

KVGA Newsletter

March 2020

Vol. 1. No. 1



Hello fellow Kentucky Vegetable Growers Association members!

Our organization is enjoying our 50th year of service to vegetable growers across Kentucky. Through the years we have seen a shift in production in our industry, both in scope of size of the acreage per farmer and techniques used. Our initial membership was mainly large-scale operations growing for the co-ops or other large buyers. Today, the majority of the members are smaller-scale growers producing for direct to consumer sales through farmers markets, CSAs, or on farm stands. Our organization has tried to keep up with the changes as needs are presented.

One of the needs that we are trying to meet is the establishment of a newsletter for our members. This is the initial newsletter and we are going to try and inform you about the organization, the events and meetings that we help with and all the educational material that we can share. If you have feedback about the newsletter, things that you would like for KVGA to be doing or other educational programming you would like to see, please feel free to let us know. We thank you for being members and look forward to helping our industry grow and to help you succeed in your endeavors.

Joel Wilson

President, Kentucky Vegetable Growers Association

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Do you have a question about production, marketing or another veggie-related topic? Send in your question and you may see it answered in a future newsletter!

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Susan Miller, Miller's Farm (Stanford)

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Dr. Rachel Rudolph, UK Department of Horticulture (Lexington)

Dr. John Strang, UK Department of Horticulture (Lexington)

Dr. Shawn Wright, UK Department of Horticulture (Jackson)

Produce Grower-Buyer MeetUp: match-making Kentucky vegetable growers with regional markets

KVGA co-hosted a Produce Grower-Buyer MeetUp on Friday, February 28 that provided the opportunity for approximately 20 Kentucky produce growers to meet with a dozen buyers representing restaurants, retail and wholesale businesses, institutions including school systems, and other buyers like food banks and processors. This was a regional event held in advance of the Eastern Kentucky Farmers Conference in Morehead (Rowan Co).

After a short welcome from Cindy Finneseth, Kentucky Horticulture Council, buyers introduced themselves to the group noting their purchasing geography; desired volumes and crops; and details such as requirement of third-party GAPs certification.

Growers then met face-to-face with buyers of their choice to ask questions and exchange contact information. Experts from several organizations were on hand to discuss resources available to Kentucky growers.

This free event was hosted by the Kentucky Department of Ag (KDA), the Kentucky Horticulture Council (KHC), and KVGA.

Participant feedback was extremely positive, indicating an interest in similar events in the future.



Production Notes

Seed Germination Temperatures

Seeds require certain conditions to germinate and most vegetable crops will germinate when the soil temperature is between 68° and 86°F. Each crop has a temperature range over which germination will occur as well as an optimum temperature where germination occurs most quickly.

Schedule your spring seeding activities (direct seeding and starting seeds for transplants) to hit those target temperatures.

Germination temperature ranges and vegetable crops commonly grown in Kentucky are included in the following table.

Once germination occurs, seedlings can grow at temperatures about 10 °F cooler than germination temperatures.

Optimum Germination Range (°F)	Crop
50-65	celery, lettuce, peas, radish, spinach, turnip
50-85	beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, parsley
65-85	beans, Swiss chard, sweet corn, cucumber, eggplant, melons, okra, onion, pepper, sweet potatoes, squash, tomato

Fungicide Updates for Kentucky Vegetable Production

A change that may save you money this year is that several products have expired patents meaning generic versions will be available. Generic products can be more economical than brand name products but keep in mind that there can be differences between the two, especially in inert ingredients and formulations. These differences can cause variations in control, behavior, or phytotoxicities. Be a savvy shopper:

- Review the label carefully before you use any new product.
- Consult the *Vegetable Production Guide for Commercial Growers, 2020-21*, which is now available at your local county Extension office and online (<http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agcomm/pubs/id/id36/id36.pdf>).
- Check out labels and safety data sheets (SDS; formerly known as material safety data sheets or MSDS), which can be found online at sites like www.cdms.net
- Always read and follow the label on any chemicals you use!

Soil Testing Best Practices

- ⇒ Sample production areas annually and early enough to make any adjustments or applications before planting.
- ⇒ Use a sample collection strategy that ensures the sample represents the site to avoid over- or under- fertilizing.
- ⇒ Keep records to monitor production costs, nutrient levels, and to identify any problem areas.

Building your Business

Group Health Insurance for Kentucky Vegetable Growers

Do you offer health insurance benefits to your employees and want to see if you are getting the best price and coverage possible? Or, are you thinking about offering health insurance?



