

A MESSAGE FROM THE
EXECUTIVE DEAN
OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture
July 2008

Spotlight on... Food Safety Practices on New Jersey Farms
By Wesley Kline, Ph.D., Agricultural and Resource Management Agent



New Jersey growers are doing their part to keep our food safe by developing individual farm food safety plans and refining them each year. In 1999, New Jersey farmers started to implement food safety practices prompted by a request from supermarkets. The New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA), in collaboration with Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES), took the lead in developing the first statewide third-party audit system in the country to help growers evaluate their operations for food safety. This system has since been incorporated into the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Good Agricultural Practices and Good Handling Practices Audit Verification Program.

Growers have developed food safety plans to address hazards on their farms that might lead to product contamination. They have also started to implement a traceback system for produce items. Some growers in New Jersey can now follow their produce from the field, to the packinghouse, to the wholesale buyer, and on to the supermarket. Traceback systems will become more important as the Food and Drug Administration now uses them to determine the source of food-borne illness outbreaks.

Once growers do a self evaluation and modify their food safety plans as needed, Rutgers NJAES works with them at their request to review their food safety plans and facilities prior to the third-party audit. Many growers in New Jersey have the NJDA's auditors perform the audit. Once the audit is successfully completed, the grower receives a certificate. In addition, the grower's information is placed on the USDA website so that buyers can easily determine which farm operations have been audited.

With the exception of Florida's new food safety practices required for tomato growers, grower participation in food safety audits is voluntary. New Jersey is a leading state, especially in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic, in grower training and participation in food safety audits. Rutgers NJAES, in collaboration with the NJDA, has trained more than 1,000 individuals since 2007 on food safety, third-party audits, and train-the-trainer sessions, in addition to developing manuals and writing newsletter columns.

For more information on food safety, visit njaes.rutgers.edu/foodsafety/default.asp.



Rutgers Snyder Research and Extension Farm hosted a turf information clinic earlier this month. An article on the clinic from the *Hunterdon County Democrat* follows:

Rutgers Grass Fields On Display Tonight



GRASS FIELD CLINIC — The Rutgers University Snyder Research and Extension Farm has three fields ready for play tonight as six youth lacrosse teams from the New Jersey Titans will compete in controlled scrimmages at the 140 Locust Road location. The public is invited to the turf-information clinic, slated to start at 5:30 p.m.

Knapp Makes Pitch In Clearwater

North Hunterdon grad Jason Knapp got his first professional win as a member of the Gulf Coast Phillies out of Clearwater, Florida last week.

He threw three innings in relief, fanned six and walked just one. He gave up one hit and one run as his team defeated the Gulf Coast Indians, 11-6.

Knapp was just moved from

the inactive to active roster with the rookie league Phillies team and will be seeing some spot relief stints for the next few weeks according to the organization.

He signed a contract with the Phillies organization two weeks ago, and was the 71st pick in the recent Major League Baseball Draft, a second-round pick by the Phillies.

If you're looking to upgrade your knowledge of natural grass athletic fields, tonight may well be your night.

John Grande, the director of the Rutgers University Snyder Research and Extension Farm in Hunterdon County, will be among the experts at this evening's junior lacrosse clinic and scrimmage program at the farm beginning at 5:30 p.m.

"We are looking to educate the parents and all those citizens involved in turfgrass field development," said Grande. "We are constantly reading about new fields throughout the county and the state and we are looking to help out."

Tonight's program will be held on the three new fields at the farm, located at 140 Locust Grove Road, just a mile and a half south of Pittstown.

Joe Anderson of Pro Impax Lacrosse, the group that fields the New Jersey Titans, is helping organize the event, which will include clinics and controlled scrimmages among six county teams. County coaches involved include Mike Vergalito, Tom Bill, Bob Schroeder, Andrew Conforti, Rob Donnelly and Anthony Petraglia.

Grande will make a presentation concerning the installation, development and maintenance of grass

fields, such as those at the farm.

"We have a basic 10-step process," he said. "We will show just how it is done and the costs involved in each step."

"Our goal is to educate the public. We are looking to inform those involved in building fields at schools, parks and for recreation."

The three fields on display were planted last August.

"We used basic principles, just as in farming," Grande said. "We are looking to keep costs in check. Those in attendance will see these principles in action. They may even learn something about improving their lawns."

Grande indicated that a soccer clinic/scrimmage may be conducted later in the year.

