

XII Media Outreach

Research showed that in addition to freshness consumers realized that purchasing locally raised products provided economic benefits as well. Reviewing the products that were a part of the study it was decided that the Simply Sweet had the greatest possibility of focusing media interest on both the quality and economic benefits of purchasing locally raised products.

Why the Simply Sweet? This product was developed through Penn State University researchers who were seeking a product that could come to market at an optimum time for profitability while being resistant to destruction by wildlife. The hard work of the farmers who raise our food was integral to the onion story as was the “native raised” aspect as the product was specific to Pennsylvania.

During the initial stage of the second phase of the study Pennsylvania Preferred organized a promotion effort that sought to tell the story of the Simply Sweet from the perspective of the farmers who raise it and the chefs who use it. TV, radio and print media were contacted with the result that Southeast Pennsylvania consumers read and saw more about Pennsylvania farmers and their contribution to the local economy. Noted Philadelphia chef Jack McDavid agreed to appear on local television talking about the Pennsylvania farmers raising the Simply Sweet. Cross Creek Farms representative Mike Kotz was featured on a WHYY food and dining program. Associated Press as well as The Philadelphia Inquirer carried stories on the product. In short this effort produced a noticeable spike in the reporting on farmers and their products.