

A REPORT FROM THE
EXECUTIVE DEAN
OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture
March 2014

Rutgers NJAES was awarded two of the six Northeast Regional IPM Competitive Grants for 2013. The grants, funded by USDA-NIFA, supported these Rutgers projects: "A Novel Attract-and-Kill Approach for Managing the Invasive Pest Spotted Wing Drosophila in Multiple Small Fruit Crops," led by **Cesar Rodriguez-Saona**, specialist in blueberry/cranberry entomology, for \$175,000, and "Reducing Insecticide Use and Labor through Precision Bed Bug IPM," led by **Changlu Wang**, specialist in entomology, for \$60,000.

Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) offered a women's farm business management program focusing on greenhouse production, *Annie's Project New Jersey (APNJ) for Greenhouse Growers*, from Jan. 14 - Feb. 25 with weekly classes and webinars. There were 35 greenhouse growers in the class, the first greenhouse-specific course conducted by APNJ. Participants graduated in a March 4 ceremony held at RCE of Burlington County. Guest speaker at the graduation was Matt Pavone of USDA Farm Service Agency. Lead organizers and instructors for the course were **Robin Brumfield**, specialist in farm management, and **Jenny Carleo**, agricultural agent for Cape May County. Rutgers speakers for the course also included **Meredith Melendez**, senior program coordinator; **A.J. Both**, specialist in bioresource engineering; **Steve Rettke**, IPM program associate for greenhouse, nursery, landscape; Agricultural Agents **Rick VanVranken** and **Nick Polanin**; **Ann Gould**, specialist in ornamental pathology; and **Barbara O'Neill**, specialist in financial resource management.

Jenny Carleo, agricultural agent for Cape May County, served on the planning committee for the conference at the 13th Annual Regional Women in Agriculture Conference held on February 20 in Dover, Delaware. In addition, Carleo was the co-chair of the pre-conference session on Agritourism. During the pre-conference, Carleo presented "Customer Experience and Customer Service in Agritourism," and during the main conference, she presented "The Do's and Don'ts of Writing a Farm Business Plan," which was co-authored with **Robin Brumfield**, specialist in farm management. This conference had the largest attendance yet with 177 participants and about 35 people attending the Agritourism pre-conference. Carleo reports interesting results from a conference survey in response to the multiple choice question, "What do you consider the greatest challenges pertaining to your farm and farming operation?" The responses in order of importance were: Weather (25.96%); Regulations (21.70%); Input costs (18.72%); Pests & diseases (9.79%); Wildlife damage (8.94%); Markets (8.51%); and Loss of farmland (6.38%). Of the 115 respondents, 105 were women, with the majority from DE and MD, and only a few from NJ, PA, and VA.

The Rutgers NJAES Office of Continuing Professional Education (OCPE) conducted its 38th Annual Home Gardener's School on March 22. Topics covered by Rutgers NJAES faculty helped gardeners "get back to basics:" **Bill Hlubik**, Middlesex County agricultural agent presented "Mastering Organic Gardening and Landscaping: Working with Nature," while Family & Community Health Sciences educators **Daryl Minch** (Somerset) and **Sandra Greci** (Hunterdon), presented "Canning Fruits & Vegetables" and "Freezing Techniques for Fruits, Vegetables and Herbs" respectively. In contrast to "the basics", but befitting the times, **Ken Karamichael**, associate director, OCPE, presented "#gardening Using Social Media" and "Garden Photography Meets Your Smart Phone." **Bruce Crawford**, director of Rutgers Gardens, gave several landscaping presentations while the keynote presentation, "Creating Natural Barriers with Seaside Horticulture: Master Gardeners in Action," was made by **William Sciarappa**, Monmouth County agricultural agent.



