

Dear colleagues,

Please join me in congratulating all of the groups and individuals whose accomplishments are described below. A list of grants received for the period August 4–September 15 is also attached.

A program to establish an undergraduate exchange program between Rutgers, Ohio State, and two universities in Brazil—Universidade São Paulo, specifically the Escola Superior de Agricultura Luiz de Queiroz campus in Piracicaba, and the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul in Porto Alegre—has been given grant funding from the U.S. Department of Education’s Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE). All four institutions have a tradition of undergraduate students involved in their biotechnology research programs and the added benefit of an international research experience ensures that the proposed program will continue beyond the government sponsorship period. The exchange program is being funded through the U.S.-Brazil Higher Education Consortia Program, which is jointly administered by FIPSE and the Brazilian Ministry of Education. FIPSE provides grants for up to four years to consortia of at least two academic institutions each from Brazil and the United States. The program fosters the exchange of students and faculty within the context of bilateral curricular development. The Rutgers co-investigators leading this project are **Gerben Zylstra, Barbara Zilinskas, Michael Lawton, Rod Sharp, and Cesar Braga-Pinto.**

Tim Casey, director of the Cook Honors Program, has been selected to receive the Honorary American FFA Degree at the 79th Annual National FFA Convention in Indianapolis next month. The award recognizes Casey’s outstanding service to agriculture, food, and natural resources education and the FFA.

Andrew Pleasant, an assistant professor in the Department of Human Ecology at Rutgers' Cook College, is co-author of a new book, *Advancing Health Literacy*. The book addresses the crisis in health literacy in the United States and around the world.

The Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board has granted accreditation for a six-year period to the course of study leading to the first professional B.S. degree in landscape architecture at Rutgers’ Cook College.

Georgiy Stenchikov, professor in the Department of Environmental Science, was filmed and interviewed about the aerosol plume from the 9/11/01 World Trade Center collapse. The interview and online content can be found [here](#).

Alan Robock, professor in the Department of Environmental Science, had a letter to the editor printed in the September 19 issue of the New York Times. The letter may be found [here](#) (free registration required).

Peter C. Kahn, professor in the Department of Biochemistry and Microbiology, has been invited by the Minister of Science and Education of Bosnia to attend the First Congress of Bosnian Academic Diaspora as a guest of honor. The Congress will provide a forum for discussion of significant topics for the development of knowledge and scientific research in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Annalise Van Vranken, daughter of **Richard Van Vranken**, Atlantic County agricultural agent, was a member of the USA vaulting team, FAME, which took the silver medal at the World Equestrian Games in Aachen, Germany.

The Advisory Committee for Instructional Computing awarded a total of \$62,686 in grants to Cook College. Six proposals were submitted for consideration and five of these were ranked highly enough by the review committee to receive at least partial funding. One proposal was recommended for full funding. The recipients are as follows:

Peter Bastardo and **Rebecca Jordan**, “Distance Learning: A Skill in Teacher Education,” fully funded at \$7,900.

Jean Marie Hartman, “Blake Instructional Lab Upgrade,” partially funded at \$17,210.

Richard Lathrop, “Upgrade of Environmental Geomatics Instructional Computing Lab,” partially funded at \$25,006.

Tamar Barkay, “Enhanced Computation and Image Processing in Microbiology Education,” partially funded at \$3,290.

Robert Tate, “Instructional Computing Enhancements within Environmental Sciences,” partially funded at \$9,280.

The 16th Annual Tomato Tasting Event held August 31 at the **Snyder Research and Extension Farm** in Pittstown was a great success, with an estimated 800–900 in attendance for the late afternoon and evening event. Although there was no clear "winner" from the Snyder event, a smaller sampling of 500 tasters at the Somerset County 4-H fair showed that Amarillo (a new hybrid cherry tomato) was a clear favorite among all those tasted, and Snow White was the favorite heirloom cherry tomato.

Since April 2004, **John Grande**, director of Snyder Farm, and his team have overseen a turf demonstration site on a median in Bordentown (route 206) for the New Jersey Department of Transportation. Grande and his team have made a number of recommendations for improving turf on these medians to reduce costs and improve efficiency. Jeffrey Callahan, assistant commissioner of operations at NJDOT, noted that “[a]s a direct result of these suggestions, NJDOT Maintenance and Operations has implemented a statewide Grassland Eco Mow Zone program to reduce mowing....” This program has “...shown that proper turf management can reduce manpower and equipment costs, save on fuel, improve roadside aesthetics, enhance erosion control, reduce rainwater run-off, and improve ground water recharge,” Callahan said.

