

NEWS

for the commercial vegetable, potato and berry grower



December 2020 / Volume 43 Number 12

Don't Miss the 2021 Virtual Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention

The 2021 Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention educational program this year offers four days of educational sessions for vegetable, potato, berry, and fruit growers and marketers plus an industry trade show. Although the Convention will be held virtually, The Convention Joint Committee is working to present comprehensive educational program along with an opportunity to visit with suppliers of seeds, plants, pesticides, packaging, equipment and other farm supplies in the virtual trade show.

Remember that while the educational sessions will be streamed live on February 8 through the 11, the educational program will be available 24/7 from February 12 to March 31, 2021. So if you are busy February 8 to 11, you will still be able access the sessions. Likewise, many of the exhibitors may be available to chat online with you from 11:00 a.m. to noon on the Tuesday and Thursday of the Convention days, but their virtual booths will be open 24/7 until March 31.

Registration

All registration for the virtual Convention will be done online at www.mafvc.org. Registration is expected to be open about January 11, 2021, or before. There will be a flat registration

fee of \$40 for each person registered. While registration for the Convention will be separate from PVGA membership, **PLEASE** remember to renew your PVGA membership also. Dues invoices were mailed in December although dues may also be paid online at www.pvga.org.

Pesticide Credits Available

Pesticide credits will be available for Pennsylvania, Maryland and New Jersey pesticide applicators. When you register, you will be asked to enter your pesticide license number and birthdate. The Zoom platform that will be used for the virtual educational sessions allows the Convention managers to track who is attending each presentation. This information will be used after the Convention to send a report to the different state pesticide regulatory agencies about who has attended the sessions that qualify for pesticide credits.

For growers that have several employees that may want to watch presentations together, it will be possible to register several persons as a group although the \$40 registration fee will need to be paid for each individual.

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PVGA Annual Meeting Set for February 17 at 1:00 p.m.



The Annual Meeting of the General Membership of the Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association will be held virtually on Wednesday, February 17, 2021, at 1:00 p.m. All members are invited and encouraged to participate in the meeting. While the Annual Meeting is usually held during the Mid-Atlantic Convention, due to the virtual nature of the Convention this year, the Board decided to schedule their meeting and the Annual Meeting for the following week instead.

To participate in the virtual meeting, members will need to enter the meeting ID of 813 0091 5044 and passcode 827082 either from www.zoom.us or by calling 1-929-436-2866. Members who would like to participate by telephone on a toll-free line should call PVGA ahead of time at 717-694-3596.

The results of the mail balloting for the Board of Directors will be announced at the meeting. The terms of Robert Amsterdam, Brian Campbell, Peter Flynn, Arthur King, Amy Metrick, Michael Orzolek and Mark Troyer expire at the Annual Meeting this year. Mr. Amsterdam has decided not seek re-election but the rest of the incumbents are running for re-election. The Leadership and Recognition Committee has nominated all the eligible incumbents plus Matt Christner of Dawson and Ted LeBow of Bala Cynwid for election. Write-in votes are also allowed. Five of the candidates will be elected to three-year terms on the Board of Directors by the members. Ballots have been mailed to all members with the annual dues invoices. The ballots must be postmarked by January 15, 2021. All members are urged to vote in the election.

Two years ago the members approved changes to the Association's constitution to allow the Board to appoint one director to

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NEWS



*Pennsylvania
Vegetable Growers
Association*

*An association of
commercial vegetable,
potato and berry growers.*

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Mark Troyer '21
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Joel Weaver '23
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William Troxell
Richfield

What's Happening on the Farm

Brian Campbell

Good bye 2020, Hello 2021

Happy New Year to all! Are you all excited for the coming year?

Looking back at 2020, we all have so much to be thankful for, given the record increases in sales most all retail markets have seen. In addition, there are the record high prices most commodities were selling at.

It is important to recognize the hardships that many have experienced due to COVID, and our hearts go out to all of those families impacted.

How many of us ever expected we would experience a year where PVGA would have zero income from the Farm Show and the Convention. Monies from these events allowed PVGA to support research and the ongoing activities of PVGA.

I would like to personally reach out to all members and ask for donations to PVGA in order to help support the organization through these times of greatly reduced income. An anonymous director has provided a donation of \$10,000 and encouraged the Board of Directors to come up with enough monies to match this \$10,000 donation. Hoping we can see \$20,000 in donations from the Directors, I would also like to encourage the members to make a good faith effort in giving what they can in order to help. THANK YOU VERY MUCH TO ALL FOR THE EFFORTS.

Farmer to Food Box Program

I would like to share a little of my experience with this program as I was able to obtain a contract and work with many of the organizations that are involved with seeing that the food insecure people have access to fresh nutritious food.

I started shipping fresh fruits and vegetables on May 15th. The boxes we provided contained blueberries, oranges, tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, onions, radishes, carrots, potatoes, sweet potatoes and celery. My contract was for delivery in Pennsylvania and I did everything I could to cover the four corners of the state. I worked with many of the food banks and partner agencies, and also Feeding America (more specifically Feeding PA). It has been a very satisfying experience to see the vast numbers of volunteers that are helping provide food to the people in need.

It is amazing to truly understand the organization and structure these food banks and Feeding America have in order to be able to provide what is needed.

In my opinion, the traditional produce items like potatoes with long storage life that have been provided are beginning to change into a more nutritious and educational approach as we are seeing a vast variety of nutritious fruits and vegetables being provided. This is great, but it is also a challenge to be able to procure and logistically get the freshest product to those in need.

I look forward to helping the food banks and Feeding America in any way I can, and ultimately be able to help all growers get fresh nutritious fruits and vegetables from their farm to the tables of those who can use them.

Happy New Year and Thank You to all for what you do to help others.

Mr. Campbell is the President of the Association.

He grows fresh vegetables for both the retail and wholesale markets on his farms near Berwick.

Please Note: In the membership renewal letters, PVGA had only requested that Pennsylvania members consider donating to the Association because PVGA is only registered to solicit donations in Pennsylvania, not in other states.

The Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers News is the official monthly publication of the

Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association, Inc.,

815 Middle Road, Richfield, PA 17086-9205

Phone and fax: 717-694-3596 • Email: pvga@pvga.org • Website: www.pvga.org

Our Mission:

The Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association serves Pennsylvania's commercial vegetable, potato and berry growers through education, research, advocacy and promotion.

Our Vision:

The Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association will be the driving force in ensuring the future viability of the commercial vegetable, potato and berry industries in Pennsylvania.

Inquiries about membership, this publication or advertising rates should be directed to William Troxell, Executive Director, at the above address.

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Several PVGA Scholarships Available

The Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association is pleased to be able to offer two Rudolph Grob Memorial Scholarships each year to students pursuing higher education. Previously the scholarships were only available to children or grandchildren of PVGA members who were pursuing a career in the vegetable, potato, or berry production industries. In January 2020 the Board of Directors approved revisions to the scholarship criteria to make it available to a broader range of students.

The Association gives the annual scholarships in memory of Rudolph Grob of Millersville who served the Association for 50 years as a Director, 20 years as Secretary Treasurer and for over 20 years as manager of the Association's Farm Show Booth. Mr. Grob was a horticulture graduate of Penn State University who was employed for many years at Funks Farm Market in Millersville. The funds for the scholarships are generated by a portion of the interest earned by the Association's Keystone Fund, an endowment-type fund created by the voluntary extra dues paid by the Keystone Members of the Association.

The purpose of the scholarship is to assist students in obtaining a baccalaureate or associate degree that will enable them to pursue a career in the vegetable, potato or berry production or related industries or businesses. Children or grandchildren of an Association member who has been a member in good standing for one or more years and who are pursuing a degree in an agriculture-related field may also be considered.

Preference will be given first to children or grandchildren of Association members who are pursuing a career in the vegetable, potato or berry production or related industries or businesses. Second preference will be given to non-member students who are pursuing a career in the vegetable, potato or berry production or related industries or businesses. Last preference will be given to children or grandchildren of members who are pursuing a degree in an agriculture-related field but necessarily in the vegetable, potato or berry industries.

Applicants must be currently enrolled or be planning to enroll in a two-year associate or four-year baccalaureate degree program at an accredited institution and be in good academic standing.

The \$1,000 scholarship will be awarded to two students for a one-year period although if funds are available and there are no other qualified applicants, the committee may award \$2,000 scholarships. Recipients may apply for a renewal although preference will be given to other qualified students over previous recipients. It is not a need-based scholarship.

The following items must be included with a completed application form:

- A copy of the most recent academic transcript.
- Two letters of reference from someone outside of the immediate family.
- A typed essay (approximately 500 words) on one of the following topics:
 - Describe the biggest issue that has faced the Vegetable/Potato/Berry Industry in Pennsylvania in the last five years or that the Industry will face in the next five years and how you plan to deal with this issue in your future career, or
 - Describe your previous experiences with the Vegetable/Potato/Berry Industry and the role you hope to play in the Pennsylvania Vegetable/Potato/Berry Industry upon graduation.
 - Describe your previous experiences in agriculture and the role you hope to play in agriculture upon graduation.

Applications must be received or postmarked by April 30, 2021, and are available by contacting PVGA at 717-694-3596 or pvga@pvga.org. The application is also available on the website at <https://www.pvga.org/services/rudolph-grob-memorial-scholarship/>. The scholarship committee may request to interview the applicant in person or by telephone as well as contact college or school advisors and/or references. If you have a child or grandchild in college, encourage them to apply for the scholarships.

PVGA Committees and Board Meet in December

Since 2016, most of the major PVGA committees have had face-to-face meetings on the day prior to the December Board of Directors meeting in a "Committee Day" event. This year the committees and the Board met virtually instead. The Executive, Leadership and Recognition, Educational, Government Affairs, Administrative, Capacity Development, Berry and Potato Committees met individually during the week prior to the December 8th Board of Directors virtual meeting. The committees each made recommendations to the Board about their respective areas of programming.

The Vegetable Marketing and Vegetable Research Committees, the two other major committees, are joint committees with the Pennsylvania Vegetable Marketing and Research Program (PVMRP). Those committees met virtually in November in conjunction with the PVMRP Board meeting to make vegetable promotion plans for 2021 and to evaluate the vegetable research pre-proposals respectively.

