



## PENNSYLVANIA VEGETABLE MARKETING AND RESEARCH PROGRAM

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# Fresh Ideas

VOLUME 22

2012 ANNUAL REPORT

NUMBER 3

*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.*

## Growers Approve Changes to Program

By an overwhelming majority, growers approved several changes to the Program Order as proposed by the Program Board in a referendum conducted this fall. Seventy-eight percent of the growers returning a ballot voted in favor of the changes. They represented 75% of the production volume which voted.

As a result of the vote, the Program will now include growers who grow and sell \$2,000 of vegetables regardless of what acreage or greenhouse area they use as well as all growers who sell vegetables from an acre or more of field production or 1,000 sq. ft of greenhouse area.

Growers now have the option to pay the assessment based on their field acreage (or their greenhouse area) as they did previously or they can choose to pay 1.25% of their gross sales, whichever is lower. The base assessment of \$25 for all growers who are subject to the assessment remains the same. In nearly all cases, it will be to the growers advantage to calculate their assessment based on their acreage or greenhouse area.

The approved changes also define the marketing season as the calendar year rather than from October 15 to October 14 of the following year. Thus assessments will be due one month after the end of the year or January 31 rather than October 31.

Another approved change is that high tunnel production area will now be considered greenhouse production area and the assessment will be based on number of 1,000 sq. ft. rather than the number of acres. This change recognizes the advancement of high tunnel technology which has become very similar to greenhouse production.

The final change approved counts acres of field production as equal to 1,000 sq. ft. of greenhouse production area for the purpose of calculating the amount of assessment due.

The Board was deeply gratified by the vote of confidence expressed by the large majority of growers voting to approve these changes.

## Five-Year Review Referendum Coming

With one referendum concluded, as noted above, the Program is now preparing for another referendum in March of 2013. Under the Pennsylvania Agricultural Commodities Marketing Act under which the Program operates, growers must approve the continuance of the Program every five years. That five-year period is up in March of 2013. Therefore, growers will be asked to vote again, this time simply on whether to continue the Program as it was recently amended or to discontinue the Program.

Naturally, the Board is asking growers to vote "Yes" to continue the Program. Since 1988 when the Program was established, over \$520,000 grower assessment dollars have been used to fund hundreds of practical vegetable research projects. The Program helped established systems to monitor tomato diseases and sweet corn insect pests so growers can time their fungicide and insecticide applications to be more effective. Various weed and root control methods for snap beans and other crops have

been evaluated by the Program's research efforts. Variety trials for several different crops have been supported.

In addition, over \$490,000 grower assessment dollars have been supplemented by \$330,000 in state and federal grants to promote Pennsylvania-grown vegetables with point-of-purchase materials, press-relations efforts, billboard and radio advertising, vegetable recipe contests and the August is PA Produce Month campaign.

Growers must vote "Yes" to continue the Program and the benefits it provides to the state's vegetable industry as a whole and to individual growers. The research and promotion efforts undertaken by the Program over the past 25 years are beyond the scope of what growers could do individually. The Program provides the framework for growers to cooperatively fund research and promotion efforts that are controlled and directed by a volunteer board

of growers. A “Yes” vote by growers in March 2013 will allow this progress to continue.

## Produce Month Celebrated

The Vegetable Marketing and Research Program conducted its seventh celebration of August as Pennsylvania Produce Month this year. With the help of a Specialty Crop Block Grant from the United States Department of Agriculture through the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, the Program was able to promote Produce Month and Pennsylvania vegetables on radio stations across the state during August again this year.

During the first two weeks of August, the Program ran 30-second ads on the 59-station Radio Pennsylvania network including KYW in Philadelphia. The Program also sponsored traffic reports on 49 radio stations for two weeks in the Allentown/Bethlehem, Scranton/Wilkes Barre, Erie, Pittsburgh, Johnstown/Altoona/State College, Harrisburg and Lancaster/York markets from late July to the end of August. The radio messages encouraged consumers to stop and pick up some fresh Pennsylvania vegetables at their local community farmers’ market, roadside farm market or supermarket. Consumers were also encouraged to visit the Program’s website at [www.paveggies.org](http://www.paveggies.org) for vegetable recipes.

