

VegNet Vol. 14, No. 3. March 29, 2007

Ohio State University Extension Vegetable Crops On the WEB at: <http://vegnet.osu.edu> experiencing problems receiving this fax, Call 614-292-3857

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VegNet Cell Phone Text Message Alert System  
– from the OSU Vegetable Team

**GROWERS SIGN UP TODAY!**

Ever think you may have better managed a crop or pest situation if you had 1 or 2 days, or even 6 hours advanced warning? The OSU Vegetable Team is piloting an experimental rapid alert system where critical vegetable pest management and production information can be sent to growers cell phone during the season. These short messages (150 letters or less) would be used to alert growers of specific threats or updates (disease, insect, weed, pesticide, frost, weather, etc.) and point to other resources for more details.

To receive these messages, the cell phone needs to be SMS (simple message system) capable. Not sure if your cell

phone is SMS capable? Contact your cell phone provider and ask them. Dont forget to ask them how much it costs to receive text messages; costs vary with contract and carrier but average about 10 cents per message. We anticipate using the alert system perhaps 3–4 times per week.

The company we are using works with all major services (Sprint, Nextel, Verizon, T-Mobile) EXCEPT Cingular.

The text alert system service begins April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2007 and will run through the summer until October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

To sign up for the VegNet Text Alert message system, email your cell phone number (including area code) to Jim Jasinski (jasinski.4@osu.edu) or call his office at 937-484-1526.

Your number will not be distributed or used for any other purpose. If you are dissatisfied with the service, your name can be removed from the text alert message system at any time by again contacting Jim Jasinski.

## **Input on 2007 Farm Bill by Fruit and Vegetable Growers Needed Now**

Given that Senator Browns status as the first Ohioan to serve on the Senate Agriculture Committee in almost forty years, this is a

tremendous opportunity for Ohio farmers to have a voice in the writing of the 2007 Farm Bill. Senator Brown will need to hear from all segments of production agriculture throughout the state but fruits and vegetables are hot buttons. Be proactive, by writing to the Senator through his legislative aide, Joe Schultz. The email, snail addresses, fax and phone numbers are below.

The Senator's goal is to learn about the opportunities and challenges facing Ohio agriculture. All our producers are urged to get involved. Rest assured that other states are being outspoken.

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

Joseph A. Shultz Legislative Assistant U.S. Senator Sherrod  
Brown  
Phone: 202-224-2315 Fax: 202-228-6321  
Joseph\_Shultz@brown.senate.gov

#### Summary of the SUMMARY OF SPECIALTY CROP SUPPORT

##### Recommendations In Brief

Create greater equity in farm policy by increasing assistance for specialty crop growers through an array of changes that will enhance their ability to compete in the marketplace.

##### Problem

Specialty crop producers have traditionally been under-represented in farm bill policy. Five program crops receive 93 percent of direct farm bill cash subsidies, yet the value of U.S. specialty crops is equivalent to the combined value of these five crops. Sixty percent of all farmers do not raise program crops and therefore do not receive direct subsidies.

##### Recommended Solution

The Administration is recommending a broad package of proposed changes to several

titles of the farm bill to provide additional support to specialty crop producers. Following is a list of the major components of the package.

#### Conservation Title

Enhance several conservation programs that assist specialty crop producers in managing natural resources. These include: significant increases to the Wetlands Reserve Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program, and the Private Lands Protection Program.

#### Trade Title

Phase-in \$68 million in enhanced mandatory funding for the Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops (TASC) program including \$4 million in FY 2008; \$6 million in FY 2009; \$8 million in FY 2010; and \$10 million thereafter through FY 2013. Increase the maximum allowable annual project award from \$250,000 to \$500,000 and allow more flexibility to grant TASC project timeline extensions.

Expand mandatory funding for the Market Access Program (MAP) by \$250 million over 10 years and focus the additional funds on non-program commodities. MAP funding has shown to be an effective use of funds to expand markets for U.S. agricultural products.

While specialty crops are already a significant user of this program, USDA will apportion this new, additional funding to help address the inequity between crops that are directly subsidized and those commodities that are not directly subsidized.

