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# Fresh Ideas

VOLUME 27 NUMBER 1

JUNE 2017

*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.*

## Plan Now to Celebrate August as PA Produce Month

The Vegetable Marketing and Research Program is excited to celebrate August as Pennsylvania Produce Month - what better time to highlight the bounty of PA Vegetable Farms! The Program will again concentrate its promotion efforts on the month of August and we invite you to join in 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 farmers' markets, roadside farm markets and even supermarkets during the month of August.

The Program is partnering with Kitchen Table Consultants to develop new messaging and promotional opportunities, as well as tips and tricks for driving sales and interest during this peak season. As many of you have experienced, August can bring a bounty from the fields, but a drop off of sales as customers head to their summer vacations. So let's get creative and work together to build momentum and awareness across the state of all the produce available to our residents, at home or on the go. August as PA Vegetable Month will be designed to help match the product with the consumer.

**Stay tuned for a full roll out of this year's innovative new tools in the June issue of the Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers News as promotional activities begin in July, peak in August, and continue through October.**

The Program will also be updating its directories of both retail markets and wholesale growers on its website – [www.paveggies.org](http://www.paveggies.org). Please check your farm's listing on the website and make any changes by completing the pink "We Need Your Help" form that is included with this mailing. This will help the Program accurately list roadside markets, CSAs, and community farmers' markets on the website for retail growers. Likewise, wholesale growers are asked to complete the back of the pink "We Need Your Help" form so we can update the crops you grow in the directory of wholesale growers on the Program's website.

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

1. ALL growers who order ANY point-of-purchase materials in 2017 prior to August will automatically receive six small (8.5" x 11") full-color "August is PA Produce Month" posters.
2. A Produce Month grower kit will be available to all growers at a nominal cost of \$2 per kit. This kit will include two large posters (about 18" x 24"), and twenty 7" x 11" price cards – both in full color plus a sample press release. These kits can be ordered directly from the Program. Growers will also be able to order additional small posters for \$0.50.
3. A series of statewide press releases on Pennsylvania vegetables and PA Produce Month will be issued to news media across the state plus various social media postings.
4. 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.
5. A Produce Month market kit for non-grower markets will be available at most produce auctions across the state. These kits will include one large poster, six small posters, and twenty price cards – all in full color.

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## PA Produce Month *(continued)*

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

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

1. Order a Produce Month grower kit.
2. Use PA Produce Month in your print advertising during August.

3. Run a special coupon in your advertising for use at your market during PA Produce Month. 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

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, 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 you will use this campaign to highlight the availability of your crops in August.

## 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 Brenda Sheaffer at 717-369-5740 or [bsheaffer@pa.gov](mailto:bsheaffer@pa.gov).

The Department is also offering a GAP/GHP Cost-Share Program for the 2017 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](mailto:kyheffner@pa.gov).

## 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 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 form by June 30, 2017, 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 on the Penn State Extension Vegetable, Small Fruit and Mushroom website at <http://extension.psu.edu/plants/vegetable-fruit>.

## Monthly Grower Conference Calls

For the past two years the Program and the Vegetable Growers Association have been conducting monthly grower conference calls during the season to allow growers to talk about problems they are experiencing during the season – and hear recommendations from Penn State experts for solving them. This year it has been suggested that the calls be held every two weeks alternating between noontime and the evening. It was also suggested that each call have an announced topic although other questions/topics will be welcomed also. Following is the schedule for this year's calls:

**Wed., Jun. 7 - noon – Strawberries**

**Tue., Jun. 20 – 8:00 p.m. – Veg. Weed Control**

**Wed., July 5 – noon – Blueberries/Brambles**

**Tue., July 18 – 8:00 p.m. – Vegetable Insect Pests**

**Wed., August 2 – noon – Vegetable Diseases**

**Tue., August 22 – 8:00 p.m. – Tomatoes/Peppers**

**Wed., September 6 – noon – Vegetable Diseases**

**Tue., September 19 – 8:00 p.m. – Pumpkins**

**Tue, October 2 – 8:00 p.m. – Veg. Research Needs**

**Remember, questions about other topics will be allowed on any of the calls but we will try to have Penn State experts for the announced topic on the line. To participate in the calls, call toll-free 1-877-643-6951 and then enter pass code 55835024# at the scheduled time. All callers will be able to speak if they wish or they can just listen in on the discussion. Please do not call the toll-free number at other times – no one will answer. For any questions, contact the Program at 717-694-3596.**

## 2017 Assessments Are Now Payable

Enclosed with this newsletter is your Production Verification Statement for 2017. The assessment for the 2017 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, 2018, at the latest. **You are encouraged to pay the assessment and order any point-of-purchase materials by June 30, 2017.**

### 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 54% of grower assessment dollars on research and 46% 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 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.

**Questions?** Call the Program at 717-694-3596 or email us at [pvmrp@embarqmail.com](mailto:pvmrp@embarqmail.com).

## Program to Help Fund 14 Research Projects in 2017

The Vegetable Marketing and Research Board approved up to \$20,000 in assessment funds for vegetable research in 2017. In cooperation with the Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association (PVGA), which will be contributing an additional \$59,126 from its General Fund, the two vegetable growers organizations will be funding 14 different projects. The Association's research funds are earned by the members at the Farm Show and Ag Progress Days Food Booths and other Association events. The approved projects total \$79,126.

