

A MESSAGE FROM THE
EXECUTIVE DEAN
OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

April 2008

A New Director for Rutgers NJAES Cooperative Extension

Dr. Larry Katz, presently chair of the Department of Animal Sciences, has accepted an offer to serve as the next director of Rutgers Cooperative Extension and as an associate director of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station. His term will begin on July 1, 2008. Katz will succeed Dr. Karyn Malinowski, who has served with distinction in this leadership role for the past six years.

Katz received his bachelor's and master's degrees from Cornell, and his doctorate from the University of California–Davis. He joined Rutgers in 1989 and has chaired the department of Animal Sciences since 2001, which has been a period of significant enrollment growth in the major and in the number of graduates who go on to veterinary school. Katz's scientific expertise is in behavioral endocrinology, reproductive biology, and the behavior of domestic animals. He has served on committees at the university, state, and national level regarding agricultural animal care and wildlife damage control. Over the years, he has received numerous awards for his teaching, including being named Outstanding Teacher seven times by the Cook College Leadership Committee on Teaching and Advising Excellence.

Katz brings his stature as a scientist, his gifts as a communicator, his passion for service to society, and his considerable people skills to this new role at a time when Rutgers Cooperative Extension is experiencing growth in county support and seeing new opportunities and challenges in its state-wide role of service to all of New Jersey's residents. Katz is deeply committed to the land-grant mission and to educating the public about food, nutrition, health, and agriculture. He looks forward to meeting and getting to know the excellent leadership team already in place at Rutgers Cooperative Extension.

Faculty and Staff Activities and Accomplishments

David E. Fairbrothers (emeritus, Ecology, Evolution, and Natural Resources) has been selected as the recipient of The Garden Club of New Jersey 2008 Medal. This is the club's highest honor. The medal will be presented during the club's Awards Banquet and Annual Meeting on May 22, at the Bridgewater Marriott Hotel.

Carey Williams (specialist in equine management) was recently inducted into the U.S. Pony Club's Academy of Achievement Inductee "in recognition of her outstanding achievements after graduation from a member club of the United States Pony Clubs, Inc., and for her participation in the 2008 National Youth Congress."

New Jersey Associate of 4-H Agents Annual Awards

Friend of 4-H - Samuel T. Frisbee, Trenton Recreation Department

Volunteer of the Year - Phoebe Hunt Shotwell, Sussex County 4-H volunteer

Educator of the Year - Aquanetta Allen, Gloucester County Seeds to Success manager, Woodbury Farmstand



Excellence in 4-H Programming Awards

Jeannette Rea-Keywood, Cumberland County 4-H agent and **Cheryl McCormick**, Cumberland County 4-H program assistant for "Exploring Agriculture Summer Enrichment Program"

Laura Bovitz, Middlesex County 4-H agent and **Abbie Kesely**, Middlesex County 4-H program assistant for "Volunteer Counselors as Partners in Summer Camp Programming"

Laura Bovitz, Middlesex County 4-H agent; **Abbie Kesely**, Middlesex County 4-H program assistant; **Bill Hlubik**, Middlesex County agricultural agent; **Rich Weidman**, Middlesex County ag program associate; Matt Bickerton; Jessica Baculis; Jhon Othoa; and David Smela for "Eco-ventures at the Earth Center"

Chad Ripberger, Mercer County 4-H agent; **Sharon Gore**, Mercer County 4-H program associate; **Karen Mansue**, Ocean County 4-H program associate; **Annette Devitt**, Salem County 4-H agent; **Abbie Kesely**, Middlesex County 4-H program assistant; and **Terri Yost**, Morris County 4-H program associate for "Trenton Food & Fitness Ambassador Training"

Grants

Christopher Obropta (Environmental Sciences) arranged a Memorandum of Understanding between the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and Rutgers Cooperative Extension to develop a pilot program that hires five new tenure-track environmental county agents. This provides the NJAES the opportunity to work with local communities to address suburban and urban environmental issues. NJDEP will provide \$750,000 in funding for the first three years of this pilot program.

Annette Devitt (Salem County 4-H agent); **Nurgul Fitzgerald** (extension specialist in health promotion and behavior); **Daryl Minch** (Somerset County FCHS educator); **Kathleen Morgan** (FCHS department chair); and **Marilou Rochford** (Cape May County FCHS educator), received \$50,000 from the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services–Division of Adolescent Health for "Get Moving – Get Healthy New Jersey."