Sprintin' Clinton Sunday Evening

The 29th annual Sprintin' Clinton race is scheduled for this Sunday.

The 5K race and 1-mile fun run will start at the Community Center on Halstead St. at 6:30. Preregistration is \$18 for the 5K and \$10 for the mile run. Registration on race day is \$25 and \$12, respectively.

For registration information, visit www.sprintinclinton.org.

Faculty and Staff Activities and Accomplishments

The 2007 *New Jersey Equine Economic Impact Study* has been honored as one of three recipients of the 2007 Award of Excellence from the Northeast Cooperative Extension Directors. This is the highest award presented by the Directors of Extension in the Northeast. It recognizes Extension outreach programming that has achieved outstanding accomplishments, results, and impacts in addressing contemporary issues. **Paul Gottlieb** (Department of Agricultural, Food and Resource Economics) and **Diana Orban-Brown** (Equine Science Center) accepted the award at the Northeast Summer Joint Session of Cooperative Extension Directors, Experiment Station Directors, and Council for Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching members on July 14.

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Jerry Frecon (Gloucester County agricultural agent) has been chosen to receive the Excellence in Extension Award—Northeast Region from National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges. This award is presented annually to an individual who has strived throughout his or her career to achieve benchmarks reflective of excellence in Extension educational programming. The award will be presented in Chicago in November.

Brian Schilling (associate director of the Food Policy Institute) was elected as president of the New Jersey Agricultural Society. The society sponsors several programs, including a Learning Through Gardening program for elementary school students, the New Jersey Agricultural Leadership Development Program, and Farmers Against Hunger.

Laura Bovitz (Middlesex County 4-H agent) has been selected as a 2008 4-H Families Count: Family Strengthening Award winner for the Project GIFT program. This prestigious national award will be presented at the Galaxy Conference in September. With this recognition comes a \$15,000 cash award to further the programming efforts. This award is jointly sponsored by the Annie E. Casey Foundation through National 4-H Council.

Sandra Greci (Hunterdon County FCHS educator) received the Emerging Leader Award from the New Jersey Dietetic Association, May 2008.

Grants

Jerome L. Frecon, Gloucester County Agricultural and Resource Management Agent, received \$4,900 from The New Jersey Peach Council for the research proposal Testing and Evaluation of Peach and Nectarine Cultivars. He also received \$2,000 from The New Jersey State Horticultural Society and \$4,018 from the Pennsylvania Peach and Nectarine Research Advisory Board, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture for Project Testing and Evaluation of Peach and Nectarine Cultivars for the Eastern United States.

Daniel Kluchinski, ARMA Department Chair, received \$60,000 from eXtension for development of a Sustainable Agricultural Energy Systems Community of Practice with Juli Brussell, University of New Hampshire; V. Grunbinger, University of Vermont; and Roy Jeffrey, University of Connecticut.

Outreach Efforts: Public/Community Service

Water Emergency Management Plan

A plan for fruit crops was developed in February 2008 by a committee of agents, NJDA and USDA-NRCS specialists, and growers. The committee was chaired by **Jerome L. Frecon** and included **William Tietjen** (Warren County Agricultural and Resource Management agent) and **Ray Samulis** (Burlington County Agricultural and Resource Management Agent). The plan was submitted and approved by the NJDA to be used in water emergencies.



Crop Insurance

David Lee (Salem County Agricultural and Resource Management agent) heads a state-wide Targeted States Crop Insurance grant with the USDA. On May 14–15, 2008, Sam Coburn, crop insurance specialist from the Risk Management Agency in Raleigh, NC, was invited to New Jersey to speak to nursery growers at several crop insurance workshops. Sam met with several nursery growers and crop insurance agents in Elmer and Quinton for workshops and also took tours of four nursery operations in South Jersey. Through these outreach efforts, it was found that a salt intrusion into a nursery's irrigation supply, due to drought, may not be a covered cause of loss. This disaster caused several hundred thousand dollars in damages to nursery stock. Sam has taken this concern back to the Risk Management Agency and it is currently being examined by the agency to identify if this should be a covered disaster. Nursery growers also discovered that over-wintering operations for their greenhouses require a heating device in order to be an insurable crop for certain plant types under their crop insurance policy. These growers voiced their concern that this is not a common practice in the Northeast and therefore should not be a requirement under the crop insurance policy. Sam returned these comments to his office in Raleigh for more research. Sam's visit to New Jersey has the potential to positively impact the nursery crop insurance policy for the state's growers.

