



PENNSYLVANIA VEGETABLE MARKETING AND RESEARCH PROGRAM

2301 North Cameron Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17110-9408
717-694-3596 pvmp@embarqmail.com www.paveggies.org



Fresh Ideas

VOLUME 24 NUMBER 1

JUNE 2014

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.

We've Made it Easy to Sign Up for PA Preferred

The PA Preferred program is the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's branding program for all agricultural products produced in the state. The brand has been established permanently by the General Assembly so it will remain the same from administration to administration. While the former "Simply Delicious" promotion program worked very well for produce, it was not adaptable to other agricultural products, especially non-edible crops and products.

The Department continues to work at building recognition for the PA Preferred logo and brand with advertising, social media and other public relations efforts as funding allows. Individual growers play a very important part in that process by being licensed to use the PA Preferred logo on their products and in their markets. In order to better protect the integrity of the PA Preferred brand, the Department does require individual producers to be licensed to use the PA Preferred logo on their products and in their markets. There is no cost for the license, but it simply requires growers to certify that the products they use the logo on are actually produced in Pennsylvania.

The Department has streamlined the licensing/membership process by making it available online at www.papreferred.com. In addition, because vegetable growers represent one of the largest groups of agricultural producers who direct market much of their produce to consumers, the Department and the Program are cooperating to include the PA Preferred license/membership agreement with the Program's annual assessment notices. The back of the white copy of the Program's Production Verification Statement will now contain the

signature page for growers to sign up with the PA Preferred program. The details of the PA Preferred license are contained on a separate sheet. So if you have been putting off signing up for the PA Preferred program because of the extra paperwork, all you have to do now is to mark that you are a producer, list your major crops/products and sign at the appropriate place on the back of your Production Verification Statement. Please note that most growers who are sole proprietors only need to sign near the top of the page. Growers whose operations are a corporation, LLC or partnership need to sign further down at the appropriate place.

Once you are signed up to be a member of the PA Preferred program, you are not only able to order items from the Vegetable Program that contain the PA Preferred logo (like the banners and large price paddles) but you will be able to request/receive selected point of purchase items from the PA Preferred program at no cost. These items include price paddles, price cards, truck decals, window

clings, plant tags, and stickers. You can also customize your listing of your market/farm on the PA Preferred website. You can contact the PA Preferred coordinator, Zach Gihorski, at 717-772-3094 or zgihorski@pa.gov.

The Vegetable Program urges growers to use the back of their assessment forms to sign up for PA Preferred. This will allow the Program to use the PA Preferred on more of its point-of-purchase materials in the future and thus piggy-back on the name recognition of the statewide agricultural products brand. Remember that to sign up for the PA Preferred program when you pay your Vegetable Program assessment, you must sign the back of the white copy of the form as well as the front.



Evaluation and Planning Prompts Program Changes

As a result an evaluation of the Vegetable Marketing and Research Program promotion efforts conducted by Jeff Manning, a nationally known marketing consultant who helped develop the very successful “Got Milk?” dairy promotion and who was also the keynote speaker at the 2013 Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention, the Program’s Board has voted to make some significant changes in its promotion efforts. Other changes as a result of the statewide Vegetable Industry Strategic Planning Initiative are also planned.

In short, Mr. Manning concluded that while the Program’s various promotion efforts – point-of-purchase materials, August is PA Produce Month, press relations and recipe contest – were all run well, the Program’s available funds were not sufficient to make them really effective in changing consumer behavior. He recommended focusing all the Program’s promotion efforts and budget on a one-month promotion in August, the peak season, to encourage consumers to visit farm markets and farmer’s markets where our growers’ products are readily available.

Recognizing that this change in focus will need to be done somewhat gradually, 2014 will be a year of transition. The Program’s longstanding distribution of point-of-purchase materials program will be continued in 2014 and beyond because it is widely used by the Program’s growers and the Program has significant inventories of

materials on hand. The August is Pennsylvania Product Month promotion will also be conducted as previously planned because the point-of-purchase materials for that promotion are already in inventory. However, the grant funds previously allocated for advertising the PA Produce Month in 2014 will be reserved to promote the new August promotion in 2015. To free up both funds and staff time to allow planning for the introduction of the new August promotion in 2015, the vegetable recipe contest and the press relations efforts will be discontinued in 2014.

While the final reports and workplans from the Strategic Planning Initiative are still being developed, the Program will be implementing some of the strategic priorities for the goals and objectives that were identified. Under marketing, the Program’s planned marketing changes will implement the priorities set forth of distributing point-of-purchase materials and developing the August promotion for farm markets and farmers’ markets for 2015 and beyond. Social media is expected to be an important component of that promotion. Under research, the Program will be exploring opportunities to work with other research institutions and obtain research results from other states besides exploring ways to increase the amount of funds available for research. The Program will continue to survey growers regularly and conduct conference calls with growers and researchers to help determine research priorities for the industry.