Chad Ripberger (Mercer County 4-H agent), **Sharon Kinsey** (Camden County 4-H agent); Robert Atkins (Rutgers–Camden Center for Children and Childhood Studies); **Jennae DuBois** (Passaic County 4-H program associate); **Miss Harmon** (Mercer County Urban 4-H program associate); **Tamara Pellien** (Bergen County 4-H program associate); **Sharice Richardson** (assistant dean); and **Jenice Sabb** (assistant director of special programs) received an RCE Community Enhancement Award of \$50,000 for Urban Youth, STEM, and Quality Out-of-School Environments: A Promising Intersection of Audience, Content, and Context.

Ann Gould (Plant Biology and Pathology) received a \$14,007 grant from the Tree Fund for her project "Bacterial Leaf Scorch of Oak: Early Warning Techniques for Arborists."

Dave Foord (Sussex County 4-H program associate) received \$1,400 through the 2008 Youth in Action Grant, National 4-H Council, and Cumberland Farms.



Jim Nichnadowicz (Union County 4-H agent) received \$1,400 through the 2008 Youth in Action Grant, National 4-H Council, and Cumberland Farms.

Outreach

Ag Viability

Value-Added Meat Goat Project

The "value-added meat goat project" is a systems approach to meat goat production in New Jersey. New Jersey is a goat deficit state in the production of both breeding herds and market goats, but it imports and consumes one third of all goats marketed nationally. This project focuses on the production system(s) in rearing meat goats (kids) and the potential marketing opportunity to consumers (individual, restaurants, specialty markets) as whole and/or fabricated (cut and processed) goat meat cuts. In conjunction with the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA), a two-session educational program was designed and delivered by Rutgers NJAES Cooperative Extension. Attendants included 163 producers who were interested in raising meat goats as part of their agricultural enterprise. Participants in the program received a meat goat production guide produced by the NJDA and Cooperative Extension faculty. Based on the program exit survey, those attending represented over 2,500 acres of owned farmland, and 67 producers indicated that they would dedicate 738 acres to the production of 2,070 goats (kids). Interested producers attended a third educational meeting to discuss the potential of developing two cooperating production sites, one north and one south in the state.

In June 2007, two pilot locations were selected with the arrival of 60 kids weighing and average of 50 lb. The goal of the applied meat goat project was to procure a set of goats at four months of age and manage them in a confined feedlot environment and then to market them to consumers and restaurants. All of the kids were managed under similar protocols for health considerations, quality assurance, performance (weight gain), and monitored for general performance, condition, and market attributes. At the end of the applied project, a sampling of the goats will be harvested and test marketed to consumers and restaurants to ascertain the market potential for goat meat to the general consumer.

The applied management project implemented protocols designed by the project team to raise the meat goats using methodologies that in general are not currently being used in the meat goat industry, and to examine high-value market opportunities. The whole group of goats was placed in quarantine with aid from the staff from the New Jersey Department of Animal Health and managed during that time to meet state health rules and monitored for any diseases and shipping health concerns.

Two twilight educational meetings were conducted to allow producers to track the progress of the project animals both live and on the rail and to participate in the educational programs. Data have been collected on project inclusive of all project costs from beginning to end, inclusive of meat carcass attributes and marketing designs. At the end of the project, a written report will be prepared for presentation to all interested producers and other colleagues. To date, the project has harvested 15 goats, which have been used for a random consumer (60 consumers) and restaurant (two currently) testing program. A questionnaire was developed to collect needed data from the test markets to evaluate the feasibility of producing and marketing goat meat in a value-added scenario.



Hay Production and Marketing to Improve Farm Viability

In 2006, the Rutgers University Animal Science Team was established to provide the New Jersey animal industry with unbiased, research-based information to help improve productivity and to promote sound environmental management of animal operations in the state. A series of educational programs dedicated to improving the quantity and quality of New Jersey grown hay specifically for the equine industry was conducted. Educational meetings were held at several locations across the state for hay producers and consumers in 2006 and continued in 2007 with a focus on developing linkages between hay producers and equine consumers. Program participants were surveyed to determine the effectiveness of program efforts and research projects included an economic analysis.

- There was an average of 70 participants per program.
- Respondents reported gaining a better level of understanding of hay production practices.
- Thirty-two percent of respondents reported a change in hay feeding practices based on the information presented in programs. This change resulted in an average 11.5% increase in total hay fed based on survey results.
- Fifty-six percent of consumers reported a willingness to pay an average 11.5% premium for locally produced, high-quality hay. This translates to a \$0.42 to \$0.49 premium per bale based on consumers reported hay prices and a potential \$2 million impact to the New Jersey hay industry.
- Producers reported gaining a better understanding of consumer needs and in hay production practices including:
 - Thirty-three percent performing soil tests
 - Seventeen percent reporting a plan to conduct soil tests according to university recommendations.

