

A MESSAGE FROM THE  
EXECUTIVE DEAN  
OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

October 2007

### Faculty and Staff Activities and Accomplishments

**Karen Ensle**, Union County FCHS Educator, was presented with the 2007 Program Award from the Society for Nutrition Education Public Health Nutrition Division for “Walking: Steps to Better Health,” in Chicago, IL.

The *Asbury Park Press* featured an [article](#) on efforts to revitalize the oyster-fishing industry on the Mullica River through the Barnegat Bay Shellfish Restoration Project. Over 200,000 oyster seeds were planted late last month near the mouth of the Mullica River in order to re-establish oyster reefs decimated over the years by disease. **Gef Flimlin**, Marine Extension Agent, and others at NJAES have been working closely with volunteers and other agencies to restore clam and oyster reefs throughout the Barnegat and Delaware Bay regions.

Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences (IMCS) researchers are involved in a major initiative to assess the ecological condition of New Jersey’s nearshore ocean waters. During August and September, benthic samples were collected at 100 nearshore ocean sampling sites from Sandy Hook to Cape May. Both seafloor sediment samples and benthic organisms are being analyzed to determine if habitat conditions are impaired in the region. This investigation, known as the Coastal Assessment Project, is headed by **Mike Kennish** (IMCS). It is a collaborative research project involving the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, and Rutgers’ IMCS. To learn more, see “[Digging deep on ocean floor](#),” an article by David Benson of *The Press of Atlantic City*, highlighting the work being done by Mike Kennish and **Rose Petrecca** (IMCS).

The **Rutgers NJAES Food Innovation Center** has been selected to receive the first-ever USDA-CSREES Partnership Award for Innovative Program Models. This award was created to recognize a program at a land-grant university or other cooperating institution that responds to critical/emerging regional or national issues and combines resources in new ways. The award was presented at the annual CSREES Day of Appreciation on October 10.

Early this month, **Rutgers NJAES Food Policy Institute** staff participated in an apple gleaning at Giamarese Farm in East Brunswick as part of the New Jersey Agricultural Society’s Farmers Against Hunger program. The event was organized by **Brian Schilling**, vice president of the NJAS, and produced more than 1,000 pounds of apples that were later distributed to hungry families in the Trenton area.

**William Hallman** (Human Ecology) was sent by the USDA’s Foreign Agricultural Service as a U.S. delegate to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) High-level Dialogue on Public Perceptions of Agricultural Biotechnology in Lima, Peru (October 3–5). The conference focused on agricultural biotechnology in the developing countries of APEC.

**Alan Robock** (Environmental Sciences) was honored this month by the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research for advocacy on behalf of the scientific community above and beyond the call of duty.



## Student Activities and Accomplishments

**Yevgen Nazarenko** (graduate program in Environmental Sciences) was awarded the Air Pollution Educational and Research Grant Scholarship by the Air and Waste Management Association.

**David Rotter** (graduate program in Plant Biology) received the 2007 Spencer Davis, Jr., graduate student research award from the Plant Biology Graduate Program. The award provides a cash prize of \$1,250 to encourage innovative research by graduate students and advanced undergraduates.

**Mariola Cuebas** (along with other students in the joint Rutgers/UMDNJ Molecular Biosciences graduate program) was recognized by the AAAS/Science Program for Excellence in Science. She will receive a full membership in AAAS (American Association for the Advancement of Science) and a one-year subscription to the weekly journal *Science*.

**David Babson** (graduate program in Chemical and Biochemical Engineering) received a \$1,000 scholarship from the Solid Waste Association of North America–New Jersey.

## Grants and Fundraising Efforts

The **Rutgers NJAES Center for Vector Biology** is a recipient of a \$3.8 million, five-year grant to fund a USDA-ARS Area-Wide IPM proposal, starting in early 2008.

**North Jersey IPM** has received a \$75,000 grant from the NJ Highlands Council. The grant is part of an agreement between Hunterdon County and the NJ Highlands Council.

**Daryl Minch**, Somerset County FCHS Educator, **Kathleen Morgan**, Chair of the Department of Family and Community Health Sciences, and C. Warne, received \$50,000 (first of two payments) from a Johnson & Johnson grant for Healthy Kids – Better Health, A Better Future.

**Madeline Flahive DiNardo** (PI), Union County Agricultural Agent and **Christopher Obropta** (co-PI), Specialist in Water Resources, received \$200,000 from USDA CSREES National Integrated Water Quality Program for “Stormwater Management in Your Backyard: An Extension Initiative for New Jersey, New York and Virginia.”

**Barbara O’Neill**, Specialist in Financial Resource Management, received a \$10,000 grant from Citigroup, in cooperation with the NJ Coalition for Financial Education, to support a 2008 Financial Education Institute for teachers.

Barbara Chamberlin (New Mexico State University) and **Carol Byrd-Bredbenner** (Nutritional Sciences) received \$600,000 from the USDA National Food Safety Initiative for “Youth Understanding of Foodborne Illness with Computer-Based Resources for Science Classrooms and Informal Learning Settings.”



