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PSU Ref. No: 199707

Title: The Next Generation of Fruit Growers-Building Leadership and Coalitions

Submitted to: Patti Keller

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Proposed Project Period: 4/1/2018 - 3/30/2019

Total Project Request: \$6,000

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Please reference PSU Ref. Number in all correspondence.

Grant Proposal Submitted to SHAP Extension Committee January, 2018

Title: *The Next Generation of Fruit Growers—Building Leadership and Coalitions*

Personnel: Tara Baugher, Penn State Extension Tree Fruit Educator, Adams County
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Don Seifrit, Penn State Extension Tree Fruit Educator, Berks County
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Duration

Of Project: Continuing, 14th year of valued support for the Pennsylvania fruit industry's young growers

Justification: The Pennsylvania tree fruit industry has a strong history of effective grower leadership and cooperation. To secure the long-term viability of the industry, it is important that a new generation of growers build coalitions to develop innovative approaches for meeting future fruit growing and marketing challenges. With support from the State Horticultural Association Extension Committee, a coalition of young horticultural leaders, called the Young Grower Alliance, has been offering opportunities for experiential learning and networking with peers.

It is important to note that seed grant funding from SHAP was integral in helping Penn State Extension secure USDA and PDA beginning farmer grants to develop educational programming specific to the needs and learning preferences of the next generation of specialty crop growers. The grants have enabled Penn State Extension to establish model apple orchard plots around the state and to begin developing on-line commercial tree fruit courses that young growers can take as they have time. These courses are supplemented by in-depth field trainings.

Procedure: This year, two new tree fruit extension educators (Don Seifrit in the Southeast, and someone yet to be hired for Adams County) will begin strategic planning sessions with the Young Grower Alliance to look at both short- and long-term goals and initiatives. Plans are underway to conduct additional research in the newly planted model orchard plots, to cooperate with Penn State Extension's new specialty crop engineers to explore innovations to increase precision management and labor efficiency, and to expand our work in the area of IPM to support on-site monitoring and management of invasive pests such as spotted lanternfly.

The young growers will be conducting a workshop on orchard trellis construction the afternoon prior to the Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention, and they are providing leadership for a new fruit sales and sampling booth at the Pennsylvania Farm Show. They continue to coordinate a scholarship fund to support young fruit growers and to fill new leadership roles with the State Horticultural Association of Pennsylvania.

Highlights of Young Grower Alliance programming will be published in *PA Fruit News*, at the Penn State Extension YGA website, and during a poster session at the Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention.

Budget:

Salaries and Fringe (3% effort)	
Seifrit	\$2000.00
Adams educator(3% effort (TBD)	\$2000.00
Wages	\$1500.00
Travel	\$500.00
TOTAL	\$6000.00

Budget Justification:

Salary: Salary savings are for 3% effort by two Tree Fruit Extension Educators to conduct needs assessments, field trials, and educational programs for the Young Grower Alliance and to assist entomologists with monitoring and education programs for spotted lanternfly.

Wages: A part-time summer intern will assist with monitoring for spotted lanternfly.

Fringe Benefits

Fringe benefits are computed using the fixed rates of 41.60% applicable to Category I Salaries, 15.40% applicable to Category II Graduate Assistants, 7.90% applicable to Category III Salaries and Wages, 0.10% applicable to Category IV Student Wages, and 26.30% for Category V, Postdoctoral Scholars and Fellows, for fiscal year 2018 (July 1, 2017, through June 30, 2018). If this proposal is funded, the rates quoted above shall, at the time of funding, be subject to adjustment for any period subsequent to June 30, 2018, if superseding Government approved rates have been established. Fringe benefit rates are negotiated and approved by the Office of Naval Research, Penn State's cognizant federal agency.

Travel: Extension educators and the summer intern will require additional funds for travel outside of their counties.

2017 Programs and Impacts:

The Young Grower Alliance began 2017 volunteering at the PA Farm Show at the YGA Apple Sales Booth. The Alliance also hosted a pre-conference workshop preceding the Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention on bench grafting and bark grafting fruit trees. The workshop had over fifty people in attendance. The workshop was led by young growers Sean Callahan and Taylor Mackintosh, and the workshop opened with a presentation on establishing a small variety test planting block by Jerry Frecon, Professor Emeritus of Rutgers University.

In February, the Young Grower Alliance hosted a winter study circle for young growers in South Central Pennsylvania. Young growers met to discuss marketing strategies and how to develop a unique farm brand, with young grower Ben Wenk leading the group's conversation.

On June 14th, YGA toured the Penn State Russel E. Larson Agricultural Research Center. The group viewed research plots for vegetable, small fruit, and tree fruit crops. The group also saw Penn State's new hops variety trial planting, and a wine grape trial. In addition to learning about the research being conducted at the research farm, the group had the opportunity to speak with Dr. Richard Roush, Dean of the College of Agricultural Sciences, over lunch. Dean Roush discussed the new agricultural engineering positions that will be located on campus and in Biglerville. The group also discussed the college's plans for creating collaborations between Penn State Erie and the Lake Erie Regional Grape Research and Extension Center. After the tour, young growers continued their discussions over ice cream at Berkey Creamery.

Members of YGA travelled to the International Fruit Tree Association Summer Study Tour in Michigan during July. Young growers observed fruit production systems in commercial orchards throughout Southwest Michigan, and learned first-hand about the various research projects taking place at Michigan State University's research farms on and off campus. On the drive out to Michigan, YGA stopped for a lunch-and-learn with Bill Dodd, 2015 Apple Grower of the Year recipient, and executive director of the Midwest Apple Improvement Association. Bill showed the group his home farm, Hillcrest Orchard. Bill discussed how he grows his trees, how he has developed agritainment on his farm, and discussed Evercrisp and some of the new releases of apples coming out from the Midwest Apple Improvement Association.

YGA had a fall tour on November 15th and travelled to Butler's Orchard and Waters Orchard in Maryland. The group learned about direct retail marketing, incorporating entertainment on the farm, and innovative fruit production practices. The group also

actively planned for both the 2018 PA Farm Show and the 2018 Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention workshop.

An impact survey was conducted during a Young Grower luncheon held during the Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention. Some of the key impacts follow. As a result of YGA educational activities survey participants (N=32) attended during the previous year, 75% felt "moderately to greatly" better equipped to contribute as a "Next Generation" member of the fruit industry. Sixty percent felt more confident giving a presentation at an educational meeting or hosting an educational tour for other growers; 56% were more confident about participating in the financial management aspects of the farm business; 53% were more confident about providing input on developing a farm transition plan; 50% were increasing service to the industry and/or food security initiatives. For each of the following over 40% of respondents indicated they had increased confidence: 1) diversifying into new crops, 2) trying new labor saving or precision-management technologies, 3) adopting new marketing or fruit storage practices, and 4) developing advanced integrated pest/cultural management programs for a crop on the farm. On average, growers estimated the annual \$ value of Penn State Next Generation programming to be in the range of \$500 to \$2000 per year.