Some of the actions taken by the Board of Directors were:

- approved the minutes of the July 21, 2020, meeting;
- received the financial reports which showed current balances of \$273,592 in the General Fund, \$201,326 in the Keystone Fund, and \$7,364 in the Onion Committee Fund;
- agreed to decrease 2021 vegetable research funding from \$60,000 to \$30,000 and small fruit research funding from \$14,000 to \$10,000 for 2021;
- reviewed the 2021 budget worksheet which is projecting about an 80% drop in revenue and a deficit of \$133,400 after in-

cluding the above cuts in research funding resulting in a projected year-end General Fund balance of \$144,600;

- planned to eliminate the "Committee Day" in-person committee meetings in December 2021 as a cost-saving measure;
- decided to ask Pennsylvania members to consider giving donations to increase the amount available for vegetable and small fruit research in 2021;
- voted to work toward maintaining a small fruit position in the Department of Plant Science at Penn State;
- approved several award recommendations from the Leadership and Recognition Committee;
- decided not to publish a printed Membership Directory as a cost-saving measure for 2021 but to put the directory online in a "members-only" section of the website;
- agreed to offer sponsorships to commercial entities on the weekly email update as a new source of revenue for the Association;
- encouraged offering access to the virtual Mid-Atlantic Convention to high school agricultural classes at no cost;
- recommended eight state, three state and federal and one federal Policy Resolutions to the members for adoption at the Annual Meeting (which are included in a separate newsletter article);
- set the following state legislative priorities for 2021:
 - Elimination of unemployment compensation fees for H-2A workers.
 - Adequate agricultural research and extension funding.
 - Limitation of liability for agritourism operations.

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PVGA Committees and Board Meet in December *continued from page 3*

- Relaxed stormwater management requirement for high tunnels.
- Reduction of stormwater fees for farmland.
- Increased broadband internet access in rural areas.
- Farmers' Market Nutrition Program funding.
- set the following federal legislative priorities:
- Immigration and farm labor reform.
- Maintenance of secret balloting for union representation.
- Reform of the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System regulations.
- Reasonable water use and produce traceability Food Safety Modernization Act rules for small growers.
- Continued Specialty Crop funding.
- Adequate agricultural research and extension funding.
- Continued nutrition program funding.
- Reasonable cost healthcare options for the self-employed.
- Inheritance tax elimination.
- Maintenance of the Business Depreciation Deduction Limit at \$500,000.
- adopted an updated version of the Standing Rules for the Association; and
- approved the following donations, sponsorships and promotions for 2021:

• National Ag County Agents Convention (Donations)	\$500
• 2022 Farm Show Reception Sponsorship (Donations)	\$500
• Ag In The Classroom Program (Donations)	\$500
• Ag Science Education Mobile Lab (Donations)	\$500
• Capitol Hunger Garden (Donations budget)	\$200
• Dela. Valley Univ. A-Day Program Ad (Promotions)	\$125
• Ag Progress Days Booth with PVMRP (Promotions)	\$350
• Farm-City Day Vegetables (Promotions)	+ \$50
• 2022 Farm Show Veg. Cooking Demos (Promotion)	\$1,650
• 2022 PASA Conference Program Ad (Membership)	\$310
• 2022 Farm Show Public Officials Day (Legislative)	\$500
• Keystone Cornucopia Reception (Legislative)	\$200
• Ag Council Research Tour (Legislative)	\$100
• 2022 Farm Show Livestock Sale (Farm Show Booth)	+\$100
• 2022 Farm Show Bus Transportation (Farm Show)	+\$300
• 2022 Farm Show Food Court Cleaning (Farm Show)	+\$500
• 2022 Farm Show Visitor's Guide Ad (Farm Show)	\$750
• Virtual Convention (Convention)	\$500

The Board also received various other reports. The next meeting will be on the morning of February 17, 2021, prior to the Annual Meeting.

PVGA Annual Meeting Set for February 17 at 1:00 p.m. *continued from page 1*

a three-year term each year. When the mail-ballot election system was instituted the Leadership and Recognition Committee adopted the practice of nominating several more candidates than seats available. Obviously, the vote of the members determines who is elected but the results may result in certain groups (such as potato growers, processing growers, berry growers, women, etc.) or areas of the state not being represented on the Board. Thus after the results from the member balloting are determined, the Board selects an additional Board member to help insure the diversity of the Board. Implementing this system three years ago resulted in the Board of Directors having 21 members for 2018 because the members elected six members and the Board appointed a seventh. Beginning with 2019 only five Directors have been elected by the membership so that over a three-year period, the number of Directors will return to 18 after this year's election.

At the Annual Meeting, the members will also receive reports on membership, finances, and the other activities of the Association.

The following additions to the Association's policy resolutions are being proposed for adoption by the members at the Annual Meeting. The underlined text is to be added to the resolutions.

State Resolutions

1. Supporting provisions that agricultural vehicles which are less than 14'0" in height traveling on the road or in the road right of way not be liable for any damage resulting from knocking down low hanging tree limbs and branches encroaching the road right of way.
2. Supporting state appropriations for an Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program that will be sufficient to reduce the level of nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment runoff estimated from agriculture by at least 50 percent by 2025.
3. Supporting an exemption for farmers from regulations for draining wet areas on croplands if the area drained is two acres or less.
4. Supporting a collaboration between the Pennsylvania Departments of Agriculture and Labor and Industry and the agriculture industry to identify ways to improve workforce development at the state and local level and to assist growers in providing or accessing housing for H-2A workers.

5. Supporting changes in the PA Game Commission definition of a "farmer" to include any individual or entity that actively cultivates, operates, or manages land for a profit when determining wildlife harvests for crop damage.
6. Supporting provisions that all agriculture and agriculturally-related businesses, including but not limited to farm markets, farmers markets and greenhouses and their retail operations be deemed "essential" during a disaster emergency.
7. Supporting modifications to the permitting and engineering requirements for the construction of farm ponds to make such ponds more economically feasible for growers.
8. Supporting a prohibition for counties and municipalities in Pennsylvania to enact and enforce zoning ordinances that require tracts or parcels of agricultural land, consisting of 10 or more acres, to be re-zoned if the agricultural land is being used for commercial purposes.

Federal and State Resolutions

1. Supporting research to combat new emerging pests (e.g., Brown Marmorated Stink Bug, the Spotted Wing Drosophila Fruit Fly, Bermuda Grass Stem Maggots, the Spotted Lanternfly, etc.).
2. Supporting efforts to have all 48 contiguous states develop a reciprocal agreement regarding their farm plate registrations and to have at least Pennsylvania pursue such agreements with neighboring states.
3. Supporting incentives and support be given to utilities to offer three-phase power to farm operations at a more reasonable cost.

Federal Resolutions

1. Supporting efforts to harmonize food safety audits with what is required under the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) to reduce duplication.



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NEWS

National News Briefs

Congress Passes Funding and COVID-19 Relief Bills

On December 21 Congress completed its work for the 116th Congress by passing a \$1.4 trillion funding bill that will keep the government running through the end of the 2021 fiscal year and a \$900 billion COVID-19 relief package. That pretty much ends all of the legislative activity for the remainder of 2020. Below are highlights about the above actions along with additional items of interest for the United Fresh Government Relations Community.

COVID Relief package sent to the President – In rare moment of bipartisan support, the House voted 359-53 and the Senate voted 92-6 on a \$900 billion COVID relief package. It is now awaiting President Trump's signature. The package contains \$26 billion in support for nutrition and agriculture priorities many of which we have been pushing for since the summer. Finally, \$300 billion is dedicated to a second draw of Paycheck Protection Program loans and the program also includes important policy changes around supplier expenses that are now eligible to be used for PPP loan funding.

Produce workers get priority access for vaccines – The CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommended that essential frontline food and ag workers receive priority access for vaccinations in Category "1b". This means our frontline workers from farm to grocery store fall right behind "1a" status for frontline health care workers and long-term care facilities residents and employees. Since June, United Fresh has been working with Trump and the incoming Biden Administration, representing the fresh produce industry to ensure frontline workers have a priority access to the vaccine. United Fresh has been the fresh produce industry's representative on scores of calls with CDC's COVID-19 food systems team, the associations representing state, county, and city health officials, and both administrations, actively advocating on your behalf.

Coalition sends letter to Biden Transition Team on Immigration – The Agriculture Workforce Coalition sent a letter to President Elect Biden's transition team outlining key priorities for immigration reform in agriculture. This letter will be used as the foundation of our efforts to ensure agriculture immigration reform is included in legislation considered during the first 100 days of the Biden Administration.

Fresh Produce Purchasing Working Group Engaged – With the current round of funding for Farmers to Families expiring at the end of the month, the need of nonprofits' access to food has been garnering additional attention. United Fresh has recently convened a Fresh Produce Purchasing Working Group made up of stakeholders from the grower, distributor, and nonprofit communities to help communicate the need for, and improvements to, future purchasing programs. As we look to 2021 and recovery, focusing on increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables will be as important as ever with recent data indicating that those with diet-related diseases like obesity and diabetes are twice as likely as their peers to be hospitalized due to complications from COVID, and have a 50% higher likelihood of dying.

USDA releases report on Agriculture Transportation – The USDA released a report on the importance of US Highways to agriculture. In the report it found that agricultural producers are the single largest user of freight services, comprising 17% of freight movements across all transportation modes in dollar value and 33% of all ton-miles. In 2017, 2.9 billion tons of agricultural products worth \$2.5 trillion moved on the freight network. This study will be a good benchmark in providing important data to Congress as they consider infrastructure legislation in 2021.

Adapted from the United Fresh Produce Association Government Affairs Update.



Photo: PA Farm Bureau

Thompson Named Top Republican on House Agriculture Committee

Pennsylvania is likely to have a much stronger influence on national agriculture policy going into next year.

U.S. Rep. Glenn "G.T." Thompson, who represents parts of north-central and Western Pennsylvania, has been named Republican leader of the U.S. House Agriculture Committee.