From Our Farms – Gloucester County

From Our Farm promotes improved nutrition and consumption of locally grown foods (which will, in turn, sustain the economic viability of local farms) through a series of family-based activities offered through local libraries, childcare facilities and preschools. From Our Farms is a compilation of fun, educational activities that use exploration and adventure to teach children about food, nutrition, and the farm. The program targets 3- to 8-year old children, their parents and teachers and the curriculum uses hands-on activities and family literacy projects to reach children. The activities featured in this curriculum also help prepare children for school by emphasizing math, reading, writing, and cognitive development. To date, more than 6,500 children have participated in From Our Farms since its launch in August 2000. This year, From Our Farms reached 400 children via Head Start classes conducted in conjunction with EFNEP. Survey responses of parents whose children participated in From Our Farms revealed that participation in the program resulted in these behavior changes:

- 83% learned which fruits/vegetables grow in New Jersey
- 97% visited a farm stand or farm market
- 99% purchased "Jersey Fresh" produce

Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Monmouth County co-sponsored a Rain Garden Conference with the Monmouth County Environmental Council on June 2 in Freehold. More than 50 people representing Monmouth County municipal officials, environmental commissions, and Shade Tree Commissions registered. They participated in discussions with three presenters—Bill Pearce, New Jersey American Water Supply engineer; **Bill Sciarappa**, Monmouth County Agricultural and Resource Management agent; and **Vivian Quinn**, Rutgers program assistant. This session led to a walking tour of the extension rain garden that filters the back parking lot runoff and concluded with next steps in which the group hopes to boost the number of demonstrational rain gardens in the county from 20 to 100.





Joel Flagler, Bergen County Agricultural Agent, hosted an annual twilight meeting for farmers and growers at Rohsler's Allendale Nursery, in Allendale/Saddle River on June 12. Speakers included Mark Rohsler who focused on nursery management for high-end ornamental trees; and Joel Flagler who spoke on nursery IPM practices for optimal plant health care. Nearly 40 farmers and growers attended from Bergen, Passaic, and Warren Counties.

Rutgers Cooperative Extension personnel continue to collaborate with the NJ Environmental Federation, NJ Department of Environmental Protection and others to develop and conduct IPM trainings focusing on the landscape and turf component for school district IPM programs.

Recently one session was held on May 22 in Sewell and was attended by 120 participants.

Richard Weidman, Middlesex County Agricultural Program Associate, presented. A session was held in Ewing on May 15 and attended by 57. A presentation was given by **Barbara J. Bromley**, Mercer County horticulturist. Another session was held in Howell on April 10 was attended by 79 people. **Bill Hlubik**, Middlesex County Agricultural and Resource Management Agent, presented.

Bill Sciarappa (Monmouth County Agricultural and Resource Management agent) completed his second hybrid course as a School of Environmental and Biological Sciences instructor for "Organic Farming and Gardening" with 37 enrolled students. Lectures, field tours, and independent assignments meshed to form a 2-credit, double-period, one-half semester course. Guest instructors included **Dan Kluchinski** (ARMA department chair) for soil fertility and composting; **Joe Heckman** (extension specialist in soil fertility) for the history of organic farming; and **Bill Hlubik** and **Rich Weidman** (Middlesex County Agricultural and Resource Management agent and program associate), on natural landscaping at the Rutgers Earth Center. As part of the hands-on educational process, student teams completed a Ramapo tomato fertilizer experiment in the Cook Campus greenhouses, constructed a compost demonstration at the Rutgers Gardens with seven different methods for the general public to view, and created a specialty vegetable crop demonstration garden featuring five different cultural methods for home gardeners.

On May 15 and May 22, the Farm and Land Management Seminar series continued at the Snyder Research Farm and the Salem County Extension Office. Presenters and organizers again included **Carey Williams** (Extension specialist in equine science); **Steve Komar** (Sussex County Agricultural and Resource Management agent); **Bill Bamka** (Burlington County Agricultural and Resource Management agent); **Bill Sciarappa** (Monmouth County Agricultural and Resource Management agent); **Bob Mickel** (Hunterdon County Agricultural and Resource Management agent); and **Mike Westendorf** (Extension specialist in Animal Science). Topics included pasture rotation and renovation, weed and nutrient management, as well as environmental concerns and horse health. Outdoor demonstrations in applied pasture management included spreader calibration and on-farm composting.

