



PENNSYLVANIA VEGETABLE MARKETING AND RESEARCH PROGRAM

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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.

Vegetable Industry Strategic Planning Sessions Set for This Winter

The Vegetable Marketing and Research Program in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association was awarded a Specialty Crop Block Grant to organize a series of strategic planning sessions for the Pennsylvania vegetable industry during the winter of 2013 to 2014.

The Pennsylvania vegetable industry is a very diverse industry. It is composed of over 3,500 growers who produce an acre or more of vegetables according to the 2007 Census of Agriculture. Over half of those growers grow less than five acres and only 105 grow 100 acres or more. In an industry dominated by a large number of small growers, the ability of the industry to act cooperatively is vital to its future but also very challenging.

The Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association, the voluntary industry association, was instrumental in establishing the Vegetable Marketing and Research Program in 1988. The Program by law includes all the growers in the state and thus enables all the growers to help fund vegetable research and promotion through their annual assessment payments to the Program.

The Association has worked cooperatively with the Program to help it fulfill its mission, especially in the area of research funding. In most years, the Association has provided over half of the research funding thanks to its successful food booths at the Pennsylvania Farm Show and Ag Progress Days.

The Pennsylvania vegetable industry enjoys the support of dedicated Penn State Extension personnel both at the University level and the county level. In addition to growers and the above organizations, the produce auctions, processors, suppliers, and wholesale buyers all play a vital and dynamic role in making the Pennsylvania industry function.

The goal of this strategic planning initiative is to gather all segments of the industry together to strategically plan how the different organizations, segments and partners in the industry could work together to collectively strengthen and advance the industry.

A series of regional facilitated strategic planning sessions with growers, allied industry personnel, board members of the Program and PVGA, university staff and faculty, extension educators, and Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture personnel will be held to discuss what these groups can and should be doing to foster the growth and profitability of the vegetable industry. While details will be announced in the coming weeks, meetings open to all growers will be planned for the following areas:

- Western Pennsylvania
- Northeastern Pennsylvania
- Southeastern Pennsylvania
- South Central Pennsylvania

After the regional meetings have been conducted, a statewide all-day meeting especially for the board members of the Association and the Marketing and Research Program as well as key industry, extension and university personnel would also be conducted. Professional facilitators will be retained to conduct the sessions.

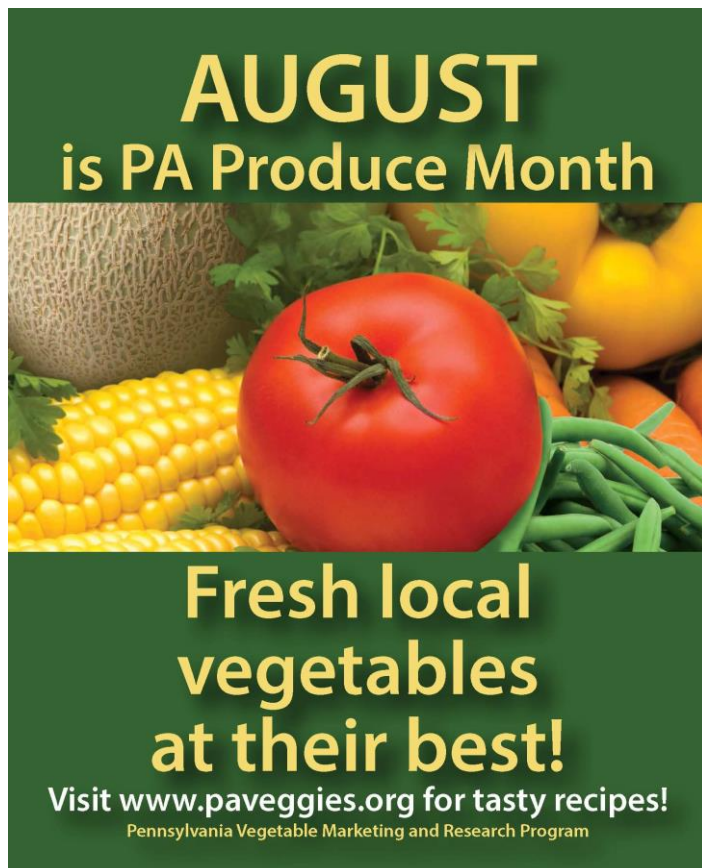
Surveys for all growers will likely be part of the planning process. Growers are urged return surveys sent to them as well as to participate in the regional meetings. This effort will only be successful if growers and industry members take some time to look at the "big picture" of the vegetable industry and provide some well-thought out input. Please plan to be a part of this process.

August Continues to be Pennsylvania Produce Month

The Vegetable Marketing and Research Program conducted its eighth annual celebration of August as Pennsylvania Produce Month this season. With the help of a Specialty Crop Block Grant from the United States Department of Agriculture through the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, the Program was again able to promote Produce Month and Pennsylvania vegetables on radio stations across the state during August again this year.

While the Program's press relations efforts, distribution of point-of-purchase materials, vegetable recipe contest, website and other activities promote Pennsylvania vegetables throughout the season, Produce Month is designed to focus extra attention on Pennsylvania vegetables at the height of your season.