## Conferences, Seminars, and Other Events

The **Rutgers Marine Field Station** held its annual open house on Saturday, September 22. Highlights of the tour included fish identification, history and overview, StriperTracker, LEO-15, wet lab, and field research. A record number of visitors (588) attended this event and exit surveys indicated an overwhelmingly positive response by these visitors. The majority of these visitors (62.7%) were from surrounding towns and most (80%) of them indicated it was their first time visiting the field station. More than half these visitors learned about the open house via ads in local newspapers, but 28% heard about it from friends.

On September 27, **Center for Turfgrass Science** faculty and agronomists from the USGA Green Section held a national live meeting webcast that highlighted USGA-funded turf research at Rutgers. This webcast shared current turf research with agronomists from the USGA Green Section who are located across the entire country. There were presentations in the areas of turfgrass management, entomology, pathology, breeding for disease and salt tolerance, and the development of molecular markers for heat tolerance in turfgrass species.

## SPOTLIGHT ON NEW JERSEY PEACHES

To increase the consumption of peaches, with an emphasis on New Jersey peaches, Rutgers NJAES Cooperative Extension has focused efforts on increasing per capita consumption, increasing the marketing of New Jersey peaches, and increasing the profitability of growers and shippers by reducing transportation costs and increasing wholesale value and retail value. **Jerome Frecon**, Gloucester County Agricultural Agent, along with others at Rutgers Cooperative Extension, has headed significant activities and efforts in 2006 to meet these goals. They include:

- Authored a wholesale buyers guide with all peach information including names and address of all peach shippers.
- Developed a website ([www.jerseypeaches.com](http://www.jerseypeaches.com)) where most of the information from the Wholesale Buyers Guide was posted. This information is also linked to the NJ Department of Agriculture website.
- Helped organize the New Jersey Peach Festival was held in conjunction with Gloucester County 4-H Fair in Mullica Hill; the festival attracted 22,000 visitors.
- Held a Peach Media Day at Wightmans Farms in Morris County for food writers and other media. The event attracted one cable TV network and six newspaper writers who published articles in the *Trenton Times*, *Star Ledger*, *Bergen Record*, a local Morris County newspaper, and a paper from Sussex County.
- Set up displays at the New Jersey Peach Promotion exhibit at the Chili Festival, NJ Peach Promotion Council Festival, Farm Aid concert, Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention, and the New Jersey Agricultural Society Convention, for exposure to 100,000 consumers.
- Held a peach marketing summit in December 2006 to address peach marketing methods and plans for future shipments/food safety.
- Conducted research on post-harvest handling of peaches that resulted in improved knowledge regarding storing and handling current varieties.
- Introduced eight new novel peach cultivars to improve peach shelf space for growers. One was a white nectarine, three were flat white- and yellow-fleshed peaches, one was a low-acid, yellow-fleshed peach that does not get mealy in transit.

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## DEAN'S CORNER

A new study on agritourism in New Jersey has been published by the Rutgers NJAES Food Policy Institute (FPI). According to the report, which can be found at <http://foodpolicyinstitute.org/>, agritourism generated \$57.5 million in revenue for New Jersey's farmers last year. In addition to revenues for farmers, the Rutgers study team found that agritourism created an additional \$33.3 million in revenue for non-farm businesses in 2006.

The FPI study was based on a statewide survey conducted by the New Jersey Agricultural Statistics Service, funded by the New Jersey Department of Agriculture and the Rutgers NJAES Food Policy Institute. It follows a study released in October 2006 that found agritourism to be critical to ensuring the current and future viability of agriculture and a revenue booster on farms. That report can be found at [www.nj.gov/agriculture/pdf/ATReport.pdf](http://www.nj.gov/agriculture/pdf/ATReport.pdf). The 2007 study found that more than one-fifth of New Jersey farms offered some form of agritourism, with 43 percent of New Jersey's total farmland associated with farm operations engaged in agritourism.

Agritourism is a smart use of farmland, especially in a state as highly developed as New Jersey. Making sure that land is properly managed and used should be a top priority for us at the university, as well. In that vein, I have selected a group of individuals to look at use, management, and stewardship of university-owned lands throughout the state. The committee, chaired by Mark Vodak, first met in August with the goal of developing an overarching policy regarding resource management and land stewardship of university's lands. One of the first steps the committee is taking is auditing our land holdings and considering the various management and stewardship issues presented by our various properties. For instance, properties such as the Rutgers Gardens, Hort Farms 2 and 3, Helyar Woods, Hutcheson Forest, and Rutgers Ecological Preserve represent a range of management requirements. By deliberating on and closely considering the needs and goals of a resource management/stewardship policy for university lands, we can ensure that our lands benefit from our attention. The committee is looking to other, similar universities for examples of policies that have been successfully implemented. Further, the committee will seek input and possibly partner with groups such as the Nature Conservancy, the New Jersey Conservation Foundation, the Duke Foundation, and others, to ensure that Rutgers University lands benefit from a broad range of expertise and knowledge.



Photo (l. to r.): New Jersey Secretary of Agriculture Charlie Kuperus, Brian Schilling (FPI), and Eric Johnson, one of the owners of Johnson's Corner Farm, where the agritourism news conference was held. Photo courtesy of Lynne Richmond.

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