As ranking member, Thompson will lead the committee's GOP caucus and work closely with the committee's chairman, Rep. David Scott (D-Ga.), on legislation related to agriculture, rural communities and food security.

"Rep. Thompson is a leader in Pennsylvania's agricultural community, not just in his district but statewide," Pennsylvania Farm Bureau President Rick Ebert said. "He has been a close friend to Pennsylvania Farm Bureau and we look forward to continuing to work with him as he takes on a greater leadership role. With Rep. Thompson's election as ranking member, we have an even greater opportunity to put Pennsylvania agriculture in the national spotlight."

From Farm Bureau Express, Penna. Farm Bureau, December 11, 2020.



Vilsack to Reprise Role as U.S. Secretary of Agriculture

Tom Vilsack, who served as agriculture secretary in the Obama administration, has been tapped by presumptive President-Elect Joe Biden to return to the role.

Tom Vilsack, who served as agriculture secretary in the Obama administration, has been tapped by presumptive President-Elect Joe Biden to return to the role.

A Pittsburgh native, Vilsack was governor of Iowa before he was picked to lead the U.S. Department of Agriculture by President Barack Obama in 2009. Vilsack served throughout the Obama administration.

"Tom Vilsack understands that the agriculture sector is far more complex than most people understand. He believes in a 'big tent' philosophy that supports all types of production and understands the importance of respecting farmers and ranchers as partners worthy of support in the race to achieve sustainability goals," American Farm Bureau President Zippy Duvall said. "The American Farm Bureau stands ready to support Tom and work closely with him knowing his success as Ag Secretary correlates directly with America's farmers and ranchers, as well as our rural communities, having the support they need to flourish."

Farm Bureau built a strong relationship with Vilsack during his first time serving as USDA secretary and looks forward to building on that relationship.

From Farm Bureau Express, Penna. Farm Bureau, December 11, 2020.

Adverse Effect Wage Rate Frozen for Two Years

The Department of Labor announced it will stabilize the wages paid to guest farmworkers. The Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR) will remain at 2020 rates for the next two years.

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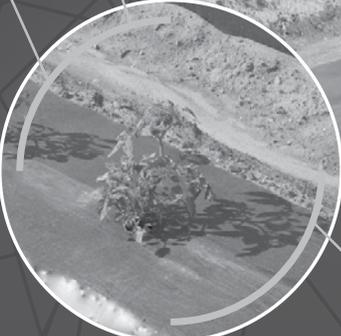
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NEWS

State News Briefs

Adopted State Budget is Good News for Agriculture

In the final days of their legislative session, the Pennsylvania General Assembly adopted a budget that will fund the state through June 30, 2021.

The spending plan does not call for any broad-based tax increases and instead relies on federal stimulus dollars and transfers from special accounts to fund operations.

Nearly all of agriculture's priority line items will receive flat funding through the rest of the fiscal year. The Department of Agriculture will receive roughly \$600,000 less in spending than the previous fiscal year, and the department's disaster preparedness line will receive a \$1 million cut.

In addition, the state is setting aside grant money to aid county and community fairs that had to cancel due to COVID-19. Those fairs will be able to apply for reimbursements for money they typically would have received for hosting agriculture-specific events and contests.

Work on the state's 2021-2022 budget will start in February when Gov. Tom Wolf unveils his next spending plan.

From the Penna. Agricultural Alliance Issues Update, Penna. Farm Bureau, November/December 2020.

Agritourism, COVID-19 Immunity, Vetoed

Gov. Tom Wolf vetoed sweeping COVID-19 immunity legislation that contained language that would have provided civil immunity exemptions to agritourism businesses.

House Bill 1348, drafted to provide limited immunity relief to farmers that host public events and activities on their farms, was amended into a larger civil immunity bill in the final days of the General Assembly's two-year session.

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau is disappointed with Gov. Wolf's decision and will seek to address agritourism liability reform again this legislative session. The governor's veto memo expressed objections to the COVID-19-related provisions but did not mention any qualms with the legal protections for agritourism.

House Bill 1348 was approved by the full House 120-81 before it was amended into HB 1737 while in the Senate. HB 1348 had bipartisan support as it moved through the legislative process. However, the bill became more controversial when it was amended into a larger bill aimed at COVID-19 immunity.

House Bill 1348 would have provided farmers limited civil immunity from accidents that occurred beyond their ability to control, such as trip and fall accidents in corn mazes. In order to receive those protections, farmers would be required to post multiple warning signs and also have visitors sign waivers, or place waivers on the back of admission tickets.

House Bill 1348 was approved by the full House 120-81 before it was amended into HB 1737 while in the Senate. Pennsylvania Farm Bureau wants to thank the following Democrats who crossed party lines to vote in favor of this legislation: Danilo Burgos, Frank Burns, Pam DeLissio, Bill Kortz, Bridget Kosierowski, Danielle Otten, Eddie Day Pashinski, Adam Ravenstahl, Harry Readshaw, Christina Sappey, Pam Snyder, Wendy Ullman, Joe Webster, Dan Williams and Rosita Youngblood.

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau wants to especially thank Representative Barb Gleim, who introduced HB 1348, and lead the charge to get this legislation passed. In addition, Representatives Mark Keller, Marty Causer and Kerry Benninghoff worked to make sure the bill was voted on in the House before the legislative session ended. Farm Bureau also thanks Senate Majority Leader Jake Corman for working to get agritourism legislation added into the larger immunity legislation that was eventually sent to the Governor.

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau will work with lawmakers to reintroduce agritourism legislation in the coming months.

From the Penna. Agricultural Alliance Issues Update, Penna. Farm Bureau, November/December 2020.

Pennsylvania Secures Federal Funding for Broadband

Pennsylvania internet providers successfully bid for \$368.7 million in federal funds to expand broadband internet service to underserved areas over the next decade. The funding comes through the Federal Communication Commission's Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Phase I auction.

The state estimates that the funding will help expand high-speed internet access to more than 327,000 Pennsylvanians and affect nearly every county.

Expanding broadband access has been a top priority for Pennsylvania Farm Bureau. Internet connectivity is becoming increasingly important to agriculture, business and everyday life yet many rural communities lack adequate access.

From Farm Bureau Express, Penna. Farm Bureau, December 11, 2020.

Broadband Expansion Bills Become Law

Two bills that will help expand broadband access in rural Pennsylvania are now law.

Gov. Tom Wolf recently signed Senate Bill 835, following its passage by the General Assembly.

The legislation, introduced by Sen. Wayne Langerholc of Cambria County, creates a special account for grants to develop broadband service in underserved areas. The grants, which will be overseen by the Commonwealth Financing Authority, will be funded by shifting an existing \$5 million tax credit.

A month earlier, the governor signed House Bill 2438, sponsored by Rep. Clint Owlett of Tioga County, after the measure cleared the General Assembly.

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That bill makes it easier for rural cooperatives to offer broadband service by allowing them to use their existing utility easements to install fiber-optic lines without having to renegotiate agreements. Cooperatives would still have to renegotiate if the installation of broadband service results in the need for new infrastructure, such as new poles.

Expanding broadband access is among Pennsylvania Farm Bureau's chief legislative priorities. While high-speed internet is becoming more and more essential to agriculture, business and daily life—a reality underscored by the COVID-19 pandemic—many rural communities lack adequate access.

From the Penna. Agricultural Alliance Issues Update, Penna. Farm Bureau, November/December 2020.

General Assembly Caucuses Choose Leadership

The General Assembly's four caucuses have selected their leadership for next year, with women making historic rises.

Senate Republicans selected Kim Ward, of Westmoreland County, as Majority Leader, replacing Jake Corman, of Centre County, who was elected as President Pro Tempore of the Senate—the highest ranking position in the body. Ward's selection as majority leader is the first time that a woman has held that position in the Senate.

House Democrats selected Joanna McClinton, of Philadelphia, as Democratic Leader—the first time a woman has held that position.

Also in the Senate, Republicans selected Pat Browne of Lehigh County as Appropriations Chair; John Gordner, of Columbia County, as Majority Whip; Bob Mensch, of Montgomery County, as Majority Caucus Chairman; and Ryan Aument as Majority Caucus Secretary.

Senate Democrats selected Jay Costa, Jr. of Allegheny County as Democratic Leader; Vincent Hughes of Philadelphia as Democratic Appropriations Chair; Anthony Williams of Philadelphia as Democratic Whip; Wayne Fontana of Allegheny County as Caucus Chair; Maria Collett of Montgomery County as Caucus Secretary; and Katie Muth of Montgomery County as Democratic Policy Committee Chair.

In the House, Republicans selected Bryan Cutler, of Lancaster County, as Speaker of the House; Kerry Benninghoff, of Centre County as Majority Leader; Stan Saylor of York County as Appropriations Chair; Donna Oberlander of Clarion County as Majority Whip; Marty Causer, of McKean County as Policy Chair; Mike Reese, of Westmoreland County as Caucus Chairman; Martina White, of Philadelphia, as Caucus Secretary; and Kurt Masser of Northumberland County as Caucus Administrator.

Also in the House, Democrats selected Jordan Harris, of Philadelphia County, as Democratic Whip; Matt Bradford, of Montgomery County, as Democratic Appropriations Chair; Dan Miller, of Allegheny County, as Democratic Caucus Chair; Tina Davis, of Bucks County, as Democratic Caucus Secretary; Mike Schlossberg, of Lehigh County as Caucus Administrator; and Ryan Bizarro of Erie County as Democratic Policy Chair.

From the Penna. Agricultural Alliance Issues Update, Penna. Farm Bureau, November/December 2020.

Plenty of Funding Available for Farm Conservation Planning

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection has lots of funding still available to reimburse farmers in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed for costs associated with developing conservation plans.

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NEWS

As of mid-October, the Agricultural Plan Reimbursement Program still had \$827,000 available to reimburse producers for the cost of hiring technical experts to develop Nutrient and Manure Management and Agricultural Erosion and Sediment Control plans. Plans developed after Jan. 1, 2019 are eligible.

More than one plan may be submitted for reimbursement, for up to a maximum of \$6,000. Plans must be submitted by May 31, 2021 to be eligible for reimbursement.

