

A REPORT FROM THE
EXECUTIVE DEAN
OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture
July 2017



Meredith Melendez and Wes Kline

County agricultural agents **Wes Kline** (Cumberland) and **Meredith Melendez** (Mercer) have been recognized for their work helping growers understand FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) and other fresh produce food safety issues. Their grant-funded work through the USDA Risk Management Education program was selected as a featured success story for 2017. Also, Melendez, Kline and the on-farm

food safety team was awarded the National Association County Agricultural Agents (NACAA) Search for Excellence National Award for Farm Health and Safety. The team has trained over 6,000 individuals in the produce industry since 1999. This represents most New Jersey produce operations, including farms that grow for wholesale distribution, on-farm sales, direct market sales, as well as new and beginning farmers. The program raises awareness of food safety as one of the most important considerations in a produce operation. Training on farm food safety for growers is offered annually with additional presentations offered at meetings throughout the state. Workshop participants are provided training materials, sample record keeping forms and templates to write their own food safety plans. Additionally the team offers walk-through visits with farms to give guidance on current and proposed foods safety practices.

The Ultra-Niche Crops Team, led by Cape May agricultural agent **Jenny Carleo** and project coordinator **Jennifer Matthews**, was the NACAA Northeast Region Winner (Communications, Promotional Piece Category) for its *Rutgers Ultra-Niche Crop Series: Promotional Efforts for Live and Online Audiences*. The team was also the American Society for Horticultural Science (ASHS) National Winner (Extension Division, Educational Materials) for its *Progressive Farmer Virtual Field Trip: High Tunnel Winter Lettuce*. ASHS is the premier national association for applied horticultural sciences.



Delegation from Yunnan with Xenia Morin and Wendy Tan, Rutgers China Group.

A delegation from Yunnan Agricultural University visited the Cook campus on July 10, hosted by Rutgers Centers for Global Advancement and International Affairs and SEBS International Programs. Associate professor **Xenia Morin**, program director of SEBS Agriculture and Food Systems major, led the delegation on a tour of the New Jersey Institute for Food, Nutrition, and Health building and the campus farm. The purpose of the visit was to explore opportunities for collaboration, student exchanges, and academic cooperation. Yunnan Province, in Southwestern China, is

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10% arable land and approximately 90% mountains, with many micro-climates, ranging from tropical to temperate. The province produces rice, corn, tobacco, wheat, soybean, herbs, vegetables, with a specialty in mushrooms. Morin reports that, although the geography is quite different, the Yunnan Agricultural University's research interests are similar to Rutgers, and research projects in that region have been conducted by some SEBS students through the Rutgers International Program.

Of Interest:

Many New Jersey fruit and vegetable growers have battled brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB), an invasive pest that feeds on most fruiting vegetables, small fruits, and tree fruits, and can cause significant economic losses. One reason that BMSB is so damaging is that when it arrived in the U.S., it did so without its co-evolved natural enemies, like the Samurai wasp (*Trissolcus japonicus*). The lab of extension specialist **Anne Nielsen**, Department of Entomology, reported in the *Plant & Pest Advisory* that the Samurai wasp arrived in the U.S. independently and the first populations were found in New Jersey in 2016 by the Department of Agriculture. However, no presence of the Samurai wasp had been found in agricultural crops and that made researchers uncertain about the pest's impact. This month, a parasitized egg mass, tentatively identified as belonging to the Samurai wasp, was discovered in a commercial peach orchard in southern New Jersey, and may be the first reported sighting in a U.S. agricultural crop. The wasp, which attacks stink bug eggs, has a special appetite for BMSB eggs and is regarded as an effective parasite of BSMB. The female wasp lays its eggs directly into stink bug eggs and can parasitize on average 50% of each egg mass. The researchers had placed egg masses in the orchard to measure natural enemy impacts of their border spray approach when they discovered the Samurai wasp. It is uncertain what the impact the Samurai wasp will have on New Jersey agriculture, but the discovery is a very promising new development in the fight against BMSB.

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

FS1276 New Jersey Hops Production FAQs. Bamka, W. <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/fs1276>

FS1275 Ultra-Niche Crop Series: Mixed Cut Flowers for Small Farms. Carleo, J., Matthews, J. and Melendez, M. <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/fs1275>

E357 Organic Land Care Best Management Practices Manual. Rowe, A. and Bakacs, M. <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pid=E357>

Events:

Snyder Farm Open House and Great Tomato Tasting, August 30, 2017, 3:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Rutgers Snyder Research Farm, 140 Locust Grove Rd., Pittstown, NJ (Hunterdon County)

RSVP at <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/rsvp/tomato> or call 908-730-9419, ext. 3501. Cost \$10.

