



## 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

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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.*

## Board Recommends Changes to the Program

The Vegetable Marketing and Research Program Board is recommending several changes to the Program Order, the document that describes how the Vegetable Marketing and Research Program operates. These changes to the Program Order must be approved by growers in a statewide referendum. Growers will be receiving official notices about the proposed changes from the Secretary of Agriculture. The referendum is expected to be conducted this fall.

The first change the Board is proposing is to change the criteria for which growers are required to pay an annual assessment to the Program. Currently growers who grow and sell an acre or more of vegetables must participate in the Program as well as growers who grow and sell vegetables in 1,000 sq. ft. or more of greenhouse space. The proposed change would also require growers who

grow and sell \$2,000 worth of vegetables (even if they have less than an acre or 1,000 sq. ft. of greenhouse area) to participate in the Program and pay the assessment.

The second change would allow growers to pay an assessment of 1.25% of their gross sales of vegetables (with a minimum payment of \$25) instead of the current rate of \$25 for the first five acres and \$1.50 for each acre over the first 5 acres (or \$25 for the first 5,000 sq. ft. of greenhouse area plus \$1.50 for each 1,000 sq. ft. over the first 5,000 sq. ft.). Growers would be entitled to calculate their assessment both ways and pay the lower of the two rates – which in most cases would be current method rather than percentage of gross sales.

These first two changes are designed to enable the Program to identify growers who are required by law to

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## Order Your Point of Purchase Materials for 2012

The Vegetable Marketing and Research Program will be offering a large selection of point-of-purchase items including some new items.

With the adoption of "PA Preferred" as the official brand of Pennsylvania agricultural products last year, the Program's point of purchase materials will gradually be transitioned to include the "PA Preferred" logo rather than the "Simply Delicious" logo. This will require, however, that growers will have to be members of the "PA Preferred" program to receive certain point-of-purchase items. Membership in "PA Preferred" is free, but a membership agreement must be on file with the Department of Agriculture. Growers who are not "PA Preferred" members are urged to join this free program – forms are available at [www.papreferred.com](http://www.papreferred.com) or by calling the Program at 717-694-3596. The Vegetable Marketing and Research Program still has considerable supplies of "Simply Delicious" items on hand and will continue to offer these to all growers.

Some of the most popular items historically have been the plastic price cards and price paddles which will be available along with the new 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 one set of 16 different recipe cards featuring the best recipes from the 2010 and 2011 Vegetable Recipe Contests.

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## Program Changes Proposed

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participate in the Program from the sales records of various produce buyers or sales agents like processors, auctions, cooperatives, brokers, wholesalers and retail stores. State requires these businesses to provide the Secretary of Agriculture with the names of the growers they deal with. However, these businesses typically do not have records of the growers acreages, but they do have sales records. Thus the \$2,000 threshold and 1.25% assessment rate will allow the Program and the Department to better identify which growers should be paying the assessment and calculate how much assessment they owe from the sales agents records. One of the Vegetable Program's greatest difficulties has been to maintain an accurate list of growers across the state and these changes should help that situation. The Program is based on the premise that the promotion and research activities funded by the Program potentially benefit all the growers in the state and thus should be funded by all the growers in the state.

The third change goes along with the first two and changes the definition of the growing season from October 15 to the following October 14 to the calendar year. The final deadline for assessment payments would then be January 31 (for the previous growing season) instead of October 31.

The fourth change is intended to correct a miswording of the original Program Order. Currently, because of how the original Order was worded, growers who produce vegetables both in the field and in the greenhouse have to calculate their assessment for their field acreage (\$25 for the first five acres plus \$1.50 for each acre above the first five acres) and for their greenhouse area (\$25 for the first 5,000 sq. ft. plus \$1.50 for each 1,000 sq. ft above the first 5,000 sq.ft.) separately. They then must add the two amounts together and subtract \$25. Not only is this confusing to everyone involved, it results in an inequitable assessment for some of these growers. The assessment rate for a grower with 10 acres of field vegetables is \$32.50 and the assessment rate for a grower with 10,000 sq. ft. of greenhouse vegetables is \$32.50. But the assessment rate for a grower with 5 acres of field vegetables and 5,000 sq. ft. of greenhouse vegetables is only \$25 even though he has also 10 "units" of productions (5 acres and 5,000 sq. ft.). The Board is proposing to change this so that the \$1.50 additional assessment will added for each unit of production (either field acres or greenhouse 1,000 sq.ft units) over the first five units. The amount of the current inequity (at the most \$7.50) is not real significant but the change should also make the assessment calculation simpler for growers.