Bill Tietjen (Warren County Agricultural and Resource Management agent) hosted the 2nd North Jersey Commercial Fruit Growers Meeting, which was attended by 39 growers at Melick Orchards in Califon, NJ, on May 19. In addition, a Food Safety Meeting on May 22 was attended by 15 growers.



Mark Your Calendars!

Gloucester County Fair

WHEN: July 24–27

WHERE: 4-H Fairgrounds, Route 77 South, Mullica Hill, NJ

For more information: <http://gloucester.njaes.rutgers.edu/fairfest/>

Morris County 4-H Fair

WHEN: July 25–27

WHERE: 4-H Fairgrounds at Chubb Park, Chester, NJ

For more information: morriscounty4h.org/fair.htm

Monmouth County 4-H Fair

WHEN: July 23–27

WHERE: East Freehold Showgrounds, Kozloski Road, Freehold, NJ

For more information: monmouthcountyparks.com/page.asp?agency=131&id=2492

Warren County Farmers Fair

WHEN: July 27–August 2

WHERE: Intersection of Rt. 519 and Strykers Road, Harmony Township, NJ

For more information: warrencountyfarmersfair.org/

Camden County Fair

WHEN: August 1–3

WHERE: 4-H Fairgrounds, Lakeland Complex, County House Rd. and Salina Rd., Blackwood, NJ

For more information: camdencounty4h.com/Camden_County_4-H_Fair.html

Sussex County Farm and Horse Show/NJ State Fair

WHEN: August 1–10

WHERE: Sussex County Fairgrounds, Augusta, NJ

For more information: newjerseystatefair.org/

90th Annual Mercer County 4-H Fair

WHEN: August 2–3

WHERE: Howell Living History Farm, Lambertville, NJ

For more information: howellfarm.org/

Middlesex County Fair

WHEN: August 7–10

WHERE: Middlesex County Fairgrounds, East Brunswick, NJ

For more information: middlesexcountyfair.org/

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Salem County Fair

WHEN: August 5–8

WHERE: Salem County Fairgrounds, Route 40, Woodstown, NJ

For more information: saalemcountyfair.com/

Atlantic County 4-H Fair

WHEN: August 7–9

WHERE: 4-H Fairgrounds, 3210 Rte 50, South Egg Harbor, NJ

For more information: aclink.org/RCE-atlantic/4-h/events.asp

Somerset County 4-H Fair

WHEN: August 13–15

WHERE: Somerset County 4-H Fairgrounds at North Branch Park, Bridgewater, NJ

For more information: somerset.njaes.rutgers.edu/4hfair/

Hunterdon County Fair

WHEN: August 20–24

WHERE: County Fairgrounds, South County Park, off of Route 179 in Ringoes, NJ

For more information: co.hunterdon.nj.us/4hagfair.htm

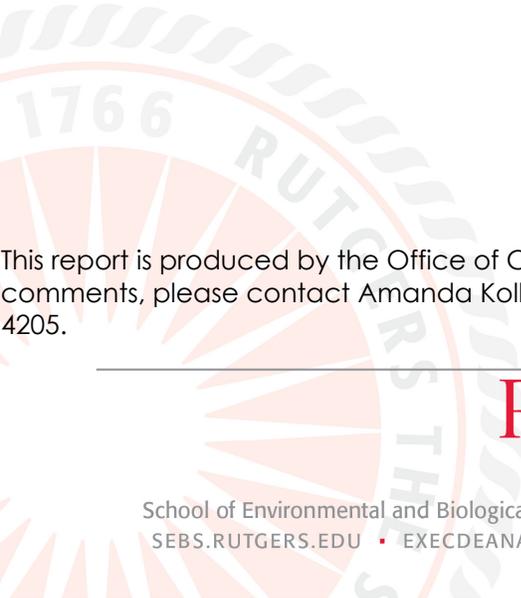
A Taste of Jersey Fresh: Annual Open House and Tomato Tasting

WHEN: August 27

WHERE: Snyder Farm, 140 Locust Grove Rd., Pittstown, NJ

For more information: snyderfarm.rutgers.edu/

RSVP: 908-713-8980



This report is produced by the Office of Communications. For information or to provide comments, please contact Amanda Kolling at kolling@njaes.rutgers.edu or 732-932-7000, ext. 4205.

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