



PENNSYLVANIA VEGETABLE MARKETING & 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.

New Logo and Website Highlight PA Produce Month Activities

The Vegetable Marketing and Research Program's 13th annual celebration of August as Pennsylvania Produce Month in 2018 was highlighted by the introduction of the Program's new "PA Produce" logo and a completely reconstructed website at www.paveggies.org. The PA Produce Month campaign is designed to focus extra attention on Pennsylvania vegetables at the height of the local season, equipping farmers with promotional tools and resources, while educating the consumer about PA produce and encouraging them to support their local farmers.

New Logo

In an effort to make the Program more identifiable a rebrand was completed. This involved the creative development and finalization of the new "PA Produce" logo, tagline, brand colors, brand fonts, and a website. Once the new branding was established, the look and feel was transferred to the Program's marketing channels, such as new POP materials, social media channels, new videos, and email campaigns. As the Program moves forward with promotions in coming years using the new relevant and consistent branding, consumer awareness of the Program's efforts and messaging should increase.



Website

The new website was structured to be more user friendly, educational, engaging, and responsive to multiple devices. The latter point proved to be critical since 42% of user sessions happened with a mobile device from July 18 to September 18 (49% were by desktop; 9% were by tablet). It also aimed to improve search engine optimization, user tracking and content management. In relation to those 2018 goals, website performance was a success. We found that, in comparing 2017 to 2018, visitors were visiting far more pages (up 34.7%), remaining on paveggies.org for longer periods of time (up 27%), and the bounce rate, or percentage of visitors navigating away from the site after viewing only one page, decreased (down 6.8%).

continued on page 2



Logo and Website Highlight Produce Month *continued from page 1*

Videos

The Program's custom content inventory was developed beyond editorials and graphics this year to include 12 videos. Seven of the videos featured custom recipes using Pennsylvania vegetables and were intended to inspire consumers to purchase seasonal vegetables and try suggested recipes. The other five videos featured Pennsylvania farmers and aimed to educate the consumer about Pennsylvania produce, highlighting a variety of stages through the vegetables' life cycle. The videos received over 5,000 views in under 60 days.

Public Relations

The Program sent out a series of weekly press releases to mass media. Between mid-July and mid-September, a total of 25 articles were published throughout the state on PA Produce Month. The total estimated impressions, or number of times content was displayed to the public eye, for this time period was 595,337. With over 19 different publication sources, the estimated media value was \$50,217.

Farmer Resources (The Toolkit)

The Program made the following resources available to Pennsylvania farmers through the PA Veggies website and weekly email campaigns to help them promote their produce and markets during PA Produce Month and throughout the season:

- An Instructional Video Demonstrating How to Make the Most of the 2018 Toolkit
- Marketing Lesson (Marketing 101)
- PA Produce Month Marketing Checklist
- Campaign Themes & Checklist
- Promotional Prompts & Content Inspiration
- Press Release Templates
- Graphics
- Facebook Cover Photos & Facebook Profile Frame
- An Instructional Video Demonstrating How To Engage on Facebook as Your Business Page
- Four Infographics

Social Media

Kitchen Table Consultants drove consumer reach this year by continuing to build an audience for PA Veggies through social media engagement on Facebook and Instagram. A YouTube channel was added to the lineup of PA Veggies' social media presence due to the addition of new video content produced for the 2018 campaign. The August is PA Produce Month (PA Veggies) Facebook page continues to be steadily maintained throughout the year and serves as the Program's most active social media presence for the time being. From mid-July to mid-September, we observed the following Facebook page statistics -

30,435 reached; 2,306 engaged; 204 new likes; 5,037 videos viewed; 47,535 impressions; and 834 Facebook discussions that mentioned "PA Veggies"

Website Directories Updated

Using information submitted by growers in 2018, the Program updated the directory of retail Farm Markets, Farmers' Markets and CSA's that is posted on the Program's website. The Program also updated its directory of wholesale growers that lists growers by the crops they produce at the wholesale level.

Other Produce Month Efforts

Over 200 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 while 66 kits were ordered from the Program by growers. PA Produce Month point-of-purchase materials were requested for about 230 supermarkets by Acme, Supervalu, Four Seasons Produce, Redner's Markets, and Lancaster Family-Owned Markets.

Point-of-Purchase Items Sent to Growers

The Program shipped point-of-purchase materials to 257 growers for the 2018 season. Items shipped included 21 banners, 12 restaurant signs, 136 roadside signs, 669 crop stickers for the roadside signs, 78 packs of clip-on price cards, 320 packs of plastic price cards, 55 packs of brochures and student activity cards, 105 rolls of price stickers, and 121 pads of "How to Use" information/recipe cards. The Program also supplied growers with about 50 cases of plastic "T-shirt" shopping bags that were imprinted with a vegetable graphic and "Fresh Local Vegetables" on one side and the PA Preferred logo on the other side. These bags are provided at cost to growers. The Program spent \$10,700 for the distribution of point-of-purchase materials in 2018.

13 Research Projects Funded

In 2018, the Vegetable Marketing and Research Program used \$20,000 of grower assessment dollars to fund the thirteen research projects in partnership with the Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association which provided \$59,156 and the Pennsylvania Simply Sweet Onion Committee which provided another \$2,750. The reports from these projects will be available on the Program's website at www.paveggies.org or paper copies can be ordered at pvmrp@embarqmail.com or 717-694-3596. Due to weather conditions and other circumstances some of the projects funded in 2018 will be continued in 2019 and thus reports will not be available until 2020.