Rutgers EcoComplex, an off-campus research institute in Bordentown, N.J., specializes in helping green-minded companies to commercialize and market their ideas. Laboratories, research institutes, and companies are able to call upon the EcoComplex to demonstrate and validate leading-edge environmental technologies. The center offers access to applied research and demonstration capabilities and facilitates the commercialization of new technologies that address the pressing environmental and energy issues facing New Jersey and the nation.

"Technology and innovation are the keys that open the door to new business development and economic growth," notes David Specca, assistant director for bioenergy technologies and controlled-environment agriculture at the EcoComplex. "By offering services and resources to entrepreneurs that are not available anywhere else, we are establishing New Jersey as ‘the place to go’ for clean energy firms in terms of access to environmental technology and entrepreneurial know-how."

Several companies are currently developing their clean energy technologies within the EcoComplex. They include Adsorptech, Inc., Carbozyme, Inc., Green Primate, Inc., Koach Energy, LLC, Metro Biofuels, LLC., and Specialties Group, Inc. Clean energy graduates of the business incubator program at the EcoComplex include Acion Technologies, Inc., Garden State Ethanol, Inc., and PTC Organics, Inc. Headquarters for the New Jersey Corporation for Advanced Technology (NJCAT) are housed at the EcoComplex. NJCAT is a unique non-profit organization that validates the performance of new environmental technologies in order to ensure the technology works according to the manufacturer’s claims and to streamline the environmental permitting process.

The EcoComplex also has a number of programs that are aimed at sustaining the viability of agricultural businesses within the state. Controlled-environment agriculture will play a significant role in New Jersey if it can be done in an environmentally sustainable manner. The EcoComplex greenhouse is being used to investigate new renewable energy technologies and crop production systems that conserve natural resources such as energy, water, and nutrients, which may give New Jersey growers a competitive edge. University researchers are working on microturbine co-generation of heat and electricity and on biogas production from food waste. These processes, tested in a real-world environment, can be easily duplicated at farming operations throughout the state while the greenhouse continues to serve as a research, demonstration, and business development facility.

With a mission to promote economic development in the environmental arena through the best in research, education, and economic development, the EcoComplex provides a distinctive focus and an array of capabilities unique in the nation.
Spotlight on Food Recalls

Rutgers’ Food Policy Institute (FPI) released a study today showing that many Americans fail to check their homes for recalled food products. Only about 60 percent of the studied sample reported ever having looked for recalled food in their homes, and only 10 percent said they had ever found a recalled food product.

Despite widespread awareness of recent foodborne illness outbreaks and a sense that the number of food recalls is increasing, about half of Americans say that food recalls have had no impact on their lives, said William K. Hallman, director of FPI. “Getting consumers to pay attention to news about recalls isn’t the hard part,” he said. “It’s getting them to take the step of actually looking for recalled food products in their homes.”

Hallman said that personalizing communications about food recalls may be the way to overcome the sense that the messages are meant for someone else. Providing consumers with recall information about specific products they have purchased makes it harder for them to ignore the advice to look for the recalled items.

The authors of the study are William K. Hallman and Cara L. Cuite, researchers at FPI, and Neal H. Hooker, a researcher at the Ohio State University. The study was funded by the USDA and the Grocery Manufacturers Association.

Faculty and Staff Activities and Accomplishments

In March, Rutgers Against Hunger (RAH) partnered with the Greater New Brunswick Charter School (GBCS) to build a new food pantry. Over half of the children enrolled in the school are on the free or reduced-price lunch program and many of these local families are struggling in the current economy. Teachers and administrators have noticed an increase in the number of children who are malnourished, tired, and having difficulty concentrating because they are not getting the nutritious foods their bodies need. RAH donated 6,000 pounds of food to the pantry, with the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences and the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station contributing some 20 delivery boxes of food.

Rutgers NJAES Food Innovation Center has formed a strategic partnership with the New Jersey Food Processors Association to strengthen and grow the organization, provide new services for its membership, and widen its reach within New Jersey. The center will take on a portion of the association’s administrative and marketing duties, manage its website and membership communications, and assisting with long-term strategic planning.
An articulation agreement between Mercer County Community College (MCCC) and the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences was recently signed. The purpose of this agreement is to enable students who graduate from MCCC to continue their education and obtain a Bachelor of Science in Food Science from Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences. Students completing the associate in science degree with an emphasis on Culinology may transfer 74 credits toward a B.S. in Food Science (general food science option), allowing them to complete their Rutgers degree in four to five years of part-time study or two years of full-time study.

The following awards were presented at the annual meeting of the New Jersey Association of 4-H Agents held on Feb. 26 in Mount Holly:

