should be noted that these percentages do not take into account the money spent on general administrative expenses nor the grant funds the Program has received. Usually the Program has received matching grant funds from the Department of Agriculture that more than doubled the funds available for marketing activities. No such matching grants are available for research activities.

### Questions?

Call the Program at 717-694-3596. We are here to serve you.

## Make Sure Your Farm Is Listed

Growers who retail their produce at a roadside market should be listed in the "Consumer's Guide to Pennsylvania Farm Markets" published by the Department of Agriculture. Call 717-783-9948 for further information. This directory also lists community farmers' markets. Penn State's Ag Map is also a good place for retail markets to be listed. Growers who want to list their farm on AgMap should go to <http://agmap.psu.edu> or call them at 814-863-7001.

## Introducing MarketMaker

The Vegetable Marketing and Research Program has partnered with Penn State Cooperative Extension and several other organizations to enhance your ability to sell and/or buy Pennsylvania-produced foods. Pennsylvania MarketMaker, an online tool, will soon provide access to free, in-depth marketing information to help you find markets for your products throughout Pennsylvania and other participating states.

MarketMaker is a resource designed to boost farmers' marketing efforts, help consumers and businesses find locally grown products, and contribute to agricultural profitability...in line with the mission of the state program, PA Preferred®. Likewise, other buyers and sellers in the food supply chain, including food retailers, processors, wholesalers, producers and farmers, restaurants, wineries, farmers' markets and others will be able to find your business and products.

Pennsylvania MarketMaker will be part of a growing national network of MarketMaker websites. Currently, the network has one of the most extensive collections of searchable food industry data in the U.S., with 350,000+ farmer and food business profiles.

As more than just an online directory of sellers, Pennsylvania MarketMaker will provide a rich source of demographic and business data to help buyers and sellers find each other. Here's what you will be able to do with Pennsylvania MarketMaker:

- **Access** demographic profiles of target markets.
- **Locate** buyers and sellers within a target region in a map-based format.
- **Connect** with potentially thousands of buyers and sellers quickly through the Buy & Sell Forum.

To realize the full benefits of Pennsylvania MarketMaker, we need a cross-section of agricultural and food producers to be registered. Currently, we are building the database through registrations from businesses like yours, and we hope for the site to be fully functional by fall. Registration and participation is free. So, please register your business now—and spread the word. Visit <http://pa.foodmarketmaker.com>.

If you do not have Internet access and wish to register, please contact Gina Backes at 309-792-2500 and ask her to either mail you a registration form or have her complete your registration over the phone.

## GAP/GHP Certification and Cost Share Available

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA) offers farms and packinghouses the opportunity to be certified for Good Agricultural Practices for farms and Good Handling Practices for packinghouse operations. The inspection and certification are made under standards established by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA). For further information on the certification program, contact the Department at 717-787-4315.

## The Growing Season...

As you are planning many aspects of your growing and marketing season, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture continues to work hard to provide support and assistance. The Department is currently accepting applications to join the PA Preferred™ state branding program and is announcing an upcoming event to expand your marketing channels.

Today's consumer is very interested in knowing the producer and where their food comes from. By utilizing the PA Preferred™ logo on your produce, you can distinguish your product from others in the marketplace. It is an effective tool for increasing the awareness of Pennsylvania produced, quality product. There is no charge for becoming a member. Program information may be found on line at [www.PAPreferred.com](http://www.PAPreferred.com) or by calling Kristi Rooker at 717-772-3094. By enrolling today, you will be listed on the PA Preferred™ website. There are currently 4,500 member locations and is a frequently visited site by consumers searching for Pennsylvania products, producers and farm and farmers markets. Enroll today and take advantage these complementary program benefits.

The Department's commitment includes providing venue such as the upcoming PA Preferred – Giant Food Stores; LLC 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Buyer/Vendor Show. The show will be held at the PA Farm Show Complex & Exposition Center and is scheduled for June 10, 2010 in the Northeast Hall; show will start at 10 a.m. and run until 3 p.m.

PDA also works with many partners, including United States Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Services (USDA-AMS) to provide the Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBGP-FB) program. The focus of this program is to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops in Pennsylvania. To date the Department has awarded more than \$1.3 million in block grant funds to support twenty-three (23) projects including the Direct Farm Sales Grant and Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Cost Share Program. Additional projects will be selected to receive 2010 funding in the next few months.

We appreciate your commitment to providing an affordable, nutritious and safe food supply. Pennsylvania is third in the nation for direct farm sales and ranks nationally in the top 10 for 11 specialty crops. They include: apples, tart cherries, grapes, peaches, pears, cantaloupes, cabbage, strawberries, sweet corn, tomatoes and processed snap beans.

The Department is also offering a GAP/GHP Cost-Share Program for the 2010 calendar year. Any business or individual located in Pennsylvania that successfully completes one initial USDA Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) or one initial USDA Good Handling Practices (GHP) audit is eligible to apply. Qualified applicants may receive up to a maximum of \$400 per year to cover the costs of *one* successful initial USDA GAP or GHP audit.

For information, contact Jared Grissinger, at 717-705-9513 or [jgrissinge@state.pa.us](mailto:jgrissinge@state.pa.us).