



## 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.*

## Your Vote is Needed to Improve the Program

The Vegetable Marketing and Research Program Board is proposing several changes to the Program's Order, the document that outlines how the Program operates. These changes will need to be approved by a grower referendum planned for late September 2012 for them to take effect. The Board urges all growers to vote "YES" to approve these amendments to the Program.

Currently, the Program's assessment only applies to persons who grow one or more acres of vegetables for sale in the field or who grow 1,000 sq. ft. of greenhouse vegetables for sale. The proposed change would also make the assessment apply to growers who grow and sell \$2,000 of vegetables regardless of what acreage or greenhouse area they use.

Growers would have the option to pay the assessment based on their field acreage (or their greenhouse area) as they do now or they could 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 would remain the same. In nearly all cases, it would be to the growers advantage to calculate their assessment based on their acreage or greenhouse area, the current method.

The main reason for proposing these changes is to better enable the Department of Agriculture to use information from sales agents to identify growers affected by the Program. Sales agents typically do not keep records on the number of acres (or amount of greenhouse area) that growers use to produce vegetables. They do, however, keep records of the dollar value of sales the growers sell to or through them.

The Department of Agriculture has the legal authority to ask businesses which purchase agricultural commodities to report to the Department the growers with whom they do business. Thus with the proposed change to the Program Order, the Program and the Department will be able to obtain lists of growers who should be part of the Vegetable Marketing and Research Program from businesses purchasing vegetables. Compiling a complete list of the names and addresses of all the growers in the state has

always been a challenge for the Program and this change will help this situation.

The Board is also proposing two changes in the definitions section of the Program Order. Currently the assessment is due for vegetables sold during the growing season that runs from October 15 to October 14 of the following year. The Board is proposing to change this growing or marketing season to the calendar year to simplify things.

The Board is also recommending that "greenhouses" be defined to include both traditional greenhouses and high tunnels. Currently high tunnel production area is not considered greenhouse area for the purposes of the assessment, but high tunnels have evolved over the years to the point that they are being operated more like greenhouses than like field production. The Program has sponsored considerable research on high tunnel production which is considerably more valuable than field production.

Besides the changes outlined above, the Board is also proposing to revise how the assessment is calculated for growers who grow vegetables both in the field and in the greenhouse. . The Program has always considered an acre as a "growing unit" for field production and 1,000 sq. ft. as a "growing unit" for greenhouse production. For both field production and greenhouse production, an additional assessment of \$1.50 has been required for each growing unit over the first five units. However, due to the way the original Program Order was worded, currently growers who grow vegetables in the field and in the greenhouse must calculate the assessment they would owe for their their field acreage alone, then the assessment they would owe for their greenhouse area alone, add the two together and subtract the \$25 base assessment. Besides being very confusing to everyone involved, it is also unfair. A grower who grows 10 acres of field vegetable or who grows 10,000 sq. ft. of greenhouse vegetables pays an assessment \$32.50 – that is \$25 for the first 5 acres or first 5,000 sq. ft. plus \$7.50 for the five additional growing units of acres or 1,000 sq. ft. But a grower who grows five acres in the field

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## Produce Month Celebrated in August

The Vegetable Marketing and Research Program conducted its seventh celebration of August as Pennsylvania Produce Month this season. 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.

While the Program's press relations efforts, distribution of point-of-purchase materials, vegetable recipe contest, website and other activities promote Pennsylvania vegetables throughout the season, Produce Month is designed to focus extra attention on Pennsylvania vegetables at the height of your season.

During the first two weeks of August, the Program and 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 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 each of 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).

If you have a retail farm market or are part of a community farmer's market, plan now to participate in the 2013 August is PA Produce Month promotion.

## Program Changes Recommended

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AND 5,000 sq. ft. of greenhouse vegetables only pays an assessment of \$25 even though he also grows 10 "units." While the financial impact of the proposed change to either the Program or the growers is relatively small – at the most it is a difference of \$7.50 and for many growers less than \$7.50 – the Board is seeking this change to clear up the confusion this causes for many growers when figuring out their assessments. It will also make the assessment more fair.