Research conducted determined that an \$80 per acre return could be realized by treating for one insect pest common in timothy, a hay heavily demanded by the equine industry. This research program demonstrated a protocol that, if followed in 50% of the state's 45,000 acres, could result in \$1.8 million additional gross revenue for hay producers while ensuring an adequate supply of high-quality hay for the industry. The team comprised **Stephen Komar** (Sussex County agricultural agent), **Bill Bamka** (Burlington County agricultural agent), **Everett Chamberlain** (Warren County agricultural agent); **Jenny Carleo** (Cape May County agricultural agent); and **Bob Mickel** (Hunterdon County agricultural agent).

Ag Marketing

Ethnic Market Study

Economic opportunities have arisen in the last decade for specialty crop agriculture catering to the diverse consumer markets along the eastern coast of the United States. The rapid expansion of ethnic populations and a consumer demand for specialty and organically grown foods presents significant opportunities for fruit and vegetable producers in the region to take advantage of the close proximity to densely populated, diverse areas. In response to a need for East Coast farmers to remain economically viable, a USDA National Research Initiative-funded study was initiated to document and quantify current market opportunities to target opportunities from a demand perspective.

The general objectives of the study were to



- identify and estimate the market size for ethnic segments that present significant opportunities to local growers;
- assess demand, conduct production studies, and make recommendations for appropriate ethnic produce items to locally address this market; and
- develop strategies and production timelines to coordinate production of select ethnic crops to exploit this market niche.

The intended outcome of the project was to generate and distribute science-based information about production, marketability, and utilization of selected ethnic crops and herbs. This initiative bridges the supply–demand gap and expects to deliver practical solutions to economic problems faced by many vegetable growers, and contribute to the nutritional and health needs of regional consumers.

After completing the first phase of the ethnic produce project related to consumer survey results, the second phase focused on crop production research and demonstration. The four primary objectives of this phase were to:

- establish a common set of field demonstration and research plots in each collaborating state;
- demonstrate and evaluate a variety of ethnic crops grown at each site;
- conduct case studies of specialty ethnic produce growers; and
- communicate ethnic crop production information to advisors and growers via presentations, tours, websites, fact sheets, articles, and other forms of informational literature.

The research team consists of **Ramu Govindasamy** (Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics), **William Sciarappa** (Monmouth County agricultural agent), **Venkata S. Puduri** (Food Policy Institute), **Richard VanVranken** (Atlantic County agricultural agent), **Albert Ayeni** (Plant Biology and Pathology), **Kim Pappas** (clerical staff), **James Simon** (Plant Biology and Pathology), Frank Mangan, Mary Lamberts, and Gene McAvoy.

Community Farmers Market Seminars

Nearly 100 New Jersey food processors, farmer,s and community farmers' market (CFM) managers gathered at forums held throughout New Jersey on April 1, 2, and 3. The number of CFMs in New Jersey grew 158%, or three times the national rate, since the year 2000—from 40 in 2000 to 103 by the end of the 2007 growing season. Participants learned that consumers are seeking local foods for purchase and value an interaction with New Jersey farmers; communities are increasingly seeing farmers markets as a vehicle for local economic development; and farmers have found this to be an opportunity in which they can earn considerably greater income.

Events

Gef Flimlin (Ocean County Marine Extension Agent), working with colleagues from the East Coast Shellfish Growers Association, held workshops with shellfish growers from MD, NJ, CT, and RI in three separate sites to expand their discussion on best management practices (BMP). Funded by USDA Northeastern Regional Aquaculture Center, the project seeks to develop a code of practice and a set of BMPs that states can adopt or adapt to fit their specific needs. Sessions were held in Maine and Massachusetts in March followed by sessions in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina/Georgia, and Florida.





Bill Sciarappa (Monmouth County agricultural agent) organized the Central Jersey Vegetable Growers Conference in Freehold on February 8. Nearly 140 people attended to hear various Rutgers specialists and agents speak on crop production issues as well as to get updates from Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, Farm Bureau, and New Jersey Department of Agriculture. The “roll-out” of the Rutgers Ramapo tomato by Morris County Agricultural Agent **Pete Nitzsche** set the stage for reintroducing this classic tomato back into Garden State production. An evaluation of the attendees for this 10-year vegetable program showed that the progressive growth in attendance (from 40 to 90 to 140) was related to the quality of speaker presentations, agricultural content, and New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection accreditation, which led to a high degree of client satisfaction—over 75% were rated excellent and 25% rated good in all categories.

