



Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association

An association of commercial vegetable, potato and berry growers.

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Federal Legislative Priorities for 2020

The Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association is an association of commercial vegetable, potato and berry growers with 950 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

Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Regulations – Local governments are imposing burdensome costs on Pennsylvania farms as they seek to cover their costs of complying with this federal mandate.

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.

2020 Policy Resolutions

The Members of the Association recently adopted these additions to our Policy Resolutions put the Association on record as:

State and Federal Resolutions

1. Supporting increased efforts by the state and federal governments to facilitate broadband internet access to all areas of the state.
2. Supporting the exemption of Pennsylvania agriculture from Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) requirements mandated under the Federal Clean Water Act, and the funding by the state of all mandated Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) implementation practices.
3. Supporting the use of water quality monitoring in local watersheds for the verification of theoretical data in the Chesapeake Bay Model.
4. Supporting the use of genetic engineering of potatoes and the modern, enhanced potato breeding methods that enable breeders to improve potato varieties much sooner than traditional breeding methods.

Federal Resolutions

1. Supporting farm labor reform to ensure growers with access to an adequate legal labor force but opposing the Farm Workforce Modernization Act in the form passed by the House of Representatives.
2. Supporting a requirement for the operator of the UAS to gain the written consent of the landowner and/or farm operator if the UAS will be operating above the landowner's private property.
3. Supporting a requirement by the U.S government, as part of the private-government relationship with the National Crop Insurance Services, (NCIS), that the NCIS Board of Directors include at least one active farmer from each of the five major geographical regions of the United States.

The Association's full Policy Resolutions can be found at <https://www.pvga.org/representation/>.