

A MESSAGE FROM THE  
EXECUTIVE DEAN  
OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

January 2007

**Faculty and Staff Activities and Accomplishments**



**Bruce Clarke**, specialist in Turfgrass Pathology, was made a Fellow of Crop Science Society of America (CSSA) at the American Society of Agronomy-Soil Science Society of America-CSSA Annual Meeting in Indianapolis, November 2006. It is the highest honor the Society bestows on its members. Up to 0.3% of CSSA's membership base of 4,500 may be elected to Fellow each year, placing Clarke among an elite group of agricultural researchers around the world. Fellows are selected through an intense nomination and review process that analyzes nominees' achievements in education, research, service, and leadership.


**Paul Takhistov**, associate professor in the Department of Food Science, has been named president of the Rutgers University chapter of Sigma Xi. **Donna Fennel**, assistant professor of bioenvironmental engineering, has been named secretary. Sigma Xi was founded in 1886 to honor excellence in scientific investigation and to encourage a sense of companionship and cooperation among researchers in all fields of science and engineering.

**Elwin Orton**, professor in the Department of Plant Biology and Pathology, will be awarded the American Society for Horticultural Science's (AHS) Luther Burbank award. The prestigious award recognizes extraordinary achievement in the field of plant breeding and will be presented this summer at the AHS' 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Gala.

The following awards were presented at the National Association of Extension 4-H Agents National Conference, Milwaukee, WI, October 22–26, 2006: **Gloria Kraft**, Burlington County 4-H Agent, Distinguished Service Award; **Sharon Gore**, Mercer County 4-H Program Associate, Meritorious Service Award; **Annette Devitt**, Salem County 4-H Agent, National Communicator Award—Media Presentation; Somerset County 4-H Team (**Lisa Rothenburger, Carol Ward, Valerie Kreutler, Georgeanne Valis, Barbara Navatto**), National Communicator Award—Periodical Publication; NJ 4-H Communication, Marketing, and Promotion Committee (Team: **Lisa Rothenburger, Jeanette Rea-Keywood, Deborah Cole, Virginia Powell, Tina Hunter, Annette Devitt, Rachel Everett, and James Tavares**), National Communicator Award—Promotional Piece; **Jeanette Rea-Keywood, Laura Bovitz, and Peggy McKee**, Northeast Regional Winner—Natural Resource/Environmental Stewardship; **Macy Compton and Laura Bovitz**, Northeast Regional Winner—Beyond Youth Leadership Award; **Alayne Torretta**, Northeast Regional Winner—Communicator Award: Educational Package—Individual; Get Moving-Get Healthy with New Jersey 4-H Team (**Annette Devitt, Sharon Gore, Karen Mansue, Susan Makres, Virginia Krzyzanowski, Tina Hunter, Brittany Rigg**, New Jersey Food & Fitness Ambassadors), Northeast Regional Winner—Communicator Award: Educational Package—Team; **Annette Devitt**, Northeast Regional Winner—Communicator Award: Published Photo.

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**Albrecht Koppenhofer**, associate Extension specialist in entomology, was selected by the Department of Agricultural and Resource Management Agents for the annual “Specialist of the Year” award. Koppenhofer was recognized for his outstanding performance and generous assistance to department members over the past year.

New Jersey Association of Extension 4-H Agents presented the Volunteer of the Year Award at the 2006 Northeast Regional Volunteer Forum, held October 12–15 in Long Branch, NJ, to **Buddy Nemetz** (Bergen) and **Chan Leung** (Somerset). **James Nichnadowicz** (Union) won the Team Award: High Distinction for Exceptional Programming in the area of Mixed Media—Youth and Teacher Education from the Southern Regional Extension Forestry Association for the Forest of Fun 4-H Forestry Curriculum.

**Patricia Brennan**, FCHS senior Extension trainer, and **Barbara O’Neill**, Extension specialist, won the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS) Eastern Region Florence Hall Award for Money Talk: Financial Guidelines for Women Program—Book, Curriculum, CDs that have been distributed nationwide. **Karen Ensle**, Union County FCHS educator, received the NEAFCS National Living Well Award. **Maria Young**, Passaic County FCHS educator, received the Continued Excellence Award at the NEAFCS Conference. The award recognizes NEAFCS members who have been actively involved in professional improvement programs, the promotion of professional development of others, and leadership. All awards were presented at the NEAFCS national meeting in Denver, CO, October 2–6.

**Dipak Sarkar**, professor in the Department of Animal Sciences, received the prestigious gold and silver medals from the Physiological Society of India for significant research contributions in the field of physiological sciences. Sarkar gave the Suva Mukherjee Memorial Oration lecture entitled “The Potential Use of Neuronal Stem Cell Transplant Therapy in Stress Disorders” at the Annual Physiological Society of India Meeting in Kolkata in December, where he was presented with the medals.

**Jozef Kokini**, chair of the Department of Food Science, is profiled in the December issue of *Food Technology*. The article is a follow-up on past recipients of the Marcel Loncin Research Prize.

