



## 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.*

## Your Input Will Help Us Serve You Better

### Research Conference Calls October 16 and 17

In preparation for choosing research projects to be funded for 2015, 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#**

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:

Processing Vegetable Research Issues	
Thursday, October 16, 2014	7:00 p.m.
Fresh Market Vegetable Research Issues	
Thursday, October 16, 2014	8:00 p.m.
Fresh Market Vegetable Research Issues	
Friday, October 17, 2014	10:00 a.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 2015. 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, 2014, your responses can be compiled for review by the Board at its meeting scheduled for November 5, 2014, in the Susquehanna Room of the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex 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 2015 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](mailto:pvmrp@embarqmail.com).

## PA Produce Month Celebrated in August

The Vegetable Marketing and Research Program conducted its ninth annual celebration of August as Pennsylvania Produce Month this season. The Program shipped Produce Month point-of-purchase kits to individual growers, to auctions for sale to their market customers and to supermarket chains. The promotion is designed to focus extra attention on Pennsylvania vegetables at the height of your season.

Last year the Program introduced a new design for the Produce Month point-of-purchase materials created for the month-long promotion because supplies of the old design were exhausted. The new materials feature the same produce graphic used in the new banner introduced two years ago along with the emphasis on "fresh local vegetables". The new posters also highlight the Program's website at [www.paveggies.org](http://www.paveggies.org) where the recipes from the annual Vegetable Recipe Contest are featured.


The Pennsylvania state House of Representatives officially recognized August as Pennsylvania Produce Month with a special resolution. The Program's press release about PA Produce Month was referred to in articles in 18 newspapers reaching over 370,000 print and online readers.

To encourage greater participation in Produce Month, the Program mailed six small PA Produce Month posters to each grower ordering point-of-purchase orders from the Program. About 60 of these growers ordered the Produce Month kit in addition which included two large

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## Produce Month Celebrated

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**AUGUST**  
**is PA Produce Month**

**Fresh local  
vegetables  
at their best!**

Visit [www.paveggies.org](http://www.paveggies.org) for tasty recipes!  
Pennsylvania Vegetable Marketing and Research Program

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 price cards were requested for about 230 stores by Acme, Karns, Lancaster Family-Owned Markets, Redner's Warehouse Markets, ShopRite (Wakefern) and ShurFine (Associated Wholesalers).

## Mid-Atlantic Convention Opens Jan. 27

The 2015 Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention will be held January 27 to 29 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](http://www.mafvc.org) or 717-694-3596.

## Changes for August Promotion Planned for 2015

In March 2014, the Vegetable Marketing and Research Board, with the aid of a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, hired Jeff Manning to evaluate the Program's promotion efforts. Manning, who was the keynote speaker at the 2013 Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention, is a recognized authority on agricultural commodity promotions. He was part of the team that created the highly successful "Got Milk?" promotion for the dairy industry and has worked with beef, potato, egg, raisin, and cherry promotions as well.

Mr. Manning found that the Program's promotion activities – point-of-purchase materials distribution, press relations, vegetable recipe contest and August is PA Produce Month promotion – were generally well executed. However, he recommended that due to the extremely limited amount of funds available for promotions, the Program could be more effective if it concentrated all its efforts and funding into one month-long promotion during August. His suggestion was that the promotion focus on encouraging consumers to visit nearby community farmer's markets and roadside farm markets to find fresh, local vegetables in the peak of their season during August.

Next year's August promotion will be different than past August is PA Produce Month promotions and may even have a different name. Plans will be developed this winter. The Board voted to reserve \$10,000 in Specialty Crop Block Grant funds originally planned for radio advertising for the 2014 Produce Month for the new August promotion in 2015. The Department of Agriculture has also approved additional Specialty Crop Block Grant funding for the new promotion in 2015.

Details of the new promotion will be announced in the coming months.

## 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, prepare for next season by calling Sandy Hopple at 717-787-2940.

## Questions?

Call the Program at 717-694-3596 or email us at [pvrmp@embarqmail.com](mailto:pvrmp@embarqmail.com). We are here to serve you.

## Are You “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](http://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 [zjihorski@pa.gov](mailto:zjihorski@pa.gov).

## Point of Purchase Materials Still Available

The Program will continue to ship point-of-purchase items to growers through the fall – we do ask that all orders be submitted by November 30, 2014.



Supplies of banners, binwrap, roadside signs, price cards, small price paddles, price stickers, brochures, and recipe cards are all in stock and ready to ship. We are out of large “Simply Delicious” price paddles but can offer large “PA Preferred” price paddles in place of them. We also have plenty of medium “Simply Delicious” tee-shirts but we are completely out of large, extra large and extra extra large shirts and aprons.

The newly designed banner (shown above) introduced two years ago and other items in the Program’s selection of point-of-purchase materials were shipped to over 345 growers across the state this year.

The banner and other items containing the “PA Preferred” logo can only be distributed to growers who are licensed by the Department of Agriculture to use the “PA Preferred” logo.

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 2014 will be accepted until November 30. If you have misplaced your order form, contact the Program at 717-694-3596 or [pvmrp@embarqmail.com](mailto:pvmrp@embarqmail.com) or visit our website at [www.paveggies.org](http://www.paveggies.org).