- **Friend of 4-H:** Karyn Malinowski (Equine Science Center)
- **Volunteer of the Year:** Wallace Warren, Gloucester County 4-H Volunteer. It was also announced that Warren will be the recipient of the state and regional Lifetime Volunteer Salute to Excellence Award, to be recognized by the Northeast Region later this year.
- **Excellence in 4-H Programming:** Lisa Rothenburger (Somerset County 4-H agent), Rachel Lyons, (Morris County 4-H agent), and Theresa Yost (Morris County 4-H program associate) for Be the Change Service Learning Summer Day Camp; Susan Makres (Atlantic County 4-H program associate) and Joanne Kinsey (Atlantic County FCHS educator) for Family Fun Nights; Rachel Lyons (Morris County 4-H agent), Gloria Kraft, (Burlington County 4-H agent), Macy Compton (state 4-H program coordinator), and Karen Mansue (Ocean County 4-H program associate) for New Jersey Operation Military Kids; Laura Bovitz (Middlesex County 4-H agent), Rachel Lyons, Lisa Rothenburger, Alayne Torretta (Warren County 4-H agent), Jennae DuBois (Passaic County 4-H program associate), Tamara Pellien (Bergen County 4-H program associate), Jim Nichnadowicz (Union County 4-H agent), Terri Yost, and Abbie Kesely (Middlesex County 4-H program assistant) for North Jersey Teen Conference; Jeannette Rea-Keywood (Cumberland County 4-H agent) and Donna Griebau (Cumberland County 4-H program assistant) for the “Robotics Explorer” 4-H Enrichment Program; Linda Strieter (Gloucester County 4-H agent), Peggy McKee (former Gloucester County 4-H program associate), Luanne Hughes (Gloucester County FCHS educator), and Mary Cummings (Gloucester County Ag program associate) for Seeds to Success Youth Farm Stand; Lisa Rothenburger and Carol Ward (Somerset County 4-H agent) for Somerset County TOPS Camp; Tamara Pellien for the Art of Communication.

Awards announced that will be received in October at NAE4-HA:

- **Distinguished Service Award – Macy Compton**
- **Meritorious Service Award – Carol Ward**
Outreach Efforts: Public/Community Service

Maintaining Timothy Hay Production in NJ
The New Jersey Department of Agriculture reports over 90,000 acres of grass hay produced in the state with roughly half this acreage as timothy hay. With an average production yield of 3 tons/acre, this represents over $36 million dollars in production revenue. A production problem faced by timothy hay producers is a relatively new pest, the cereal rust mite (*Abacarus hystrix*). This pest has been in the mid-Atlantic region for only the past 10 years. Cereal rust mite typically reduces hay yields by 30–70% and reduces the quality of hay because of brown discoloration. Horse owners are reluctant to buy off-color hay. Virtually every acre of timothy hay in the region is infested with cereal rust mite. There is growing concern that the cereal rust mite will soon develop resistance to insecticide Sevin XLR Plus, the only labeled control measure. Anecdotal evidence indicates that there are increasing reports of control failures. If control strategies for cereal rust mite are not developed, it may not be economically viable to produce timothy hay in New Jersey. Both an applied research program and educational program were initiated by Bill Bamka (Burlington County Agricultural and Resource Management agent); Stephen Komar (Sussex County Agricultural and Resource Management agent); and Robert Mickel (Hunterdon County Agricultural and Resource Management agent). The goals of the program were to develop alternative control strategies for cereal rust mite and raise producer awareness about this pest of timothy hay. The findings of the applied research were presented at the educational meetings. Evaluations conducted after the educational programs indicated:

- Over 80% of participants had a greater awareness of the life cycle of cereal rust mite and how to scout for this pest.
- 70% of participants felt that they would be able to more effectively control this pest and thereby increase their economic return from producing timothy hay.
- 100% percent of participants supported continued research to develop additional control measures for cereal rust mite.

Farm Financial Management
Agricultural producers often make major financial decisions without analyzing the full impact to their operation. Until accurate financial records are maintained, decisions regarding the financial health of an operation are uninformed at best. To address these issues, a financial management program for farmers has been in existence for approximately 15 years, led by David Lee (Salem County Agricultural and Resource Management agent). During 2008, small group workshops and individual one-on-one meetings were conducted with agricultural producers. Finpack, a comprehensive whole-farm financial planning and analysis software program, was utilized to develop custom financial data for each individual. The audience comprises agricultural producers who participate each year as a way to manage their finances as well as those who participate due to a major change in their operation that could affect their bottom line. This program rates among the highest in stakeholder satisfaction. The highly individualized nature of this program ensures that each participant receives a custom experience based on their needs. Individuals participating during 2008 had unique objectives, including analyzing crop insurance decisions, satisfying borrower training requirements, securing an operating line of credit, performing enterprise analysis, and analyzing the financial impact of...
a major change in the operation. Impacts stemming from this program are most commonly portrayed as behavioral. Specific examples are listed below:

- A New Jersey dairy producer analyzed the impact of purchasing a robotic milker within his operation. In doing so, he closely inspected the labor costs incurred with and without the robot. A multiple-year cash flow statement was generated to forecast the long term financial impact of this purchase. He was also able to provide a lender with the financial statements generated with Finpack to assist with securing funding.
- A grain and hay producer utilized Finpack to make strategic changes to his crop insurance coverage. By analyzing each crop budget, he was able to determine the amount he was able to spend on insuring each of his crops.
- An organic vegetable producer utilized Finpack to determine prices for her operation. By accurately determining her costs of production she was able to set share prices to ensure both a profit and a fair price for her customers. She also analyzed the impacts of growing her business and finding new customers.
- Four producers of various commodities participated in Finpack as a means to satisfy Farm Service Agency (FSA) borrower training requirements. This program is the only hands-on financial management training in New Jersey that is accepted as a borrower training method for New Jersey producers. FSA has referred numerous producers to us and continues to do so each year.

Over the history of this program, its value has been proven with each participant. Public and private lending institutions have recognized this program as an asset for their clients. Several participants each year are referred to this program by their lender. The USDA Farm Service Agency officially accepts this program as borrower training for accounts when necessary.

Mark Your Calendars!

**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. (rain or shine)
**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. Free.
**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.