

A REPORT FROM THE
EXECUTIVE DEAN
OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture
October 2013

Nicholi Vorsa, cranberry breeder at Rutgers Philip E. Marucci Center for Blueberry and Cranberry Research and Extension, received a \$500,000 USDA-NIFA grant for the project titled, "*Genomic Regions and Genetic Constellations Associated with Agronomic Traits, Fruit Quality and Disease Resistance in the American Cranberry.*" The proposed research outlined in the grant will identify regions and genes on the cranberry's genome, i.e., chromosomes that are involved with yield, resistance to fruit rot, anti-oxidant phytonutrients, and other traits. By locating the genes that are involved, the efficiency of further genetic improvement of the cranberry will increase. The project is in collaboration with Dr. Juan Zalapa (USDA-ARS), University of Wisconsin-Madison and Dr. James Polashock (USDA-ARS), Marucci Center.

Two Specialty Crop Block Grants, funded through the New Jersey Department of Agriculture from the USDA, were awarded to NJAES for 2014: **Cesar Rodriguez Soana**, specialist in entomology of the Marucci Center, will be looking for ways to minimize the damage caused by key insect pests of blueberries by evaluating and developing innovative insect behavior-based approaches to managing Oriental beetle, plum curculio, brown marmorated stink bug and spotted wing drosophila; demonstrating the effectiveness of an attract-and-kill strategy for controlling these pests; and sharing results with blueberry growers. Also, in cooperation with the Small Fruits Council, agricultural agents **Bill Hlubik** and **Pete Nitzsche** received funding to increase production of New Jersey strawberries by assessing the status of the production and marketing of minor small fruits; expediting the evaluation and release of strawberry selections from the Rutgers breeding program; and sharing results of the project with small fruits growers. In addition, **Hlubik** and **Nitzsche** have secured a competitive grant from the Walmart Foundation, which is administered by the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture's Center for Agricultural and Rural Sustainability. The grant is for their work with NJAES breeder **Gojko Jelenkovic** on new strawberry selections for local growers.

Based on a pilot curriculum developed by **Barbara O'Neill**, extension specialist in Finance Resource Management and Roberta Riportella of Kansas State University, a 90-minute webinar on October 18 introduced participants to a discussion about Farm Families and the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Participants in "You and Health Insurance: Making a Smart Choice for Farm Families," learned how the Affordable Care Act affects farm families as consumers and business operators and also how it affects farm workers. The webinar is available online for viewing at <https://learn.extension.org/events/1256>. In another item, **O'Neill** and Riportella were both quoted in the article, "How Does the US Health Reform Affect Farmers?" on The Pig Site. **O'Neill** is quoted as saying, "Because premiums in the individual health insurance market are rated based on the individual's own risks, they have been exceptionally high for farmers. The new law makes it more likely that farm families will be able to purchase less expensive coverage." **O'Neill** also noted that farms with less than 50 employees will not be required to provide insurance and thus won't face government penalties. In addition, tax credits are available to help the smallest employers (less than 25 employees) pay for the cost of employee health insurance. The full article is available at: <http://www.thepigsite.com/swinenews/34447/how-does-the-us-health-reform-affect-farmers>



On October 9, **Ray Samulis**, agricultural agent for Burlington County, hosted a Farm Safety Twilight Meeting, “Grain Bin Emergency Response Training,” for farmers and rescue personnel to learn how to deal with safety issues. Speakers included Michael J. Love, extension agent for safety at University of Delaware Cooperative Extension, Burlington County agricultural agent **Bill Bamka**, and **Samulis**. Love brought equipment to demonstrate to farmers and rescue workers how to prevent a farm accident in a storage facility and how to rescue a trapped person. Some of the key points addressed by Love included not working in a grain bin alone, keeping children away from bins, and easy visibility of safety warnings. **Bamka** spoke about other equipment safety, especially when working near electrical lines. If someone gets trapped or injured by a piece of farm equipment, **Bamka** recommended first pulling the key out before helping the victim. Should equipment touch an electrical line, he recommended not leaving the cab while the lines are energized and others not getting near the equipment until the power company disconnects the power. **Samulis** covered a new EPA initiative called the Oil Spill Prevention, Control and Countermeasure (SPCC) Program. SPCC regulations apply to farms that store, transfer or use oil or oil products, including diesel fuel, gasoline and vehicle oils as well as vegetable oil or animal fat (in amounts of 1,320 gallons or more in aboveground containers or 42,000 gallons or more in buried containers), and could reasonably be expected to discharge oil into waterways. The owners of farms that meet those criteria are required to have an SPCC plan to prevent oil contamination of lakes, streams or shorelines.

Cumberland County agricultural agent **Wes Kline** was a featured speaker at an event titled “The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA): What Does it Mean for Your Farm?,” sponsored by New Jersey Department of Agriculture and New Jersey Farm Bureau on October 22. Kline spoke about “The Effect of FSMA on New Jersey Farms.” **Kline** was also a panel member for the discussion, “What are the Options for New Jersey Farmers?”

Of Interest:

The new factsheet, “Planning to Start a Vineyard in New Jersey,” by **Pete Nitzsche, Jerry Frecon, Gary Pavlis** and **Dan Ward**, is available at county offices or <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/fs1206>.

The multi-state research team Stop BMSB, which includes Rutgers extension specialists in entomology, **Anne Nielsen** and **George Hamilton**, has just published the latest installment in the “Tracking the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug” video series produced by the Northeastern Integrated Pest Management Center at Cornell University. In this video, researchers and growers explain management methods for BMSB such as insecticides, trap cropping, physical barriers, and organic and biological control techniques. The video includes New Jersey grower Gary Mount of Terhune Orchards. Earlier videos explain history and identification, overwintering and spread, monitoring and mapping, and host plants and damage. The videos are available at <http://www.stopbmsb.org/video>.

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Jersey Vegetable Crops Ag Updates: <http://jerseyvegupdates.blogspot.com>

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Field & Forage Crops Nutrient Management Ag Updates:
<http://fieldforagecropsnutrientmanagement.blogspot.com>

Sustaining Farming on the Urban Fringe: <http://njsustainingfarms.rutgers.edu>

What's in Season from the Garden State:

<http://www.njfarmfresh.rutgers.edu/archive.html>

