



PENNSYLVANIA VEGETABLE MARKETING & RESEARCH PROGRAM

2301 N. Cameron St., Harrisburg, PA 17110 | 717-694-3596 | pvmp@embarqmail.com | PAVeggies.org

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

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Dear Fellow Grower:

If you have not already received it, you will soon be receiving your ballot for the five-year review referendum of the Pennsylvania Vegetable Marketing and Research Program. On behalf of my fellow Board members, I ask you to vote "YES" to continue the Program.

Enclosed you will find a copy of the Program's Annual Report for 2022 as well as some quotes from growers and other industry members. Both pieces provide you with information on how your assessment dollars are being spent. Be assured that the members of the Program's Board recognize their position as your representatives and view the Program's funds as your money. They volunteer their time and work to spend the money carefully to gain the most benefit for the grower community.

The Vegetable Marketing and Research Program is currently the lead organization in promoting Pennsylvania vegetables. The Department of Agriculture's "PA Preferred" campaign promotes all Pennsylvania agricultural commodities but the Program still has the lead in specifically promoting PA vegetables. For many years, the Program has focused its efforts on its August is Pennsylvania Produce Month campaign to highlight the time when most local vegetables are at their peak across the state. While focusing on August, the Program has always recognized that PA vegetables are available before and after August and used its press releases and social media campaigns make consumers aware of that extended season. In 2022, the Program introduced its "Summer Means Local" campaign to broaden its promotions efforts to include July, August and September. The Program also offers growers professional-looking point-of-purchase materials that can be used the entire season. A "YES" vote will allow the Program to continue this promotion work that benefits growers across the state.

In the research area, a "YES" vote tells Penn State University administrators and legislators that practical agricultural research is so vital to our industry that we as growers are willing to put up our own money to fund vegetable research. Government funding for agricultural research has not kept pace with increasing costs. Our Program's research grants help ensure that when University administrators are looking for positions or projects to cut, they will look at other areas where grower support is weaker or non-existent.

The Vegetable Marketing and Research Program is not perfect. But the Board is always seeking to listen to the concerns of growers and always seeking to put the assessment monies to the best use for your benefit. The Program is a true example of growers working together for the benefit of the industry as a whole. Your "YES" vote is important. Please, vote "YES" for Vegetables, "YES" for PA vegetable promotion, "YES" for vegetable research funding, and "YES" for the future of our industry. Thank you.

On behalf of the Board,

Christopher J. Powell
Chairman

What Others Are Saying About the PA Vegetable Marketing and Research Program

The Pennsylvania Vegetable Marketing and Research Program directs both marketing and research projects that benefit the state's vegetable growers. By combining grower assessment dollars with PVGA monies, the grower board, through this program, has provided almost two million dollars for practical research over the past 35 years. Your assessment dollars represent an investment in the PA vegetable industry that yields big benefits. The Pennsylvania Marketing and Research Program deserves your "Yes" vote.

Dave Miller, grower, York

The PA Vegetable Marketing and Research Program has helped to grow the awareness of the produce our local growers have to offer Pennsylvania consumers. When the pandemic forced consumers to search for local produce, the efforts of the Marketing and Research program helped consumers find local farms. The research dollars, overseen by Pennsylvania growers themselves, has helped to ensure vegetable research is addressing problems faced by local growers. It is one of the reasons vegetable production, markets, and opportunities are expanding in Pennsylvania helping to bring on a whole new generation of farmers.

Jeff Stoltzfus, grower, Atglen and Penn State Extension educator

We at the Ag Division of Furmano Foods and Furman Farms endorse the continuation of the referendum for research and marketing. Where it's been the most beneficial has been the support given to Dr. Foolad's tomato breeding program, which is a long term investment both in the fresh market and the processing tomato arena. The Program allows processing growers to direct all of our assessment monies to research since we don't receive any benefit from the marketing efforts. Also the research monies go a long way toward a researcher's ability to leverage other grants and the committee that represents the growers has input in where those monies are used. It is a good investment to have a say in the research and have non-biased results from the universities who do the work. So a "Yes" vote is an affirmation to a good program where growers have input on where the money is spent.

Ken Martin, Director of Ag Operations at Furmano Foods, Northumberland

"I believe that the Vegetable Marketing and Research Program is highly significant to keeping Pennsylvania's produce growers sustainable, thus profitable. It is the applied focus of this Program that means so much to growers. Growers are often able to directly use information gained from funded projects to improve their production, improve profitability, improve sustainability, and generally keep up-to-date. Few others research programs fund nutrient-related projects, variety trials, and respond to other related production challenges that can be highly regional in nature. Projects funded by the PVMRP often have very high ROI's based on the funds provided."

Steve Bogash, former Penn State Extension educator; Pro Farm Group Territory Business Manager

We as farmers rarely have the time to properly evaluate new ideas. I appreciate what the Pennsylvania Vegetable Marketing and Research Program has done over the years in helping PA farmers by testing best management practices and vegetable variety selection. Each year I read the results of the projects and apply new information to my growing practices as relevant to my operation. The future of agriculture is full of opportunities but also pitfalls. The investment we as growers pay into this program is a small price to pay for what we get out of it. Vote "YES" to continue the Pennsylvania Vegetable Marketing Research Program!

Steve Groff, grower, Holtwood

Research supported by Pennsylvania Vegetable Marketing and Research Program directly benefits growers in the Commonwealth by addressing production constraints deemed most important for their farm's success. As a researcher, receiving fundings from PVMRP not only provides funds to conduct vegetable research, but it also documents grower priorities. In turn, this enables me to leverage your dollars through those research results to garner support from larger state, regional, and federal resources. Competition for grant funding is fierce and often it is stakeholder support and the research results from projects funded by the PVMRP (and PVGA) that are needed to be successful at securing the larger pools of funding needed to address larger complex production priorities for Pennsylvania growers.

Dr. Beth Gugino, Penn State Extension vegetable pathologist

Now more than ever, Pennsylvania vegetable farmers are feeling the effects of adverse environmental conditions. We are experiencing resistance in all manner of diseases, insects, and weeds. The Pennsylvania Vegetable Research and Marketing Program is helping us combat these ever-changing challenges with their research in new vegetable varieties and resistance management. The marketing program targets Pennsylvania-grown produce to specifically help the Pennsylvania vegetable growers succeed. A "Yes" vote helps all Pennsylvania growers.

Pete Flynn, retired grower, West Chester