More information about the program is available at <http://bit.ly/2Nranxh>.

For additional questions, farmers in Bradford, Cameron, Carbon, Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Columbia, Elk, Jefferson, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Lycoming, McKean, Montour, Northumberland, Potter, Schuylkill, Snyder, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Union, Tioga, Wayne, and Wyoming Counties should contact Josh Glace of Larson Design Group at jglace@larsondesigngroup.com or 570.374.5700, extension 4011.

Farmers in Adams, Bedford, Berks, Blair, Cambria, Chester, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Indiana, Juniata, Lancaster, Lebanon, Mifflin, Perry, Somerset, and York Counties should contact Jedd Moncavage of TeamAg at jeddm@teamaginc.com or 717.721.6795.

From the Penna. Agricultural Alliance Issues Update, Penna. Farm Bureau, November/December 2020.

New Program to Help Agriculture Businesses Navigate Pandemic

The Penn State Small Business Development Center and partner programs at Clarion University and The University of Scranton are launching a new Pennsylvania Small Business Development Centers Agriculture Center of Excellence, a joint initiative to help Pennsylvania agriculture businesses sustain operations and stabilize food supply chains in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The program will offer training and assistance to help agriculture businesses manage their finances, improve their businesses and navigate the aid programs and new health and safety considerations related to the pandemic.

Learn more at <https://sbdc.psu.edu/about/pasbdc-agriculture-center-of-excellence>.

From the Penna. Agricultural Alliance Issues Update, Penna. Farm Bureau, November/December 2020.

Kieffer Named to AFBF Post



Sam Kieffer, who has led Pennsylvania Farm Bureau's professional staff for nearly four years at chief administrative officer, has been named vice president of public affairs for the American Farm Bureau Federation.

Kieffer has served PFB members in a variety of roles since joining the organization's staff in 2005. Kieffer began his Farm Bureau career working with grassroots members and county Farm Bureaus as regional organization director and went on to serve as national government relations director and manager of the Government Affairs and Communications Division. He is a 12-year veteran of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard, where he served as a logistics officer, and grew up on a family grain farm in Northumberland County.

"Sam brought passion and care to his career at Pennsylvania Farm Bureau," PFB Rick Ebert said. "He has always made serving members his top priority and has fostered that same member-driven culture throughout the organization. We thank Sam for his service to PFB. While we will miss his efforts in Pennsylvania, we look forward to continue working with him as he serves Farm Bureau members at the national level."

As PFB's top administrator, Kieffer oversaw the day-to-day operations of PFB, its affiliated companies, and the Pennsylvania Friends of Agriculture Foundation and worked closely with PFB's State Board of Directors to plan for the organization's future and navigate challenges. He assisted the board with efforts such as modernizing the structure of PFB membership, examining how PFB can position itself to best serve Pennsylvania farmers going into the future, and developing a new strategic plan for the organization along with a new mission statement: Growing Communities. Many Voices. United Vision.

Kieffer begins his new position at AFBF Jan. 1. In that role, he will lead AFBF's government relations, advocacy and team of economists.

From Farm Bureau Express, Penna. Farm Bureau, December 11, 2020.

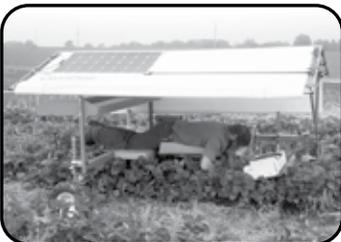
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CONVENTION

Don't Miss the 2021 Virtual Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention

continued from page 1

Awards Announced

Normally the different associations that sponsor the Mid-Atlantic Convention present their annual awards at the banquet held at the Convention. This year, the awards for the various associations will be posted on a special page on the Convention website. PVGA will be announcing it's 2021 Annual Award, two Life Memberships, and its Young Grower Award at the Convention. We will also be recognizing the 40 Under 40 Award winners from Pennsylvania.

Research Posters

At the Hershey Lodge, you may have noticed posters on easels lining the hallway outside the Nigeran and Trinidad Rooms. These posters report on the research work of graduate students and other researchers whose work is supported by industry and/or not included on the program otherwise. The virtual Convention offers the opportunity for researchers to present this type of information in a printed form with text and pictures. In many ways it may be more convenient for you to view posters online at your leisure than in front of an actual poster in a crowded hallway at Hershey. There will be a page on the virtual Convention website that will list these research posters.

Convention Program

The following topics and speakers have been scheduled for the educational program at the 2021 Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention. Please note, speakers, topics, times and rooms in this program are subject to change. Check for updates on the website at www.mafvc.org.

* indicates topic expected to qualify for a category pesticide update training credit

** indicates topic expected to qualify for a core pesticide update training credit

2021 Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention Program

Monday, February 8, 2021

9:00 to 11:00/11:15 AM

110 Wholesale Marketing

- 9:00 **Produce Industry Update: Where Do Go from Here?** - Joseph Watson, Produce Marketing Association
 9:45 **To Be Announced**

120 Third Party Liability

- 9:00 **Preventing Third Party Legal Liability from Operations and Products** - Brook Duer, Penn State Ag Law Center
One response to COVID-19 from federal and state governments has been to prioritize the creation of "liability protections," but exactly for whom and against what type of liability? This session will first explore those questions to help agricultural producers understand what legal liabilities to third parties exist and don't exist - without the rhetoric. Then the session will proceed to outline an understandable snapshot of exactly and how to best address those liabilities without overthinking things. There will be lots of time for live questions and answers.

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130 General Vegetables

- 9:00 **Precision Restoration of the Soil Microbial Rhizosphere Ecosystem** - Dr. Richard Woodward
 9:45 **Anaerobic Soil Disinfestation: A Regenerative Approach for The Management of Soilborne Pests and Pathogens** - Erin Roskopf, USDA-ARS
 10:30 **Optimizing Anaerobic Soil Disinfestation for Pennsylvania Vegetable Production Systems** - Dr. Francesco Di Gioia and Raymond Balaguer, Penn State Univ.

12:00 noon to 2:00/2:15 PM

210 Hydroponics/Greenhouse Vegetables

- 12:00 **Plant Nutrition for Hydroponic Lettuce** - Neil Mattson, Cornell Univ.
 12:30 **Water and Nitrogen Management and Use Efficiency of Hydroponic Leafy Vegetables** - Daniel Leskovar, Texas A&M Univ.
 1:00 **To Be Announced**
 1:30 **Agronomic Biofortification of Soilless Vegetables for the Production of Functional Greens** - Dr. Francesco Di Gioia, Penn State Univ.

CONVENTION

220 Honeybees for Pollination

- 12:00 **Honey Bee Biology and Life Cycle** – Dr. Margarita Lopez Uribe, Penn State Univ.
- 12:30 **The Beekeeper's Calendar and Stressors** – Dr. Robyn Underwood, Penn State Univ.
- 1:00 **How to Get Started with Honey Bees** – Thomas Butzler, Penn State Extension
- 1:30 **Products of the Hive** – Dr. Robyn Underwood, Penn State Univ.

230 Post-Harvest Food Safety

- 12:00 **Food Safety Concerns of Packing Equipment** - Chris Callahan, Univ. of Vermont
- 12:45 **FSMA Update on Traceability and/or Water Use Regulations** – Dr. Emily Greip, United Fresh Produce Association
- 1:30 **FSMA Inspection Update** – Penna. Dept. of Agric.

2:30 to 4:30/4:45 PM

310 Creative Marketing

- 2:30 **Creative Marketing Discussions & Interviews with Innovative Beginner Farmers** – Brendon Pearsall, RU Ready 2 Farm Program, Rutgers Univ.
- 3:00 **Challenges & Opportunities in Urban Farmers Markets** – Lauren Errickson, New Brunswick Community Farmers Market
- 3:30 **Expanding My Farmers Market in 2020** – Lenny and Lauren Prezorski, Cold Spring Farms
- 4:00 **What's Happening at Snapping Turtle Farm?** – Alison Akbay, Snapping Turtle Farm

0320 Ag Workplace/Legal Compliance COVID-19 –

- 2:30 **Ag Workforce Legal Compliance Check-Up** – Brook Duer, Penn State Ag Law Center
2020 was been an eventful year for federal and state governmental changes to laws which impact the employer-employee relationship. Many of those changes came and went with the change of calendar year. Some are still with us. This session will attempt to arm agricultural employers with the chance to do a "check-up" on their compliance with current changes/requirements, as well as provide lots of information on where to go for answers and guidance. There will be lots of time for live questions and answers.

0330 Specialty Vegetables

- 2:30 **Mid-Atlantic (NE) Demand for Ethnic Produce** - Dr. Ramu Govindasamy, Rutgers Coop. Extension
- 3:15 **Baby Hemp as a New Salad Green** – Dr. Neil Mattson, Cornell Univ.
- 3:45 **Asian Vegetable Variety Selection and Production** - Dr. Lewis Jett, West Virginia Univ.

Tuesday, February 9, 2021

9:00 to 11:00/11:15 AM

0410 Sweet Corn

- 9:00 ****The Worker Protection Standard and the AEZ Change** - James Harvey, Penn State Univ.
- 9:30 ***IPM in Sweet Corn - Practices and Resources: Plus an App for That** - Marion Zuefle, Cornell Univ.
- 10:15 ***Ear-Feeding Insect Control** – Dr. David Owen, Univ. of Delaware

Continued on page 14

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CONVENTION

Mid-Atlantic Convention Program *continued from page 13*

0420 Economies of Online Sales

- 9:00 **Financial Considerations of Distribution, and Delivery Services: Make them Complimentary, Not Overwhelming** - John P. Wodehouse, Penn State Extension
- 9:30 **Data Needed to Calculate Online Break Even** - Maria Graziani, Penn State Extension
- 10:00 **Profitability of Distribution & Delivery Services: Are You Making Money at it?** - Lynn Kime, Penn State Extension
- 10:30 **Cost Considerations for Long Term: Know When to Trim the Business Plan** - Annie Miller, Penn State Extension
- 11:00 **Questions and Answers with speakers**

0430 Tree Fruit Entomology

- 9:15 ***Get Ready for the Big 10 in 2021: Periodical Cicada Brood 10 That Is** - Dr. Chris Bergh, Virginia Tech
- 9:45 ***Recent Progress on Preventing Ambrosia Beetle Attacks in Apple Plantings; plus, the NEWA Rebuild and Updated Insect Prediction Models** - Dr. Arthur Agnello, Cornell Univ.
- 10:15 ***Codling Moth and Oriental Fruit Moth Are Back - Are You Ready?** - Dr. Greg Krawczyk, Penn State Univ.
- 10:45 ***Rainfast, Persistence & Performance Attributes of Insecticides for Tree Fruit IPM** - Dr. John Wise, Michigan State Univ.