The Governor officially proclaimed August as Pennsylvania Produce Month as did the state Senate. Secretary of Agriculture George Greig presented the Governor’s proclamation at a special event at the Scranton Cooperative Farmers’ Market on August 8. The vendors of the market and other growers contributed a truckload of Pennsylvania produce to the local food bank as part of the promotion.

To encourage greater participation in Produce Month, the Program mailed six small PA Produce Month posters with about 330 point-of-purchase orders received from growers. About 70 of these growers ordered the Produce Month kit in addition which included two large posters and 20 special Produce Month price cards. Growers could also order a compact disc with graphics for use in their newspaper or other print advertising.

Over 300 Produce Month kits were shipped to the various produce auctions across the state where they were available to growers and to the non-grower marketers who purchase produce at the auctions.

The Program again offered the large and small PA Produce Month posters to several major supermarket chains in the state. Posters and/or price cards were requested for about 235 stores by Karns, Lancaster Family-Owned Markets, Redner’s Warehouse Markets, ShurFine (Associated Wholesalers), and SuperValu (Shop N’ Save, Foodland, and County Stores).

## Program Awarded Two Grants

The Program was awarded two new Specialty Crop Block Grants by the state Department of Agriculture this fall. One will provide \$20,000 to advertise PA Produce Month in 2013 and 2014. The other will provide \$30,000

for a vegetable industry strategic planning effort in the winter of 2013-14.



## Point-of-Purchase Orders Increase

The Program shipped point-of-purchase materials to 467 growers for the 2012 season, almost 100 more than last year. A newly designed banner (shown above) and large price paddles featuring the “PA Preferred®” logo were added to the Program’s selection of point-of-purchase materials for growers this year. The new banner and new price paddles could only be distributed to growers who are licensed by the Department of Agriculture to use the “PA Preferred” logo. The Department of Agriculture is discontinuing its use of the “Simply Delicious” logo and urging all agricultural producers to be licensed to use the “PA Preferred” logo.

The Vegetable Marketing and Research Program has considerable inventories of “Simply Delicious” point-of-purchase materials that it will continue to distribute to growers. Binwrap, roadside signs, price cards, price paddles, price stickers, shirts, aprons and hats will all be available for several years until supplies are exhausted. Other items like recipe cards, clip-on price cards and brochures will be transitioned away from the “Simply Delicious” logo as supplies of these items are exhausted in the next year or so.

The following numbers of the different items were ordered in 2012:

Banners	32
Binwrap	117
Restaurant Signs	20
Roadside Signs	194
Stickers for Roadside Signs	1,329
Clip-On Price Cards (pk of 10)	136
Price Cards (pk of 10)	223
Small Price Paddles (pk of 10)	303
Large Price Paddles (pk of 10)	233
PA Vegetables Brochures (pk of 100)	43
Fun & Healthy Facts Brochures (pk of 100)	28
Price Stickers (roll of 500)	165
Aprons	36
Shirts	101
Hats	32
Recipes Cards (50 of each of 16 recipes)	62
Recipe Card Racks	13

## Press Relations Effort Reaches Over 3.6 Million

The Vegetable Program sent out press releases on sweet corn, tomatoes, cantaloupes/melons, zucchini, cucumbers, peppers, cole crops and pumpkins/squash this season. The crop releases contained recipes entered in the "Simply Delicious" Vegetable Recipe Contests. In 2012, 72 articles from the releases referencing the Program's releases or information appeared in newspapers (both print and online) read by over 3.6 million persons including:

- 22 articles on sweet corn reaching 1,667,000 readers,
- 10 articles on pumpkins/squash reaching 729,000 readers,
- 8 articles on tomatoes reaching 157,000 readers,
- 7 articles on cole crops reaching 146,000 readers,
- 6 articles on melons reaching 214,000 readers,
- 5 articles on zucchini reaching 104,000 readers, and
- 4 articles on snap beans reaching 53,000 readers.