Plan Now to Celebrate August as PA Produce Month

As indicated above, the Vegetable Marketing and Research Program will once again celebrate August as Pennsylvania Produce Month to highlight the peak season for most Pennsylvania vegetable crops. 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 realizes that some Pennsylvania vegetables hit the market in May, June and July. But August is the month when nearly all vegetable crops are available in plentiful supply across the state. August is also the time when an extra boost in sales would be welcomed by most marketers.

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 2014 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. These kits can be ordered directly from the Program. Growers will also be able order additional small posters for \$0.50.

3. A sample press release that markets can use to both promote PA Produce Month and any special activities they will be undertaking to celebrate PA Produce Month to their local press will be sent to each participating market.

4. A general statewide press release on PA Produce Month will be issued to news media across the state.

5. 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.

6. 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 (about 18” x 24”), six small posters (8.5” x 11”), and twenty 7” x 11” price cards – all in full color.

7. The Program will also make posters 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 the PA Produce Month graphics in your print advertising during August. These will be available on the

continued on page 3

Time to Order Your Point-of-Purchase Materials for 2014

The Vegetable Marketing and Research Program will again be offering a large selection of point-of-purchase items including the new banner introduced in 2012. The full-color heavy-duty banner advertises "Fresh Local Vegetables" and features the "PA Preferred" logo. New for 2014 is a cookbook featuring the best recipes from the ten vegetable recipe contests sponsored by the Program from 2004 to 2013.

In 2012 the Program began the process of phasing out materials with the "Simply Delicious" logo. The Program has considerable inventories of some "Simply Delicious" items because it has been the Program's policy to purchase large quantities of the custom printed items at a time to take advantage of volume discounts. These inventories will be used up in the coming years.

The Board encourages all individual growers to become licensed to use the state's official "PA Preferred" logo that is featured on the new banner. The Program can only ship the banners and other items with the "PA Preferred" logo to growers who are licensed with the "PA Preferred" program. Completing the license application is free and the form is now contained on the back of the

PA Produce Month *(continued)*

Program's website.

3. Run a special coupon in your advertising for use at your market during PA Produce Month. Don't forget to include the PA Product Month graphics on the coupon. 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
- Free cantaloupe with \$10 or \$15 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 growers will use this campaign to highlight the availability of their crops during August.

Production Verification Statement enclosed with this mailing.

One of the newer items being offered is a series of "How to Use" information sheets for less familiar vegetables like Beets, Eggplant, Kale, Leeks, Spaghetti Squash, Summer Squash, Swiss Chard, and Winter Squash. These 3" x 5" sheets will be in tablet form so they can be easily displayed along with the produce. The sheets will contain information on how to prepare the item plus a recipe or serving suggestion.

Also available for purchase will be reusable tote bags with the "PA Preferred" logo and white tee-shirt bags with "Fresh Local Vegetables" imprinted on them.

Some of the most popular items historically have been the plastic price cards and price paddles which will be available along with the clip-on 3" x 4" price cards in plastic holders for retail market displays.

The crop or message stickers for the roadside signs will again be offered separately. There are 15 different stickers available for the signs. The choices include: Sweet Corn, Tomatoes, Peppers, Asparagus, Green Beans, Cantaloupe, Watermelons, Strawberries, Pumpkins, Fall Crops, Organic, Just Ahead, Farm Fresh, and a directional arrow. A blank sticker is also available allowing growers to letter in their own message or crop. Growers may choose to change the crop or message on the sign during the season or put a different crop on each side of the signs. The crop stickers can also be used on other signs.

We will be offering a set of 16 different recipe cards featuring the best recipes from the 2012 and 2013 Vegetable Recipe Contests.

Market aprons and tee-shirts with the "Simply Delicious, Simply Nutritious" logo in full color on the front are available while supplies last. They enable growers to give their market personnel a more professional and uniform appearance.

If your market is going to participate in the PA Produce Month promotion, don't forget to order those point-of-purchase materials as well on the enclosed yellow sheet.

Each grower is allowed a credit equal to 50% of their assessment payment for the year up to a maximum credit of \$25 in ordering point-of-purchase materials. If you wish to order more than your credit allowance, you may do so by paying for the additional items. For a full description of the items available, see the enclosed list on the green sheet.

Questions? Call the Program at 717-694-3596 or email us at pvmrp@embarqmail.com.

