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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.

Program Introduces New Logo

The Program is introducing a new logo for its point-of-purchase items and other promotional purposes. For many years the Program used the "Simply Delicious" logo developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. However, the Department has since developed the "PA Preferred" brand and logo that is adaptable to promote all of Pennsylvania's agricultural commodities and industries, not just produce. Consequently, the Program Board decided it was best for the Program to have its own logo which it could use to specifically promote Pennsylvania Vegetables.

The Program's Board considered a number of designs submitted by Kitchen Table Consultants, its marketing consultant. They settled on the design above. Here is its printed in black and white but a full-color version with the vegetables will be used whenever printing capabilities and budgets allow that.



Celebrate August as PA Produce Month

The Program will again be celebrating August as Pennsylvania Produce Month when many Pennsylvania vegetables are at the peak of their seasons. We invite you to take advantage of the opportunities to promote your PA grown vegetables. The purpose is to focus consumer attention on the abundant supplies of quality, fresh Pennsylvania produce that are available in roadside farm markets, farmers' markets and even supermarkets as well as CSA's during the month of August.

Further information on Produce Month activities will be published in the June issue of the Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers News and a special Produce Month mailing that will be sent out in mid-July.

All growers who order any point-of-purchase materials will automatically receive six small (11" x 8.5") full-color "August is PA Produce Month" posters. Growers can also order a Produce Month promotional kit which will include two large (18" x 23") posters and twenty 11" x 7" price cards both in full color. Plan now to join this statewide vegetable promotion this August. These posters will be made available to other markets which sell local produce.



Program Launches New Website

The Program will be launching its newly restructured website this July at PAVeggies.org. With PA Produce Month unfolding all August long, the website will be completed just in time, and will serve as a perfect place for consumers to discover ways to celebrate one of Pennsylvania's most delicious months. The new updates will appease the needs of many consumers, from the veggie curious who's just beginning to dip their toe into the local bounty, to the expert who's eager to seize the local veggie scene for summer entertaining and winter preparation. It continues to offer annually updated marketing tools and resources for Pennsylvania farmers as well.

Some exceptional new features of PAVeggies.org include:

Recipe Videos- *Developed to educate and inspire in less than 5 minutes, these fun instructional videos offer 21 recipe ideas across 7 collections, each with a unique theme, like 3 No Fail Veggies Slaws and 3 Pestos Using Unexpected Ingredients.*

Farm Videos - *In an effort to bring the farm to consumers, these videos go behind the scenes through on-site interviews with 5 Pennsylvania farmers, featuring footage of operations and first-hand tellings of farm life.*

New Blogs - *The 2018 blogs give a fresh face to the extensive amount of good reading already present at PAVeggies.org, tempting consumers to explore every recipe, interview, farm glimpse, tip, and beyond.*

Local Food Directories - *Whether one is looking in their area for an on-farm stand, neighborhood farmers' market, or CSA, or hoping to connect with a wholesale farmer or auction, these directories address various needs in one clear, central location. Use the enclosed blue form to update your listings in the directories.*

Vegetable Guide – *This is a perfect quick reference of the when, why, and how of local PA veggies. It outlines seasonality per vegetable, as well as unique tips for selecting and preparing.*

Farmer Toolkit – *This is designed for growers and includes tools and resources to assist with PA Produce Month promotions and marketing all year long.*

Consumer Survey - *The survey enables visitors to provide ideas and feedback for website improvements.*

These website resources are not meant to solely entertain but, more importantly, to cultivate and nourish new relationships. They are designed to make consumers aware that on-farm stands, neighborhood farmers' markets, many supermarkets, CSAs, some restaurants, and specialty grocers all throughout the state, are offering fresh, local vegetables through spring, summer and fall, and especially in August. It's the perfect time to celebrate the state's successful industry and familiarize with the friendly people who grow their food.

Growers Vote to Continue Program

Nearly 80% of the vegetable growers voting in the March 2018 review referendum on the Pennsylvania Vegetable Marketing and Research Program voted "Yes" to continue the Program for another five-year period. A total of 395 eligible ballots were received with 315 voting "Yes" to continue the Program and 80 voting "No". Over 2,000 ballots were mailed to growers.

The Program Board greatly appreciates the vote of confidence in the Program. They strive to use the grower assessment funds wisely to benefit all the different sectors of the vegetable industry in the state.

