



Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association

An association of commercial vegetable, potato and berry growers.

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Federal Legislative Priorities for 2017

The Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association is an association of commercial vegetable, potato and berry growers with 970 plus members representing an industry that annually produces crops valued at over \$170 million on 3,500 farms with 55,000 acres of farmland across the Commonwealth.

Labor Issues

Immigration and Farm Labor Reform – Our members regularly list immigration reform and labor availability as one of their main legislative concerns. Our growers need an affordable and dependable labor supply to stay in business. We need immigration reform that creates a legal labor force with reasonable verification requirements. A mandatory E-verify bill without a workable agricultural labor program would be disastrous for American agriculture.

Card Check – We are opposed to the elimination of the secret ballot for employees in deciding on union representation and to mandatory arbitration to resolve failed union and employer contract negotiations.

Environmental

Waters of the United States – We are concerned that the changes in regulations adopted by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers will require federal permits and approval for many ordinary farm practices that are currently adequately regulated at the state and local level.

Food Safety

Good Agricultural Practices, Produce Traceability – We support safe food production systems, but these mandates should not be so burdensome so as to prevent our small growers from competing in the marketplace for negligible improvement in food safety.

Appropriations

Specialty Crop Funding – The Specialty Crop Block Grants have been a major source of funding for our industry's promotion and research activities. These funds need to be maintained.

Land Grant Agricultural Research and Extension Funding – Federal funding of these key agricultural support programs has continued to dwindle. Farmers depend on the research and extension activities of their land grant institutions.

Nutrition Funding - The Farmers' Market Nutrition Program for Women, Infant, Children clients and senior citizens is of great benefit to both of these groups and our growers.

Health Care Costs

Health Insurance - Most of our members are self-employed and/or small employers.

Spiraling health insurance costs threaten their ability to expand or even maintain their operations.

Taxes

Business Depreciation Deduction Limit (Section 179) – This limit needs to remain at least at \$500,000.

Inheritance Tax – This tax should be eliminated.