



Date: 1/18/2019

PSU Ref. No: 206467

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

Submitted to: Patti Keller

State Horticultural Association of Pennsylvania
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Submitted by: Donald Seifrit

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Proposed Project

4/1/2019 - 3/31/2020

Total Project Request: \$4,000

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DATE *1/18/19*

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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: Don Seifrit, Penn State Extension Tree Fruit Educator, Berks County
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Duration

Of Project: Continuing, 15th 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 a needs assessment of the Young Grower Alliance will take place to look at both short- and long-term goals and initiatives. This needs assessment survey will be completed during the YGA meeting at the Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention. 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 the pros and cons of early apple thinning 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:

Wages	\$3,712
Fringe	\$288

Fringe benefits are computed using the fixed rates of 38.97% applicable to Category I Salaries, 14.74% applicable to Category II Graduate Assistants, 7.81% applicable to Category III Salaries and Wages, 0.18% applicable to Category IV Student Wages, and 25.34% for Category V, Postdoctoral Scholars and Fellows, for fiscal year 2019 (July 1, 2018, through June 30, 2019). 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, 2019, 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.

TOTAL	\$4000.00
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Budget Justification:

Wages: A part-time assistant will help to provide support for the Extension educators for YGA functions.

2018 Programs and Impacts:

2018 began with volunteering at the PA Farm Show Apple Sales Booth with efforts led by Ben Lerew and Corey McCleaf. The Alliance also hosted a pre-conference workshop preceding the Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention on orchard trellis construction and maintenance. The workshop had over 75 people in attendance. The workshop opened with a presentation on trellis construction by John Wall, founder of John Wall Inc., and Bonita Whalen and included interactive discussions and demonstrations in high density orchards at the Penn State Fruit Research and Extension Center.

On May 16th, YGA toured the Frecon Farms and Keim Orchards in Boyertown, PA. The group discussed cider production and high-density pear plantings with Steve Frecon in the morning, before heading next door to discuss top-worked trees with Ben Keim.

The YGA hosted young growers from New York state in early August. The New York growers spent two full days exploring Adams County and were able to interact with several growers and packing operations. 20 growers took part in the tour.

YGA had a fall/winter tour on December 5 and travelled to the Rutgers AG Research and Extension Center in Bridgeton. There they spoke with Dr. Dan Ward and the rest of the Rutgers Extension faculty about their research. That afternoon, the group headed to Larchmont Farms to discuss the success of the H-2A for their operation. The group also actively planned for both the 2019 PA Farm Show and the 2018 Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention workshop.

This year the Young Grower Alliance added 33 new participants, and the total is now 391. In a survey of young growers who took part in YGA programming in the past year, 10% estimated the annual value of that programming as worth between \$50 - \$100; 37% estimated the annual value of YGA programming as worth between \$100 - \$500; another 18.5% estimated the annual value of YGA programming as worth between \$500 - \$2000; and finally, 4% estimated that YGA programming is worth more than \$2000 annually.

96 % of young growers who have participated in YGA activities in recent years indicated they felt better equipped to contribute as “next generation” members of the fruit industry. As a result of YGA programming, 62% felt more confident about taking on an industry leadership role; 53%, diversifying their crop production; 46%, trying new labor saving or precision management technologies; 42%, developing advanced integrated pest/cultural management programs; and 34%, participating in financial management aspects of the farm business.