The Kentucky Horticulture Council (KHC) has joined the Kentucky Ag Health Care Trust and through this relationship, eligible horticulture businesses can access 21 different Anthem health insurance plans. If you have a horticulture-related business, have at least two employees (this can include yourself), and are a member of KVGA, you are most likely eligible. This is a great benefit for small businesses that are currently offering or thinking about offering health benefits to employees. Joining the Plan gives you the purchasing power of a large group and this often results in access to better plans and better pricing.

Where do I start?

- Contact Melissa Hinton (The Hinton Agency; 859-351-6559) to fill out the paperwork to get started on a quote. Note: you will need to provide some specific details about your business and each employee.
- Review and analyze the quote to determine if this is a good option for your business.
- Complete paperwork and join KHC as an employer-member.

Several frequently asked questions are listed on the KHC website: <https://kyhortcouncil.org/khc-ag-health-care-trust/>. Other questions can be submitted to info@kyhortcouncil.org or call 859-490-0889.

Are you ready for April 15 (aka Tax Day)?



Do you consider yourself a farmer? You are if you grow and sell vegetables.

Do you grow vegetables as a hobby or a business? It makes a difference to the IRS and according to that agency, a key feature of a business is the intention of making a profit. A hobby can produce income, but is generated for entertainment or recreation and not really intended to make a profit. Below are several questions to help you determine if growing vegetables is your business (or your hobby). Do you:

- produce vegetables (or value added products) in a businesslike manner?
- maintain complete and accurate books and records?
- put in the time and effort to grow crops profitably?
- depend on the income from selling produce or value added products?
- manage your operation in an attempt to improve profitability?
- have the knowledge needed to grow produce or make value-added products?
- expect to make a profit in the future based on appreciation of your assets? And,
- Have you successfully made a profit growing crops in the past?

Farming income is reported when you file your taxes on the Schedule F. Read more about farming income in The Farmer's Tax Guide (IRS publication 225; <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p225.pdf>).

**If you grow, pack, process, or sell fresh produce, then FSMA may apply to you.
As of January 2020, all income tiers (\$25K+) are now eligible for inspection.**

Food Safety Q&A

What is that PSA training I've been hearing about?

Since 2010, the Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) at Cornell University has been developing a standard program to satisfy the training requirements outlined within the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule (PSR). According to the PSR, *"at least one supervisor or responsible party from the farm to successfully complete food safety training at least equivalent to that received under the standardized curriculum recognized as adequate by the Food and Drug Administration"*. PSA's training session is one way to satisfy the training requirement.

The Food Systems Innovation Center (FSIC) at the University of Kentucky is the lead group scheduling trainings in the state. Upcoming PSA trainings:

- March 17—Bath County Extension Office, Owingsville
- March 26—Graves County Extension Office, Mayfield
- March 27—Warren County Extension Office, Bowling Green
- April 15—Kentucky State University Farm, Frankfort

For more information about scheduled PSA Grower Training Courses in Kentucky, please visit the FSIC website at <https://www.uky.edu/fsic/trainings.php> or call 859-218-4387.



PSA Training

Who Should Attend:

Fruit and vegetable growers and others interested in learning about produce safety, Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), co-management, and the proposed FDA's Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule (PSR).

Registration Details:

Badrinath Jagannathan
badrivj@uky.edu
325 Cooper Drive
210 W.P Garrigus Building
Dept of Animal and Food Science
Lexington, KY 40546

\$15 fee includes lunch, snacks, and grower resources.



2021 Kentucky Fruit & Vegetable Conference

The annual Kentucky Fruit and Vegetable Conference has outgrown the hotel where we've been the last several years and will be in a new location — the Sloan Convention Center in Bowling Green — for 2021. KVGA is represented on the planning committee and working hard to organize an excellent event. One advantage of the new space is more room for additional educational tracks and exhibitors. We would love your input on pre-conference events, educational topics, speakers, or vendors you would like to see at the show. You can share your ideas with any of the KVGA board members to pass along or submit this quick online survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2021FruitVegConfPlanning>

Jan. 3: Pre-Conference Short Courses

Jan. 4-5: Conference Sessions

Jan. 6: Direct Marketing Summit

Sloan Convention Center at
Holiday Inn University Plaza
1021 Wilkinson Trace
Bowling Green, KY 42103
270-745-0088
www.HIBowlingGreen.com





2020 Fruit & Vegetable Conference Highlights

KVGA co-hosted **530+ attendees** at the annual Kentucky Fruit & Vegetable Conference January 6-7, 2020 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Lexington. The KVGA annual meeting was held Tuesday morning during the Conference.