Growers should have already received information about the proposed changes from the Secretary of Agriculture. Again, the Board asks each grower to take the time to vote "YES" for these changes that will enable the Program to better identify all the growers in the state and make the collection of the assessment more equitable.



*Food bank produce donations at the Scranton Cooperative Farmers' Market loaded on the Hopkins family 1929 Chevrolet truck for the press conference where Secretary of Agriculture George Greig presented the Governor's Produce Month proclamation. The following growers donated produce to the effort: B&R Farms, Ringtown; Brace's Orchard, Dallas; Broyan's Farm Market, Nescopeck; Covered Wagon Produce, Wapwallopen; Farmer Bucky's Produce, Clarks Summit; Fred Eckel Sons, Clarks Summit; Furmano Foods, Northumberland; Heller's Orchard, Wapwallopen; Hopkins Farms, Falls; Indian Oven Farms, Falls; Jim's Farm Produce, Dalton; Kemmerer Farms, Berwick; Miller Family Farm, Scott Township; Sernak Farms, Weatherly; Stehr Bros., Klingerstown; and Summit Produce, Clarks Summit.*

## Your Input is Needed

### Research Conference Calls

In preparation for choosing research projects to be funded for 2013, the Program is scheduling a series of conference telephone calls between researchers and growers. Growers are invited and urged to participate in the crop areas of interest to them. To participate in any of the calls, growers should call 1-877-643-6951 at the appointed time. When prompted, enter the following passcode 55835024#

The conference calls will be limited to an hour (or less) in length. They are the ideal time for growers to present their needs directly to some of the researchers at the universities. Following is the schedule for the conference calls:

|                                     |             |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| General Vegetable Research Issues   |             |
| Tuesday, September 25, 2012         | 8:00 p.m.   |
| Tomato Research Issues              |             |
| Wednesday, September 26, 2012       | 11:00 a.m.  |
| Snap Bean Research Issues           |             |
| Wednesday, September 26, 2012       | 12: 15 p.m. |
| Sweet Corn Research Issues          |             |
| Tuesday, October 2, 2012            | 8:00 p.m.   |
| Cucurbit Research Issues            |             |
| Wednesday, October 3, 2012          | 11:00 a.m.. |
| Organic/Sustainable Research Issues |             |
| Tuesday, October 9, 2012            | 8:00 p.m    |

### Annual Grower Survey

Please fill out the enclosed green "Annual Grower Survey" to help the Program's Board meet your marketing and research needs for 2013. We especially need your response for the first question for our Specialty Crop Block Grant to help evaluate the effects of our grant activities.

While your response anytime this fall is welcome, if you can return your survey by October 20, 2012, your responses can be compiled for review by the Board at its meeting currently scheduled for November 12, 2012 at the Department of Agriculture Building in Harrisburg.

Each comment submitted by growers is typed up for the Board members to review. The morning session of the November meeting will be devoted to the annual election of officers, promotion plans for 2013 and general business. The afternoon will be set aside for discussion of research topics for next year.

All meetings of the Board are public meetings that growers are welcome to attend. Any questions about the exact time and location of the meeting or the Program in general should be referred to William Troxell, Executive Secretary, at 717-694-3596 or [pvmrp@embarqmail.com](mailto:pvmrp@embarqmail.com).

### Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

Growers who want to accept the Farmer's Market Nutrition Program checks from senior citizens and WIC program recipients MUST be registered with the Farmers' Marketing Nutrition Program first. If you are not registered, call Sandy Hopple at 717-787-2940.



## New Banner Introduced

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 Program shipped point-of-purchase materials to about 350 growers so far this season.

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.

Growers receive a credit equal to half of their assessment payment (up to a maximum of \$25) to order point-of-purchase items from the Program at no additional cost. Orders for point-of-purchase items for 2012 will be accepted until December 31. If you have misplaced your order form, contact the Program at 717-694-3596 or [pvmrp@embarqmail.com](mailto:pvmrp@embarqmail.com) or visit our website at [www.paveggies.org](http://www.paveggies.org).