12:00 noon to 2:00/2:15 PM

0510 Soil Health/Cover Crops

- 12:00 **Lessons from Long-Term Cover Crop Research in the "Salad Bowl of the World"** - Dr. Eric Brennan, USDA-ARS-CIPR
- 12:30 **To Be Announced**

0520 E-Commerce - Platform and Marketing Options

- 12:00 **Platforms, Social Media and Email Marketing Options Presentation** - Maria Graziani, Penn State Extension
- 1:05 **Panel Discussions of Farms, Farm Co-ops, CSA's with E-commerce Platforms** - John P. Wodehouse, Annie Miller, Penn State Extension, moderators
- 2:05 **Questions and Answers**

0530 Lunch/Learn - Vegetables

- 12:00 **Open Roundtable Discussion on Vegetable Production**

2:30 to 4:30/4:45 PM

0610 Organic Vegetable Production

- 2:30 **Soil-Biodegradable Mulch for Organic Production** - Carol Miles, Washington State Univ.
- 3:00 **To Be Announced**
- 3:30 **Impact of Cropping Systems and Management Practices on Colored-Flesh Potato Nutrient Quality** - Dr. Gladis Zinati, Rodale Institute
- 4:00 **Reducing Tillage in Organic Vegetable Systems** - Erin Silva, Univ. of Wisconsin

0620 General Vegetables

- 2:30 **Compact Bed Geometry: An Effective Strategy to Reduce Costs and Risks and Improve Sustainability for the Vegetable Plasticulture Systems** - Prof. Sanjay Shukla, Univ. of Florida

- 3:15 ****Protecting Water Resources During Mixing and Loading** - Ryan Selking, Penn State Univ.
- 3:45 **Soil-Biodegradable Plastic Mulch as Sustainable Alternative to Polyethylene Mulch** - Dr. Carol Miles, Washington State Univ.

0630 Tree Fruit: Plant Health

- 2:30 ***Biology & Management of Bitter Rot of Apple** - Phillip Martin
- 3:00 ***Alternative Controls for Apple Replant Disease - Using Carbon Applications to Shift to Beneficial Root Microbiomes** - Tianna DuPont, Washington State Univ.
- 3:45 ***Rizophagy: How Plants Farm Microbes** - Dr. James White, Rutgers Univ.
- 4:40 **SHAP Annual Business Meeting**

Wednesday, February 10, 2021

9:00 to 11:00/11:15 AM

0710 Vine Crops

- 9:00 **Seedless Watermelon Variety Trial Results** - Dr. Gordon Johnson, Univ. of Delaware
- 9:30 **Vertical High Tunnel Specialty Melon Production: Variety Performance, Food Safety and Consumer Response** - Petrus Langenhoven, Purdue Univ.
- 10:00 ***Understanding Root Diseases of Vine Crops** - Anthony Keinath, Clemson Univ.
- 10:30 ****Pesticides and Pollinators** - Jamie Kopco, Penn State Univ.

0720 Cole Crops

- 9:00 ***Managing Common Diseases of Cole Crops** - Dr. Beth Gugino, Penn State Univ.
- 9:30 ***Diamondback Moth: One of Several Insect Pests of Concern** - Riley Harding, Cornell Univ.
- 10:00 **Evaluating Broccoli Cooling and Handling Operations to Extend Quality** - Dr. Steven Sargent, Univ. of Florida
- 10:30 **What's New in Broccoli, Cauliflower, Cabbage, and Other Brassicas** - Atlee Burpee, Sakata Seed America

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CONVENTION

0730 Small Fruit

- 9:00 ***How Did I Get Anthracnose in My Strawberry Field?** - Phillip Martin and Kathy Demchak, Penn State Univ.
- 9:30 ***Strawberry Diseases: Current Issues and Management** - Dr. Mengjun Hu, Univ. of Maryland; Kathy Demchak, Penn State Univ.; Dr. Andrew Wyenandt, Rutgers Univ.
- 10:15 **Matted-Row vs. Plasticulture Strawberries: What Works Best on our Farm and Why** - John Shenk, Shenk's Berry Farm; Wade and Ben Butler, Butler's Orchard; Michael Groszkiewicz, Mason Farms

0740 Tree Fruit:Horticulture/Physiology

- 9:00 **George Goodling Lecture: Honeycrisp Nutrition to Reduce Bitter Pit** - Dr. Lailiang Cheng, Cornell Univ.
- 9:45 ****Protecting Water Resources During Mixing and Loading** - Ryan Selking, Penn State Univ.
- 10:15 **Effect of Rootstocks on the Quality Characteristics of Honeycrisp Fruit** - Dr. Macarena Farcuh, Univ. of Maryland
- 10:35 **Use of Reflective Materials & Other Technologies to Improve Fruit Color in High Value Apple Cultivars** - Dr. Mario Miranda Sazo, Cornell Univ.

12:00 noon to 2:00/2:15 PM

0810 Tomatoes

- 12:00 **Building a Tomato Nutrition Program From the Soil Up** - Steve Bogash Marrone Bio
- 12:45 **The Potential for Implementing Nano-Technology-Based Approaches in Plant Disease Management** - Dr. Mathews Paret, Univ of Florida

- 1:30 **BioUnite™ - The Integration of Biological and Chemical Controls to Manage Insects and Diseases on Tomatoes** - Dr. Timothy Johnson, Marrone Bio Innovations

0820 Vegetable Biocontrols

- 12:00 **Research & Development Update on Biopesticides** - Gregory Clarke, Valent USA; Greg Rodgers, Certis; and Steven Bogash, Marrone Bio Innovations
- 12:45 ***Evaluation of an Isolate of Bacillus subtilis for Bio-control of Phytophthora Blight of Pepper** - Dr. Jeana Hansel, Plant Pathologist
- 1:15 ***Vegetable Transplant IPM** - Jessica Crabtree, Wegman's Organic Farm and Orchard
- 1:45 ***How to Avoid Epic Failures when Utilizing Biopesticides** - Steven Bogash, Marrone Bio Innovations

0830 Agritourism

- 12:00 **Legal Considerations for Agritourism** - Jacqueline Schweichler, Penn State Univ.
- 12:30 **Agritourism Online Customer Experience Best Practices** - Sarah Cornelisse, Penn State Univ.
- 1:00 **Best Practices for Developing Agritourism Trails** - Claudia Schmidt, Penn State Univ.
- 1:30 **Lessons Learned from COVID-19 and the Way Ahead for Agritourism** - Hugh McPherson, MaizeQuest

0840 Lunch/Learn Tree Fruit

- 12:00 **Color Enhancing Technologies** - Color Enhancing Technologies - Grower Panel
- 12:45 **Evaluating the Use of Reflective Groundcovers on Fruit Quality of Honeycrisp and Fuji Apple Cultivars in the Mid-Atlantic** - Dr. Macarena Farcuh - Univ. of Maryland
- 1:30 **Grower Discussion**

Continued on page 16

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CONVENTION

Mid-Atlantic Convention Program

continued from page 15

2:30 to 4:30/4:45 PM

0910 General Vegetables

- 2:30 **Splice Grafting Watermelon Increases Efficiency and Yield Under Verticillium Wilt Pressure** – Carol Miles, Washington State Univ.
- 3:00 **Snap Bean Production**- Julie Kikkert, Cornell Coop. Extension
- 3:30 **Onion Variety Results** – Thomas Butzler and Timothy Elkner, Penn State Extension

0920 Farm Markets Post-COVID

- 2:30 **Retail During & Post COVID**- Brian Moyer, Penn State Extension
- 3:00 **Changes We Made to Our Businesses During COVID** – Panel - Stacey Mullen, The Berry Farm & Orchard; Ed Weaver, Weaver's Orchard; Caleb Torice, Tabora Farm

0930 Small Fruit

- 2:30 **What's New in Blackberry Varieties from the Univ. of Arkansas** - Dr. John Clark, Univ. of Arkansas
- 3:00 ***Weed Control in Brambles** – Dr. Eric Hanson, Michigan State Univ. (emeritus)
- 3:45 **What We Learned about Pick-Your-Own in 2020** – Kurt Alstede, Alstede Farms; Craig Pallman, Pallman Farms; Guy Moore, Larriland Farm

0940 Stone Fruit

- 2:30 ****Pollinator Protection** - Jamie Kopco, Penn State Univ.
- 3:00 **Ernie Christ Memorial Lecture: Developing New Peach Cultivars for the Eastern U.S.** - Dr. Ksenija Gasik, Clemson Univ.
- 3:45 **Opportunities & Growth for the Peach Industry: A Look at Market Impacts to Selling Peaches** - Kay Rentzel, National Peach Council
- 4:15 ***Fall Application of Ethephon for Bloom Delay in Peach & Sweet Cherry: Pros & Cons** - Dr. Sherif Sherif, Virginia Tech Univ.

0950 Spanish

- 2:30 **Keys to Success in Planting, Establishing, and Tree Training in Orchards during the First Year** - Mario Miranda Sazo, Cornell Coop. Extension
- 3:30 **Sergio and Silvia – The Rosario Team** - Sergio Rosario and Silvia Rosario, co-founders and co-owners of Rosario Brothers LLC, an agricultural company for contract tree pruning/grafting/budding

Thursday, February 11, 2021

9:00 to 11:00/11:15 AM

1010 High Tunnels

- 9:00 **Nitrogen Input Effects on Yield and Quality of Grafted and Non-Grafted Tomato Grown in High Tunnels** - Dr. Francesco Di Gioia and Andrew Blunk, Penn State Univ.
- 9:45 ****Best Practices to Limit Phytotoxicity from Pesticides on High Tunnel Crops**– Thomas Ford, Penn State Univ.
- 10:15 **Opportunities for Growing Grafted Cucumbers in High Tunnels** – Dr. Wenjing Guan, Purdue Univ.