IPM Information Once Again Available

Sweet corn, tomato and curcubit integrated pest management (IPM) weekly updates will again be available to growers in several forms this year, including email, fax or regular mail. For the last twenty-one years the Program has offered this information to growers in the PA Vegetable IPM Weekly Update.

The IPM Weekly Update will be offered again this year from mid-June through August. The regular mail version will only be sent to growers who request it on the enclosed yellow form. Please return the yellow form by July 20, 2018, or call 717-694-3596 as soon as possible to get on the list for the weekly mailings, faxes or emails. Please note that faxes will normally be sent during the nighttime hours.

Growers can also obtain IPM information a toll-free recorded telephone message that is available 24-hours-a-day by calling 1-800-PENN-IPM. The IPM information will also be available at many produce auctions.

GAP Cost Share Available

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA) offers farms and packinghouses the opportunity to be certified for Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) for farms and Good Handling Practices (GHP) for packinghouse operations. For further information on the certification program, contact Audra Mata at 717-369-5740 or amata@pa.gov.

The Department is also offering a GAP/GHP Cost-Share Program for the 2018 calendar year. Growers that successfully complete one initial USDA Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) or one initial USDA Good Handling Practices (GHP) audit are 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 Kyle Heffner, at 717-836-3973 or kyheffner@pa.gov.

Order Your POP Materials Today

Use the yellow form to order your POP materials.

2018 Assessments Are Now Payable

Enclosed with this newsletter is your Production Verification Statement for 2018. The assessment for the 2018 growing season is now payable. **Remember, high tunnel production is considered greenhouse vegetable production and is assessed by the 1,000 sq. ft. of production area rather than by the acre. Also, growers that have both field production and greenhouse/high tunnel production simply add the acres of field production and the number of 1,000 sq. ft. of greenhouse/high tunnel production together to determine their total number of "production units" to calculate their assessment.**

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 OR on white potatoes.**

If you are growing less than an acre of vegetables this year and less than 1,000 sq. ft. of greenhouse or high tunnel vegetables and expect to sell less than \$2,000 worth of 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 January 31, 2019, at the latest. **You are encouraged to pay the assessment and order any point-of-purchase materials by July 20, 2018.**

You Have a Choice

You have the opportunity to designate on your Production Verification Statement how much of your

assessment you want to see used for marketing activities and how much you would like to see used for research. Marketing activities include sponsoring PA Produce Month in August and printing and shipping of point-of-purchase materials. Over the past five years, the Program has spent about 57% of grower assessment dollars on research and 43% 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.

Help Us Help You

Like previous years, 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 serves two purposes. It allows the Program to determine how many growers use different growing and marketing methods. This helps us to plan our promotion and marketing activities better. Second, the Program is 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.

Questions? Call the Program at 717-694-3596 or email us at pvmrp@embarqmail.com.

Program to Help Fund 13 Research Projects in 2018

The Vegetable Marketing and Research Board approved up to \$20,000 in assessment funds for vegetable research in 2018. In cooperation with the Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association (PVGA), which will be contributing up to an additional \$60,000 from its General Fund, the two vegetable growers organizations will be funding 13 different projects. The Association's research funds are earned by the members at the Farm Show Food Booth and other Association events.

The projects approved for funding and their objectives are listed below.

Testing High Residue Cultivation (HRC) for No-Till Snap Bean and Squash Production

Dr. Andrew Smith, Rodale Institute **\$5,000**

- Evaluate and provide vegetable growers with valuable information on the success of using the HRC in managing weeds mechanically for no-till and organic vegetable crop production.
- Compare cover crops + HRC to herbicide treatments in no-till snap bean production.

- Compare cover crops + HRC to herbicides and black plastic mulch in butternut squash production.

Viable Options for Managing Allium Leafminer (ALM) in Organic Onion Production

Dr. Gladis Zinati, Rodale Institute **\$5,000**

- Evaluate the potential for different plastic mulches and two cover crops to reduce ALM populations and damage.
- Empower allium growers with knowledge and scientifically-based viable cultural and biological tools to improve allium leaf miner early detection and management, and onion yield and quality.

Allium Leaf Miner Monitoring and Management

Timothy Elkner, Penn State Extension and Shelby Fleischer, Penn State Univ. **\$4,500**

- Investigate the emergence period of allium leafminer in the spring and fall in order to alert growers of the need for control measures.
- Refine an alert system for growers regarding the emergence of allium leafminer.

(continued)

2018 Research Projects *(continued)*

- Investigate the impact of plant age on attractiveness to leafminer adults.
- Evaluate the efficacy of insecticides on both a spring onion and a fall leek crop.

