



Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association

An association of commercial vegetable, potato and berry growers.

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Federal Legislative Priorities for 2019

The Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association is an association of commercial vegetable, potato and berry growers with 1,000 plus members representing an industry that annually produces crops valued at over \$147 million on 3,950 farms with 50,000 acres of farmland across the Commonwealth.

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 guest 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 support the repeal of the regulations proposed under the previous administration and support the revised regulations that do not unduly burden farmers and other landowners.

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.