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

### **New Herbicide Options for Weed Control in Sweet Corn: Round 2**

*Dwight Lingenfelter, Penn State Univ. and Dr. Mark VanGessel, Univ. of Delaware* **\$3,000**

- Examine various new herbicides in sweet corn to determine their effectiveness on weed control.
- Evaluate these herbicide programs on sweet corn injury and yield impact.

### **Efficacy of Organic Biopesticides for the Management of White Mold in Processing Snap Bean in Pennsylvania**

*Dr. Sarah Pethybridge, Cornell Univ. and Dr. Beth K. Gugino, Penn State Univ.* **\$6,800**

- Support and facilitate organic production of snap beans by further quantifying the efficacy of OMRI-listed biopesticides available to growers for white mold control.

### **Fresh Market Slicer Tomato Variety Evaluation**

*Dr. Timothy Elkner, Penn State Extension* **\$6,850**

- The purpose of this study is to evaluate disease resistance, yield and fruit quality of commercially available slicing tomato varieties in a replicated trial in southeast PA, repeating the trial from 2016. Several advanced selections from Dr. Foolad's breeding program will also be included in the trial to compare with the current commercial standards for yield and quality.

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## Research Projects Funded *(continued)*

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

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

- Development of fresh-market (FM) and processing tomato breeding lines with late blight (LB) resistance, conferred by Ph-3 and/or Ph-5 resistance genes.
- Development and genetic analysis of a recombinant inbred line (RIL) population of tomato segregating for LB resistance.
- Genetic characterization of additional (recently identified) sources of LB resistance in tomato.
- Development and field evaluation of FM and processing experimental F<sub>1</sub> hybrids with high yield, early blight (EB) resistance, and other desirable characteristics including fruit quality.
- Development of FM experimental F<sub>1</sub> hybrids in collaboration with a seed company (co-hybrids) and evaluation under multiple field locations.
- Field evaluation of Penn State advanced FM and processing breeding lines.

### Authority MTZ: the Fit for Processing Tomatoes

*Dr. Mark VanGessel, Univ. of Delaware; Dwight Lingenfelter, Penn State Univ.* **\$3,000**

- Evaluate Authority MTZ for safety with processing tomatoes.
- Determine level of early-season weed control from Authority MTZ

### Phytophthora Blight Management

*John Esslinger, Penn State Extension* **\$2,400**

- Test whether Orondis is as effective as it appeared to be on one farm in 2016.
- Evaluate other fungicide options that might give comparable control at a lower cost per acre.
- Compare a pepper cultivar tolerant to phytophthora blight with one that is not tolerant under each treatment.
- Test whether a generous application of manure-based compost has a positive impact on limiting phytophthora blight by out competing it in the soil. The hope is that the final objective will provide a viable phytophthora management option for the state's organic vegetable growers.

### Keeping PA Vegetable Growers Profitable: Statewide Pumpkin Cultivar Trials

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

- Evaluate up to 25 cultivars of 15-25 lb orange smooth-faced pumpkins at three locations: southwestern, central and southeastern Pennsylvania.

### Impact of Insectary Strips to Control Cucumber Beetles

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

- Monitor weekly (June through mid-August) the populations of striped cucumber beetles, beneficial insects, and ground beetles (bi-weekly) attracted to insectary strips and cucurbit beds using yellow sticky cards and pitfall traps.

- Assess percent parasitism weekly by parasitoids from field collected striped cucumber beetles between May and August 2017.

### Colored Bell Pepper High Tunnel Variety Trial

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

- Evaluate commercially available colored bell pepper varieties in a replicated trial in a high tunnel. Peppers will be grown and evaluated for yield, fruit quality and marketability.

### Issues with High Soluble Salt Levels in High Tunnels

*Dr. Elsa Sánchez, Penn State Univ. and Thomas Ford, Penn State Extension* **\$4,400**

- Analyze soil and irrigation water from various high tunnels throughout Pennsylvania and offer recommendations using the information we learn as well as develop publications with information to help avoid high soluble salt levels.

### Allium Leaf Miner Monitoring and Management

*Dr. Timothy Elkner, Penn State Ext. and Shelby Fleischer, Penn State Univ.* **\$3,500**

- Further investigate the emergence period of allium leafminer in the spring and fall in order to alert growers of the need for control measures.
- Initiate an alert system for growers regarding the emergence of allium leafminer.
- Investigate the impact of plant age on attractiveness to leafminer adults; and to do some insecticide efficacy evaluations on a fall leek crop.

### Leek and Celery Variety Evaluations

*Dr. Timothy Elkner, Penn State Extension* **\$4,750**

- Evaluate current varieties of celery and leek for yield, disease and insect resistance and quality.

### Tactics for the Management of Center Rot of Onion: Augmented Nitrogen Fertilization and Cultivar Selection.

*Dr. Beth K. Gugino, Penn State Univ.* **\$7,176**

- Conduct two replicated trials at Rock Springs as well as four on-farm trials to evaluate cultivar susceptibility to bacterial disease and production potential under commercial production conditions and evaluate the interaction between N rate and disease pressure to provide growers with additional tools and information that they could use in building an integrated program to manage bacterial diseases of onions.

### Development of Fungicide Programs for Phytophthora Blight of Squash

*Dr. Sally Miller and Jhony Mera, The Ohio State Univ.* **\$4,250**

- To determine if one or more Orondis products, in combination with other fungicides with some efficacy against Phytophthora blight, can reduce damage caused by the disease in squash to economically acceptable levels.

PVGA will also be providing an additional \$2,600 to fund the sweet corn insect trapping network coordinated by Dr. Shelby Fleischer.