



PENNSYLVANIA VEGETABLE MARKETING & RESEARCH PROGRAM

2301 NORTH CAMERON STREET, HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17110-9408

717.694.3596

Board Members

Chairman

Christopher Powell
Strasburg

Vice Chairman

Scott Hoffman
Northumberland

Secretary-Treasurer

Kenneth Metrick
Butler

Russell Redding

Secretary of Agriculture

Leonard Burger III

Drums

Stephen Ganser

Kutztown

Joel Kosa

Ulysses

Joseph Mason

Lake City

David Miller

York

Laverne Nolt

Martinsburg

Nathan Richard

Catawissa

Joseph Stahl

Lititz

Cynthia Yingling

Glen Rock

Bennie Yoder

Springs

Executive Secretary

William Troxell
815 Middle Road
Richfield, PA 17086
717-694-3596
pvmrp@embarqmail.com

Fresh Ideas

Volume 29 Number 2

November 2019

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.

PA PRODUCE MONTH CELEBRATED

The Vegetable Marketing and Research Program conducted its 14th annual celebration of August as Pennsylvania Produce Month this season. The campaign is designed to focus extra attention on Pennsylvania vegetables at the height of the season, equipping farmers with promotional tools and resources, while educating the consumer about PA produce and encouraging them to support their local farmers.

This year, we again collaborated with Kitchen Table Consultants to help direct our promotions and build upon our past successes. The 2019 campaign focused on a reboot of the website's listings which feature farm stands, community farmers markets, wholesale growers, produce auctions, and CSAs. The directories are now in a reformatted, digestible layout that showcases business names and details. The databases also include new location filters with responsive maps and "snapshot" info when a map icon is selected. We also produced and distributed four videos, and performed routine maintenance and valuable updates to PA Veggies many marketing channels and platforms. For example, this was the first year PA Veggies amassed a large enough email list to communicate directly to consumers on a regular basis. A PA Produce Month campaign page and a page to educate farmers about the PVMRP were also created at paveggies.org. These steps were all taken strategically upon the rebranding initiatives of 2018 to ensure that PA Veggies can easily communicate their mission and scale up their consumer, farmer, and partnership networks in the coming years.



PA PRODUCE MONTH *(continued from page 1)*

POP Materials

Four point of purchase materials were updated this year. They included two PA Produce Month Posters (large and small), the PA Produce Month Price Card, and the PA Veggies Price Sticker. These updates are all part of a long term process to unify branding of all original point of purchase materials. When all consumer/buyer facing materials are consistently communicated to consumers with appropriate fonts, colors, logos, icons, and taglines, it increases the ability for those materials to make a lasting impression and encourages brand loyalty.

Directories

The Directories were launched as of October 25, turning what was once a few static websites and pdf files into (4) responsive, searchable databases. The databases can be updated upon request and will continue to be managed internally, for consistency purposes. A new form was also created to request inclusion, which can be used to capture and convert non-assessment farmers. These newly designed databases also promise to improve SEO.

Videos

Four full length videos were created to educate consumers about PA Produce Month, PA produce recipes, and the importance of supporting local food. An abundance of raw photos and videos were sourced during the making of the full length videos, and that footage is now saved for future content purposes. The videos were published on YouTube, paveggies.org, and Facebook.

- Make Rainbow Cauliflower Salad with Leah Shenot of Shenot Farm & Market
- Make 5 Minute Salsa with Tina Forry of Risser Marvel Farm Market
- August is PA Produce Month – Share Your Pride for Local Veggies
- 6 Local Food Lessons from Pennsylvania Farmers Markets, Restaurants, and More

Blogs

PA Veggies published two blogs for 2019 PA Produce Month, one of which quickly became one of the most popular blogs to grace

paveggies.org in the last 2 years - Your Itinerary for the Ultimate PA Veggie Road Trip. To date it has 228 views and continues to generate great engagement, especially shares, when published on social media. *continued on page 3*

Press Releases

A total of 13 press releases were sent to drum up excitement around a variety of happenings. Between early July through October, a total of 21 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 768,195, which is valued at \$35,281.

- How to Perform Small Acts of Local Love for PA Produce Month
- So Many Ways to Share the Stories of Pennsylvania's Agriculture
- More Local Veggies and a Statewide Directory on the 2019 Horizon for Pennsylvania
- Head Behind the Scenes of 30+ Pennsylvania Farms and Local Food Operations
- Enjoy These Local Veggies in Pennsylvania This Month
- Make This with PA Produce: Spirits & Tales' Heirloom Tomato and Fennel Galette
- Just Launched: Come Find Local Produce in PA Veggies' New Statewide Directory
- Make This with PA Produce: Grilled Brussels Sprouts Kabobs with Apple Walnut Dressing
- Make This with PA Produce: White, Red and Gold Ranch Potatoes
- Make This with PA Produce: Quick Cucumber Kimchi
- Make This with PA Produce: Winter Squash Risotto
- Secretary Redding Presents Produce Month Proclamation at Buffalo Valley Produce Auction
- Just Launched: Come Find Local Produce in PA Veggies' New Statewide Directories

PA PRODUCE MONTH

(continued from page 2)

Website

A PA Produce Month page was created to educate both consumers and farmers about the campaign. It includes a countdown to August, the PA Produce Month video created this year, the “who, what, where, why, when” of PA Produce Month, as well as a call to action to contact the Program with questions or requests. Secondly, the page, Invest in PA Vegetables, was created to explain to farmers why the Program and PA Produce Month are so important, and encourage them to get involved.