Onion Variety Evaluation Trial

Thomas Butzler, Penn State Extension **\$1,000**

- Evaluate the marketable yield and quality (sugar and pyruvic acid level) of onion varieties that have the potential to become part of the Simply Sweet Onion Program. (The PA Simply Sweet Onion Committee is providing an additional \$2,750 for this project.)

Breeding Tomatoes for Disease Resistance and Other Desirable Characteristics for Production in PA

Majid R. Foolad, Penn State University **\$12,000**

- Develop and do field evaluations of fresh market experimental F₁ hybrids with high yield, EB resistance, and other desirable characteristics including fruit quality.
- Produce large numbers of seeds of 17 Penn State elite fresh market F₁ hybrids and do field trials by numerous researchers/extension agents/growers.
- Develop and do field evaluations of processing experimental F₁ hybrids with high yield, EB resistance, and other desirable characteristics including fruit quality.
- Develop fresh market and processing tomato breeding lines with LB resistance, conferred by *Ph-3* and/or *Ph-5* resistance genes.
- Develop and evaluate fresh market and processing experimental F₁ hybrids with LB resistance.
- Conduct genetic analysis of a recombinant inbred line population of tomato segregating for LB resistance.
- Evaluate in the field Penn State advanced fresh market and processing tomato breeding lines.

Enhancing Authority MTZ Safety for Processing Tomatoes

Mark VanGessel, University of Delaware and Dwight Lingenfelter, Penn State University **\$5,000**

- Evaluate metribuzin and sulfentrazone for safety with processing tomatoes under different application strategies.
- Determine level of early-season weed control from metribuzin and sulfentrazone.

Keeping PA Vegetable Growers Profitable: Statewide Muskmelon Cultivar Trials

Elsa Sánchez, Penn State Univ. and Timothy Elkner, Thomas Butzler, Robert Pollock, and Carla Burkle, Penn State Extension **\$12,000**

- Evaluate twenty cultivars and selections of muskmelons in conventional plasticulture system.

Monthly Grower Conference Calls

Because of limited grower participation in these calls over the past two years, we will not be conducting these call this year.

Specialty Melon Variety Trial (Honeydew, French Charentais, Canary, Crenshaw, and Ananas)

Michael Orzolek, Penn State Univ. Emeritus **\$3,500**

- Evaluate the listed specialty melon varieties for marketable yield and quality.
- Evaluate consumer acceptance of specialty melons through the PSU Student Farm on the University Park campus.

Managing Early Season Cucumber Beetle Populations in Pumpkin Using Exirel

Timothy Elkner, Penn State Extension and Shelby Fleischer, Penn State Univ. **\$4,000**

- Evaluate the effectiveness of Exirel in managing cucumber beetles and reducing the incidence of bacterial wilt in pumpkins during the early season.

Colored Bell Pepper High Tunnel Variety Trial

Timothy Elkner, Penn State Extension **\$4,000**

- Repeat the trial conducted in 2017 to confirm the results.

Coupling Host Resistance with the Evaluation of Biofungicides for the Management of Common Foliar Vegetable Diseases in Pennsylvania.

Beth K. Gugino, Penn State Univ. **\$6,000**

- Evaluate the coupling of host resistance with the evaluation of biofungicides and biofungicide augmented conventional programs for the management of the most common economically important foliar diseases on tomato and cucurbit in Pennsylvania.

Developing a Tool for the Site-Specific Nutrient Management of Vegetable Crops in Pennsylvania

Francesco Di Gioia and Elsa Sanchez, Penn State Univ. **\$7,156**

- Conduct a survey of PA growers to assess their common fertilization and nutrient management practices and adoption of best management practices.
- Test and validate the soil aqueous extract method as an in-season fertilization tool for monitoring the root zone nutrient status for site specific nutrient management of vegetable crops.

Vegetable Grafting as a Sustainable Tool to Improve Tomato Tolerance to Alkalinity Stress

Francesco Di Gioia and Elsa Sanchez, Penn State Univ. **\$8,100**

- Evaluate the potential of vegetable grafting as a tool to enhance tomato crop tolerance to alkalinity stress sometimes experienced in high tunnel culture.

2017 Research Reports Available

Reports from the research reports funded last year (and in previous years) by the Program are available on the Program's website at www.paveggies.org. If you do not have access to the internet, you can order paper copies of last year's reports at no cost on the back of the enclosed yellow form.