1020 Potatoes

- 9:00 **Cover Crops and Potatoes**- John Jemison, Univ. of Maine
- 9:30 ***Blackleg, Stem Rots, Dickeya, Pectobacterium, Bacterial Soft Rot** – Dr. Steve Johnson, Univ. of Maine
- 10:00 **Growing Russets in PA - Can it be Done?** – Robert Leiby, PA Coop. Potato Growers
- 10:20 **PA Potato Variety Trials** – Xinshun Qu, Penn State Univ.
- 10:40 **Potato Issues in 2020 and What Can We Expect in 2021** – Robert Leiby, PA Coop. Potato Growers

1030 Small Fruit – Blueberries

- 9:00 ****Pollinator Protection** - Leah Fronk, Penn State Extension
- 9:30 **There is NO perfect Blueberry Variety, But There ARE Many, Many Choices: Some Advice** – Mark Ehlenfeldt, USDA-ARS
- 10:00 ***Blueberry Root and Cane Diseases** – Dr. James Polaschok, USDA-ARS,
- 10:30 **How Blueberry Cultivars with Southern Highbush Backgrounds Access Nutrients Differently than Standard Varieties in Upland Soils** - Dr. Chris Walsh, Univ. of Maryland

1040 Tree Fruit: Ag Engineering

- 9:00 ****Utilizing Intelligent Sprayers Benefit Growers and the Environment** - Dr. Heping Zhu, USDA-ARS & Steve Booher, Smart Guided Systems.
- 9:30 **Computer Vision & Drone Imaging in Apple Orchards** - Dr. Dana Choi, Penn State Univ.
- 9:50 **Precision Irrigation Systems for Tree Fruit Production** - Dr. Long He, Penn State Univ.
- Lightning Talks**
- 10:10 **Concept Design of an Integrated Robotic Pruner for Apple Tree Pruning** - Azlan Zahid, Penn State Univ.
- 10:20 **Measuring Accurate Tree Canopy Density for Developing a Precision Spraying System** - Md Sultan Mahmud, Penn State Univ.
- 10:30 **UAV-Based Heating Requirement Determination for Frost Management in Apple Orchards** - Wenan Yuan, Penn State Univ.
- 10:40 **Fall Foliar Nutrition Programs: What is Really Needed?** - Dr. Lailiang Cheng, Cornell Univ.

1050 CSAs

- 9:00 **To Be Announced**

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CONVENTION

12:00 noon to 2:00/2:15 PM

1110 Pumpkins/Winter Squash

- 12:00 ***Management Considerations for Downy Mildew and Plectosporium Blight on Pumpkin** - Dr. Beth Gugino, Penn State
- 12:30 **It All Started with Pumpkins & Strawberries** – Bruce Hellerick, Hellerick’s Family Farm
- 1:00 ***Review of Weed Control in Pumpkin** – Dwight Lingenfelter, Penn State Univ.
- 1:30 ***Integrated Pest and Pollinator Management (IPPM) in Pumpkins** – Dr. Shelby Fleischer, Penn State Univ.

1120 Potatoes

- 12:00 ***Designing a Fungicide Program for Potatoes**- Dr. Steve Johnson, Univ. of Maine
- 12:30 **PotatoesUSA** – Blair Richardson, PotatoesUSA
- 12:50 **National Potato Council** - Mike Wenkel & Kam Quarles, National Potato Council
- 1:10 **PA Cooperative Potato Growers**, Nathan Tallman, PA Coop. Potato Growers
- 1:30 ****Core Credit Potatoes** – Duane Miller, Penn State Univ.

1130 Lunch/Learn - Small Fruit

- 12:00 **Strawberry Grower Discussion: 2020 Issues and Experiences** - moderated by Kathy Demchak and Robert Pollock, Penn State Extension
- 1:00 **Blueberry Grower Discussion: New and Recurring Challenges** – moderated by John Esslinger and Kathy Demchak, Penn State Extension

1140 Digital/Social Marketing

- 12:00 **Social Selling**, Sarah Cornelisse, Penn State Univ.
- 12:30 **Email Marketing**, Ginger S. Myers Univ. of Maryland Extension
- 1:00 **Become a Social Agriculture Advocate!** Michele Wal-fred, Univ. of Delaware

- 1:30 **Making Videos for Social Outlets**, Peter Coffey Univ. of Maryland Extension

2:30 to 4:30/4:45 PM

1210 General Vegetables

- 2:30 **Developing Sensor-Based Smart Irrigation Systems for Vegetable Crops** - Long He, Haozhe Zhang, Penn State Univ.
- 3:00 **Decision Support Systems for the Rational Site-Specific Management of the Fertigation of Tomato** – Antonio Elia, Univ. of Foggia
- 3:45 **Application of Sensor-Based Automated Irrigation and Decision Support System for the Fertigation Management of Fresh-Market Tomato in Pennsylvania** – Francesco Di Gioia, Haozhe Zhang, Long He, Antonio Elia Penn State Univ./Univ. of Foggia
- 4:15 **Panel Discussion**

1120 Potatoes

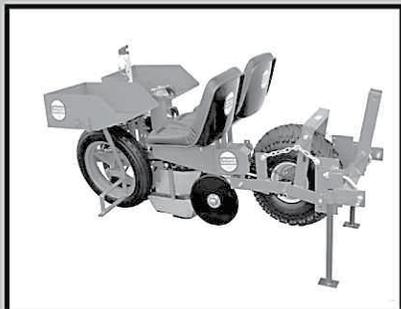
- 2:30 ***Managing Diseases in Potato Storages** – Todd For-bush, Techmark, Inc.
- 3:15 **Improving Soil Health While Growing Potatoes** – Dr. John Jemison, Univ. of Maine
- 4:00 ***Potato Insect Control Update** – Dr. Thomas Kuhar, Virginia Tech

1230 Small Fruit – Blueberries

- 2:30 **How to Reduce Soil pH and Maintain It in a Good Range for Blueberries** – Dr. David Bryla, USDA-ARS
- 3:00 **Practical Approaches to Correcting Irrigation Water pH and Bicarbonate Issues for Blueberries (tentative)** - Thomas Ford and Kathleen Demchak, Penn State Extension; Dr. David Bryla, USDA-ARS (tentative)

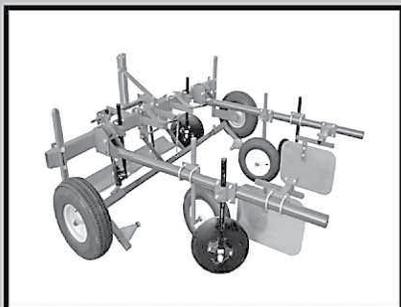
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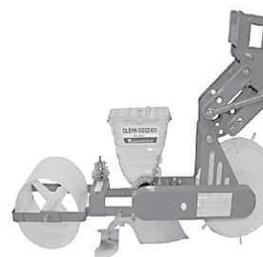
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VEGETABLE PRODUCTION

Nutrient Management Tips

G. Higgins and S. Scheufele

Becky Maden and Laura Johnson of University of Vermont Extension presented two workshops on nutrient management for vegetable crops. In addition to getting into the details behind soil pH, organic matter, and nitrogen availability, Becky and Laura addressed the fact that managing soil fertility can often be very overwhelming and expensive for farmers and they gave some overarching take-home messages to prevent farmers from getting bogged-down by stacks of soil tests and in-depth fertility recommendations.

Address the low-hanging fruit first: pH and macronutrients.

pH. Optimal pH for most vegetable crops is 6.5-6.8. Nutrients are most available at a neutral pH (7) and start to become unavailable as soil becomes more acidic. At a pH of 5.5, only 77% of N, 48% of P, and 77% of K in the soil is available to plants. Lime your fields to get your pH closer to 7 before you spend lots of money on fertilizers.

Macronutrients. Focus on reaching optimal levels of N, P, and K before addressing micronutrient concerns. Micronutrients are present in such small quantities in soils that they are hard to detect precisely with soil testing methods. Instead of trying to increase your soil zinc from 0.8 to 1.0 ppm, keep an eye out for nutrient deficiencies throughout the season and submit a tissue sample if you suspect a specific micronutrient deficiencies.

Base cation saturation ratios: The model of soil fertility that all state university soil labs use is based on the proven concept that nutrient levels can be defined for all crop nutrients and below those levels, you will see a yield response in your crop if you add more of that nutrient. This is known as the “sufficiency level of available nutrients” model. There are some private soil labs that use the “base cation saturation” (BCSR) model. The BCSR model focuses on fertilizing soils based on the ratios of calcium, magnesium, and potassium in the soil, with the goal of achieving “ideal” ratios that will result in a “balanced” soil and maximum crop quality and quantity. This idea of ideal ratios was first proposed in the late 1800s but became popular in the 1970s after it was publicized by the soil scientist William Albrecht. However, the BCSR concept has since been disproved and it has been shown that maximum yields of many crops can be achieved across wide ranges of Ca:Mg and K:Mg ratios, if pH is maintained in an optimum range and sufficient macronutrients are supplied. While Mg and K deficiencies can certainly occur, it is much easier to address those deficiencies once the low-hanging fruit (pH and macronutrients) have been addressed. See the “Resources” list at the end of this article for more information about BCSR.

