



Benefits of Membership

Pickle Packers International (PPI) has represented the pickled vegetable industry since 1893 by sponsoring research, representing industry before government agencies, producing educational materials, and providing superior networking opportunities to its members. Today, membership represents 87 percent of the cucumber tonnage grown for pickle-use in North America, valued at more than \$1.5 billion. PPI membership has grown to represent pickles, peppers, sauerkraut and other pickled vegetables.

Member firms include processors, salters, green shippers, brokers, growers, seed companies, ingredient and equipment manufacturers, packaging suppliers, and those providing goods and services to the industry. PPI's presence is world-wide, with members from 16 countries, including Belgium, Canada, China, Finland, Germany, Holland, India, Japan, Mexico, The Netherlands, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, and United States.

Governance – The PPI Board of Directors represents the pickled vegetable industry by setting policy for the common good of the industry and all members, overseeing three operating divisions – Research & Education, Government Affairs, and Industry Outreach.

Acidified Foods GMP School – PPI promotes certification of individuals working as operating supervisors in acidified foods processing as required by FDA. The school provides instruction in food handling techniques; food protection principles; personal hygiene; plant sanitation; pH controls; critical factors in acidification, and more.

Ag Appropriations – PPI secures over \$4 million annually in federal funding for U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Research Services (ARS) laboratory facilities for continued research on pickled vegetables. Labs are located in Charleston, South Carolina; East Lansing, Michigan; Madison, Wisconsin; and Raleigh, North Carolina.

Allied Trade – PPI works cooperatively with regional, national and international trade groups involved in production, packaging and distribution of food products.

Communications – PPI produces electronic newsletters – *Industry Outreach*, *Let's Get Together!*, *Government Matters*, and *Research & Education* – to keep members informed of current events.

Crisis Management – PPI developed a bioterrorism preparedness and crisis management plan and serves as industry spokesperson during media events. Media protocol requests that member companies report situations to PPI for drafting media response and, as appropriate, involve its research scientists to make credible statements toward restoring public confidence in the food supply.

Food Safety – PPI represents industry before the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and development of its Food Safety Modernization Act by meeting with the agency, submitting comments to proposed rulemakings, and authoring compliance information.

Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) – PPI developed a food safety program for growers and green shippers of produce that is destined for further processing, recognizing 5-log pathogen kill steps that ensure food safety. This eases compliance at a time when downstream customers are increasingly requesting 3rd party GAP certifications.

Government Affairs – PPI influences public policy – legislation, regulatory compliance, and international trade – via meetings with government officials, presenting written and oral testimony, and conducting grassroots campaigns. PPI’s efforts in Washington, D.C. generally affect policy decisions in other countries.

Labor – PPI represents its members’ interests on immigration and seasonal worker issues.

Legal Counsel – PPI is represented by Hogan Lovells, providing antitrust, legal, corporate and regulatory counsel. Staff is fluent in acidified foods regulations.

Market Data – PPI compiles worldwide statistical information about the pickled vegetable industry regarding production and consumer consumption.

Membership Directory – PPI produces a “Who’s Who” listing of member contacts, and has expanded its website, www.ilovepickles.org, to include a complete online membership directory, a listing of brands, and links to members’ websites with improved search capabilities.

Process Filing Handbook – PPI-sponsored research establishes processing times and temperatures for the production and delivery of safe products. Its folio of research information assists its members with successful submission of process controls as required by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration.

Product Quality Improvement – PPI provides an un-biased third-party quality evaluation of products in the marketplace.

Product Showcase – PPI provides industry suppliers an economical forum for displaying their products and services at annual events.

Public Relations – PPI conducts public awareness campaigns and offers promotional sales to enhance its members marketing efforts, increasing exposure of members’ brands.

Research Advisory Committee – PPI engages an advisory committee comprised of scientists knowledgeable in both public and private research being conducted in North America, Europe, India, China, Taiwan, and other places important to the industry. This committee helps prioritize the best use of PPI’s research dollars world-wide, and identifies research findings important to the education of members.

Research Funding – PPI allocates nearly 50% of its operating budget towards agricultural research projects (seed germplasm with special attention to disease and stress resistance, improving yields, suitability for processing, harvesting methods, etc.) and advances in manufacturing technology (handling, brining, processing, packaging, refrigeration, etc.). For example, over \$1M in seed germplasm research has led to commercially available Downy Mildew disease resistance.

Social Media – PPI has a social media presence, utilizing this cost-effective medium for increasing public awareness, website traffic, and exposure of members’ brands.

Strong and Balanced Programming – PPI educates members at its Spring and Annual Meetings and co-sponsored events with national and regional allied trade groups.

Superior Networking Value – PPI provides members of industry opportunities to foster and maintain valuable business connections.

University Research – PPI supports worldwide pickled vegetable research via grants to individual scientists and collaborative efforts. Multiple researchers collaborating with other institutions leads to greater results!

USDA ARS Relations – PPI maintains close-working relations with the USDA Agricultural Research Service Administrator in Washington DC, National Program Leaders in Beltsville MD, and microbiologists at the Food Science Research Unit in Raleigh NC – relations crucial for sustaining long-term pickled vegetable research.

Association Management

PPI is managed by **Verto Solutions** - an association management company located in Washington, D.C. Core competencies include: Association management; coalition building; communications; media relations; financial management; government affairs; legal services; meeting planning; membership development; scientific program management; strategic planning and more.