Farmer Resources

In addition to the updated point of purchase materials, this year’s refresh to Farmer Resources included new digital graphics for downloading and/or printing, PA Veggies logos and icons, a Facebook frame, Vegetable Jokes and Riddles, and regular emails with tips, resources and ideas. An Email Archive Page was also created so farmers could easily access previous emails and choose to repurpose ideas and content from them as needed.



MID-ATLANTIC CONVENTION OPENS JANUARY 28

The 2020 Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention will be held January 28 to 30 at the Hershey Lodge 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 or 717-694-3596.

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, our two most active social media channels. The August is PA Produce Month (PA Veggies) Instagram page surpassed Facebook this year as the most popular and active social media account. This was largely (if not totally) due to the Instagram Takeovers strategically managed, which enabled PA farmers and other advocates or the PA Produce and local food industry to showcase a day in the life of their operation via @paveggies. Takeover candidates encouraged their audience to follow along and @paveggies’ audience were exposed to, and followed, many new PA produce-focused accounts in return. From July 27 to October 27, we observed the following Facebook page statistics:

36,994 reached
3,943 engaged
116 new likes
5,747 video views (all videos)
68,870 impressions
1,423 Facebook discussions that mentioned “PA Veggies”

And Instagram statistics:

66 new follows
121,300 impressions
24,000 reached
4,600 likes
254 posts

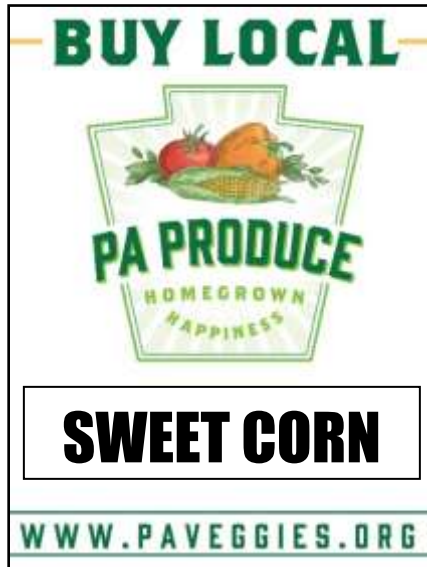
FARMERS MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM

Growers who want to accept the Farmer’s Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) checks from senior citizens and WIC program recipients MUST be registered with the Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program first. If you are not registered, prepare for next season by calling the FMNP office at 717-787-2940.

POINT OF PURCHASE MATERIALS STILL AVAILABLE

The Program will continue to ship point-of-purchase items to growers through the fall although we do ask that all orders be submitted by December 16, 2019.

Supplies of banners, roadside signs, price cards, clip-on price cards, price stickers, brochures, “Fun and Healthy Facts” activity cards and how-to-use information cards are all in stock and



ready to ship. Point-of-purchase materials were shipped to about 200 growers across the state so far this year.

The “Fresh Local Vegetables” banner shown in the next column which contains the “PA Preferred” logo can

only be distributed to growers who are licensed by the Department of Agriculture to use the “PA Preferred” logo.



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 2019 will be accepted until December 16.

HELP THE PROGRAM SAVE MONEY

If you use email, PLEASE include your email address on your Assessment Statement Form at the place indicated to the right of your name. The Program is planning to do more of its communications to growers by email which saves the Program greatly in postage and printing costs.

YOUR INPUT IS NEEDED

As stated in the Program’s Mission Statement (top of page 1), the Program’s sole purpose is to serve Pennsylvania vegetable growers. To do that effectively, we need your input on a regular basis. While growers are welcome to communicate their needs at anytime to the Program by phone (717-694-3596), email (pvmrp@embarqmail.com) or regular mail (2301 North Cameron Street, Harrisburg, PA 17110), each fall we conduct our **Annual Grower Survey**.

Please fill out the enclosed green sheet to help the Program’s Board meet your marketing and research needs for 2020. We especially need your response for the first question for our Specialty Crop Block Grant to help evaluate the effects of our grant activities.

Each comment submitted by growers is typed up for the Board members to review. The November meeting will be devoted to the annual election of officers, promotion plans for 2019, review of the research pre-proposals for 2019 and general business.

All meetings of the Board are public meetings that growers are welcome to attend. Any questions about the meeting or the Program should be referred to William Troxell at 717-694-3596 or pvmrp@embarqmail.com.