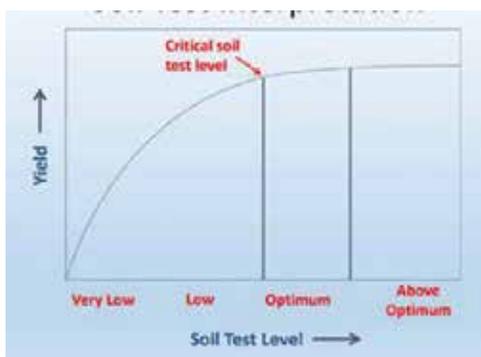


Figure 1. Crop yield response to soil nutrient levels. If a soil contains no nutrients, adding some nutrients will result in a large increase in yield. As soil nutrient levels approach optimum, each incremental addition of nutrients has less and less of an effect on crop yield. Figure: UVM Extension

Prioritize problem fields and/or high-value crops. While we should strive to achieve the recommended fertility for every crop every year, it is not always realistic or even necessary. Crops

respond to added nutrients logarithmically (see Figure 1), meaning the initial response to added fertility is huge but there is a point of diminishing return, where adding more fertilizer leads to only small gains in growth or yield. Fertilizer is expensive! So spend your time and money wisely and get “close enough.” Work on dialing in nutrients for fields where you see nutrient problems regularly and for high-value crops where you can’t afford to get less-than-optimum yields. For other crops, you may be happy enough getting less-than-optimum yields and saving money on the fertilizer needed to get that last 5% yield.

Don’t obsess over soil organic matter—work within the range of your soil type. Soil organic matter (SOM) includes living (e.g. insects, bacteria, fungi), dead (e.g. dead plants, insects, bacteria, fungi), and very dead (aka humus) material in soil. Organic matter is generally increased by incorporating cover crops or applying organic amendments like manure and compost, most of which have high phosphorous levels relative to crop need. Generally, 2-3% SOM is considered low, and 4-6% is considered good. But it’s nearly impossible to maintain SOM above 3% in a sandy soil, and if you’re adding enough compost that your SOM is increasing above 3%, your phosphorous levels are very likely skyrocketing. If you have sandy soils, aim to maintain your SOM instead of increasing it. Across all soil types, look at the trend of your SOM and don’t obsess over the value alone. If you’re increasing your SOM without applying excessive phosphorous, great! If you’re maintaining your SOM, great! If your SOM is decreasing, consider making a change.

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VEGETABLE PRODUCTION

Know your phosphorous levels and your environmental risk level before adding organic amendments. Phosphorous is an essential plant nutrient but can become an environmental pollutant if large quantities enter water sources. This is mainly an issue with large-scale growers who use manure or compost or who are growing on fields that historically had lots of manure put down. When P levels are high, there are no corrective actions except avoiding adding more phosphorous. Most organic amendments—composts and manures—are high in P. Cover crops are great ways to add organic matter without adding P. In high tunnels, where cover cropping is difficult, peat moss and coconut coir are two options for adding organic matter without adding extra P.

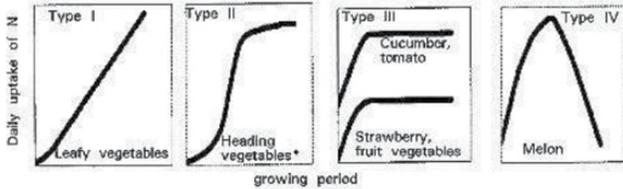


Figure 2. Uptake of nitrogen over the growing period of various crops. Figure: Redrawn from Kato 2000.

Optimal phosphorous ranges from a Modified Morgan soil test is 4-7ppm; above that, your phosphorous levels will be reported as “excessive”. That means a P at 8ppm will look the same on the soil test report as one at 300ppm, even though 300 ppm is much worse than 8ppm. Generally speaking, P levels above 50 ppm are alarming. We’ve heard some farmers say that excess P is not a big deal as long as your field is not next to a waterway—not so! There is a growing awareness that long-term over-application of manure and chemical fertilizer contributes to phosphorus

movement into the groundwater system, resulting in a significant groundwater source of phosphorus to streams and lakes, as well as potential contamination of the groundwater resources. Further, excessive P can tie up zinc leading to deficiencies.

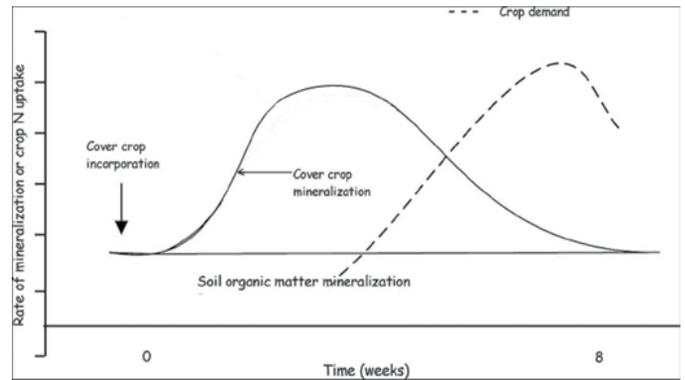


Figure 3. Timing of nitrogen (N) mineralization from soil organic matter, cover crop residues and organic fertilizer in relation to crop N uptake (from Gaskell et al., 2006).

Nitrogen is very dynamic in soil. Pre-sidedress nitrate tests (PSNTs) can be very useful for assessing nitrogen status of a field or crop. For example, if you incorporated a leguminous cover crop and want to track when the nitrogen is being released, you could take PSNTs over time and watch the level of nitrate change. Or, you could take a PSNT at the end of the season to see how much nitrogen you have leftover (then plant a cover crop to soak it up!). Most organic sources of N are slow to release, and if you

Continued on page 23

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ANNUAL MEETING

Minutes of the January 29, 2020, PVGA Annual Meeting

Call to Order, Proof of Notice of the Meeting and Attendance

- President Jonathan Strite called the meeting to order at approximately 11:50 a.m. in the Crystal Room of the Hershey Lodge in Hershey, Pennsylvania, with about 39 members present. Notice of the meeting had been published in the December newsletter and on the dues notices.

Minutes – Kenneth Martin moved to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the January 30, 2019, Annual Meeting and to approve them as published in the agenda. The motion was seconded and adopted.

Officer and Committee Reports

Treasurer – Executive Director William Troxell reviewed the year-end financial reports summarized as follows:

	2019 Income	2019 Expenses	Balance 12/31/19	Value 12/31/19
General Fund	\$476,720	\$478,181	\$231,401	\$233,576
Keystone Fund	\$8,282	\$5,761	\$165,717	\$177,155
Onion Committee Fund	\$10,120	\$14,799	\$13,942	\$13,942

Executive Committee – Mr. Strite reported that the Directors and committee members had a strategic planning session in conjunction with their December 2019 meetings in Boalsburg.

Leadership and Recognition – David Miller, Committee chairman, announced the following persons had been elected to three-year terms as Directors by the mail-in balloting: Christopher Harner, Christopher Powell, John Shenk, Jeffrey Stoltzfus and Joel Weaver. The Board will be electing a sixth person to a three-year term as a Director after the Annual Meeting.

Young Grower Award – Mr. Miller introduced Nick Lubecki and Wesley Nel who were both awarded PVGA Young Grower Awards for 2020.

Scholarship – Mr. Miller also announced that Wyatt Kosa had been awarded a Rudolph Grob Memorial Scholarship for 2019.

Government Affairs - Barron Hetherington, Committee member, introduced William Beam, Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs at the federal Farm Service Agency. Mr. Beam highlighted the availability of assistance to growers through the Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program Plus (WHIP+) to cover losses because of unusually wet conditions.

Administrative

Budget - William Reynolds, Committee chairman, reviewed the General Fund budget adopted by the Board of Directors. The budget anticipates \$481,600 in income and \$472,300 in expenditures for a surplus of \$9,300.

Membership - Mr. Reynolds, reported that 2020 membership stood at about 791 compared to 739 on the second day of the Convention last year. Membership at the end of 2019 was 956.

Farm Show Food Booth - Mr. Reynolds reported a preliminary profit of about \$77,906 had been earned at the Farm Show Booth on record sales of \$238,883 – all due to the volunteer labor. Several changes were instituted this year including the addition of infused water, berry-battered Oreos, and batter-dipped snap beans to menu along with dropping chili, vegetable wraps, pumpkin pie, garden salads, and bean salad.

Capacity Development Committee – Robert Amsterdam, Committee chairman, reported that the Committee was working on the transition to a 501(c)3 organization, establishment of a succession planning committee and review of the crisis management plan.

Educational Committee – Mr. Campbell, Committee chairman, reported that the Convention was going well with registration at about 1,024 compared to 995 the previous year after the

second day.

The Association will be working with Penn State Extension to sponsor twilight meetings again in the 2020 season as well as to continue to support the website and produce the newsletter and email updates.

Government Affairs Committee – Rita Resick, Committee chairman, reported the Directors will visit with state legislators in March. The Association will also be represented at the United Fresh Produce Association Public Policy Conference in Washington in the fall. She then presented the following Policy Resolutions additions recommended by the Board of Directors:

(Underlined text is to be added. Struck-through text is to be deleted.)

The Association is on record as:

State Resolutions

1. Urging the Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Committee to actively inform growers of the differences between “Jack-O-Lantern pumpkins” and “Howden pumpkins” for the purposes of reporting their pumpkin acreages to FSA and to explain the possible consequences of how they report their pumpkin acreages.
2. Opposing the closing of Regional Department of Agriculture Offices.
3. Supporting online enrollment or reenrollment of lands for DMAP and Red Tag programs.
4. Supporting the increase of Red Tag and DMAP permits to 4 per hunter per property enrolled in the respective programs.
5. Supporting a requirement for PennDOT to notify CDL drivers and commercial truck owners of Spotted Lanternfly regulations and penalties with their license and registration renewals.
6. Supporting a 50-mile radius of operation from the farmer’s farm(s) for farm vehicles with the Type B and Type C biennial certification of exemption.
7. Supporting research funding on the effect of new insecticides, seed treatments and diseases on honeybees.
8. Supporting the exemption of H-2A workers’ wages from state unemployment contributions.
9. Supporting the state funding of the review of any mandated DEP permit instead of by the permit holder.
10. Supporting the elimination of all permit fees for farmers to repair or replace non-public agricultural culverts, pipes or bridges.
11. Supporting a requirement for government agencies and authorities levying Stormwater Management Fees to offer offsetting credits to those fees for the following:
 - a) Each acre of compliance under each of the following: an NRCS or County Conservation District approved Conservation Plan, an Erosion and Sediment Plan, an Act 38 Nutrient Management Plan, and/or an implemented NRCS Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan.
 - b) Each approved Manure Management Plan.
 - c) Erosion controlling structures including diversion ditches, grass waterways, stone waterways and terraces.
 - d) NRCS or County Conservation District approved manure holding structures.
 - e) Each acre of forested or wooded acres.
 - f) Positive ratios of pervious to impervious areas.”
12. Opposing any fee, tax or ordinance based on stormwater runoff.