As the Board was discussing these proposed changes relative to how greenhouse area was assessed at their March meeting, the question was raised as to how high tunnel area is assessed. Many years ago, the Board had determined that high tunnel area was to be considered as field acreage rather than greenhouse production area. They did not, however, define the difference high tunnels and greenhouses. As the Board considered how high

tunnel production practices have developed over the years, they were at a loss to come up with a good method of distinguishing between high tunnels and greenhouses. Many growers supply some heat to their high tunnels when necessary, some have power ventilation systems, and few move their high tunnels periodically. Moreover, it was noted that the Program has funded several research project projects related to high tunnel production methods. Thus the Board is asking that high tunnels be considered greenhouse production area for the purpose of calculating a growers annual assessment payment.

The Board believes these changes will help in enforcing the payment of assessments to the Program and help simplify how the assessment is calculated. In the end, it should enable the Program to better serve the vegetable growers of Pennsylvania by funding more vegetable promotion and research. The Board asks growers to vote "yes" to approve these changes.

## Point-of-Purchase Materials

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A new supply of market aprons and tee-shirts with the "Simply Delicious, Simply Nutritious" logo in full color on the front was purchased in 2010 so plenty are available. They enable growers to give their market personnel a more professional and uniform appearance. Both compliment the "Simply Delicious" embroidered hats.

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.

## 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 2012 calendar year. Any business or individual located in Pennsylvania that successfully completes one initial USDA Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) or one initial USDA Good Handling Practices (GHP) audit is 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 Jared Grissinger, at 717-705-

9513 or [jgrissinge@state.pa.us](mailto:jgrissinge@state.pa.us).

local produce.

## Plan Now to Celebrate August as PA Produce Month

When is Pennsylvania Produce most plentiful all across the state? August, of course. That is why the Pennsylvania Vegetable Marketing and Research Program will once again be celebrating August as Pennsylvania Produce Month. 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. A press release highlighting sweet corn will be mailed in late June. Regular point-of-purchase materials will be mailed beginning in June. 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 2012 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 with the "Simply Delicious, Simply Nutritious" logo 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. Produce Month graphics for use by markets in print advertising will be available by CD for a cost of \$0.50.
4. 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.
5. The Program will be contracting for radio advertising and possibly outdoor (billboard) advertising to let consumers know about PA Product Month.
6. A general statewide press release on PA Produce Month will be issued to news media across the state along with articles on various Pennsylvania vegetable crops.
7. 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. The Program will be seeking to arrange events strategically located across the state during the early part of the month.
8. 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 with the "Simply Delicious, Simply Nutritious" logo in full color.
9. The Program will also make posters available to supermarkets across the state to support their sales of

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. While supplies last, growers may order up to three kits each.
2. Use the PA Produce Month graphics in your print advertising during August. Order the CD to give to your printer.
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.

## 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.

## 9th Annual Vegetable Recipe Contest Set

The Pennsylvania Vegetable Marketing and Research Program is sponsoring its ninth annual Pennsylvania "Simply Delicious, Simply Nutritious" Vegetable Recipe Contest this summer. Pennsylvania residents, including growers or spouses, are eligible to enter one or more of their best vegetable recipes using Pennsylvania vegetables to compete for \$100 prizes in four categories at a state-wide cook-off.

**Growers who would like brochures about the Recipe Contest to give to their customers should call the Program at 717-694-3596. Entries are due June 30, 2012.**

The cook-off is set for August 3 at Harrisburg Area Community College as part of the PA Produce Month promotion.

A panel of four judges will review the written recipe entries and select sixteen finalists to prepare their recipes at the cook-off. Four recipes will be chosen in each of the following four categories:

- Tomatoes/Peppers/Eggplant
- Melons/Cucumbers
- Summer Squash/Zucchini
- Winter Squash/Pumpkins

Recipe entries must contain as a major ingredient one of the vegetables in the category entered. Fresh, canned, frozen or dried vegetables can be used in the recipe.

