

EXECUTIVE DEAN  
OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture  
September 2010

*Spotlight on Snyder Farm Annual Great Tomato Tasting Festival*

The weather leading up to the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Great Tomato Tasting was sunny and hot, just perfect for ripening of those rows and rows of luscious tomatoes for the 1,300 visitors who descended on the Snyder Research and Extension Farm on September 1. Attendees were treated to over 80 varieties of tomatoes representing many different categories, including hybrid, heirloom, plum, grape, and cherry. In response to the long lines of previous years, additional tomato tasting



stations, manned by 100 **Rutgers NJAES Master Gardener volunteers**, were added. This year, the farm reintroduced pepper tasting with an array of both hot and sweet peppers grown by **Edwin Dager** (Snyder Farm manager). Tastings of cucumbers, herbs, apples, and peaches were also available throughout the day.

New Jersey Secretary of Agriculture Douglas Fisher

attended the festival, joining the winding queues to get at a taste of the many varieties of tomatoes. Visitors were also able to taste an array of apples as part of the farm's tree fruit extension program led by **Win Cowgill** (agricultural agent, Hunterdon County).



Doug Fisher samples tomatoes while **Master Gardener volunteers** Sara Malone (Hunterdon County) and Rich Dufort (Morris County) serve up slices of tomatoes at one of the many tasting stations



L-R: **Larry Katz** (senior associate director, NJAES) and Doug Fisher pictured with **Edwin Dager** (Snyder Farm manager), who plays a key role in the success of the annual festival

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The Melda C. Snyder Teaching Garden, which featured a variety of plants that attract beneficial insects to the garden, sparkled under the sunny skies and the farm was resplendent with displays of deer tolerant ornamentals and award-winning *Jersey Grown™* daylilies.

Festival attendees were also invited on guided hayride tours of the farm's research plots to help them better understand the importance of **Rutgers Cooperative Extension** and the **New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station** to New Jersey agriculture. The Snyder Farm has focused on improving the quality of life of New Jersey farmers and residents through an extensive program of public education and community outreach, and the annual tomato tasting is among the premier services offered by the farm.



A variety of apples on display and available for tasting by festival goers

### **Pallone Hosts Food Safety Press Conference on George H. Cook Campus**

In the wake of the recent national egg recall, U.S. Rep. Frank Pallone Jr. (D-NJ) hosted a press conference on August 27 on the Rutgers George H. Cook Campus to urge congressional action on the Food Safety Enhancement Act. Approved last year by the U.S. House of Representatives, the bill awaits action in the U.S. Senate. Pallone was joined at the press conference by **Donald Schaffner** (director, Center for Advanced Food Technology) and several consumer advocacy groups, including Food and Water Watch, New Jersey Public Interest Research Group (NJPIRG), and Consumers Union, which publishes Consumer Reports. Among its major provisions, the bill



L-R: Surur Fatema Sajanlal, NJPIRG; Jim Walsh, Food and Water Watch; Congressman Frank Pallone Jr.; **Donald Schaffner**; and Michael Hansen, Consumers Union

calls for frequent and mandatory inspections for high risk facilities, requires that food products be tracked back to facilities that produced them, and provides the FDA with the authority to issue immediate and mandatory recalls of products. On hand to answer media inquiries were **William Hallman** (director, Food Policy Institute; Human Ecology) and **Wes Kline** (agricultural and resource management agent, Cumberland County).

### Turfgrass Producers International Tour Adelphia Farm

On July 26, scores of turfgrass producers participated in the Turfgrass Producers International (TPI) tour of the **Plant Science Research and Extension Farm** located in Adelphia, NJ. Hosted by the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station and the **Center for Turfgrass Science**, the tour was part of TPI's summer convention and field days that were held in New York and New Jersey from July 25–29.



TPI Vice President Claus Zander of Kettleby, Ontario, Canada, **Dean Robert M. Goodman**, **William Meyer**, and TPI President Chip Lain, Pine Island, NY. The TPI leaders presented a silver plate to the Center for Turfgrass Science

The July 26 tour of the Adelphi farm included an earlier stop at Reid Sod Farm in Freehold, NJ. The purpose of the tour was to highlight the advances made by Rutgers researchers in turfgrass breeding, management, and pest control for economically and environmentally sustainable cultivated sod production. TPI is a not-for-profit worldwide trade association that represents the turfgrass sod industry. Rutgers relationship with TPI began with the late **Henry Indyke**, a former extension specialist in turfgrass management, who was instrumental in starting TPI, which later established a scholarship in his honor.

**Stephen Hart**, (associate extension specialist) serves as the faculty liaison between the Center for Turfgrass Science and the Cultivated Sod Association of New Jersey. Many of the association members are part of TPI.



TPI members on the tour learn about breeding for brown patch resistance, quality, and growth habit at the 2006 National Tall Fescue Test plot at the farm in Adelphia this July. Rutgers turfgrass breeders are in red shirts.

