



Testimony

Of

Lisa Schacht

Schacht Family Farm and Market

Canal Winchester, Ohio

Committee on Agriculture

Subcommittee on Nutrition & Horticulture

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC

May 8, 2012

Chairman Schmidt, Ranking Member Rep. Baca, and distinguished members of this Committee. I truly appreciate this opportunity to speak with you today. I wish to express my sincere gratitude for your thoughtful considerations of the horticultural industry and the producers reliant on its success.

I am Lisa Schacht of Schacht Family Farm and Market. With my husband, David, I operate a small fruit and vegetable farm in close proximity of Columbus, Ohio. We produce a diverse variety of crops and market them directly to customers as well as wholesale to other retailers and distributors. We established our enterprise just over 30 years ago. Though also raising some USDA program crops for rotational purposes, we are not participating in their related programs. Our primary production is focused on our horticultural crops.

We have capitalized on the accessibility of our farm to the public to build a loyal client base. Our commitment to producing consistently high quality products in a sustainable fashion has created rapport with our customers. Having ample tools to achieve this is crucial. The USDA Farm Bill plays a significant role in this.

The USDA Farm Bill has both direct and indirect impact on our operation. We do participate in redeeming SNAP and the Senior Farmer Market Nutrition benefits. The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program as administrated in Ohio and the Specialty Crop Research Initiative have funded projects from which we have drawn new or improved resources. These efforts, though not direct revenue to us, generally have the greatest impact. Programs like the Farmers' Market Promotion Program, Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program, Farm to School Program, and Value Added Grant Program have been more residual in effect. And though not measureable, any effort that raises awareness has good potential to generate more revenue at the producer level. As well, this is putting more nutritious, safe food in the hands of the American people.

I am also the current President of the Ohio Produce Growers & Marketers Association (OPGMA). This is a statewide industry association representing all specialty crop enterprises. We are committed to consumer and processor satisfaction, environmentally friendly practices, business success, and the provision of fulfilling career opportunities for family and employees. Members could be small but producing an extensive variety of crops, very large producing only a few crops, or any combination of the like. Our members would tell you that specialty crop production and marketing are truly labor intensive and provide extensive economic activity in their communities.

In comparison to my farm, my OPGMA peers may have greater direct impact from the Farm Bill. So I wish today to emphasize the virtue of the programs written into the Bill for the horticulture industry.

The SNAP and Nutrition programs have attempted to drive recipients to producers. Across Ohio, producers have reached out to the recipients. There is a significant increase in farmers markets with electronic transfer access. I began in the days of the paper vouchers. The use of the EBT cards has reduced the paperwork burdens to those of us redeeming benefits, but not without some costs.

In my opinion, SNAP, WIC Fruit and Vegetable Program, and the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program need more of its funds directed to better management of the benefits. Without extensive education about the practical use of the benefits, the actual return on taxpayers' investment is crippled. The elderly and individuals receiving the benefits must have more knowledge of food and nutrition to make the choices that reap their reward.

The research-based programs of the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program and the Specialty Crop Research Initiative are truly the favored sons of the Farm Bill to our growers. I know past testimony has described these as appropriate approaches to the challenge of assisting such a diverse sector of agriculture. Ohio has various micro climates and farm populations that require efforts to be pin-pointed to specific needs. These programs being administered any higher than the state or regional level will reduce the effectiveness of research needed for competitiveness. Our producers are not looking for direct payment for support, but, again, the tools that help them be the best producers possible. This will contribute to greater food security overall.

In Ohio, OPGMA has been a grant recipient recently for an ongoing food safety project. This project began as an initiative to address meeting consumer/buyer expectations of good practices and grew into a thorough educational and certification process. When similar programs have been attempted on a national level, they have been challenged because of the difficulty to get "one size fits all" results. With state-specific programs, our growers will have greater potential for new or expanded marketing opportunities in and out of Ohio. Since the beginning of block grant funding for horticulture, stakeholders in Ohio have concertedlly strove for the best results for Ohio producers. Growers are involved in the process and are benefiting from the results of the funded projects.

Because a great number of producers in Ohio market either directly to consumers or within their local communities, promotional programs funded through the Farm Bill also need to be on the local level. Any broad-based efforts need to be focused on nutrition and food management education. Also efforts need to be unbiased in regards to cultural practices of conventional versus organic. Sustainability starts with economic viability. Bringing up awareness of the health and wellness benefits of more consumption of fruits and vegetables should reach all socio-economic groups. Marketing to specific consumer trends should be the responsibility of private enterprise.

Also, Farm to School and the Fruit and Vegetable Snack Programs will hit at the core of benefiting both citizens and producers. The early introduction of good nutritional choices and better awareness of improved health will have a ripple effect. Children will develop good eating habits. The operations seeking to participate in these opportunities will reap direct benefit through increased sales. Those continuing to market in more traditional manners should also see increases because of the potential for heightened demand.

In conclusion, I repeat that fruit and vegetable production is diverse with unique needs. Having programs in the Farm Bill that enhance and propel the horticulture industry must be flexible enough to serve producers where those needs are. Increased access, knowledge, and consumption of fresh produce will benefit both consumers and producers.