Rutgers Annual “Horse Management Seminar” offered advice to over 100 new and prospective horse owners. “So you want to own a horse? And if you already do, what next?” was the theme of the 2008 Horse Management Seminar held January 26 and sponsored by Rutgers NJAES Equine Science Center, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, and the New Jersey Horse Council. The seminar was coordinated by **Carey Williams** (specialist in equine management).

FYI

Evening Fruit Meeting

WHEN: April 23, 7:15 p.m.

WHERE: Gloucester County Office of Government Services, Auditorium, Clayton, NJ

CONTACT: Jerome L. Frecon (frecon@njaes.rutgers.edu), 856-307-6450, ext. 1.

90th Ag Field Day Celebration

WHEN: April 26, 9 a.m.–4 p.m.

WHERE: The G. H. Cook Campus

For more information on the event and to register as a vendor or exhibitor, please visit

<http://agfieldday.rutgers.edu/>.

9th Annual NAERIC Yearling Horse Benefit Auction

WHEN: April 27, 11 a.m.—preview, 1 p.m.—auction

WHERE: Round House, College Farm Road

No charge for spectators; bidders must be registered (\$15 pre-registration, \$20 on the day)

RSVP: Sarah Ralston (ralston@aesop.rutgers.edu).

Rutgers Turf Research Golf Classic

WHEN: May 5

WHERE: Fiddler's Elbow Country Club, Far Hills, NJ

CONTACT: Shaun Barry, 732-846-8173



RUTGERS
THE STATE UNIVERSITY
OF NEW JERSEY

School of Environmental and Biological Sciences and New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station
SEBS.RUTGERS.EDU • EXECDEANAGRICULTURE.RUTGERS.EDU • NJAES.RUTGERS.EDU

16th Annual Garden Expo and Plant Sale

WHEN: May 10, 9 a.m.–1 p.m.

WHERE: RCE of Somerset County, 310 Milltown Road, Bridgewater, NJ

Highlights include a vast medley of perennials, ornamental grasses, ferns, flowering annuals, hanging baskets, heirloom vegetables and herbs. Free Rutgers Fact Sheets, native plant displays, and an information booth will also be on site.

CONTACT: Joe Gyurian (gyurian@co.somerset.nj.us), 908-526-6293.

Vegetable Integrated Crop Management Twilight Meeting

WHEN: May 20, 7 p.m.–9 p.m.

WHERE: TBA

CONTACT: Michelle Casella (minfante@njaes.rutgers.edu), 856-307-6450, ext. 1.

2008 Graduation Convocation

WHEN: May 23, 10 a.m. (or, in the case of inclement weather, in the Louis Brown Recreation Center at 10:30 a.m.)

WHERE: Passion Puddle Lawn

SPEAKER: Eva J. Pell (Ph.D. in plant biology, Rutgers, '72) Senior Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School at Pennsylvania State University

CONTACT: Patricia Kastner (Kastner@aesop.rutgers.edu), 732-932-7000, ext. 4211.

Food Innovation Center and NSF International to offer specialized food safety training classes for New Jersey food and agricultural producers

A series of seminars will be held May–July that will provide educational training relevant for established food companies seeking to upgrade quality assurance systems, enter new markets, and expand and improve their operations; startup food companies wishing to adopt best practices in their operations; farmers and cooperatives desiring to create new businesses based on value-added agricultural products; and also retail and food service establishments seeking to better understand the food safety practices of their suppliers. The courses are being provided by NSF International and include:

- **HACCP Manager Certification (May 13–14):** Participants will learn the seven principles of Codex Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP), how they relate to prerequisite programs, and how to write and implement HACCP plans in food processing, distribution, and preparation environments.
- **Implementing and Auditing Safe Quality Food (SQF) Systems (June 4–6):** Participants will gain detailed knowledge and understanding of the SQF codes. They are required for those individuals who wish to become SQF experts and/or auditors.
- **Preparing for a Third-Party Audit, and Food Defense/Product Security (July 15–16):** Participants will learn to prepare for a NSF third-party Cook & Thurber audit, and review the 2008 NSF Cook & Thurber Expectations manuals, procedures, and terminology, the corrective action process, and other items that will enhance the benefits of the audit process.

For additional information about these courses please see our press release:

foodinnovationcenter.rutgers.edu/2008FoodSafetySeminars.pdf. All courses will be offered at the Rutgers EcoComplex facility in Bordentown, NJ. For directions to the Rutgers EcoComplex, see http://ecocomplex.rutgers.edu/about_us_directions.php.