Of Interest:

Reports of pests threatening the Garden State: **Joseph Ingerson-Mahar**, vegetable IPM coordinator, reports in the *Plant & Pest Advisory* that a South Jersey nursery/greenhouse operation had an infestation of European pepper moth. Dispersal is largely through the transport of infested plant material. The moth cannot overwinter through harsh conditions so it is unlikely to overwinter in New Jersey. However, it has been found in several greenhouses in the Mid-Atlantic area in 2013 and 2014 and will likely become more widespread. Anyone raising bedding plants, vegetables, or ornamentals, may likely have to deal with this insect pest. **Bill Bamka**, Burlington County agricultural agent reports in the *Plant & Pest Advisory* that the kudzu bug is approaching New Jersey, with a 2013 kudzu bug sighting in Sussex County, Delaware. This new pest is a potential threat to the New Jersey soybean industry and the NJDA has requested help in tracking the potential presence of the kudzu bug in fields. Report any fields in South Jersey (particularly in Salem, Cumberland, and Cape May) that has kudzu by contacting bamka@njaes.rutgers.edu, who will forward to the NJDA scouts for determining the presence of kudzu bug.

Rutgers entomology personnel weigh in on this harsh winter's effects on insect pest populations: For BMSB, the jury is still out. **Anne Nielsen**, assistant specialist fruit entomology, reports in the *Plant & Pest Advisory* that the critical freezing temperature at which most BMSB will die is 5°F, as found in preliminary research at Virginia Tech, which may have affected populations in natural habitats. However, the majority of the BMSB population spends its winter where it is warmer, inside attics, under eaves, etc. Many factors contribute to winter mortality and research suggests ~20% winter mortality for BMSB in any given year, regardless of weather. **Nielsen** recommends monitoring crops in the mid-late spring for the initial dispersal. **Kris Holmstrom**, research project coordinator of the Vegetable IPM program, adds "The best indication of adult survival will be later this spring, when the network of RCE Vegetable IPM blacklight traps begin to capture adults that have survived the winter. If we see reductions over previous years' catches, we may assume that survival was negatively impacted by the winter." Graphic maps of statewide blacklight trap catches (including BMSB) are published weekly, beginning in May. Weighing in on whether the winter will take its toll on Southern Pine Beetle (SPB), which is devastating large swaths of the Pine Barrens, **Rick VanVranken**, Atlantic County agricultural agent, shared in an interview on NBC 40.net that although SPB is susceptible to sustained extreme temperatures, "despite all the predictions, it's still anyone's guess exactly what's going to happen, whether the cold was enough to get to the pine beetle."

Rutgers NJAES State Climatologist **Dave Robinson** reported in early March that "the 2013/14 winter (Dec. – Feb.) will go down as one of the more disruptive in New Jersey over the past several decades. It remains to be seen what the final snow tally for the entire snow season will be, however the 48.4" season-to-date statewide average snowfall through February ranked 6th greatest of the past 120 winters." Not including March data, this snow season would rank 9th greatest on record. With respect to temperature, **Robinson** reported, "The statewide average winter temperature was 30.7°. This is 2.8° below normal and ranks as the 34th coolest of the past 120 winters dating back to 1894/95. This ranking is likely surprising to many, the common belief being that this was one of the coldest winters on record. Clearly this is not the case, however there is some validity to people's assumption. It was New Jersey's third coldest winter since 1982."

The New Jersey Commercial Tree Fruit Production Guide for 2014 is now available on the NJAES website at <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pid=E002>.

The Commercial Vegetable Production Recommendations Guide for 2014 is now available at <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pid=E001>.



Events:

Maintaining Farmland Leases without Conflict Landowner Farmer Workshop

Sat, March 29, 10:00am – 12:30pm

Rutgers EcoComplex, 1200 Florence-Columbus Rd., Bordentown, NJ

Contact the SADC at hillary.barile@ag.state.nj.us or (609) 984-2504.

The first applicator pesticide training for organic producers is scheduled for April 9th at the Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Mercer County. Contact **Meredith Melendez** at Melendez@aesop.rutgers.edu.

Visit our Rutgers NJAES online resources:

Vegetable Crops Online Resource Center: <http://njveg.rutgers.edu>

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

Fruit Ag Updates: <http://jerseyfruitagupdates.blogspot.com>

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>



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