This year's PA Produce Month promotion also introduced a new design for the point-of-purchase materials created for the month-long promotion because supplies of the old design were exhausted. Since the "Simply Delicious" logo formerly used on the Produce Month posters is being phased out, the Program's new materials feature the same produce graphic used in the new banner introduced last year along with the emphasis on "fresh local vegetables". The new posters also highlight the Program's website at www.paveggies.org where the recipes from the annual Vegetable Recipe Contest are featured.



New PA Produce Month large poster design.



New PA Produce Month small poster design.

The Program sponsored traffic reports, primarily during the last week of July and the first week of August, in the Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, Lancaster, York, Erie, Altoona, Allentown/Bethlehem, Reading, and Scranton/Wilkes Barre metropolitan market areas. The ad messages announced that August is PA Produce Month and urged consumers to stop and pick up some fresh Pennsylvania vegetables at their local community farmers' market, roadside farm market or supermarket. Consumers were also encouraged to visit the Program's website at www.paveggies.org for vegetable recipes.

The Pennsylvania state Senate officially recognized August as Pennsylvania Produce Month with a special resolution.

To encourage greater participation in Produce Month, the Program mailed six small PA Produce Month posters with each grower ordering point-of-purchase orders from the Program. About 50 of these growers ordered the Produce Month kit in addition which included two large posters and 20 special Produce Month price cards.

Over 300 Produce Month kits were shipped to the various produce auctions across the state where they were available to growers and to the non-grower marketers who purchase produce at the auctions.

The Program again offered PA Produce Month point-of-purchase materials to supermarket chains in the state. Posters and/or price cards were requested for about 180 stores by Acme, Karns, Lancaster Family-Owned Markets, Redner's Warehouse Markets, and ShurFine (Associated Wholesalers).

If you have a retail farm market or are part of a community farmer's market, plan now to participate in the 2014 August is PA Produce Month promotion.

Your Input is Needed

Research Conference Calls

In preparation for choosing research projects to be funded for 2014, the Program is scheduling two conference telephone calls between researchers and growers. Growers are invited and urged to participate in the crop areas of interest to them. **To participate in any of the calls, growers should call 1-877-643-6951 at the appointed time. When prompted, enter the following passcode 55835024#**

The conference calls will be limited to an hour (or less) in length. They are the ideal time for growers to present their needs directly to some of the researchers at the universities. Following is the schedule for the conference calls:

Fresh Market Vegetable Research Issues	
Tuesday, October 22, 2013	8:00 p.m.
Processing Vegetable Research Issues	
Thursday, October 24, 2013	8:00 p.m.

Annual Grower Survey

Please fill out the enclosed green "Annual Grower Survey" to help the Program's Board meet your marketing and research needs for 2014. We especially need your response for the first question for our Specialty Crop Block Grant to help evaluate the effects of our grant activities.

While your response anytime this fall is welcome, if you can return your survey by October 25, 2013, your responses can be compiled for review by the Board at its meeting scheduled for November 6, 2013, in Room 309 of the Department of Agriculture Building in Harrisburg starting at 9:00 a.m.

Each comment submitted by growers is typed up for the Board members to review. The morning session of the November meeting will be devoted to the annual election of officers, promotion plans for 2014 and general business. The afternoon will be set aside for discussion of research topics for next year.

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

Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

Growers who want to accept the Farmer's Market Nutrition Program checks from senior citizens and WIC program recipients MUST be registered with the Farmers' Marketing Nutrition Program first. If you are not registered, call Sandy Hopple at 717-787-2940.



Point of Purchase Materials Shipped to Growers

The newly designed banner (shown above) introduced last year and other items in the Program's selection of point-of-purchase materials were shipped to growers across the state this year. The Program shipped point-of-purchase materials to about growers so far this season.

The banner can only be distributed to growers who are licensed by the Department of Agriculture to use the "PA Preferred" logo. The Department of Agriculture is discontinuing its use of the "Simply Delicious" logo and urging all agricultural producers to be licensed to use the "PA Preferred" logo. Growers can be licensed for the "PA Preferred" program at no cost by visiting the website at www.PAPreferred.com or by calling 717-772-3094.

The Vegetable Marketing and Research Program has considerable inventories of "Simply Delicious" point-of-purchase materials that it will continue to distribute to growers. Binwrap, roadside signs, price cards, price paddles, price stickers, shirts, aprons and hats will all be available for several years until supplies are exhausted. Other items like recipe cards, clip-on price cards and brochures will be transitioned away from the "Simply Delicious" logo as supplies of these items are exhausted in the next year or so.

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 2013 will be accepted until December 31. If you have misplaced your order form, contact the Program at 717-694-3596 or pvmrp@embarqmail.com or visit our website at www.paveggies.org.

Mid-Atlantic Convention Opens Jan. 28

The 2014 Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention will be held January 28 to 30 at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center 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.

