

EXECUTIVE DEAN
OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture
May 2012

Spotlight on Second South Jersey Agricultural Water Summit

New Jersey agriculture is blessed with productive soils and abundant water resources and the state's high-value crops depend on these two precious resources to maintain their competitive edge, nationally and internationally. Utilization of available water resources sometimes competes with the needs of the New Jersey farming community and the state regulatory environment. These factors, in addition to concerns about water quality degradation, led **Ray**



Bill Cutts, cranberry grower, delivering his presentation.

Samulis (agricultural resource management agent, Burlington County) to bring farmers together to discuss issues facing today's growers at the second Agricultural Water Summit held at the facilities of the Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) of Burlington County on March 21. RCE agents work extensively with the New Jersey Agricultural Water Certification program that regulates farm irrigation.

The summit began with an overview from Samulis on agricultural water quality in New Jersey and included recommendations on utilizing Rutgers' testing laboratories to obtain scientific information on how to monitor and improve water quality. In addition, Samulis' presentation focused on regulation. Current control of pesticide use falls under the jurisdiction of the Federal Insecticide Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). Recently proposed legislation, however, has sought to transfer control from FIFRA to a different



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department within the EPA. The primary impact of the legislation on farmers relates to pesticide spray applications on or near bodies of water. Bill Cutts, a prominent cranberry grower and water use expert in New Jersey, provided an in-depth explanation at the summit on the provisions of this proposed new law, which would require farmers to obtain a special permit in order to apply pesticides in wetland areas. Using aerial wetlands maps, Cutts was able to show that virtually all farms in South Jersey would be covered under the proposed legislation.

Ken Komar from the Division of Water Supply and Geoscience, Bureau of Water Allocation and Well Permitting, Department of Environmental Protection gave an update to summit participants on the overall water certification program and how it affects New Jersey growers.

Stephanie Murphy (director, Rutgers Soil Testing Laboratory) spoke about the connection between water quality and soil health and their relationship to maximizing water quality and availability.

One integral part of water management on farms is maintaining farm pond health and **Mike Haberland** (environmental and resource management agent, Burlington and Camden counties) spoke about the use of aquatic herbicides to maintain water quality in ponds.



Ken Komar of NJDEP

Also presenting at the summit was **Sal Mangiafico** (environmental and resource management, Salem County) who gave attendees a peek at the future with regards to conserving and recycling agricultural water. Mangiafico discussed the latest recommendations on recycling of irrigation water, a topic of great interest to South Jersey nurserymen who today constitute the largest segment of South Jersey agriculture with more than \$380,000,000 in annual sales.



Spotlight

Pollinator Conservation Planning Short Course

On April 27, the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station collaborated with the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to conduct a Pollinator Conservation Planning Short Course at the Snyder Farm, in Pittstown, NJ. The purpose of the workshop was to present scientific results, management guidelines, and technical expertise on restoring and managing pollinators in New Jersey. This is important because pollinators are required for 75% of the world's leading food crop plants and for 87% of all flowering plant species globally.



Rachael Winfree makes her presentation during the short course.



Molly McLeod (Ph.D. candidate in Winfree lab) delivers her presentation to attendees.

Among the important goals of the workshop:

- Identify approaches to increase and enhance pollinator diversity on the land.
- Knowledge of current best management practices that minimize land-use impacts on pollinators.
- Understand the economics of insect-pollinated crops and the effects of pollinator decline.
- Ability to make recommendations to farmers and land managers that conserve pollinators.
- Ability to design and implement habitat improvements, such as native plant restoration and nest site enhancements.

The course was made possible with the support of a USDA-NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant awarded to **Rachael Winfree** (Entomology). Additional funding was provided by the USDA Northeast Sustainable Agricultural Research and Education (SARE) program, the CS Fund, Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund, Sarah K. de Coizart Article TENTH Perpetual Charitable Trust, Turner Foundation, Whole Systems Foundation, and Xerces Society members. Support was also provided by the Cape-Atlantic Conservation District and the North Jersey Resource Conservation & Development. For more course content see the Xerces Society website at <http://www.xerces.org/enewsletter/othershortcourse.html>

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Spotlight

FFA Spring Career Development Events Held on the George H. Cook Campus

On April 14, over 250 students from 27 schools from around New Jersey participated in the 88th Annual New Jersey Future farmers of America (FFA) Spring Career Development events on the George H. Cook Campus of the Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences in New Brunswick.



Student participating in a Veterinary Science event: "Haltering a Horse"

Students competed in a range of events including agricultural mechanics, agricultural sales, environmental and natural resources, floriculture and nursery, and landscape. For the first time, students competed in a veterinary science event.

According to Nancy Trivette, ag education program leader at the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, these hands-on agricultural events were conducted by volunteers from the state's agricultural industry. Students were given timed performance and written tests and

received individual and team scores. First-place winners of each event advanced to the National FFA competition to be held this October in Indianapolis, IN. National winners from the state will be recognized at the New Jersey State FFA Convention in May 2013.



Students participating in propagation study in the nursery event.

Outreach Efforts: Public/Community Service

Seafood Share Program Gets Underway in New Jersey

The New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium and **Rutgers Cooperative Extension** (RCE) have teamed up with Sea Salt CSA to launch a consumer seafood share program that will feature local finfish and shellfish and help support the livelihoods of small-scale fishermen. The program is modeled after a community supported fishery (CSF) and will become a part of a local community supported agriculture (CSA) program, which connects local farmers to consumers. This new project will offer coastal residents the option to purchase a seafood share from Sea Salt CSA this season from June through October and provide them with a taste of fresh, responsibly harvested, locally-caught seafood. Similar to vegetable shares in CSA programs, the make-up of seafood shares will ultimately be determined by the availability of product in a given week. For now, the shares will only be available to current Sea Salt CSA customers. The project is part of a trial being led by **Gef Flimlin** (agricultural and resource management agent, Ocean County) and New Jersey Sea Grant's coastal communities agent, Caroline McLaughlin. They who will act as liaisons between Sea Salt CSA's owner Jennifer LaMonaca and the local seafood sources, which include six New Jersey seafood businesses: Viking Village in Barnegat Light, Lund's Fisheries Inc. in Cape May, Nautical Nuggets Clam Farms in Ocean View, Maxwells' Shellfish in Port Republic, Point Lobster Co. in Point Pleasant and LaMonica Fine Foods in Millville. This year's seafood selections will include Mullica River oysters, farmed oysters, farmed clams, bluefish, porgy, scallops, lobster and canned clam sauce, and possibly more, depending on the catch.

Online Resources for Small Farms and Agricultural Educators

A range of online resources is available for small-scale framers and agricultural educators through the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station. Seven short videos with companion handouts on how to better utilize modified backpack sprayers, save time and money, as well as improve safety, are posted at the Snyder Farm website at <http://snyderfarm.rutgers.edu/snyder-backpack-sprayers.html>. Modified backpack sprayers offer versatile features including simple design, professional nozzle technology accuracy, and easy and safe filling and cleaning, in addition to being relatively inexpensive. These features make them an ideal choice for small, organic, or urban farms; small jobs on larger farms; and for short season crops, spot problems, work around field impediments (fences, slopes), and work inside high tunnels and greenhouses. Rutgers NJAES Snyder Research Farm Director **John Grande** has conducted extensive tests on the sprayers and shares video instructions on how to modify these sprayers to increase their accuracy, facility, and to apply organic products. Specifically for agricultural educators, a power Point presentation as well as speaker notes are provided.

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 or 848-932-4204.

