



PENNSYLVANIA VEGETABLE MARKETING & RESEARCH PROGRAM

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Fresh Ideas

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2022 Annual Report

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 Veggies Promoted to Millions in 2022

The Pennsylvania Vegetable Marketing and Research Program once again actively promoted PA Veggies reaching millions of Pennsylvania consumers in 2022. The Program introduced the theme “Summer Means Local! Local Means Delicious”. Plus, this was the 17th year that the Program promoted the bountiful supply of Pennsylvania vegetables available in August with the PA Produce Month promotion. However, as the “Summer Means Local” theme implies, the Program expanded its promotion efforts to include July and September – before and after Produce Month.

Press releases, social media posts, consumer emails, blogs, and new website content were all used to promote PA Produce for this season. With the help of a Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBG), the Program once again worked with Taste Profit Marketing, a food marketing firm, to tout Pennsylvania vegetables in 2022.

PA Veggies Promoted *(continued)*

A new initiative for 2022 was to use some of the SCBG funds to do paid advertising on social media. The Program has been using social media – Facebook and Instagram – for several years with good results. By using paid advertising on these social media outlets, the Program hoped to significantly increase the number of people being reached with these posts which in turn link to the many consumer resources available on the website. These ads were very successful and were seen by nearly 2 million individuals in Pennsylvania. Blogs on the www.paveggies.org website drew 9,000 visitors to the website. Recipes and how-to-use videos on the website were viewed at least 42,875 times. The grower directories on the website were accessed at least 680 times.

The Program worked with social media content creators to create two videos promoting PA veggies that were viewed by over 30,000 people on Instagram. Two video ads on TikTok were watched to completion by 2,686 viewers. A sponsored segment on GoodDay PA on a Harrisburg television station was shown to 43,896 viewers.

The Program sent out a series of monthly emails during the summer to its list of consumers and worked to increase the number of consumers on the list. Growers (for whom the Program had email addresses) also received a series of emails outlining the Program’s marketing resources available to them.

The Program distributed 120 PA Produce Month point-of-purchase kits to the produce auctions for sale to their buyers and to over 200 supermarkets who requested them.

The Program has secured grant funding to continue and expand these activities in 2023.

Shirts, Aprons and Hats Added to Point Of Purchase Materials

The Program offers growers who retail their produce a selection of various point-of-purchase materials. With the support of a matching grant from the PA Department of Agriculture, the Program was purchase a supply of tee-shirts, aprons and hats – all with the “PA Produce” logo on the front – in 2022.

The shirts and aprons are tan or khaki colored. The tee-shirts are available in men’s sizes of medium, large, extra large and extra-extra large. The aprons are available in full bib apron style as was offered previously plus a waist apron. Both styles have pockets across the front to allow use at markets. The hats will have a green front and bill with the “PA Produce” logo on the front.

With the help of matching grants from the PA Department of Agriculture in previous years, the Program has been able to replenish its supplies of price cards, price paddles, price stickers, roadside signs and crop stickers, “How to Use” information cards, student activity cards and other items.

Growers receive a credit of half of their assessment payment (up to a maximum credit of \$25) to allow them to order point-of-purchase materials at no additional cost. Growers who wish to order more than their credit allows can do so by simply adding the additional amount to their assessment payment. Call the Program at 717-694-3596 for information.



Program Funds Eleven Research Projects in 2022

The Vegetable Marketing and Research Board allocated \$26,000 in assessment funds for vegetable research in 2022, an increase of \$6,000 over the amount budgeted in the previous five years. In cooperation with the Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association (PVGGA), which will contribute an additional \$42,823 from its General Fund, the two vegetable growers organizations funded the following eleven different projects:

<u>Impact of Management Practices on Soil Health Indicators in Conventional and Organic Vegetable Cropping Systems</u> (multiyear- Year 3) <i>Dr. Gladis Zinati, Rodale Institute</i>	\$5,000
<u>Are Organic Herbicides Effective for Burndown Prior to Crop Establishment?</u> <i>Dwight Lingenfelter and John Wallace, Penn State University</i>	\$1,867
<u>Potential Herbicide Programs to Control Problem Weeds in Pumpkin</u> <i>Dwight Lingenfelter and John Wallace, Penn State University</i>	\$1,869
<u>Improving Onion Center Rot Management Through More Precise Topping at Harvest</u> <i>Beth K. Gugino and Jennie D. Mazzone, Penn State University</i>	\$3,000
<u>Evaluating the Efficacy and Safety of Pyridate in Snap Beans</u> <i>John Wallace and Dwight Lingenfelter, Penn State, University; Lynn Sosnoskie, Cornell University; Mark VanGessel, University of Delaware</i>	\$3,570
<u>In-Row Cultivation Using Camera Guidance Technology in Snap Bean</u> <i>John Wallace and Tosh Mazzone, Penn State University</i>	\$1,248
<u>Assessing the Ability of Tomato Communities to Suppress Disease in a Transplant Setting</u> <i>Kevin L. Hockett, Penn State University</i>	\$8,350
<u>Keeping PA Vegetable Growers Profitable: Statewide Cultivar Trials</u> <i>Elsa Sánchez, Robert Pollock, Timothy Elkner, Thomas Butzler, and Megan Chawner – Penn State University and Extension</i>	\$20,000
<u>Evaluation of Rootstock-Scion Interaction and Yield Performance in Fresh-Market Tomato Grown in High-Tunnel</u> <i>Timothy Elkner, Andrew Blunk and Francesco Di Gioia, Penn State Extension and University</i>	\$9,919
<u>Breeding Processing Tomatoes for Production in PA</u> <i>Majid R. Foolad, Penn State University</i>	\$6,000
<u>Breeding Fresh-Market Tomatoes for Production in PA</u> <i>Majid R. Foolad, Penn State University</i>	\$8,000

Research Reports Available

The results from the research projects funded by the Program since 2009 are available to growers on the PAVeggies.org website under the Farmers Resources tab. Growers who do not have access to the reports on a computer are able to request paper copies from the Program anytime. Each year an order form is sent to growers allowing them to order reports from the previous year. In recent years, there has been a backlog on the reports as many projects were not completed on schedule in 2020 due to the pandemic.

IPM Weekly Updates

Each year during the growing season from mid-June to early September, the Program publishes the Pennsylvania Vegetable IPM Weekly Update with information from the sweet corn insect pest trapping network across the state as well as timely advice on disease control measures growers should consider as the season progresses. This newsletter is available to growers either by regular mail, by fax or by email. Usually about 100 growers receive the Update by mail, about 40 by fax and over 300 by email.

Board Holds Annual Meeting

The Pennsylvania Vegetable Marketing and Research Program Board, made up of 12 growers appointed by the PA Secretary of Agriculture, a sales agent representative and a representative of the Secretary, met on November 7, 2022. They re-elected its current officers which are Christopher Powell of Strasburg as the Chair, Scott Hoffman of Northumberland as the Vice Chair and Kenneth Metrick of Butler as the Secretary-Treasurer. Currently there are several vacancies on the Board.

The Board, along with some representatives from PVGA on the joint Vegetable Research Committee, reviewed 13 research pre-proposals for 2023 with researchers who attended the meeting virtually. They then determined which pre-proposals they were most interested in seeing full-proposals for at their February 1 meeting.

They also reviewed the promotion activities for 2022, again with some representatives of PVGA on the joint Vegetable Marketing Committee. Promotion plans for the 2023 season were also reviewed.

The Board extended the contract for administrative services with Troxell Administrative Services for 2023. Finally, they adopted a tentative 2023 budget that anticipates \$188,550 in income and \$197,750 in expenses. It anticipates \$30,000 in research contributions from PVGA and allocates an additional \$26,000 from growers' assessments for a total of \$56,000 for research. It also provides \$106,050 for vegetable promotion including \$81,450 for the Program's Specialty Crop Block Grant project. The Program will be also be receiving a \$5,000 matching grant from the state Department of Agriculture.

Program Statistics

Source of Assessment Income – from 2021 grower reports

Breakdown by Type of Grower	Assessment Paid	% area	\$ Assessments	% \$
Fresh Market Vegetables	15,681 acres	59%	\$42,920	66%
Processing Vegetables	5,871 acres	22%	\$10,016	15%
Greenhouse/High Tunnel	4,969,000 sq. ft.	19%	\$12,201	19%

Fresh Market Grower Marketing and Growing Methods – responses from 996 growers for 2021 season

Sales Method	Growers	% of all	Wholesale Outlets	Growers	% of all
Sell Retail	649	65%	Auction	613	62%
Sell Retail Only	191	19%	Chain Store Warehouse	46	5%
Sell Wholesale	805	81%	Direct Store Delivery	128	13%
Sell Wholesale Only	347	35%	Wholesaler/Broker	129	13%
Retail Outlets	Growers	% of all	Restaurants	57	6%
Roadside Market	495	50%	Cooperatives	78	8%
Comm. Farmers Mkt.	157	16%	Other	47	5%
CSA	55	6%			
Other	56	6%			
Growing Method			Growers	%	
Conventional/IPM			678	74%	
Non-Certified Org./ Minimal Pesticides			190	21%	
Certified Organic			52	6%	