2013 Recipe Contest a Big Success

Veteran contestant, Frances Dietz of York, repeated last year's feat of winning the first place prize in two categories. This year she won the first-place prizes in both the Snap Bean/Lima Bean/Pea and Sweet Corn categories. She has won first-place prizes in four previous contests, including two first-places in 2007 and in 2012 and is the only person to win two first-place prizes in one year. First-time finalist Sally Kocan of Gibsonia won the first-place prize in the Leafy Greens category and Marilyn Goldfarb of Boalsburg took the prize in the Broccoli/Cabbage/Cauliflower category. The Cook Off was held on Thursday, August 8, 2013, at the Lebanon County Career and Technology Center in Lebanon, Pennsylvania. Daniel Naylor, Eastern Regional Director of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture presented certificates to the winners.

Ms. Dietz, won the first-place prize in the Snap Bean/Lima Bean/Pea category with her "Chicken and Veggie Stir Fry" which the judges described as a "great summer entree" with "nice colors" and a "pleasant flavor". It featured pod peas, carrots, peppers, onion and peanuts stir-fried with chicken. Her entry in the Sweet Corn category was "Corn and Black-Eyed Pea Salad" featuring corn, black-eyed peas, grape tomatoes, peppers, green onions and parsley with an enhanced bleu cheese dressing topped with feta cheese a combination great colors, textures and flavors according to the judges.

Ms. Kocan, a first time contestant, won the Leafy Greens category with her "Garden Fresh Beans and Greens." "This is delicious!" was one judge's reaction. The recipe calls for 6 cups of mixed greens which can include arugula, kale, mustard greens, spinach, collard greens and/or swiss chard plus cannellini beans, tomatoes and Italian sausage. "Asian Style Stewed Cauliflower" prepared by Ms. Goldfarb won the first-place prize in the Broccoli/Cabbage/Cauliflower category. The judges called it "New and fresh!" with great flavors. It features cauliflower cooked with onion, garlic, ginger, tomatoes, coriander seed, tumeric, jalapeno peppers, cilantro, parsley and peanuts in chicken and nam pla broth with sour cream.

Four finalists in each category completed for the top prizes. Judges choose the finalist recipes for the Cook-Off from 90 written recipe entries submitted by 43 cooks from across the state. Recipes were scored on the basis of five criteria: creativity, nutrition/healthfulness, ease of preparation, use of a category vegetable as major ingredient and overall appeal. Recipe entries had to contain as a major ingredient at least one vegetable in the category. Recipes were required to be created or modified by the contestant or a member of the contestant's family.

The other recipes prepared by the finalists at the Cook-Off are listed below.

Snap Beans/Lima Beans/Peas

Pea and Potato Salad – Cindy Kerschner,
Schnecksville

Tom's Better Beans – Tom Orlando, Altoona
Quinoa and Pea Salad with Fresh Herbs and Lemon
Dressing – Kathy Engel

Leafy Greens

Strawberry Pecan Mixed Greens Salad – Mary Ellen
Miller, Orwigsburg

Leafy Greens and Beans Soup – B J Reed and Tom
Sabo, Chambersburg

Swiss Chard Saute – Becky Frey, Lebanon

Sweet Corn

Spicy Corn Salad – Marilyn Goldfarb, Boalsburg

Corn Quinoa Salad – Vicky Sokoloff, Sokoloff

Corn Gazpacho with Fiery Lime Coutons – Cindy
Kerschner, Schnecksville

Broccoli/Cabbage/Cauliflower

Cabbage and Shrimp with Easy Thai Peanut Sauce –
Kelly Paul, Harrisburg

Seaslaw Salad – Mary Ellen Miller, Orwigsburg

Red Cabbage, Red Quinoa Stew – B J Reed and Tom
Sabo, Chambersburg

These finalists each received a \$25 prize, most in the form of a gift certificate to the farm market of their choice.

The judges for the 2013 Contest were:

Robert Corle, Jr., culinary arts instructor at Lebanon
County Career and Technology Center;

Susan Gleiter, food writer for the Patriot News in
Harrisburg;

Brian Pfeffly, pastry arts instructor at Lebanon County
Career and Technology Center;

Robert McMullin, professor of hotel restaurant and
tourism management at East Stroudsburg
University; and

Libby Mills, registered dietitian, lifestyle coach, author,
and speaker

All the finalist recipes are available on the Vegetable Marketing and Research Program's website at www.paveggies.org or by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the Program at : PA Vegetable Mktg. & Res. Program, 815 Middle Road, Richfield, PA 17086.

Press Relations Effort Continues

The Vegetable Program annually sends out press releases about Pennsylvania vegetable crops during the growing season, normally resulting in numerous articles in newspapers across the state reaching more than a million people.

This year the Program issued press releases on sweet corn, tomatoes, eggplant, snap beans, lima beans, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, and pumpkins/winter squash. The Program uses recipes entered in the Vegetable Recipe Contest in the releases. Over 75 articles were published in newspapers and websites reaching over 2 million readers as result of this effort. The Program also issued releases on PA Produce Month and the recipe contest that were widely published, reaching over 5.8 million readers.

Questions?

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