

A REPORT FROM THE
EXECUTIVE DEAN
OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture
April 2014

David L. Lee, agricultural agent for Salem County, and Mike Gavin of PortaCheck, Inc. of Moorestown, NJ traveled to Rwanda in late February as part of a USAID grant to educate dairy producers on the use of on-farm tests to keep cows healthy and improve milk quality. The USAID grant program, “Feed the Future Partnering for Innovation”, focuses on finding and commercializing agricultural technologies that can help farmers in developing countries. It serves as a bridge that brings new technologies to market, changing the way small farmers do business to improve productivity and income.

The New Jersey Junior Breeder’s Livestock and Poultry Symposium was held on April 5 at the Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences in New Brunswick. The educational symposium for adults and children provided discussions on a variety of agricultural topics, with opportunities for hands-on experience. Information sessions covered small ruminants, cattle, horses, and poultry. Hands-on sessions included equine leg bandaging, show braiding, soap making, and equine science. Rutgers presenters included **Carey Williams**, associate equine extension specialist; **Rebecca Potosky**, senior animal researcher for the Rutgers Animal Care Program; and **Tiffany Cody**, public relations specialist for the Rutgers Equine Science Center. The symposium was sponsored by NJDA, New Jersey Junior Breeder Program, and the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Department of 4-H Youth Development.

For the past two years, the Rutgers Vegetable IPM Program has had two NE-SARE grants and a grant from the Charles and Lena Maier Fund, New Jersey Vegetable Growers Association, to study the movement of pepper weevil within New Jersey and how it arrives here. Pepper weevils are brought into the state in peppers that were grown in southern states, Mexico, and parts of the American tropics. Due to the biology of the weevil, the peppers often do not show external damage so fruit from heavily infested fields can be picked, packaged, and transported to unsuspecting markets. Weevil adults escape into the region of the produce handling facility via the dumping of refuse or damaged fruit into open dumpsters. This season the Vegetable IPM Program will add monitoring for pepper weevil to its services.

A Vegetable Integrated Crop Management Twilight Meeting was held on April 22 to discuss early spring crop pest control, label updates, and management topics. Presenters included **Brad Majek**, extension specialist in weed science, who discussed weed control; **Joe Ingerson-Mahar**, vegetable IPM coordinator, who discussed European pepper moth and pepper weevil; **Andy Wyenandt**, extension specialist in vegetable pathology who covered disease control options for spring crops; **Michelle Infante-Casella**, agricultural agent for Gloucester County who discussed pesticide regulations and worker protection standards updates; and **Rick VanVranken**, agricultural agent for Atlantic County, who introduced a basil producer survey to growers, requesting their participation.

The basil survey will help establish baseline values of the economic impact of this crop as part of a four-year 2011 USDA Specialty Crop Research Initiative grant project funded for \$1.8 million and headed by **Jim Simon**, professor in the Department of Plant Biology and Pathology. The title of the grant is “Strategies for Improving Genetic Resistance and Responses to Fusarium, Downy Mildew and Chilling Injury in Sweet Basil”. Co-investigators from UMass, University of Florida, and Cornell research and extension are contributing to breeding resistance, evaluating alternative control strategies, and outreach about these threats in order to maintain the productivity of what has become one of New Jersey’s leading specialty crops. New Jersey is the third largest producer of fresh market herbs behind Florida and North Carolina. Growers from Atlantic and Cumberland counties lead the state,

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followed by Warren and Gloucester. Before 2008, soil-borne Fusarium was the most limiting pest, at which point **Simon** et al, had introduced resistant varieties. After 2008, Downy Mildew re-emerged after being imported from Africa to Europe and then to the US. Some flavored basil varieties are resistant, but most of the Genovese/Italian sweet basil varieties are highly susceptible. **Simon's** grad student **Rob Pyne** has made some promising crosses and may have successfully transferred that resistance into a line of sweet basil varieties. Other Rutgers faculty involved in the grant include **Van Vranken** and **Wyenandt**; Agricultural Agents **Wes Kline** and **Bill Sciarappa**; **Ramu Govindasamy**, extension specialist in marketing; and members of the Department of Plant Biology & Plant Pathology: **Faith Belanger**, associate professor and Research Associates **Adolfina Koroch**, **Chung Park**, and **Rodolfo Juliani**.

The South Jersey Twilight Tree Fruit Meeting was held April 2 in Clayton, NJ. Seasonal updates were given by **Dave Schmitt**, fruit IPM program associate, on tree fruit scouting for apples and peaches; **Anne Nielsen**, extension specialist in fruit entomology, on insect management; **Norman Lalancette**, extension specialist in tree fruit pathology, on tree fruit disease control; **Brad Majek**, extension specialist in weed science, on tree fruit weed control; and **Dean Polk**, statewide fruit IPM agent, on Brown Marmorated Stink Bug monitoring practices.

Of Interest:

Zane Helsel, extension specialist in agriculture energy, reminds growers that all New Jersey licensed pesticide applicators and dealers who store pesticides are required by law to send a copy of their storage inventories with an explanatory cover letter to the local fire company by May 1 each year. A storage inventory is also required to be kept separate from the actual storage area.

The 2014 Commercial Grape Pest Control Recommendations for New Jersey are now available on the NJAES website at <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pid=E283>.

New Rutgers Fact Sheets:

- FS1229: Plum Curculio: A Key Pest of Blueberries in New Jersey. **Tewari, S., Polk, D., & Rodriguez-Saona, C.** <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/fs1229>
- FS1230: Worker Health and Hygiene. **Melendez, M. & Kline, W.** <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/fs1230>

Events:

Saving America's Farms and Farmland: Celebrating 40 Years of Farmland Preservation, A two-day national conference, May 12 and 13, Hershey, PA: <http://www.cpe.rutgers.edu/courses/current/ap0301ha.html>

Pasture Walk for Healthy Pastured Livestock, June 11–12, Double Brook Farm, Hopewell, NJ. Extension Specialist in Soil Fertility **Joseph Heckman** and Farmer Jon McConaughy, Double Brook Farm, share insights on healthy livestock raised on healthy pasture soils. Program also includes veterinarian Susan Beal, DVM, and Rutgers Cooperative Extension professionals in livestock and pasture. Contact heckman@njaes.rutgers.edu for more details and registration information. Supported in part by NRCS CIG.

Visit our Rutgers NJAES online resources:

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

Plant & Pest Advisory: <http://plant-pest-advisory.rutgers.edu>

Commercial Ag Updates: <http://plant-pest-advisory.rutgers.edu/?cat=139>

Sustaining Farming on the Urban Fringe and blog: <http://sustainable-farming.rutgers.edu>

What's in Season from the Garden State: <http://www.njfarmfresh.rutgers.edu/archive.html>