2014 Assessments Are Now Payable

Enclosed with this newsletter is your Production Verification Statement for 2014. The assessment for the 2014 growing season is now payable. Like last year, the form for 2014 is slightly different from 2012 and previous years to reflect the changes approved by growers in 2012 amendment referendum. **High tunnel production is now 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 nor 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, 2015, at the latest. However, growers who sell their produce through collecting sales agents may be required to pay earlier in the year. **You are encouraged to pay the assessment and order any point-of-purchase materials by July 15, 2014.**

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, printing and shipping of point-of-purchase materials, distributing press releases and sponsoring the recipe contest. Over the past five years, the Program has spent about 67% of grower assessment dollars on research and 33% 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. The Program does not plan to publish the marketing information about individual farms but rather use it internally.

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.

The Program has funded IPM research at Penn State for tomato disease control and sweet corn insect control for many years. The Board feels it is important to provide this IPM information to growers during the season when they can use it to time fungicide and insecticide applications. For the last seventeen years the Program has offered this information to growers in the PA Vegetable IPM Weekly Update. Besides being sent to individual growers, it is posted at many of produce auctions.

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 yellow Grower Response Form. Please return the form by July 15, 2014, to get on the list for the weekly mailings, faxes or emails. Please note that faxes will normally be send during the nighttime hours.

Growers can also obtain the information from these projects to help them time their fungicide and insecticide sprays from a toll-free hotline, and from websites.

The toll-free recorded telephone message is available 24-hours-a-day by calling 1-800-PENN-IPM. While the call can be dialed from either a rotary or touch-tone phone line, to access the specific information about vegetable diseases or sweet corn, the telephone must be able to be switched to a touch-tone phone after the initial call is placed.

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>.

Program to Help Fund 15 Research Projects in 2014

The Vegetable Marketing and Research Board allocated \$20,000 in assessment funds for vegetable research in 2014. In cooperation with the Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association, which contributed an additional \$56,000 from its General Fund and \$4,000 from the Simply Sweet Onion growers, the two vegetable growers organizations will be funding 15 different projects. The Association's research funds are earned by the members at the Farm Show and Ag Progress Days Food Booths. The approved projects total \$80,000.

The projects approved for funding and their objectives are listed below. Projects marked with an asterisk "*" were only approved for partial funding.

Breeding Tomatoes for Early Blight and Late Blight Resistance and Other Desirable Horticultural Characteristics for Production in Pennsylvania

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

- Develop tomatoes with disease resistance and other desirable horticultural characteristics suitable for production in Pennsylvania

Efficacy of Biochemical and Microbial Biofungicides for the Management of Late Blight on Tomatoes

Beth K. Gugino, Penn State Univ. \$3,280

- Identify the products that are of most interest to Pennsylvania growers and how they are currently being used to manage late blight.
- Evaluate the use these products alone and in fungicide programs for managing late blight, calculate the input costs of each program and disseminate the information at grower meetings, in newsletters and in the plant disease management reports, a central publication portal for sharing this type of data with the broader research community.

Plum / Roma Tomato Variety Trial 2014

Steven Bogash, Penn State Extension \$4,919

- Identify tomato cultivars that have promise as successful market varieties.
 - Identify those cultivars that are both resistant and susceptible to yellow shoulders based on an intensive tissue testing program.
 - Identify cultivars that are considered superior in flavor and appearance.
 - Produce saleable yield data (size, avg. weight, etc.) for the cultivars in this program in order to allow growers to select varieties that meet their marketing criteria.
- Increase local market share for fresh market tomatoes by local growers by assisting them in the selection of tomato cultivars that are considered superior by tasting panels.
- Determine the maximum potential yield and packout for selected varieties through intensive tissue analysis and subsequent nutrient application.

Western Flower Thrips Management in Field Staked Tomatoes

Steven Bogash, Penn State Extension \$5,874

- Evaluate current insect control material and tactics for their ability to manage WFT infestations.
- Evaluate newer 'biological' pest materials for their ability to control WFT's as compared to current BMP's for control.
- Measure WFT levels in the field for 2014 in order to establish a baseline for future work.

Development of Insect Resistant Sweet Corn Cultivars

Surinder Chopra and Shelby Fleischer, Penn State Univ. \$4,500

- Develop sweet corn lines which will produce insecticidal compounds in the silks and leaves to provide resistance/tolerance against silk feeding corn earworm and stalk feeding European corn borer using a genetic approach and molecular markers.

Keeping Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Profitable:

Statewide Broccoli Cultivar Trials

Elsa Sánchez, Timothy Elkner, Thomas Butzler, Steven Bogash, Lee Stivers, Robert Pollock, and William Lamont, Penn State Univ. and Extension \$10,548*

- To evaluate up to 24 cultivars of broccoli for spring and fall production at three locations in a conventional production system. (western Pennsylvania, Rock Springs, and Landisville)

Striped Cucumber Beetle (SCB) Management with Plant and Microbial Metabolites

Shelby J. Fleischer and Timothy Elkner, Penn State Univ. and Extension \$4,500

- Establish whether the addition of cucurbitacin induces compulsive SCB feeding of spinosad droplets.
- Evaluate whether increased rates of spinosad application in combination with Cidetrak will improve its efficiency against SCB in a field setting, which we plan to conduct at the Southeast Research and Extension Center, in Landisville.