Pre-conference events included a Farm Food Safety Plan Writing Workshop and a Farmers Market Short Course followed by the vegetable and fruit grower roundtable discussions.

The main conference featured more than **85 speakers in 12 educational tracks** on direct marketing, beginning and advanced vegetable production, tree fruit and small fruit production, organic production, marketing and business management, protected agriculture production, and food safety. The Kentucky Grape & Wine Short Course and educational wine tasting event was held concurrently. Pesticide credits were offered for several sessions and locally-sourced ingredients were used in the two lunch meals.



More than **50 exhibitors** were present at the trade show, meeting with growers and discussing products, services, and resources available to Kentucky growers. Exhibitors and sponsors help keep the meeting cost low. See a list of the 2020 Conference sponsors on the following page.



This annual event is co-hosted by KVGA, the Kentucky State Horticulture Society (KSHS), and the Organic Association of Kentucky (OAK), the Kentucky Wineries Association (KWA), and the Kentucky Horticulture Council (KHC) in cooperation with the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture Food and Environment, Kentucky State University, and the Kentucky Department of Agriculture.



A highlight of the 2020 Conference was recognizing Dr. John Strang for his dedicated service to the produce industry of Kentucky.

He plans to retire from the University of Kentucky in September of this year.



Thank you Shubin Saha, KVGA Board Member, for serving on the 2020 program committee!

Thank You Conference Sponsors!

Platinum Level



Gold Level



Silver Level



Bronze Level



2020 Kentucky Fruit & Vegetable Conference

Wholesale Markets: GAPs

As you talk with buyers, the subject of GAPs may come up. GAPs—Good Agricultural Practices—is a voluntary, third-party audit program that verifies that fruits and vegetables are produced, packed, handled, and stored as safely as possible to minimize risks of microbial food safety hazards. Several retail and wholesale buyers require producers to have third-party audit verification.

Audits can be conducted by a USDA auditor or an accredited auditor from a private company. More information about the USDA program can be found online: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/auditing/gap-ghp>

GAPs Technical Assistance. Bryan Brady with UK's Cultivate Kentucky Program is an excellent technical assistance resource for understanding audit requirements, developing a farm food safety plan, and preparing for an on-farm audit. He can be contacted by phone (859-323-0417 or 757-651-6692) or email (Bryan.Brady@uky.edu).

GAPs Financial Assistance. In 2020, the Kentucky Horticulture Council (KHC) is offering a GAPs Cost-Share Program. Applications are currently being accepted. Any Kentucky produce grower completing a third party GAPs audit in 2020 may participate. Cost share is 75% of the audit cost up to a maximum reimbursement of \$1,250. Applications are available online: <https://kyhortcouncil.org/khc-cost-share-programs/>, by emailing info@kyhortcouncil.org or calling 859-490-0889.

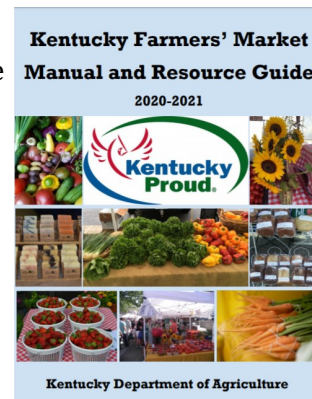
In the past, a "GAP Certificate" was required to serve samples at farmers markets. This training program, available through your local county extension office, has been renamed to PBPT or Produce Best Practices Training. The schedule for these classes is available online: <https://www.uky.edu/ccd/foodsafety/pbpt/2020dates> or call your local county extension office which may offer additional trainings not listed on that calendar.

Another program often confused with produce GAPs is the U.S. Tobacco GAP program. That is an industry program addressing crop production, agrochemical management, and labor for tobacco. That program does not have a focus on produce or foodborne illnesses and sanitation.

KY Farmers Markets

In many communities, farmers markets are a thriving direct marketing channel for Kentucky vegetable growers. In 2019, there were 160 registered farmers markets in Kentucky. Over 2,500 vendors state-wide sold through this outlet.

Did you receive a copy of the Kentucky Farmers Market Manual and Resource Guide published by KDA? You can request a copy from Nancy Monroe, Program Coordinator (502-782-4133; NancyG.Monroe@ky.gov). The publication is also available online: https://www.kyagr.com/marketing/documents/FM_Manual_and_Resource_Guide.pdf.