## Mid-Atlantic Convention Opens Jan. 29

The 2013 Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention will be held January 29 to 31 at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center in Hershey. This three-day educational meeting also includes a large industry trade show. Many of the researchers whose projects are funded by the Program will be speaking in the educational sessions so it is a good opportunity for growers to hear them speak in person. All growers should plan to attend. Information is available at [www.mafvc.org](http://www.mafvc.org) or 717-694-3596.

## 2012 Recipe Contest a Big Success

Four 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. She has won first-place prizes in three previous contests, including two first-places in 2007 and is the only person to win two first-place prizes in one year. 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.

Ms. Dietz, won the first-place prize in the Melon/Cucumber category with her "Asian Cucumber Salad" which the judges described as having a "very pleasant" and "refreshing" taste. It featured cucumbers, green onions, radishes, and shrimp with a Asian dressing. Her entry in the Summer Squash/Zucchini category was "Zucchini and Chickpea Salad" featuring zucchini, chickpeas, tomatoes, Kalamata olives, onions, garlic and feta cheese with an oil, vinegar and herb dressing, a great combination of textures and tastes according to one judge.

Ms. DeVono, also a contest winner in 2008, received the highest score in the contest, 37 of a possible 40 points, for her "Snappy Pumpkin Custard Cups" in the Winter Squash/Pumpkin category. Two of the judges called them "Awesome!" They featured a quick and easy pumpkin custard topped with crumbled ginger snap cookies and whipped topping. Ms. Miller, a first-time contestant and finalist, won the prize in the Tomatoes/Peppers/Eggplant category for her colorful and refreshing Garden Gate Chunky Greek Salad. This combination of cherry tomatoes, peppers, carrots, cucumbers, onions and Kalamata olives was accompanied by an olive oil, lemon and wine dressing plus fresh herbs and crumbled feta cheese.

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.

The other recipes prepared by the finalists at the Cook-Off are listed below.

### Tomatoes/Peppers/Eggplant

Chipotle BLT Bouquets – Kathy Rohrbaugh, Stewartstown  
Tangy Tomato Strawberry Salad – Cindy Kerschner, Schnecksville  
Fish Poached in Tomatoes – Karen Parish, Fleetwood

### Melons/Cucumbers

Key Lime Grilled Shrimp over Melon & Pineapple Salsa – Kathy Rohrbaugh  
Zesty Melon and Shrimp Salad – Cindy Kerschner, Schnecksville  
Tomato-Watermelon Salad – Marilyn Goldfarb, Boalsburg

### Summer Squash/Zucchini

Vegan Zucchini and Cashew Nut Casserole – Elen Wennell, Mechanicsburg  
Zucchini Chocolate Cake – Nora Porter, Chambersburg  
Zucchini Pie – Shelly Teska, Youngsville

### Winter Squash/Pumpkins

Squash, Roasted Peppers and Potatoes Chunky Mash – B. J. Reed, Chambersburg  
Stove Top Butternut Casserole – Pearl Ward, Hulmville  
Butternutty Hummus – Elysa Boffo, Camp Hill

These finalists each received a \$25 gift certificate to the farm market of their choice.

The judges for the 2012 Contest were:  
Martha Ebersole, trained judge with the Pennsylvania State Association of County Fairs  
Libby Mills, registered dietitian, lifestyle coach, author, speaker  
Autumn Patti, chef instructor at Harrisburg Area Community College  
Brian Peffley, pastry arts instructor at Lebanon County Career and Technology Center.

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 sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the Program at : PA Vegetable Mktg. & Res. Program, 815 Middle Road, Richfield, PA 17086.

## Press Relations Effort Continues

The Vegetable Program annually sends out press releases about Pennsylvania vegetable crops during the growing season, normally resulting in numerous articles in newspapers across the state reaching more than a million people.

This year the Program issued press releases on sweet corn, tomatoes, melons, cucumbers, zucchini, peppers and eggplant. Additional releases on pumpkins and cole crops are planned. The Program uses recipes entered in the Vegetable Recipe Contest in the releases. Over 20 articles were published in newspapers as result of this effort. The Program also issued releases on PA Produce Month and the recipe contest that were widely published.

## Questions?

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