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

ANNUAL MEETING

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.

It was agreed to add the following language to State Resolution 5: and requirements for railroads to inspect trains for Spotted Lanternflies.

Michael Tabor asked that climate change and its effects on growers be included in the Convention educational sessions and

the policy resolutions in the future.

Joel Weaver and Kenneth Martin moved to adopt the above policy resolutions as amended. The motion was adopted.

Vegetable Research Committee – It was reported that the Association would be contributing \$60,000 to vegetable research projects that would be chosen that evening by the Vegetable Marketing and Research Program Board.

New Business

Bylaw Revision – The Board of Directors proposed that the members adopt the following amendments to the current Bylaws – the additions are underlined and the deletions ~~struck-through~~.

Article I Name

Section 1 The name by which this organization shall be known is The “Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers’ Association” (hereafter referred as the “Association” or “Corporation”). [note: apostrophe removed after “Growers”]

Section 2 ~~The Association shall be incorporated as a non-profit corporation and operated exclusively for charitable, educational and scientific purposes consistent the Internal Revenue Service requirements for a 501(c)3 organization with offices at a location determined by the Board of Directors.~~

Article II Purpose

Section 1 ~~To unite in common organization those engaged in the production, handling or processing of Pennsylvania grown vegetables and small fruits and of others whose business welfare depends at least partially upon the economic efficiency of the Pennsylvania vegetable and small fruit industries.~~

Continued on page 22

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ANNUAL MEETING

Minutes of the January 29, 2020, PVGA Annual Meeting *continued from page 21*

~~**Section 2** To provide educational opportunities, information and materials to keep members of the vegetable and small fruit industries abreast of the latest developments.~~

~~**Section 3** To promote the vegetable and small fruit industries of the Commonwealth and their products in whatever way possible.~~

~~**Section 4** To encourage and support vegetable and small fruit research to increase the profitability of the industries.~~

~~**Section 5** To represent the interests of the vegetable and small fruit industries to the public and government officials although no substantial part of the activities of the Association shall involve attempting to influence legislation.~~

~~**Section 6** To engage in any other activities that will benefit the vegetable and small fruit industries.~~

The purposes of the Association are as provided in the Articles of Incorporation.

Article III Membership

~~**Section 1** Any person or organization covered by Article II, Section 1, with an interest in the purposes of the Association as stated in Article II may become a member by payment of an annual dues. Memberships expire on the day of the next annual meeting unless renewed.~~

~~**Section 2** Dues and membership classification are to be determined by the Board of Directors and included in the Standing Rules.~~

~~**Section 3** Each member shall be entitled to one vote in transacting business at any association meeting. The Board of Directors may authorize certain classes of associate members to vote.~~

Article VII Other Committees and Task Forces

~~**Section 3** The President shall appoint the members of all committees and task forces at the beginning of his or her term of office. The Executive Director shall appoint the members of the committees and task forces unless the Board provides otherwise in the Standing Rules.~~

~~**Section 4** When committees are empowered by the Board to make final decisions on matters, a simple majority of the number of the appointed members of a committee or task force present at any meeting shall constitute a quorum and questions shall be carried by simple majority of those present. The members of a given committee may be polled by telephone or mail on specific issues or questions, in which case a majority of the total number of appointed members shall be necessary to carry a question. When committees are simply preparing recommendations for the Board, quorums will not be necessary.~~

Article VIII Association Meetings

~~**Section 1** The annual meeting of the Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers' Association shall be held each winter in conjunction with an annual educational conference at such time and place as the Board of Directors shall determine.~~

~~**Section 2** The order of business at agenda at the annual meeting shall be include:~~

- (1) Proof of notice of the meeting
- (2) Reading and disposal of minutes
- (3) Annual reports of officers and committees
- (4) Election of directors Announcement of director election results
- (5) Unfinished business
- (6) Review of Policy Resolutions
- (7) New business
- (8) Adjournment

~~**Section 3** A summer field day, tour or educational meeting shall be held each year at such time and place as may be designated by the Board of Directors.~~

~~**Section 4 3** Special meetings of the Association may be called by the Board of Directors.~~

~~**Section 5 4** Members shall be given 15 days notice by mail of all meetings of the Association. The notice shall include an agenda of all major items of business expected to be acted upon and the text of any policy or major resolutions.~~

~~**Section 6 5** Twenty-five members or two-thirds of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum at all meetings of the Association.~~

Article XII Dissolution

~~**Section 1** In the event of the merger or dissolution of the Association for any reason, all money and securities or other property of whatsoever nature which at the time be owned or under the absolute control of the Association shall be distributed at the discretion of the Board of Directors, or such other persons as shall be charged by law with the liquidation or winding up of the Association and its affairs, to an organization of its choosing which is exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code, ideally one that has some relation to the agricultural/horticultural purposes for which the Association was originally organized.~~

~~In the event of the liquidation, dissolution, or winding up of this Corporation, the assets or property of the Corporation shall be distributed as outlined in the Articles of Incorporation.~~

Article XV Amendments

~~**Section 1** The Bylaws of this Association may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any annual or special meeting provided that notice of such proposed amendment is included in the call for this meeting.~~

Mr. Amsterdam and Dan Dalton moved to amend the Bylaws as recommended by the Board. The motion was adopted without dissent.

Recognition of Retiring Directors – Mr. Strite recognized and thanked Mr. Martin and Mr. Miller for their years of service on the Board of Directors. Both had served the maximum of 18 years allowed by the Board's term limit policy.

Memorial for Deceased Members - Mr. Strite noted that the following Association members and friends had passed away since the last meeting: William Geise, Jonathan Grace and Timothy Weiser

Adjournment There being no further business, Michael Orzolek moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and adopted at about 12:45 p.m. The Board of Directors immediately convened to elect officers for 2020.

William Troxell

William Troxell, Executive Director

Nutrient Management Tips

continued from page 19

are using these exclusively, you should plan to put down the pre-plant and side-dress amounts all at the beginning of the season as it won't be available to your crop in time if it's put down as a side-dress. Nitrogen from cover crops is typically available 4-6 weeks after incorporation—this might mean you need to change when you are planting in order to line up nitrogen availability with crop need better.

Updated high tunnel fertility and production recommendations. There is lots of research going on in New England right now looking at high tunnel fertility, for both summer and winter crops. In 2018, several New England state Extensions surveyed 20 tomato high tunnels to analyze growing practices and yields. That project has resulted in updated high tunnel tomato fertility and production recommendations in the New England Vegetable Management Guide, as well as in this survey report: 2018 High Tunnel Survey Report. An important part of these new recommendations is that high tunnel tomatoes should be fertilized based on the potential yield of the production system: a heated tunnel of indeterminate, hybrid, disease-resistant, grafted tomatoes that are closely spaced and heavily pruned has the potential to produce much higher yields than an unheated tunnel of determinate heirloom tomatoes that will be harvested 3 times before they go down to leaf mold. The first scenario requires much more nutrients than the second. The Guide and fact sheet list nutrient recommendations for low, medium, good, and high yields, all of which refer to the potential yield of your high tunnel tomato production system.

Salts can build up in the top two inches of high tunnel soil. Salts are wicked to the soil surface through evaporation and are not flushed back down because there's no rain. These salts are nutrients, so you don't want to remove them, but they can cause plant damage in high concentrations so take measures to mix or flush them deeper into the soil. Mix the soil by rototilling or plowing to a >6" depth and/or leave the tunnel plastic off for the winter every time you change it, to flush the salts back down.

In conclusion, when you get all 35 of your soil tests back and don't know where to start remember that you just need to get close enough and start with the low-hanging fruit.

*Ms. Higgins and Ms. Scheufele are with the Univ. of Massachusetts Extension Vegetable Program. From **Vegetable Notes for Vegetable Farmers** in Massachusetts, Univ. of Mass. Ext.*

National News Briefs

continued from page 6

"Farmers are committed to paying their employees a fair wage, but the existing system sets unpredictable rates that make it hard for farmers to remain competitive," said American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall. "The Department of Labor's decision to maintain current pay rates for the next two years for the majority of H-2A employers provides stability during the uncertainty created by the pandemic and trade imbalances. While this decision does not solve all of the wage issues, it is a step in the right direction. We look forward to continuing our work on meaningful agricultural labor reform through the regulatory or legislative processes."

The final rule no longer uses USDA's Farm Labor Survey for workers who fall under core farm occupations. The survey-based wage methodology led to drastic swings from year-to-year. The new rule allows farmers to plan for the year ahead without having a drastic increase in wages at the beginning of the year.

*From the **Penna. Agricultural Alliance Issues Update**, Penna. Farm Bureau, November/December 2020.*

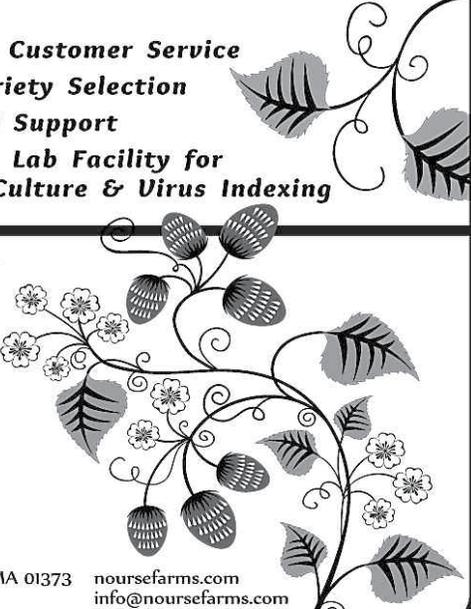


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