Meeting the Needs of Wisconsin’s Fresh Market Industry

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Wisconsin’s Fresh Market Industry

- > 1,500 fresh market vegetable growers
- WI ranks 8th in the nation for number of farms
- $21.8 million value in 1997
- WI ranks 6th for value of produce
- 600 certified organic farms, 2nd to California
- Nearly 200 farmers markets
- 3 produce auctions
Wisconsin’s Fresh Market Industry

- Average age 52 years. Range 33-80 years.
- 80% are male but the number of female growers is increasing.
- Estimated 3% are Hmong and 2% are Amish or Mennonite.
- The average farm size is 15 acres.
- Average number of years farm has been in operation - 12
Collaborators

- WFMVGA
- CIAS/PURR
- UWEX County Faculty & Staff
- UW Depts. of Horticulture, Agronomy, Entomology, Plant Pathology, Soil Science, Rural Sociology, & Ag Econ.
- WDATCP
- MOSA
- MACSAC
- Michael Fields
Grower Surveys

- 2001 survey of 270 vegetable & berry growers
- Dot poster
- 1996 survey of 240 vegetable growers
Key Issues

- Marketing, business management, recordkeeping
- Weed management
- Variety trials
- Season extension
- Small-scale, specialized equipment
- Customer relations
- Troubleshooting & diagnosis
- Enterprise budgets
UW Fresh Market Vegetable Program

**Mission:** provide research-based information to improve the economic stability & environmental soundness of the fresh market vegetable industry in Wisconsin.
Objectives

- Assist fresh market growers acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to produce a crop with minimal negative impact on the environment.
- Assist growers to develop the necessary business management skills to run a profitable business.
- Enable growers to develop the skills necessary to market their product profitably.
- Enhance consumer demand for Wisconsin fresh market vegetables.
- Increase legislative and public awareness to the importance of Wisconsin’s fresh market industry and university programming.
- Create statewide, information-sharing grower gatherings.
- Identify research needs in Wisconsin.
- Create an advisory committee of growers to increase grower involvement in program planning.
Future Programming Efforts

- **Publications**
  - Growing in Wisconsin series
  - Vegetable insect & disease fact sheets
  - Consumer vegetable fact sheets

- **Educational Programs**
  - Field Days
  - Hmong Workshops
  - Amish Seminars
  - Farmers Market Manager Workshop
  - Farmer Marketing & Pest Management Seminar

- **Vegetable Variety Trials**