

EXECUTIVE DEAN
OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture
March 2009

Update on the Agricultural Science Major

Mark Robson, dean of agricultural and urban programs, has made good progress in revising the agricultural sciences major. Among the classes that are being explored as additions to the new curriculum are Sustainable Agriculture; Value-Added Agriculture; Controlled-Environment Agriculture; Precision Agriculture; Energy-Efficient Farming; Direct Marketing; Agrotourism; Applied Economics; and Farm Management. In addition to the traditional classes on campus, there are plans to utilize the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station's nine off-campus research centers and 21 county cooperative extension offices. We hope to partner with government and industrial scientists, as well as develop a core of "farmer faculty" who will help to provide leadership, instruction, and experiential learning components for this initiative.

Our commitment to offering students a range of courses and programs of study in the agricultural sciences comes at a critical time in our state's and nation's history. There is a need for more teachers of agriculture and horticulture, technical professionals for industrial and governmental positions, as well as specialized positions in occupational and horticultural therapy, and cooperative extension professionals. Rutgers has the opportunity to be a leader in educating the next generation of agriculture professionals.

Spotlight on Research Farm Interns



Prior to summer 2008, the closest John Bolton ('10 Plant Biology and Pathology) came to farming while growing up in Woodbury, NJ, was riding his bicycling around nearby farms with his friends. Although his grandfather had grown his own food, John had no experience with farming and certainly had not considered pursuing agricultural sciences as a career. But now, armed with his summer 2008 Undergraduate Research Farm Internship with the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences and the New

Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, John is contemplating graduate school research options in plant breeding.

John has remarked that his paid summer research farm internship provided "a good wage, and definitely added value" to his undergraduate experience compared to typical summer jobs. He found that the paid summer internship "is a valuable asset to students who take advantage of it."

John interned at Rutgers Philip E. Marucci Center for Blueberry and Cranberry Research and Extension. The center develops new cultivars for industry and looks at ways to minimize the use of pesticides in the culture of these crops. At Marucci, John's mentor was Professor Nick Vorsa, who was awarded the 2008 Thomas Alva Edison patent award for his work on the Crimson Queen,

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which is only the second cranberry variety in the United States to be patented. It's no wonder, then, that John is now interested in plant breeding as the focus of his graduate studies.

John recalled that his first memorable internship experience was using an electronic "antenna gram," a research tool Professor Cesar Rodriguez uses at the center to measure how cranberry moth pests respond to sex pheromones. John worked outdoors and in greenhouses, planted research cranberry bogs, and gained basic plant maintenance skills, which he noted "was better than punching numbers in a computer." He also assisted in blueberry work. Professors and farm staff were there when needed to help perform challenging hands-on tasks the right way, John said, and these skills will be valuable assets in graduate school.

John is currently vice president of the Competitive Intelligence Club at the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences and has a 3.2 GPA.

Faculty and Staff Activities and Accomplishments

Mark Robson (dean, agricultural and urban programs) received a distinguished alumnus award for accomplishments in biological sciences during the 6th Annual Distinguished Alumni/ae Awards Reception and Dinner held on March 6. The award recognizes Robson's "important contributions to the field of environmental health through research, teaching, and service."

Florence K. L. Tangka, an alumna of Cook College and senior economist in the Epidemiology and Applied Research branch of the CDC, received the distinguished alumna award in social and behavioral sciences.

Karyn Malinowski (Animal Sciences) is one of this year's Outstanding Women in Somerset County. The Commission on the Status of Women presents awards annually in celebration of Women's History Month in March. Honorees are women who reside or work in Somerset County. The award will be presented at the 17th Annual Outstanding Women in Somerset County awards dinner on March 6.

Gef Flimlin (Ocean County Marine and Resource Management agent) has been elected director of the U.S. Aquaculture Society.

Jo Anne Crouch (Plant Biology and Pathology), who graduated from the Plant Biology Graduate Program in May 2008, is the recipient of the 2009 Musser Award. The Musser Award for Excellence supports graduate students who are working on basic turfgrass research as they strive toward their doctoral degrees.

Two tall fescue varieties (50-9440 and 50-9460) developed by the **Turfgrass Breeding** program received awards in France for distinction, uniformity, and stability, and for turf performance. The French Recommended List is the official inscription list for the county which gives one the license to sell the varieties in France.



Outreach Efforts: Public/Community Service

Sandra Goodrow (Water Resources Program) presented "The Assiscunk Creek Headwater Restoration and Protection Plan: Water Quality, Site Evaluation and Next Steps" at the NRCS Friendly Farms Soil Health Workshop on February 26 at the Burlington County Soil Conservation District Building in Burlington County. Approximately 45 people were in attendance.

