

## The Next Generation of Fruit Growers—Building Leadership and Coalitions

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An on-going leadership development initiative has resulted in the formation of a coalition of young fruit industry leaders from Pennsylvania and other eastern states. During 2008, young growers toured progressive specialty crop enterprises in Pennsylvania, Maryland, New Zealand, Italy, and Germany; toured research orchards at Penn State; sponsored a farm succession workshop, participated in Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) pilot studies to retool the fruit industry, and held lunch and learn sessions with Andrew Landers, Cornell University spray application technology specialist, and Lee Showalter, with Rice Fruit Company Grower Services. With each leadership event the group grows, and over 100 young growers from throughout the Mid-Atlantic region now participate in the alliance. The growers formally organized as a committee of the State Horticultural Association of Pennsylvania (SHAP), and call themselves the “Mid-Atlantic Young Grower Alliance (YGA).” Their mission is “to encourage, develop, support and equip the next generation of fruit growers in the Mid-Atlantic region.”



Figure 1. Tour of Weaver Orchards in Berks County.



Figure 2. Joint greenhouse and fruit producer tour.



Figure 3. Young growers “Down Under.”



Figure 4. YGA members visit with Italian growers.

### Acknowledgements

*The young grower leadership project is supported by grants from the SHAP Extension Committee and the Maryland State Horticultural Society. Lunch meetings were sponsored by Keim Orchards and Crop Production Services.*