Increase support for a number of initiatives that help to address

sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) issues and other trade restrictions that affect specialty crop and other producers:

1. Establish a new grant program investing \$20 million over ten years to further focus resources on addressing international sanitary and phytosanitary issues.
2. Authorize and provide long-term mandatory funding of \$15 million over ten years to increase U.S. presence at international standard-setting bodies, such as the Codex Alimentarius, the International Plant Protection Convention, and the World Animal Health Organization.
3. Provide enhanced monitoring, analytical support, and other technical assistance to support U.S. agriculture in bringing forward or responding to significant trade disputes and challenges. For example, U.S. specialty crop exports are sometimes threatened by rampant trademark piracy in international markets like China and Hong Kong. USDA technical assistance could help the specialty crop industry address these challenges.

#### Nutrition Title

Provide new mandatory funding for the purchase of additional fresh fruits and vegetables for use in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. This \$500 million of funding over 10 years represents a net increase in the total purchase of fruits and vegetables for school meals over levels available under any other authorities.

Encourage food stamp nutrition education and establish a new USDA Initiative to Address Obesity among Low Income Americans, a five-year \$20 million competitive

grant demonstration program to develop and test solutions to the rising problem of obesity.

Support school efforts to offer meals based on the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans, including the encouragement of the increased consumption of fruits and vegetables.

Reauthorize the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and provide more fruits and vegetables within the program.

Rural Development Title

Prioritize consideration of project applications that involve specialty crops in the Rural Development Value-added Grants awards-process.

Energy Title

Initiate a new, temporary program to provide \$100 million in direct support to producers of cellulosic ethanol. Eligibility for this program would be restricted to specialty crop wastes and other cellulosic biomass feedstocks.

Research Title

Invest \$1 billion over 10 years to establish a Specialty Crop Research Initiative to provide science-based tools for the specialty crop industry.

Miscellaneous Title

Utilize an additional \$2.75 billion of Section 32 funds over 10 years to specifically purchase fruits and vegetables for the National School Lunch Program and other nutrition programs.

For the complete summary, go to this URL address;

<http://www.usda.gov/documents/07sumspecialtycrops.pdf>

## Crop Report Brad Bergefurd

Vegetable and fruit crops have sprung in southern Ohio! Sweet corn planted under clear plastic as well as bare ground plantings were being made from the Ohio River north to Columbus this week. Tomato transplants that were seeded in the greenhouses the first week of January were planted in high tunnels the week of March 12 and planting in high tunnels continues. These first planted tomatoes are now beginning to show bloom, are being pollinated and continue to be tied and pruned weekly. No sign of any disease or growth problems. Heaters are not running much this past week with the warm night temperatures. Plasticulture strawberry growers began nitrogen fertigations this week with the rapid new growth that is occurring to the crop. Matted row strawberry growers raked straw off their fields this week due to high temperatures and new growth occurring. Lime sulfur applications not previously applied to bramble and blueberry crops have been applied early this week for bud swell and leaf out is occurring rapidly with high temperatures in the mid to high 80's. Cabbage and Kohlrabi are being transplanted to the field. Seeding continues in the greenhouse on tomatoes, melons, watermelons, peppers, cucumbers, squash and onions. Asparagus has been mowed in the past two weeks and pre emerge herbicides have been applied. Rhubarb is beginning to show new full leaf. Deer pressure seems to

have increased this spring with reports of damage to blueberry, bramble and strawberry crops coming in already. Deer have damaged several sections of our temporary deer fencing that we apply around our all research fields at Piketon this past weekend. Some growers have begun planting several fields to crops of mixed mustard that are being used as natural biofumigation/covercrops in their fruit and vegetable fields. This cropping system has had good results in replicated trials performed at the OSU South Centers as well as other Universities throughout the United States. Growers continue to participate in last minute pesticide training and recertification programs, Extension vegetable and fruit training schools, spread lime and fertilizer, moldboard plow and chisel plow, work ground, spreading manure, cutting and treating seed potatoes, laying and repairing drainage tile, repairing and readying irrigation pumps and laying out irrigation pipe for frost protection and fertigation of strawberry and ready and repair machinery and equipment for the spring fruit and vegetable season..

## Research Reports

- Several weeks ago, the list was expanded to include several new project reports listed below. Check out the complete 2006 research report list available online at the VegNet website: <http://vegnet.osu.edu>
- Compost Application and Variety Effects on Yield and Quality Variables



of Organically Grown Edamame, Lettuce, Potato, Popcorn, and  
Processing Tomato Reports, 2004 | 2005 | 2006. [PDF Files]

- Ohio Potato Germplasm Evaluation Reports: 2005 | 2006 [PDF Files]