Christopher Obropta (Water Resources Program) presented "Goose Management through Habitat Restoration" at the Goose Management Workshop, Bergen County Community College, Paramus, March 3. Approximately 75 were in attendance. He also presented "Cost-Effective Stormwater Management for Public Works Yards" at the Annual Township Engineers and Public Works Directors Meeting for the Whippany River Watershed Action Committee, Florham Park, on March 4 and "Careers in Water Resources" at the Environmental Career Day for New Jersey's AmeriCorps, Rutgers EcoComplex, Bordentown, on March 13.

Luanne Hughes (Gloucester County FCHS educator), **Alexandra (Sandra) Greci** (Hunterdon County FCHS educator), and **LeeAnne Savoca** (Gloucester County FCHS program associate) are collaborating with the Paulsboro School System (Gloucester County) to pilot test a school wellness Youth Advisory Council as part of a school wellness initiative called BEE Healthy: Eat Smart and Exercise. The council, which meets bi-monthly and is made up of 3-6th graders, is charged with assessing existing wellness practices at the school and making recommendations to guide administrators in enhancing nutrition and physical activity at the school.

Alexandra (Sandra) Greci and **Nurgul Fitzgerald** (specialist in health promotion and behavior), served on the steering committee to plan the Diabetes Care: Prevention & Treatment in New Jersey's Latino Community Summit, which is the largest New Jersey diabetes collaborative program to date. The summit was sponsored by the HealthCare Institute of New Jersey, the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, and the Latino Leadership Alliance of New Jersey. The objective of the event was to foster awareness of increasing diabetes prevalence in New Jersey's Latino/Hispanic populations, as well as to foster new and continued collaborations on diabetes prevention and improved treatment practices. The summit attracted 329 attendees.

Mark Your Calendars!

Third Party Audit Update and Produce Food Safety Refresher for 2009

WHEN: March 26, 6–9:30 p.m.

WHERE: RCE Cumberland County, 291 Morton Ave. (County Route 634), Millville

WHAT: Program will educate commercial food producers on the third party audit process and other current food safety issues. All are welcome to this free event.

MORE INFO: Contact Wes Kline, wkline@njaes.rutgers.edu, 856-451-2800

Horses 2009

WHEN: March 28–29



WHERE: Busch Campus Center

WHAT: Horses 2009 promises to be the most practical, informative event of the year. Designed as an intense learning experience, the conference offers the latest information on responsible horse ownership, equine health and behavior, nutrition, performance issues, equine facility operations, and other concerns.

MORE INFO: <http://www.esc.rutgers.edu/Horses2009/index.htm>

State 4-H Horse Judging and Hippology Contest

WHEN: April 4–5

WHERE: Lindley G. Cook 4-H Camp, Branchville, NJ

MORE INFO: Contact Carol Ward (ward@njaes.rutgers.edu) or visit <http://nj4h.rutgers.edu/horses/>.

North Jersey Forest Stewardship Meeting

WHEN: April 21, 7–9 p.m.

WHERE: Rutgers NJAES Cooperative Extension of Sussex County, 129 Morris Tpk., Newton

MORE INFO: Contact Brian Oleksak (oleksak@njaes.rutgers.edu, 973-948-3040) to register.

South Jersey Evening Fruit Meeting

WHEN: April 21, 7:15–9:30 p.m.

WHERE: Gloucester County Office of Government Services, 1200 North Delsea Dr., Clayton

WHAT: Timely discussion of pest management and horticultural practices in tree fruit plantings.

MORE INFO: Contact Jerome L. Frecon (frecon@njaes.rutgers.edu, 856-307-6450)

2009 Celebration of Excellence Awards Dinner

WHEN: April 23, 5:30–9 p.m.

WHERE: Cook Campus Center

WHAT: Dinner to recognize faculty, staff, students, and volunteers at the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences and the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station for outstanding professional contributions to the university and community. \$15/person; RSVP required.

MORE INFO: Contact Patricia Kastner, kastner@sebs.rutgers.edu, 732-932-7000 ext. 4211

Rutgers Day/Ag Field Day

WHEN: April 25, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

WHERE: New Brunswick Campus

WHAT: A celebration of Rutgers with tours, performances, exhibits, presentations, hands-on activities, and more on New Brunswick's Cook, Douglass, College Avenue, and Busch campuses. The traditional Ag Field Day continues as part of the Rutgers Day celebrations. All are welcome to this free event.

MORE INFO: Contact Patricia Kastner, kastner@sebs.rutgers.edu, 732-932-7000 ext. 4211

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.