I thank you, Chairman Schmidt and the Committee, for the invitation to speak today. I recognize the challenge before you in writing the 2012 Farm Bill. Horticulture producers know firsthand what it is to balance very diverse demands. I simply ask that if possible to maintain the critical tools in the current Farm Bill and where conducive to expand them. Trust that our producers will be responsible with the resources they may be fortunate enough to receive.

LISA L. SCHACHT,

WORK EXPERIENCE

- | | |
|---|--|
| Schacht Farm and Market
Owner/Operator | Canal Winchester, Ohio
1981 - Present |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manage retail activities including merchandising, pricing, and customer service• Manage human resource tasks, including about not limited to, interviewing, hiring, training, and supervising 12-15 seasonal employees• Maintain business records including any related to federal, state and local reporting• Perform all payable/receivable payments or invoicing and payroll calculation and distribution• Plan/develop advertising and promotion efforts and carry out such plans• Assist in various field/production tasks including equipment operation and packing/prepping products for marketing• Purchase/acquisition of many of inputs/supplies• Manage all wholesale tasks, including sales, deliveries or logistics | |
| Canal Winchester Local School District
Substitute Bus Driver | Canal Winchester, Ohio
1995 – 1999 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintain all safety requirements when called in to drive any route• Transport students with utmost care | |
| Hocking Technical College
Culinary Arts Instructor | Nelsonville, Ohio
1988 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teach short order cooking to first time offenders for job training | |
| Franklin County School Systems
Substitute Teacher | Multiple Districts
1982-1984 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Report to district and classroom of absent teacher and perform lesson as instructed• Assume complete teacher responsibility for Home Economics classes for one semester including lesson planning and execution | |

EDUCATION

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| The Ohio State University
<i>Bachelor of Arts in Home Economics Education</i> | Columbus, Ohio
June 1981 |
| Ohio University/Lancaster
Continuing Education Credits: 9 hrs | Lancaster, Ohio
1991 |
| The Ohio State University
College of Ag, Food & Environmental Sciences;
Leadership and Education Development Program, Class IX | Columbus, Ohio
2001-2003 |

ASSOCIATIONS/SERVICE

Franklin County Farm Bureau - 25+

- Board of Trustees – 1996-2000; 2004 – 2010
- Board Secretary -1996 – 99
- Membership Co chair – 1996
- Information Coordinator – 1994-1996; 2004-2005
- Metro Committee – 1984-86
- 1987 Franklin Co. Farm Woman of the Year
- OFBF Annual Meeting Delegate _ 1999, 2000, 2004, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009
- Thirtysomething Advisory Council
- OFBF tax reform task force – 2005
- OFBF Rural Development Advisory Team – 2008, 2009
- OFBF education reform task force – 2009

Ohio Produce Growers and Marketers Assn (OPGMA) 2008 – Present

- Board of Trustees – 2008 – present
- President – 2011-2012
- Vice President – 2009-2010
- Chair – Education Committee – 2008 – 2010

Ohio Vegetable and Small Fruit Research and Development Program

- Appointed 2007, 3 year term
- Recommended for reappointment

Ohio Food Policy Council

- Appointed 2010

Ohio Vegetable and Potato Growers Assn – 1982 – 2007 (note: now OPGMA)

- Board of Trustees – 2004-2006
- Growers Congress Planning Committee
- Audit Committee – 2005
- Merger Committee – 2006-2008: merged the former Ohio Vegetable and Potato Growers Assn, Ohio Fruit Growers Society, and Direct Agricultural Marketing Assn of Ohio

Direct Agricultural Marketing Assn of Ohio – 1994 – 2007 (note: now OPGMA)

- Board of Directors – 1994-96
- Finance Chair – 1994-96

Central Ohio Food Policy Council – 2008-present

National Federation of Independent Businesses

David Evangelical Lutheran Church

Canal Winchester, Ohio

Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives
Required Witness Disclosure Form

House Rules* require nongovernmental witnesses to disclose the amount and source of Federal grants received since October 1, 2008.

Name: Lisa Schacht

Organization you represent (if any): Ohio Produce Growers and Marketers Association

1. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants and subcontracts) you have received since October 1, 2008, as well as the source and the amount of each grant or contract. House Rules do **NOT** require disclosure of federal payments to individuals, such as Social Security or Medicare benefits, farm program payments, or assistance to agricultural producers:

Source: N/A Amount: _____

Source: N/A Amount: _____

2. If you are appearing on behalf of an organization, please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants and subcontracts) the organization has received since October 1, 2008, as well as the source and the amount of each grant or contract:

Source: USDA Specialty Block Grant 2009, 10, 11 Amount: \$65,000, \$92,000, \$78,000

Source: _____ Amount: _____

Please check here if this form is NOT applicable to you: _____

Signature: 

* Rule XI, clause 2(g)(4) of the U.S. House of Representatives provides: *Each committee shall, to the greatest extent practicable, require witnesses who appear before it to submit in advance written statements of proposed testimony and to limit their initial presentations to the committee to brief summaries thereof. In the case of a witness appearing in a nongovernmental capacity, a written statement of proposed testimony shall include a curriculum vitae and a disclosure of the amount and source (by agency and program) of each Federal grant (or subgrant thereof) or contract (or subcontract thereof) received during the current fiscal year or either of the two previous fiscal years by the witness or by any entity represented by the witness*

PLEASE ATTACH DISCLOSURE FORM TO EACH COPY OF TESTIMONY.