

Report on Grant #791N0200085
Michigan Vegetable Council, Inc. – Grantee
April 1, 2010

The purpose of this grant is to bring regional and national expertise to Michigan for educational programs that enhance the competitiveness of vegetable growers. As planned, the venue used for these programs was the Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable and Farm Market Expo, which was held in Grand Rapids, Michigan on December 8-10, 2009. The Expo offered three days of sessions that provided information for improving vegetable production and marketing practices.

A number of researchers from Michigan State University presented information at the 2009 Expo. In addition, the following out-of-state speakers were used to make the presentations listed below (in parentheses after each session listing are the attendance and presentation evaluation results which show the percentage of respondents that found the presentation very helpful/somewhat helpful/not helpful):

Dr. George Abawi, Department of Plant Pathology, Cornell University

- Carrot Session (47/83%/17%/0%): “Biology, On-farm Assessment, and Management of Root-knot Nematodes on Carrots”
- Fresh Edible Legumes Session (97/78%/22%/0%): “Root Diseases of Beans and Peas and the Impact of Soil Health Management Practices”
- Organic Vegetable Production Session (53/58%/37%/5%): “The Cornell Soil Health Assessment Protocol and the Connection Between Soil Health and Root Health”

James Adkins, University of Delaware Research and Education Center, Georgetown, DE

- Pickling Cucumber Session (63/50%/36%/14%): “Efficiency and Economic Returns with Current Pickle Harvesters”

Dr. Mark Bennett, Department of Horticulture and Crop Science, Ohio State University

- Tomato, Pepper, Eggplant Session (170/48%/50%/2%): “Tools for Integrated Crop Management of Peppers”
- Transplant Production Session (184/52%/38%/10%): “Vegetable Transplant Tactics for Improved Crop Establishment”

Dr. David Francis, Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center, Wooster, OH

- Tomato, Pepper, Eggplant Session (160/43%/51%/6%): “Overview of the SolCAP and Great Lakes Vegetable Working Group Tomato Heirloom Projects”
- Transplant Session (153/40%/35%/25%): “Grafting of Tomatoes for High Tunnel and Open Field Production”

Dr. Amanda Gevens, Department of Plant Pathology, University of Wisconsin

- Potato Session (65/50%/40%/10%): “Late Blight in 2009: A National Outbreak with Local Consequences”

Dr. Lewis Jett, West Virginia University Extension, Morgantown, WV

- High Tunnels and Low Tunnels Session (150/no evaluation results): “Future Trends for High Tunnels in the U.S.”

Ed LaClair, NSF-Davis Fresh Technologies, Lake Placid, FL

- GAP Audits Session (130/no evaluation results): “NSF/Davis Fresh Audits”
- Vine Crops Session (NA/18%/70%/12%): “The Future of GAP in Cucurbits”

Klass Martens, Lakeview Organic Grain, Penn Yan, NY

- Fresh Edible Legumes Session (97/25%/75%/0%): “Edamame: Varieties and Production Practices”
- Organic Opportunities and Markets Session (30/76%/24%/0%): “Is Organic Farming Stepping Back in Time or Is it the Key to the Future?”
- Organic Vegetable Production Session (60/83%/17%/0%): “Organic Weed and Soil Management: Insights from a New York Vegetable and Grain Farmer”

Dr. Brian Nault, Department of Entomology, Cornell University

- Onion Session (NA/92%/8%/0%): “Onion Thrips Control in New York”

Dr. Stephen Reiners, Department of Horticultural Sciences, Cornell University

- Fresh Edible Legumes Session (97/36%/55%/9%): “How We Grow Snap Beans in New York”
- Organic Vegetable Production Session (63/72%/28%/0%): “Sweet Potatoes: The Next Big Crop for Up North”

Dr. Mark VanGessel, Department of Plant Science, University of Delaware

- Fresh Edible Legumes Session (97/60%/10%/30%): “Getting the Most Out of Our Bean Herbicides”
- Pickling Cucumber Session (73/48%/48%/4%): “Tank Mixes, Higher Rates, and Crop Rotation to Improve Weed Control in Continuous Pickle Production”
- Sweet Corn Session (175/72%/28%/0%): “Strategies for Weed Control”
- Vine Crops Session (NA/81%/13%/6%): “Weed Management in Cucurbits: Update”

Dr. Celeste Welty, Department of Entomology, Ohio State University

- Vine Crops Session (NA/44%/53%/3%): “Efficacy and Cost Comparisons of Using Insecticide Seed Treatment on Cucurbits”

In addition to the session evaluations, a general survey of Expo attendees was conducted (a copy of the survey results is being sent with this report). The answers to questions about speakers from outside Michigan are reported on pages 12-14 of the survey report. Here’s a summary of the results:

- 44% of respondents were influenced in their decision to attend the Expo by the large diversity of expert speakers from around the country.
- 86% of respondents attended at least one presentation by a speaker from outside Michigan.
- 96% of respondents intended to incorporate information gained from out-of-state speaker presentations into production and/or marketing practices.
- 99% of respondents thought the Expo should continue to invite experts from around the country to make presentations at the Expo.

Some out-of-state attendees responded to the session evaluations and the general Expo survey, but the large majority of responses were by attendees from Michigan. It is clear from the survey results that attendees found value in the presentations which should help them be more competitive in growing and marketing their vegetable crops.