On his return from Central Asia, Biotech Center member **Ilya Raskin** (Plant Biology & Pathology) reported that the third annual conference for the NIH-funded International Cooperative Biodiversity Group (ICBG) program, held in late July, was a success. All ICBG sub-programs have made substantial progress. Hundreds of plant, fungal, and microbial samples have been collected, and promising genes and extracts have been identified. Three patents are about to be filed and already \$34,000 in licensing fees has been paid by five industry partners. Fifty percent of the licensing fees is being reinvested into the partnering countries of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Nine publications have been submitted or published, and a book on the medicinal plants of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan is close to printing. A comprehensive

educational program is up and running, and six distinguished seminar speakers have visited Central Asia, including Ilan Chet (Israel) and Slavik Dushenkov (US).

Biotech Center member **Lily Young** (Environmental Science) visited the Chinese Academy of Sciences Institute of Geochemistry in Guangzhou, China, and the South China University of Technology, also in Guangzhou, July 6–8. Two seminars were presented at each institution, one on “Anaerobic Processes Associated with Hydrocarbon Biodegradation,” and a second on “In-Situ Biodegradation of BTX and PAH.” Collaborations are being established with both institutions including research and exchange of students.

Wayne Cowgill, Hunterdon County Agricultural Agent, and a team of researchers were the recipients of the 2005 Shepard Award for their article titled “Eight-Year Performance of Apple Cultivars in the 1995 NE-183 Regional Project Planting: Growth and Yield Characteristics,” from The American Pomological Society at their annual meeting held in conjunction with the American Society of Horticultural Science, in New Orleans, in July. The Shepard Award is presented for the best paper published by the journal (*Journal of the American Pomological Society* 59:18-27).

The following awards and recognitions were received at the National Association of County Agricultural Agents’ 91st Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference, July 23–27, Cincinnati, Ohio:

Bayer Communications Awards:

- **M. Flahive DiNardo**, Union County Agricultural Agent, and **M. Maletta**, Hunterdon County Research Assistant, “Household Pests and Nuisances...Are They? How Are They Managed?” National Finalist: Computer Generated Graphics.

- **M. Flahive DiNardo**, Union County Agricultural Agent, and **P. Marquillas**, Master Gardener, “Where to Find ‘Jersey Fresh’ and ‘Grown’ in Union County,” promotional brochure. Northeast Regional Finalist: Direct Mail Piece.

- **B. Mickel**, Hunterdon County Agricultural Agent; **D. Foulk**, Agriculture Program Coordinator; **D. Kluchinski**, County Agricultural Agent; **B. Sciarappa**, Monmouth County Agricultural Agent; **C. Williams**, Equine Extension Specialist; and **M. Westendorf**, Animal Science Extension Specialist, along with out-of-state colleagues, “Mid-Atlantic SARE Equine Pasture Initiative.” Northeast Region Finalist: Learning Module/Notebook.

- **B. Mickel**, Hunterdon County Agricultural Agent; **D. Foulk**, Agriculture Program Coordinator; and **E. Chamberlain**, Warren County Agricultural Agent, “Bulletin E 305: The Equine Hay Market.” Northeast Regional Finalist: Publications.

- **W. T. Hlubik**, Middlesex County Agricultural Agent; **N. Polanin**, Somerset County Agricultural Agent; **R. Weidman**, Middlesex County Program Associate; **J. Marko**, and **D. Smela**, Middlesex County Program Assistants. Longwood Gardens Episode: The “If Plants Could Talk” Series on New Jersey Public Television. National Winner: Video Tape/Television Category.

- **C.M. Muscio** and **G. E. Flimlin**, Marine Extension Agents, “Assessing the Benefits and the Risks: The RCRE Seafood Safety Web,” Regional Finalist: Web Page

- **N. Polanin**, Somerset County Agricultural Agent, “Chainsaw Safety On and Off the Farm.” National Finalist: Feature Story Category.

- **W. Sciarappa**, Monmouth County Agricultural Agent, “Embracing Urban Sprawl.” Northeast Regional Finalist: Published Photo and Caption.
- **W. Sciarappa**, Monmouth County Agricultural Agent, “Agent’s Overview: Changing Times Newsletter.” Northeast Regional Finalist: Personal Column.
- **W. Sciarappa**, Monmouth County Agricultural Agent; **C. Obropta**, Water Quality Extension Specialist, and **V. Quinn**, Monmouth County Program Assistant. “Rain Gardens.” National Finalist: Fact Sheet.