## *Faculty and Staff Activities and Accomplishments*

### **USDA-supported International Lentil Project**

Using a USDA International Science and Education competitive grant, **Ramu Govindasamy** (Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics) is engaged in a strong collaborative effort with the University of Peradeniya in Sri Lanka on a project that aims to integrate teaching, research, and outreach in the lentil industry supply chain. Part of the 2-year collaborative project between Rutgers and the University of Peradeniya included a 2-week summer training program conducted this August. Along with colleague **Venkata Puduri** (research associate, Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics),



**Govindasamy**, standing second from left, pictured with students and other participants in Sri Lanka

Govindasamy took eight Rutgers undergraduate students to Sri Lanka to participate in the hands-on training program alongside 25 students from the University of Peradeniya. The program offered Rutgers students the opportunity to experience the global socio-cultural, economic, trade, and geo-political environment as well as helped them understand how the supply chain of lentils works outside of the

U.S. The program provided workshops on Agribusiness Marketing as well as visits to indoor and outdoor markets, farms, and processing plants. The program allowed students to investigate the real-life procedures of lentil export and sales, which has enabled them to gather more accurate data for their global marketing plan on lentil exportation from the U.S. to Sri Lanka.

**Karyn Malinowski** (Equine Science Center) presented the keynote address titled "The importance of the New Jersey equine industry and the Rutgers Equine Science Center" at the Hunterdon County Farmer and Businessmen's Annual Picnic in East Amwell Township on July 28.

**Beth Ravit** (Environmental Sciences) was invited to present testimony on "Oyster research in northern New Jersey coastal waters" to the New Jersey Senate Environmental and Energy Committee at the New Jersey State House in Trenton, NJ, on July 15.

**Robin Brumfield** (specialist in farm management), **Barbara O'Neill** (specialist in financial resource management), and **Stephen Komar** (agricultural agent, Sussex County) presented "Later life farming: Retirement and succession concerns of farm households" at the



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Northeastern Agricultural and Resource Economics Association Meetings in Atlantic City this summer.

**Cara Cuite** PI (Food Policy Institute) and **William Hallman** co-PI (Human Ecology; Food Policy Institute) were awarded \$163,271 by the National Center for Food Protection and Defense for their proposal "Experimental evidence for best practices in food crisis communications."

In a Sept. 12 *The Times of Trenton* article "Central Jerseyans find farming roots," which discussed the growing trend towards backyard homesteading, **Ned Lipman** (director, Office of Continuing Professional Education – OCPE) talked about the growing interest among New Jersey residents in starting their own gardens and beehives. This wave of interest has led to sharp increases in enrollment in bee keeping courses offered by the **Rutgers NJAES Office of Continuing Professional Education** over the last several years. More than 1,000 residents have enrolled in OCPE's basic beekeeping short course, leading to larger classes and the addition of more sections to accommodate the growing demand. According to Lipman, sections that previously attracted 25 to 30 participants now have enrollment of up to 100 persons per section. Read more at [http://www.nj.com/mercer/index.ssf/2010/09/central\\_jerseyans\\_find\\_farming.html](http://www.nj.com/mercer/index.ssf/2010/09/central_jerseyans_find_farming.html).

## *Mark Your Calendars!*

### **Golf Turf Management School**

**WHEN:** October 6–December 17, 2010, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**WHAT:** Fall semester of the 2-year turf management school offered by the Rutgers Office of Continuing Professional Education.

**MORE INFO:** Contact Fran Koppell, [koppell@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:koppell@rci.rutgers.edu), 732-932-9271, ext. 637.

### **CORE Pesticide Training Program**

**WHEN:** October 14, 2010, 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

**WHERE:** George H. Cook Campus, New Brunswick, NJ.

**WHAT:** Pesticide regulations training for new commercial applicators and operators mandated by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Pesticide Control Program.

**MORE INFO:** Contact Claudine Oleskin, [oleskin@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:oleskin@rci.rutgers.edu), 732-932-9271, ext. 614.

### **South Jersey Nursery Meeting**

**WHEN:** October 19, 2010, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**WHERE:** RCE of Cumberland County, 291 Morton Avenue, County Route 634, Millville, NJ.

**WHAT:** Daylong meeting sponsored by Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Cumberland County, New Jersey Nursery and Landscape Association, and the Crop Insurance Program.

**MORE INFO:** Contact Jim Johnson, [jjohnson@njaes.rutgers.edu](mailto:jjohnson@njaes.rutgers.edu), 856-451-2800, ext. 1.

This report is produced by the Office of Communications and is available online at <http://execdeanagriculture.rutgers.edu/boa/>.

For information or to provide comments, please contact Paula Walcott-Quintin at [quintin@aesop.rutgers.edu](mailto:quintin@aesop.rutgers.edu) or 732-932-7000, ext. 4204.