The Program has been distributing press releases about Pennsylvania vegetables for 22 years. The goal is to get accurate articles about Pennsylvania vegetables in Pennsylvania newspapers, especially on the food pages, with recipes consumers can use. The releases are also posted on the Program's website at [www.paveggies.org](http://www.paveggies.org).

## 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Contest Produces Tasty Recipes

Three Pennsylvania cooks were declared winners in the ninth annual Pennsylvania "Simply Delicious, Simply Nutritious" Vegetable Recipe Contest Cook-Off. Veteran contestant, Frances Dietz of York, won the first-place prizes in both the Melon/Cucumber category and the Summer Squash/Zucchini category. First-time finalist Mary-Ellen Miller of Orwigsburg won the first-place prize in the Tomatoes/Pepper/Eggplant category and Teresa DeVono of Red Lion took the prize in the Winter Squash/Pumpkin category. The Cook Off was held on Friday, August 3, 2012, at the Olewine Center for Culinary Arts at Harrisburg Area Community College, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. George Greig, state Secretary of Agriculture presented certificates to the winners who received \$100 prizes. The other finalists received a \$25 gift certificate to the farm market of their choice.

Four finalists in each category completed for the top prizes. Judges choose the finalist recipes for the Cook-Off from 82 written recipe entries submitted by 40 cooks from across the state. Recipes were scored on the basis of four criteria: creativity, nutrition/healthfulness, ease of preparation, and overall appeal. Recipe entries had to contain as a major ingredient at least one vegetable in the category. Recipes were required to be created or modified by the contestant or a member of the contestant's family.

All the finalist recipes are available on the Vegetable Marketing and Research Program's website at [www.paveggies.org](http://www.paveggies.org) or by mail from the Program office.

## Eleven Research Projects Funded in 2012

The Vegetable Marketing and Research Board allocated \$25,000 in assessment funds for vegetable research in 2012. In cooperation with the Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association, which contributed an additional \$37,000, the two vegetable grower organizations funded 11 different projects. The Association's research funds are earned by the members at the Association's Farm Show and Ag Progress Days Food Booths. The approved projects totaled about \$62,000.

The projects funded are listed below.

### Tomatoes

#### Building Upon BLIGHTCAST and PA-PIPE: Evaluation of an Improved Decision Support System for Late Blight

*Beth K. Gugino and Ilse Herta, Penn State Univ. and Bill E. Fry, Cornell Univ.* \$4,500

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

*Steve Bogash, Penn State Extension* \$6,164

#### Breeding Tomatoes for Early Blight and Late Blight

Resistance and Other Desirable Traits for Production in Pennsylvania

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

### Snap Beans

#### Use of Residual Herbicides for Tough to Control Weeds in Snap Beans

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

#### White Mold Control in Snap Beans Without Ronilan

*Helene R. Dillard, Joi Strauss and Alissa Carissimi, Cornell Univ.* \$4,112

### Sweet Corn

#### Sweet Corn Trapping Network

*Shelby J. Fleischer, Penn State Univ.* \$3,900

#### Keeping Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Profitable:

Statewide Sweet Corn Cultivar Trials

*Elsa Sánchez and Michael Orzolek, Penn State Univ. and Timothy Elkner, Thomas Butzler, Steve Bogash, Lee Stivers, & Eric Oesterling, Penn State Ext.* \$12,000

### Other Crops

#### Evaluate the Efficacy of Alternative In-Season

Management Products and Fertility Treatments on Yield and the Development of Onion Bacterial Diseases

*Beth K. Gugino, Michele Mansfield and Emily Pfeufer, Penn State Univ. and Jeff Stoltzfus, Eastern Lancaster Co. School District* \$4,000  
(an additional \$3,294 was contributed by the Simply Sweet Onion growers.)

