Spotlight on Cabbage Gleaning at RAREC

On November 17, Farmers Against Hunger collected 6,000 pounds of produce (5 bins of cabbage and one bin of white potatoes) from Rutgers Agricultural Research & Extension Center (RAREC) to include in its Thanksgiving food donations. Cabbage and potatoes from trials conducted by Gerald Ghidiu (extension specialist in Vegetable Entomology), Michelle Casella (Gloucester County agricultural agent), and Mel Henninger (extension specialist in Vegetable Crops) were donated to Farmers Against Hunger while several bins of produce were delivered to Terhune Orchards in Princeton to be included in 3,000 Thanksgiving baskets that were provided to needy families this season. “While our agricultural research initially benefits our New Jersey farmers and they in turn provide fresh, healthy produce to our communities, it’s wonderful that we could utilize the trial crops to help feed those less fortunate during the start of the holiday seasons. We all have a great deal to be thankful for and we at Rutgers NJAES are thankful for the public support we receive,” said Casella.
**Spotlights**

**Center Conducts Food Industry Training Program**

The Rutgers Food Innovation Center (FIC) has launched a national educational program consisting of in-class and on-site food safety training, online business planning courses, on-demand videos, and an array of specialized services targeted at the food industry. These educational resources are designed for food industry employers and employees, food business entrepreneurs, as well as community farm market participants and organizers. According to Lou Cooperhouse (FIC director), “The Rutgers Food Innovation Center has received considerable interest from entrepreneurs and established businesses regarding the availability of a wide variety of education and training programs in the food industry, as these did not exist. These classes are now available online, in-class, and on-site to meet the personalized needs of our clients. These new programs allow us to expand the reach of our Center to food businesses throughout New Jersey, and our online classes can be of great value to entrepreneurs worldwide.” Diane Holtaway (associate director of Client Services at FIC) added that “the learning curve for growing a successful business never flattens out. Business owners recognize the need for continuous education and our food industry training program is designed to meet that demand.” Read more.

**Rutgers Environmental Stewards Program Graduates New Class**

In October, fifty-two volunteers graduated in the 2009 class of the Rutgers Environmental Stewards program by completing the 60 hours of classroom and field experience, becoming the fifth class since the inception of the program. Twenty-one volunteers, drawn from among the 2009 and previous classes, successfully completed an additional 60 hours of internship projects and were installed as certified stewards in a ceremony at Duke Farms.

Rutgers Environmental Stewards are a committed segment of New Jersey residents who turn their interest in environmental issues into action through this statewide environmental stewardship certification program, which won the 2007 Governor’s Environmental Excellence Achievement Award for Environmental Education. An innovative partnership between Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) and the Duke Farms Foundation, the Rutgers Environmental Stewards program teaches participants about land and water stewardship, best management practices, environmental public advocacy, and leadership.

According to Bruce Barbour (agricultural and resource management agent) and originator of the program, the curriculum is designed to introduce non-scientists to the science underlying key environmental issues in the state. “Students not only receive facts, but also are introduced to a network of expert individuals and organizations that can be of service to them in the future as they wrestle with solving local environmental problems.” Read more.

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Members of a class visit the banks of the Passaic River to learn of the environmental challenges facing one of New Jersey’s most burdened rivers.
Faculty and Staff Activities and Accomplishments

Richard Obal (Monmouth County agriculture and resource management agent) recently received the Outstanding Professional Conservationist Award from the New Jersey Association of Conservation Districts (NJACD). This annual award is presented to a professional conservationist who has made an outstanding contribution to natural resource conservation in New Jersey. In his 32 years with Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Obal has educated thousands of homeowners, farmers, nursery owners, landscapers, and residents and has trained hundreds of municipal, county, state, and federal employees and volunteers. His areas of expertise include irrigation management, integrated pest management, soil nutrient management, water quality, landscape management, and farmland evaluation and preservation. Obal is a member of the Monmouth County Agriculture Development Board and serves as a technical adviser to many organizations including USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA’s Farm Services Agency, the Freehold Soil Conservation District and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. NJACD is a nonprofit organization overseeing New Jersey’s 15 soil conservation districts. Its mission is to advocate soil and water conservation through the implementation of conservation measures and through the promotion of conservation education programs for the betterment of New Jersey and its residents.