Disease Resistant Pumpkin Variety Evaluation

Timothy Elkner, Penn State Extension \$4,000

- Evaluate disease resistance, yield and fruit quality varieties by commercially available pumpkin varieties in a replicated trial in southeast Pennsylvania. Powdery mildew tolerant/resistant varieties, conventional selections as well as any available varieties with other desirable traits (virus resistance, etc.) will be grown.

High Tunnel Trellised Cucumber Variety Trial, Year 2

Steven Bogash, Penn State Extension \$2,786

- Identify parthenocarpic slicing cucumber cultivars that have promise as successful market varieties.
- Rate cultivars as to their resistance and susceptibility to powdery and downy mildew in a standard disease management program.
- Identify cultivars that are considered superior in flavor and appearance.

continued on page 6

Research Projects Funded *(continued)*

- Produce saleable yield data (size, avg. weight, etc.) for cultivars in this program in order to allow growers to select varieties that meet their marketing criteria.

Colored Bell Pepper High Tunnel Economics Trial; Year 2
Steven Bogash and Timothy Elkner, Penn State Extension \$4,390

- Evaluate the economics of growing colored bell peppers in high tunnels where the peppers are harvested green as early as possible and then later allowed to fully ripen once field green peppers show up in the local market.
- Evaluate the economics of growing colored bell peppers in high tunnels where the peppers are only harvested when fully colored.

Evaluating Potential Herbicides for Row-Middles with Plasticulture

Mark VanGessel, Univ. of Delaware and Dwight Lingenfelter, Penn State Univ. \$5,000

- Evaluate effectiveness of various herbicides for weed control in row middles for plasticulture.
- Evaluate potential herbicides for use in plasticulture
- Evaluate crop safety of various crops for herbicides that could be registered in Pennsylvania.

Developing Data to Support New Herbicide Registrations for Snap Beans

Robin Bellinder, Cornell Univ. \$ 6,000

- Facilitate herbicide registration (IR-4, federal) for Pennsylvania and New York growers.
- Identify new herbicides with reduced environmental impacts.
- Determine the effective use patterns and tank-mix partners for new herbicides.
- Determine effective control measures for problem weeds in snap beans.

Survey of Soilborne Snap Bean Pathogens in Pennsylvania and Establishment of a Research Plot Dedicated to Snap Bean Root Pathogen Research

Beth Gugino, Penn State Univ. \$2,923

- Establish a snap bean "disease field" at the Russell E. Larson Research and Education Center with populations of soilborne fungal pathogens to facilitate the evaluation of management strategies in future replicated field trials.
- Conduct a survey of snap bean fields to identify the predominant soilborne fungal pathogens and establish a collection of pathogen isolates for use in future research.

Survey of the Survival of *E. coli* from Manure under Field Conditions

Jeffrey LeJeune, Ohio State Univ. \$2,500

- To determine with laboratory and field studies whether increasing the interval between manure application and harvest of vegetable crops from 120 to 270 significantly improves food safety under field conditions.

Continued Evaluation of the Effects of Inoculum Pressure and Onion Maturity at Harvest on Harvest and Post-Harvest Losses Due to Bacterial Diseases

Beth K. Gugino and Emily E. Pfeufer, Penn State Univ. \$6,779

- To evaluate the effects of inoculums pressure and onion maturity at harvest on losses due to bacterial disease.

Attention Wholesale Growers

The Vegetable Marketing and Research Program is developing a directory of wholesale growers and we need your updated information about what crops you grow. If you wholesale your produce, please fill out the form on the back side of the yellow sheet in this mailing. This will allow us to build lists of growers who produce different vegetable crops to provide to wholesale produce buyers. It will also be posted in some form on the Program's website.

We are asking growers to not only list the specific crops they grow, but also to indicate about how many acres of each they grow. This enables us to direct larger buyers to the larger growers.

GAP/GHP Certification and Cost Share Available

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA) offers farms and packinghouses the opportunity to be certified for Good Agricultural Practices for farms and Good Handling Practices for packinghouse operations. For further information on the certification program, contact the Department at 717-787-4315.

The Department is also offering a GAP/GHP Cost-Share Program for the 2014 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.

Make Sure You're Listed in the Consumers Guide

Growers who retail their produce at a roadside market should be listed in the "Consumer's Guide to Pennsylvania Farm Markets" published by the Department of Agriculture. Call 717-783-9948 for further information. This directory also lists community farmers' markets.

Penn State's Ag Map is also a good place for retail markets to be listed. Growers who want to list their farm on AgMap should go to <http://agmap.psu.edu> or call them at 814-863-7001.