Recipes will be chosen on the basis of creativity, nutrition/healthfulness, ease of preparation, and overall appeal. A \$100 prize will be awarded to the winner in each category. Other finalists will each receive a \$25 gift certificate for the farm market of their choice.

Recipes must be created or modified by the contestant or a member of the contestant's family. Recipes previously published in a copyrighted publication will not be eligible.

Entries must be entered by June 30, 2012, by one of three methods:

- emailed to [pvmrp@embarqmail.com](mailto:pvmrp@embarqmail.com) (preferred method);
- faxed to: 717-694-3596 or
- mailed to:

PA Vegetable Marketing and Research Program  
815 Middle Road, Richfield, PA 17086-9205

Recipes should be printed in upper and lower letters in the following manner:

Category

Name of dish

Number of servings

Ingredients list – List in order of use. Spell out units of measure like tablespoon, teaspoon, cup, ounce, pound, etc.

Instructions – List in order in complete sentence form.

Hardcopy entries must be printed (by hand or otherwise) or formatted on a sheet of 8 1/2" x 11" plain white paper. On the back side of the entry, print the contestant's name, mailing address, and telephone number, plus email address or fax number if available. For email entries, put the contact information (name, address, telephone, email) after the recipe.

Entry of a recipe in the contest will authorize the use of the recipe, with credit given to the contestant, by the Program in its press releases, recipe cards, brochures or other published materials. The Program reserves the right to copyright such publications.

For further information about the contest, contact the Program at 717-694-3596 or [pvmrp@embarqmail.com](mailto:pvmrp@embarqmail.com)

## 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.

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

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 fifteen years the Program has offered this information to growers on a weekly basis. This service will be offered again this year from mid-June through August but the mailings will only be sent to growers who request them on the yellow Grower Response Form. Please return the form by June 30, 2012 to get on the list for the weekly mailings, faxes or emails. Please note that faxes will normally be send during the nighttime hours.

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.

## Are You Listed on PA MarketMaker?

Pennsylvania MarketMaker is an online resource designed to boost farmers' marketing efforts, help consumers and businesses find locally grown products, and contribute to agricultural profitability. Likewise, other buyers and sellers in the food supply chain, including food retailers, processors, wholesalers, producers and farmers, restaurants, wineries, farmers' markets and others will be able to find your business and products.

Registration and participation is free. Visit <http://pa.foodmarketmaker.com>. If you do not have Internet access and wish to register, contact Gina Backes at 309-757-9077 and ask her to either mail you a registration form or have her complete your registration over the phone.

## 2012 Research Funding Approved

The Vegetable Marketing and Research Board allocated \$25,000 in assessment funds for vegetable research in 2012. In cooperation with the Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association, which contributed an additional \$38,000, the two vegetable growers organizations will be funding 11 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 about \$63,000.

The projects approved for funding and their objectives are listed below.

### Tomatoes

#### Building Upon BLIGHTCAST and PA-PIPE: Evaluation of an Improved Decision Support System for Late Blight

*Beth K. Gugino and Ilse Herta, Penn State Univ. and Bill E. Fry, Cornell Univ.* \$4,500

- to evaluate and field-test the use of the Cornell late blight decision support system for managing late blight on tomato in Pennsylvania in a replicated field trial.

#### High Tunnel Fresh Market Slicer Tomato Variety Trial 2012

*Steve Bogash, Penn State Extension* \$6,164

- to identify tomato cultivars that have promise as successful market varieties based on resistance to yellow shoulder, flavor, appearance and saleable yield.
- to 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.
- to determine the maximum potential yield and pack-out for selected varieties through intensive tissue analysis and subsequent nutrient application

#### Breeding Tomatoes for Early Blight and Late Blight Resistance and Other Desirable Traits for Production in Pennsylvania

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

- to continue our research directed toward development of tomatoes with disease resistance and improved fruit quality as well as other desirable horticultural characteristics suitable for production in Pennsylvania.