KVGA is highlighted on page 26.

Social Media Marketing: Facebook



Facebook is a free social networking site that makes it easy for you to connect with current and potential customers. If this marketing platform seems intimidating, think of it as an opportunity, not an obstacle!

If you aren't convinced you need social media in your marketing toolbox, check out these Facebook stats from HootSuite:

- 2.41 billion monthly active users
- the world's 3rd most visited website
- the 5th most downloaded free app
- 71% of American adults use it
- Seniors are the fastest-growing user group
- 74% of high income earners use it
- 74% of users log in daily
- used by 90 million small businesses

KVGA Research Notes

What are YOUR research needs???

KVGA leadership serves you by communicating research needs of vegetable growers to researchers at Kentucky institutions. This information is gathered each year during registration for the annual KY Fruit & Vegetable Conference. At ANY time of year, you are welcome to submit research needs to KVGA board members to pass along to researchers who may be able to work on the project. The table below lists research suggestions from the 2020 Conference:

Pest Control: organic pest control; alternative organic insecticides; biological controls; pesticide to stop Marmorated Stink Bugs; pesticide applications; general disease control; pumpkin diseases; fungal diseases; soil/foliar nutrition for pest resistance; on-farm microbial cultures for pest management; spray guide
Marketing: general; farmers market; market analysis; crop marketability; profitability; direct marketing; crop feasibility
Food Safety
Crops: great white tomato; NASA choice of vegetables for trip to Mars; edible perennial crops; sweet corn
Variety Selection: vegetable varieties for season extension; variety trials
Production Systems: hydroponic systems; greenhouse; organic; no-till; season extension; efficiency gains
Vegetable storage for winter sales
Soils: soil building; on-farm microbial cultures for soil fertility; soil mineralization for nutrient dense crops; soil heath; no till; nutrient management and best management practices
Weed Control: basic weed control; organic weed suppression

2019 Fruit & Vegetable Research Report



Each year, UK's Horticulture Department publishes a report of the fruit and vegetable research projects conducted by faculty and staff.

The 2019 report includes the following projects:

- Spring Black Rot-resistant Cabbage Cultivar Evaluation
- High Tunnel Table Beet Cultivar Trial
- Glucosinolates Content of Turnips Grown in Sewage Sludge-amended Soil
- Enzyme Activity in the Rhizosphere of Tomato Soil After Animal Waste Application
- Results of Selection for High Yield and Zingiberene Content of Interspecific Hybrid Tomatoes Grown in the Open Field
- Recovery of Spider Mite Resistance in Advanced Generations of Interspecific Hybrid Tomatoes

The appendix at the end of the report lists sources of vegetable seeds used in the trials.

You can request a copy of the report from your local county Extension office or get it online: <http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agcomm/pubs/PR/PR762/PR762.pdf> .

Upcoming Industry Events

3/12 – 2020 Kentucky Farm Bureau Roadside Farm Market Educational Meeting (Bowling Green)

3/17 – KSHS Day at Jackson's Orchard (Bowling Green)

3/27 – Strawberry Plasticulture Field Day (Clark Co)

4/4 – WKU Farmers Market Program (Bowling Green)

4/15 – EKY Ag Water Quality Field Day (Quicksand)

4/25 – KNGA Spring Meeting (Elizabethtown)

5/5 – KSHS Day at Reed Valley Orchard (Paris)

6/8 – UK Grape Field Day (Lexington)

Save-the-Date

2021 Kentucky Fruit & Vegetable Conference

Jan. 3 – Pre-Conference Short Courses

Jan. 4-5 – Conference Sessions

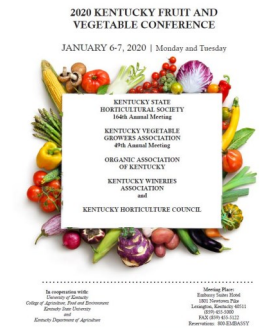
Jan. 6 – Post Conference Direct Marketing Summit

Sloan Convention Center, Bowling Green, KY



2021 Kentucky Fruit & Vegetable Conference Contest

Submit your artwork to be featured on the front cover of the 2021 Kentucky Fruit & Vegetable Conference Program.



July 1, 2020

Deadline to submit artwork to info@kyhortcouncil.org or P.O. Box 21736, Lexington, KY 40522-1736.

August 1, 2020

Winner will be notified

In addition to having their artwork featured on the conference program, the winner will receive a \$100 cash prize!