The **Rutgers Coastal Ocean Observatory Lab**’s underwater gliders have been covered in a series of *Philadelphia Inquirer* articles. Articles have also appeared the *Asbury Park Press*, the January 24 issue of *Rutgers Focus*, and on the Rutgers main webpage. Articles may be accessed [here](#).

**Thomas J. Montville**, professor of food microbiology, was interviewed by Channel 4 News regarding *Escherichia coli* food poisoning outbreaks. The report aired December 5.

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The **Nutritional Sciences Preschool** was featured on Steve Aduato's Caucus New Jersey program in December as part of a segment titled "Grow Up Great: Childhood Nutrition." The segment can be viewed [here](#).

**Dan Hoffman**, assistant professor in the department of nutritional sciences, had a letter to the editor published in the January 15 issue of the *New York Times*. The article can be found [here](#).

**Alan Robock**, professor in the Department of Environmental Sciences, was featured on NJN News in December. Robock discussed his latest research on the climatic effects of regional nuclear conflicts. Robock was also interviewed by *Environment New Jersey* regarding his research; that interview, in the Winter 2007 issue, can be found [here](#).



A mini symposium called "Microbiology at Rutgers University: cultivating traditions, current strength, and future frontiers" was held January 25–26. The symposium featured a welcome by **Dean Goodman**, **Ken Breslauer** (Dean of the Division of Life Sciences, School of Arts and Sciences), and **Jo Messing** (Director of the Waksman Institute); an historical perspective of microbiology at Rutgers by **Joan Bennett** (Associate Vice President and professor in the Department of Plant Biology and Pathology); and a keynote talk on biofuels by **Tom Jeffries** (Ph.D., Cook College, 1975; Director of the Institute for Microbial and Biochemical Technology, USDA Forest Products Laboratory at the University of Wisconsin–Madison). Sessions covering the following topics were also convened: Micro–Macro Organism Interactions, How Microbes Work, and How Microbes Work for Us. (Photo l. to r.: Max Häggblom, **Tamar Barkay**, and **Doug Eveleigh**, all of the Department of Biochemistry and Microbiology, led the planning committee for the mini symposium.)

The Geology Museum held a very successful open house on January 27. The open house included talks by **Scott Glenn**, Institute for Marine and Coastal Sciences (Underwater Ocean Observatory in the Hudson: A Prototype That Will Change Oceanography), and **Tony Broccoli**, Department of Environmental Sciences (From Ice Age to Greenhouse: What Past Climates Can Tell Us About Future Climate Change).

The **Department of Food Science**'s Culinology curriculum has been approved by School of Biological and Environmental Sciences (SEBS) faculty. Culinology will be offered as a joint curriculum between SEBS and Mercer County Community College (MCCC). Culinology is the blending of the culinary arts and the science of food; the term was formed by the Research Chefs Association to express the dual disciplinary aspects of food product research and development. The Department of Food Science seeks to collaborate with MCCC's Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Management Program and the Research Chefs Association in the development of a baccalaureate degree program in Culinology that will combine

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education and training in culinary arts and food science with experiential learning in food service and food production industries.

Six **Rutgers University** programs were found to be in the top 10 in faculty research productivity by the latest version of Academic Analytics' index. The six areas are marine biology and biological oceanography; pharmaceutical science/medicinal chemistry; philosophy; Spanish; women's studies; and atmospheric science. Rutgers also ranked second in the aggregated fields of philosophy and religious studies. The graduate program in atmospheric science ranked fourth among atmospheric science programs at top research universities.

Biotechnology Center for Agriculture and the Environment Director **Gerben Zylstra** (Biochemistry & Microbiology) and **Michael Lawton** (Plant Biology & Pathology) traveled to Brazil November 29 to December 9 to kick off the Biotech Center's recently awarded grant for a Brazil–U.S. undergraduate student exchange program at Rutgers, Ohio State, University of Sao Paulo (ESALQ campus in Piracicaba), and Universidade Federal Rio Grande do Sul. During the trip, Zylstra and Lawton visited colleagues at both partner universities and attended the annual FIPSE/CAPES meeting in Sao Paulo. Discussions were held on student recruitment and student exchange between the two countries. Zylstra and Lawton also planned an upcoming workshop on biotechnology and bioenergy planned for April 2007 at Rutgers.

#### Student Activities and Accomplishments

Several graduate students and postdoctoral associates from the Biotechnology Center for Agriculture and the Environment were invited to present posters at the “Frontiers of Biopharmaceutical Sciences” symposium, held November 30 on the Busch Campus. The students included **Marianne Baricevic** (Tumer lab), **Andre Hudson** (Leustek lab), **Brian Leibowiz** (Cohick lab), and **Hisako Masuda** (Zylstra lab). The symposium was sponsored by the Graduate School with support from Celgene Corp.

**Jeremy Feinberg** (Ecology, Evolution, and Natural Resources graduate student working with **Joanna Burger**, professor in the Departments of Ecology, Evolution, and Natural Resources and Cell, Developmental, and Neural Biology) appeared in a segment of the new PBS television program “Science Investigators,” which January 10. Feinberg described his research on the disappearance of leopard frogs from a portion of their previous range in Long Island as part of a segment on amphibian population declines. The segment can be found [here](#). Go to chapter 3: “Mystery in the Swamp.”