#### Green Slicer Cucumber Variety Trial

*Steve Bogash, Penn State Extension* \$4,753

#### Colored Bell Pepper High Tunnel Variety Trial II

*Steve Bogash and Timothy Elkner, Penn State Extension* \$4,001

Optimum Plant Populations for Cantaloupe Production

Timothy Elkner, Penn State Extension \$3,550

**2012 Financial Statistics**Area Reported in Assessment Payments\*

Fresh Market	20,489 acres	71%
Processing	6,854 acres	24%
Greenhouse	1,584 M sq. ft.	5%

Source of Assessment Income\*

Fresh Market	\$50,469	77%
Processing	\$11,525	17%
Greenhouse	\$3,934	6%

\*for the 2011 season

Income for the 2012 Fiscal Year\*\*

Grower Assessments	
Undesignated	\$53,018
Designated for Research	\$15,094
Designated for Promotion	\$8,476
Specialty Crop Block Grant - promotion	\$31,554
Interest	\$0
Other – mostly point-of-purchase materials	\$4,656
	\$112,795

Research and Promotion Spending for 2012 Fiscal Year\*\*

Research	\$25,012
Promotion	\$44,188

\*\*estimated, final figures not available yet

**2012 Research Reports Available**

In the past the Program has mailed copies of the reports from the research projects funded by the Program and the Vegetable Growers Association to all growers paying their assessment for the previous year. In order to save Program funds, the Program Board has decided to post all the research reports on the Program's website at [www.paveggies.org](http://www.paveggies.org). Growers who do not have access to the internet can order paper copies of the projects of interest to them – **see enclosed colored order form**.

**IPM Reports Published**

The Program distributed a weekly two- to six-page IPM update on tomato fungicide scheduling, sweet corn insecticide scheduling and cucurbit disease information to 165 persons by electronic mail, 50 by fax and 146 growers by mail from mid-June through August, 2012.

The Program also provided the weekly update to produce auctions.

**Contact the Program**

Growers with questions about any of the Program's activities are welcome to contact the Program:

phone: 717-694-3596

fax: 717-694-3596

email: [pvmrp@embarqmail.com](mailto:pvmrp@embarqmail.com)website: [www.paveggies.org](http://www.paveggies.org)

mail: 2301 North Cameron Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9408

**Board Officers Re-elected at November Meeting**

At their November meeting, the Vegetable Marketing and Research Program Board re-elected David Miller of York as chairman, James Hoopes of Ulysses as vice chairman and Don Geise of Northumberland as secretary-treasurer.

The Program's Board, which includes twelve grower members, has the primary decision-making authority for the Program. The Secretary of Agriculture appoints the Board members from nominations submitted by growers. The Secretary of Agriculture and a representative of the sales agents required to collect the assessment also sit on the Board. The Board members are entitled to per diem payments for their services but they have voted to refuse any payment for their service other than reimbursement for travel expenses.

Four growers are chosen from each of the three regions of the state. The following growers serve on the Board:

**Eastern Region**

- Christopher Powell, a retail and wholesale fresh market grower from Strasburg, Lancaster Co.;
- Stephen Ganser, a retail fresh market grower from Kutztown, Berks Co.;
- Harry Hopkins, a retail and wholesale fresh market grower from Falls, Wyoming Co.;

**Central Region**

- Don Geise, a field man for Furmano Foods in Northumberland, Northumberland Co., which grows and processes tomatoes and snap beans;
- Stephen Kistler, a processing snap bean grower from Orangeville in Columbia Co.;
- David Miller, a retail and wholesale fresh market vegetable grower from York, York Co.;
- David Peters, a retail fresh market grower from Gardners, Adams Co.;

**Western Region**

- James Hoopes, a processing snap bean and sweet corn grower from Ulysses, Potter Co.;
- Kenneth Metrick, a retail fresh market grower from Butler in Butler Co.; and
- Joseph Mason, a retail and wholesale fresh market grower from Lake City, Erie Co.

The fourth seats in both the eastern and western region are currently vacant. Also serving on the Board are:

- Lela Reichart, the representative for the Secretary of Agriculture; and
- a representative the collecting sales agents (this seat is also currently vacant).