### Snap Beans

#### Use of Residual Herbicides for Tough to Control Weeds in Snap Beans

*Mark VanGessel, University of Delaware and Dwight Lingenfelter, Penn State Univ.* \$4,000

- to determine the most efficient use of residual herbicides (use at planting versus postemergence);
- to evaluate herbicide combinations and surfactants for difficult to control weeds in snap beans, particularly lambsquarters

- to determine the effect of these herbicide treatments on snap bean stand, injury, and yield
- White Mold Control in Snap Beans Without Ronilan  
*Helene R. Dillard, Joi Strauss and Alissa Carissimi, Cornell Univ.* \$4,112

- to conduct a comprehensive field trial to compare efficacy of registered and non-registered new fungicides for control of white mold caused by *Sclerotinia sclerotiorum* on snap beans

### Sweet Corn

#### Sweet Corn Trapping Network

*Shelby J. Fleischer, Penn State Univ.* \$3,900

- to purchase and distribute pheromones and dichlorvos vapor strips to operate the trapping network.
- to determine the natal origins of fall armyworm from sites across Pennsylvania.

#### Keeping Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Profitable: Statewide Sweet Corn Cultivar Trials

*Elsa Sánchez and Mike Orzolek, Penn State Univ. and Tim Elkner,*

- to evaluate several cultivars of synergistic sweet corn in three field locations to provide Pennsylvania growers with up to date recommendations based on how each cultivar performed regionally and statewide.

### Other Crops

#### Evaluate the Efficacy of Alternative In-Season Management Products and Fertility Treatments on Yield and the Development of Onion Bacterial Diseases

*Beth K. Gugino, Michele Mansfield and Emily Pfeufer, Penn State Univ. and Jeff Stoltzfus, Eastern Lancaster Co. School District* \$4,000  
(an additional \$3,294 is being contributed by the Simply Sweet Onion growers.)

- to evaluate the application of alternative in-season management products including the use of hydrogen peroxide/dioxide on the incidence and severity of onion bacterial diseases.

- to evaluate the effect of different fertility programs on marketable yield, pungency and sweetness

#### Green Slicer Cucumber Variety Trial

*Steve Bogash, Penn State Extension* \$4,753

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

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## 2012 Assessments Are Now Payable

Enclosed with this newsletter is your Production Verification Statement for 2012. The assessment for the 2012 growing season is now payable.

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 (or less than 1,000 sq. ft. of greenhouse 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 October 31 at the latest. However, growers who sell their produce through collecting sales agents may be required to pay earlier in the year. Growers are encouraged to pay the assessment and order any point-of-purchase materials by June 30, 2012.

### You Have a Choice

Growers have the opportunity to designate on their Production Verification Statement how much of their assessment they want to see used for marketing activities and how much they 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 66% of grower assessment dollars on research and 34% 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.

## Don't Forget About PA Preferred

As you are planning many aspects of your growing and marketing season, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture continues to work hard to provide support and assistance. The Department continues to accept applications to join the PA Preferred™ state branding program.

Today's consumer is very interested in knowing the producer and where their food comes from. By utilizing the PA Preferred™ logo on your produce, you can distinguish your product from others in the marketplace. It is an effective tool for increasing the awareness of Pennsylvania produced, quality product. There is no charge for becoming a member. Program information may be found on line at [www.PAPreferred.com](http://www.PAPreferred.com) or by calling Peter Witmer at 717-772-3094. By enrolling today, you will be listed on the PA Preferred™ website.

### 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.

### Questions?

Call the Program at 717-694-3596. We are here to serve you.

## Research Funding *continued*

### Colored Bell Pepper High Tunnel Variety Trial II

*Steve Bogash and Timothy Elkner, Penn State Extension* \$4,001

- to identify bell pepper cultivars grown in a high tunnel environment that are considered superior in yield and appearance and to produce saleable yield data (size, avg. weight, etc.) on the cultivars.
- to increase market share for colored bell peppers by local growers by assisting them in the selection of colored bell pepper cultivars that are considered superior.
- to determine the maximum potential yield and pack-out for selected varieties through intensive tissue analysis and subsequent nutrient application.

### Optimum Plant Populations for Cantaloupe Production

*Timothy Elkner, Penn State Extension* \$3,550

- to evaluate yield and fruit quality of muskmelon grown at different plant densities by varying in row spacing and number of plants/hill.