#### Grants and Fundraising Efforts

**Gef Flimlin**, Ocean County Marine Extension Agent, with principal investigator **John Kraeuter**, associate director of Rutgers NJAES Haskin Shellfish Research Lab, received \$71,173 from the USDA

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Northeastern Regional Aquaculture Center for the evaluation and genetic analysis of hard clam (*Mercenaria mercenaria*) stocks for quahog parasite unknown (QPX) disease resistance.

**Deb Keenan**, acting as PI in collaboration with individuals from multiple Cooperative Extension departments and the UMDNJ School of Health Related Professions, has been granted Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program Funds totaling \$4,034,048, for federal fiscal year 2007, with matching funds from New Jersey municipalities, counties, and the state committed at the same dollar level.

**Gloria Kraft**, Burlington County 4-H Agent, and **Rachel Everett**, Morris County 4-H Agent, received \$26,910 for the 4-H Operation Military Kids program (subgrant from Kansas State University).

**Chad Ripberger**, Mercer County 4-H Agent, and **Ken Karamichael**, senior program coordinator at the NJAES Office of Continuing Professional Education, received \$50,000 from Mercer County Workforce Investment Board for the Mercer County Youth Farmstand.

**Jim Simon** (professor in Plant Biology and Pathology, principal investigator) and **Ramu Govindasamy** (co-principal investigator) were awarded \$1,600,000 from the United States Agency for International Development for two years to provide support for a program that promotes rural livelihood diversification in Southern Africa. The program is designed to strengthen and build partnerships between the public and private sector in the commercialization of natural African plant products by small farmers.

The **Department of Food Science** is partners with Gloucester County College on a FITS—New Jersey Careers food science/food manufacturing project, which has been funded with a \$2 million grant by the U.S. Department of Labor. The program will support the establishment of a food science and food process technology associate degree program at Gloucester and Salem County Community Colleges, as well as the implementation of strategic alliances with the Rutgers NJAES Food Innovation Center to provide support to farmers and agri-business.

For a full listing of grants received November 15 through January 15, please see the [January grants report](#).

### Publications and Editorships

**Ramu Govindasamy**, associate professor in the Department of Agricultural, Food and Resource Economics, has been invited to serve on the editorial board of ICFAI Journal of Agricultural Economics published by ICFAI press and has also been invited to serve as a guest editor for *Choices* (a policy-oriented publication of American Agricultural Economics Association) for a special theme issue on “Fresh Produce Marketing: Critical Trend and Issues.”

**Sean Liu**, assistant professor in the Department of Food Science, has been appointed associate editor of *Physical Separations in Science and Engineering*.

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## Conference, Seminars, Other Events

**Carl Pray**, professor, Department of Agricultural, Food and Resource Economics, was invited by social scientists at the National Agricultural Research Institute (INRA) of France to present the results of his research on biotechnology in developing countries (November 30). Pray also gave a talk on the impact of biotechnology in developing countries at the INRA Economics lab in Paris.

**Sarah Condry**, research analyst at the Food Policy Institute, **Bill Hallman**, professor, human ecology, **Cara Cuite**, laboratory technician at the Food Policy Institute, and **Miranda Vata**, doctoral candidate in global affairs presented “Americans’ Knowledge, Perceptions, and Probable Responses to the Threat of Avian Influenza in Poultry” at the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for Risk Analysis in Baltimore, MD, December 3–5 and to the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C., December 1.

Animal Sciences Department Chair **Larry Katz** was an invited speaker at the Festschrift Symposium for Rupert Amann at Colorado State University on December 16. The symposium honored Amann for his five decades of research on spermatogenesis and andrology. Katz’s presentation was entitled “Variation in Male Sexual Behavior, or Why Some Males Are Studs and Others Are Duds.”

Biotechnology Center for Agriculture and the Environment faculty **Nilgun Tumer** and **Michael Lawton** (Plant Biology & Pathology) are working on novel approaches for discovering and functionally validating genes that confer resistance to fungal mycotoxins causing fusarium head blight in wheat and barley. Tumer and Lawton presented papers at the annual meeting of the U.S. Wheat and Barley Scab Initiative, held December 10–12 in Durham, NC.

**Dipak Sarkar**, professor in the Department of Animal Sciences, gave a talk at the International Symposium on Basic and Clinical Neuroscience Advances from December 17–20 at Lucknow. The title of the talk was “Mother’s alcohol drinking habit may make the baby susceptible to sleep trouble, stress-hyperreactivity, and immune problem.” The presentation was covered by four newspapers in India.

*Please send comments, suggestions, contributions, photos, and questions to Amanda Kolling, [kolling@aesop.rutgers.edu](mailto:kolling@aesop.rutgers.edu), Office of Communications. Photos must be high-resolution and should add to the editorial value of a submission (i.e., the photo should represent some action, such as receiving an award or giving a lecture, and should not be a standard head shot). Future issues of the Dean’s Monthly Message will be published on the last Monday of each month. Deadline for submissions is one week prior to publication.*

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