M. Cummings, Gloucester County Agriculture Program Associate; **M. Infante-Casella**, Gloucester County Agricultural Agent; **L. Hughes**, Gloucester County Family and Community Health Sciences Educator; **L. Strieter**, Gloucester County 4-H Agent; and **M. McKee**, 4-H Program Associate. National Winner, 2006 NACAA Search for Excellence in 4-H and Youth Programming “Seeds to Success Youth Farmstand.”

P. Nitzsche, Morris County Agricultural Agent; **W. Kline**, Cumberland County Agricultural Agent; and **W. Tietjen**, Warren County Agricultural Agent, recipients of the Northeast Regional Award in the NACAA Extension Education Poster Session for their paper “Development of a Specialty and Heirloom Tomato Variety Database.”

R. Mickel, Hunterdon County Agricultural Agent, recipient of the NACAA Distinguished Service Award.

S. Rettke, IPM Program Associate, recipient of the NACAA Achievement Award.

M. Rochford, Cape May County Family and Community Health Sciences Educator, **D. Minch**, Somerset County Family and Community Health Sciences Educator, and **S. Blasé**, Cumberland County Family and Community Health Sciences Educator, recipient of a Team Award in the 2005 National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences Awards Program, First Place Eastern Region in the Newsletter category for the “Visions” newsletter.

M. Rochford, Cape May County Family and Community Health Sciences Educator, recipient in the 2005 National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences Awards Program, Second Place Eastern Region in the Educational Publications category for the “Tackling the Bullying Issue” fact sheet.

G. Zinati, Extension Specialist in Nursery Management, **A. Gould**, Extension Specialist in Ornamental Pathology, **R. Buckley**, Coordinator, Plant Diagnostic Laboratory, and **R. Obal**, Monmouth County Agricultural Agent, “Blue Ribbon Award” by the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE) for Educational Aids “Landscape and Ornamental Plant Stress: Factors, Symptoms, Diagnosis, and Management.” RCE Bulletin E-309.

K. Ensle, Union County FCHS educator, received \$1,000 from the Financial Planning Association of NJ (FPANJ) for ‘Steppin’ Out Union County—Your Health & Wealth Workout’ walking program.

M. Infante-Casella, and **M. Cummings** received \$1,241.21 from the Agricultural Agents Association of New Jersey for the research on garden tomato varieties for yield and quality.

J. Rea-Keywood, Cumberland County 4-H Agent, received \$5,000 from a 21st Century Community Learning Center Grant (Cumberland Empowerment Zone) valued at \$531,800 for staff (professional development) training and educational programs and \$61,050 from a 21st Century Community Learning Center Grant (Lawrence Township School District) valued at

\$535,000 to hire a 4-H Youth Development & Family Program Coordinator and to develop and conduct educational programs for families.

G. Zinati (PI), Specialist in Nursery Management, **S. Ullah**, **J. Johnson**, Cumberland County Agricultural Agent, **B. Schilling**, and **K. Sullivan**, Institutional Research Specialist, received \$15,000 for “Development of Nutrient Management Program Using Riparian Buffers for NJ Nursery Operations,” from the Horticulture Program Enhancement Grants Initiative.

Hoard's Dairyman, the premier dairy cattle management magazine (published in Wisconsin—Go Badgers!), recently highlighted research by **Jim Wohlt**, **Bradley Imwalle**, and **Larry Katz**. Of more than 1,500 papers and posters presented at the 2006 annual joint meeting of the American Dairy Science Association and American Society of Animal Science, only six studies were highlighted on the “Farm Flashes” page of its August 25 issue. These three Animal Sciences faculty members found that bedding made from recycled paper improved the cleanliness of heifers without affecting their behavior.

While in Minneapolis for the annual American Society of Animal Science meetings, **Sarah Ralston**, professor (Animal Science) gave a talk to a group of horse owners on "Use of total mixed ration cubes in horses" and was interviewed for a local radio show, "Horse Sense" which [aired segments](#) of the interview over the course of a week (July 10–14).

Finally, I will leave campus next Friday afternoon, September 30th, to travel to Nairobi, Kenya, for my penultimate meeting as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Centro Internacional de Mejoramiento de Mais y Trigo (CIMMYT). My second and last term on this board ends after the spring 2007 meeting, which will be in China.

Sincerely,

Bob

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