Mike Kennish (Marine and Coastal Sciences) received the 2009 award from the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) and the National Estuarine Research Reserve Association for outstanding contributions to the National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS). The award was presented to Kennish at the annual meeting of the NERRS held in San Diego in November. Kennish was recognized for his research and public outreach on human impacts to coastal systems including watershed development, habitat loss and alteration, nutrient enrichment, and eutrophication. His many regional and national contributions were noted including ecosystem assessment and remediation for the Barnegat Bay, publication of several special issues of journals such as the Journal of Coastal Research devoted to estuarine ecosystem studies, and his efforts to develop new measures of assessment for estuarine and marine waters with state and federal resource management agencies. He has made it his mission to ensure the effects of global climate change and the eutrophication of the Barnegat Bay are recognized and mitigated through changes in environmental policy and better planning in the communities surrounding the Bay and its tributaries. Read more.

Mukund Karwe, Don Schaffner and Alberto Cuitino, Co-PIs (Food Science), received a grant from the Agricultural and Food Research Initiative of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The grant, awarded for “Process non-uniformity during high hydrostatic pressure processing of heterogeneous foods,” is worth $469,596 and runs from 2009–2012.

Carol Byrd-Bredbenner (specialist in Nutrition) received $600,000 for a USDA National Food Safety Initiative for Peer Networking and Social Norms Design, titled “Implications for Food Safety Media and Behavioral Change.”
Outreach Efforts: Public/Community Service

County Program Encourages Consumption of Fresh Produce

Maria Young (Passaic County family and community health sciences (FCHS) educator) coordinated a highly successful program promoting awareness of the nutritional and health benefits of consuming locally grown fruits and vegetables titled “Passaic County Residents Eat Jersey Fresh Produce For Good Health.” Funded by the New Jersey Department of Agriculture and the Passaic County Board of Agriculture, the program encouraged local residents to shop for locally grown produce and over 1,000 Passaic County residents were reached through the FCHS effort. The goals of the program included informing county consumers about the safety of fruits and vegetables produced in New Jersey, providing information for consumers about Jersey Fresh produce grown by Passaic County farmers, and building partnerships with farmers’ markets and local libraries through food preparation demonstrations and tasting exhibits. As part of the outreach activities, 200 participants completed a FCHS consumer survey and respondents indicated a willingness to include more vegetables in their diet.

Mark Your Calendars!

19th Annual Turfgrass Research Symposium
WHEN: January 11, 2010, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
WHERE: Foran Hall, 59 Dudley Road, George H. Cook Campus
WHAT: Talk on current turf research accomplishments from a wide range of basic and applied projects at Rutgers University and other institutions in the U.S.
MORE INFO: Contact Barbara Fitzgerald, bfitzgerald@aesop.rutgers.edu, 732-932-9375, ext. 338 http://www.turf.rutgers.edu

2010 Atlantic Coast Agricultural Convention and Trade Show
WHEN: January 12–14, 2010, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
WHERE: Trump Taj Mahal, Atlantic City
WHAT: Three-day convention sponsored by the Vegetable Growers Association of New Jersey, the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, and the New Jersey Department of Agriculture
MORE INFO: Contact Rocco DiGerolamo, 856-797-1686. Daily registration is available for those not wishing to attend all three days.

Integrated Pest Management
WHEN: January 15 and January 21, 2010, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
WHERE: Cook/Douglass Lecture Hall, 3 College Farm Road, George H. Cook Campus
WHAT: This two-part class will focus on fundamentals of monitoring and practical strategies for implementing IPM for a business, school, or public space and on ornamental plant care
MORE INFO: Contact Dan Serpico, serpico@njaes.rutgers.edu, 732-932-9271, ext. 648

This report is produced by the Office of Communications. For information or to provide comments, please contact Paula Walcott-Quintin at quintin@aesop.rutgers.edu or 732-932-7000, ext. 4204.