

A REPORT FROM THE
EXECUTIVE DEAN
OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture
November 2016



Jack Rabin

Jack Rabin, associate director for farm programs, NJAES, has been awarded the New Jersey Farm Bureau (NJFB) Distinguished Service to Agriculture Award for 2016. The award was presented on November 14. **Rabin** will retire January 1, 2017, just shy of 34 years with NJAES. A graduate of Rutgers Cook College ('CC '78) and UC–Davis ('82), **Rabin** served 11 years as a vegetable crops extension agent in Cumberland County. He then served as chair of the Department of Agricultural and Resource Management Agents before being named to his current position, administrating outlying research and extension farms and on-campus greenhouses. **Rabin's** programmatic focus includes precision agriculture, wildlife damage management, sustainable farming practices, and crop-pest management communications. He has worked on a range of initiatives leading to outcomes like the delineation mapping underpinning the Outer Coastal Plain American Viticultural Area (AVA) designation in 2007 and legislative testimony supporting passage of the NJ Community-Based Deer Management Act in 2000. He's also taught classes in sustainable agriculture and agritourism, and has offered summer research farming internships to undergraduates, helping them find career paths. "**Jack's** career as a county agricultural agent and later as research farm administrator for the Rutgers Ag Experiment Station brought an unusual level of farm expertise, passion and love of agriculture that makes him unique in his contributions to commercial agriculture in New Jersey," said NJFB executive director Peter Furey. "He has a legion of friends and admirers among farmers throughout the state but especially in the South Jersey vegetable industry, many of whom have materially profited from his advice and support over many years."



Matt Elmore

Matt Elmore joined the Rutgers faculty on November 1 as the new weed science extension specialist in turfgrass, landscapes, pastures, and forages. **Elmore** earned his B.S. in turfgrass science from Penn State University followed by an M.S. and Ph.D. from the University of Tennessee, focusing on turfgrass weed control. Prior to joining Rutgers, **Elmore** was a turfgrass extension specialist for Texas A&M AgriLife in Dallas, TX, where his research efforts explored new strategies to control problematic weeds and reduce irrigation inputs in turfgrass. At Rutgers, he will focus on novel strategies to control weeds with fewer pesticide inputs as well as devote significant efforts to developing alternatives to synthetic pesticides and understanding the influence of management practices on weed competitiveness.

The Snyder Research Farm in Pittstown, NJ, has approximately 13 acres of apples and peaches as part of its research and extension program. Since the retirement of tree fruit agent Win Cowgill in April, the orchard has been managed and maintained by Snyder Farm staff in labor-intensive activities like pruning, thinning, spraying, and harvesting fruit from thousands of trees. These activities are critical to preserving the integrity of the orchard, regardless of whether research and demonstration projects are being

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conducted. Snyder Farm's orchard programs for 2016 included: 1) the distribution of fruit to Rutgers Dining Services, which reported positive feedback and enhanced fruit consumption by students in response to the apples and peaches being "Rutgers Grown and Jersey Fresh; 2) the expansion of tree fruit donations to food banks to the tune of 195,701 lbs of produce, thanks in great part to Rutgers Master Gardeners who provided the labor to harvest tens of thousands of pounds of fruit, with farm supervisor **Ed Dager** and master gardener **Dave Johnson** leading the effort; and 3) the continued sale of tree fruit to New Jersey growers for their roadside markets. The previous effort to generate revenues to maintain the orchard through the sale of tree fruit to New Jersey growers was reestablished this year through the joint effort of the New Jersey Horticultural Society and NJAES. Growers can call Snyder Farm and receive an email of inventory of fruit available for sale through direct pick-up at the farm; and a study by Fruit IPM coordinator **Dean Polk** on the use of pheromones for mating disruption of tree fruit insects. This project will be overlaid with other tree fruit projects to include all the research plantings.

Of Interest:

On November 4, the Rutgers 250 Breeding Celebration and Luncheon on the New Brunswick campus featured NJAES-developed foods in a banquet that brought together the breeders who developed them and guests from the New Jersey agricultural and food industries. NJAES speakers included Department of Plant Biology and Pathology distinguished professor **Jim Simon** who discussed breeding downy mildew-resistant basil and other products, and associate professor **Tom Molnar** who talked about his work breeding eastern filbert blight-resistant hazelnut trees. Guest speakers included Secretary of Agriculture Doug Fisher and New Jersey food industry entrepreneur Patrick Leger of First Field. The event was a celebration of the decades of revolutionary research during Rutgers 250th anniversary and provided networking opportunities for agricultural stakeholders. In addition to the breeding products incorporated into the menu, other New Jersey food products served included cheese, meat, ice cream, wine, beer, and peach cider. A special batch of First Field marinara sauce made with the Rutgers 250 tomato was bottled and given as gifts to attendees, as well as cranberry plants from commercial cranberry propagators, Integrity Propagation. NJAES faculty in attendance included breeders for cranberries, strawberries, peaches, hazelnut, basil, tomato, asparagus, oysters, hot peppers, lettuce, turf, holly, and dogwoods. Sponsors for the event included several ag and food organizations, including Integrity Propagation, First Field, The Winemakers Co-Op, River Horse Brewery, Triumph Brewing Company, Rare Find Nursery, Cherry Grove Farm, Adams County Nursery, and Edible Garden Corp. Donors included Olive Creek Farms, The Bent Spoon, Circle M Farms, Atlantic Capes Fisheries, along with Rutgers Marucci Center for Cranberry and Blueberry Research, Horticultural Research Farm 1 and 3, Haskin Snyder Research and Extension Farm, and the Haskin Shellfish Research Laboratory.

The following fact sheets are now available on the NJAES Publications Website:

FS1261 What Is On-Farm Food Safety? **Melendez, M.**, and **Kline, W.**

<http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/fs1261>

FS1262 Measuring Temperature, Pulse, & Respiration (TPR): What's Normal for My Horse? **Liburt, N.**,

Malinowski, K., and **Williams, C.** <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/fs1262>

