

A REPORT FROM THE
EXECUTIVE DEAN
OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture
August 2017



Megan Muehlbauer

Megan Muehlbauer joined the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources as county agent III/assistant professor in Hunterdon County as of August 1. Muehlbauer earned her B.S. in Agricultural Science and Ph.D. in Plant Biology from Rutgers and most recently worked on a fellowship in the Department of Plant Biology. In her new capacity, she will provide leadership to develop, implement, and evaluate educational programming and research appropriate to the needs of clientele in commercial tree fruit production, management and marketing. In addition, she will provide assistance in commercial small fruit, wine grape, and related commodities throughout the county and region. She can be reached at the Rutgers NJAES Cooperative Extension office in Hunterdon County.

The 13th annual International Turf Research Conference (ITRC) was hosted by Rutgers Center for Turfgrass Science and held in New Brunswick, NJ, in July—the first time since 1993 that the ITRC has been held in the U.S. Over 450 turfgrass researchers and professionals from around the world gathered to discuss the latest turfgrass research. The theme for the 2017 ITRC was *"Meeting the Challenges of a Changing Environment,"* to reflect the tremendous impact of the environment, from the changing climate, to the changing regulatory environment for pesticides and fertilizers, and the rapid technological changes in molecular biology and other aspects of turfgrass science. A field day offered choices of applied turf excursions covering golf, athletic sport, sod production and public green, and ended at the Rutgers Turf Farm at Adelphia, NJ, where participants learned about current turf research at Rutgers. Attendees observed turfgrasses under shade, drought, traffic, minimal nutrients, and other stresses bred to meet the challenges of a changing environment. Both Turfgrass Producers International and the European Turfgrass Society (ETS) praised the conference organizers in their newsletters, with ETS identifying center director **Bruce Clarke** and his team for an outstanding job making all participants comfortable and welcome, and realizing ambitious goals of the conference in a "precise, disciplined and professional" manner.



1st Annual Wine Grape Summer Camp

The first annual Wine Grape Summer Camp was held August 8 at Rutgers Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Upper Deerfield, NJ. The university's commitment to educating grape growers was enhanced in 2014 when it established the New Jersey Center for Wine Research and Education. The event was organized by Gloucester County agricultural agent **Hemant Gohil**, and speakers included **Dan Ward**, extension specialist in pomology and the center's director; **Thierry Besancon**, extension specialist in weed science for blueberry, cranberry, vegetables and wine grapes; and **Peter Oudemans**, extension specialist in plant pathology. The workshop covered the establishment of training systems, and disease identification, management and sprayer effectiveness.

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Based on the premise that many in the equine industry over-bed stalls, especially with wood shavings, Department of Animal Science extension specialists **Mike Westendorf** and **Carey Williams** completed a study comparing two levels of bedding in horse stalls and their effects on bedding utilization, cost, animal and stall cleanliness, and the production of particles in the stall. In addition to measuring utilization and particle size production and stall cleanliness in light and heavily bedded horses, the study also conducted a composting trial using the two types of bedding. The research involved 10 horses and bedding depths of four inches and eight inches were compared in stalls bedded with wood shavings. A particle analyzer detected levels of <2.5 microns, <10 microns, and total particles, while a web camera was used to determine animal movement. Daily estimates of bedding use and animal responses were determined. Preliminary results show there was significant particle production in both heavily and lightly bedded treatments, but only minor particle production when no bedding was used; the amount of manure and bedding removed was similar between lightly and heavily bedded groups; and neither group composted well and required other additions of water, nitrogen, and organic matter.

Joseph Heckman, extension specialist in soil fertility in the Department of Plant Pathology, was awarded a two-year USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program grant for the project, “Farmer-generated training and equipment solutions for producing and processing value-added grains.” This grant is in partnership with the Organic Growers’ Research and Information-Sharing Network (OGRIN) and the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Jersey (NOFA-NJ).

Events:

The Rutgers Food Innovation Center has partnered with the International Business Innovation Association (InBIA) in formalizing the first global Food Business Incubation Network (FoodBIN). FoodBIN will serve as a global network of food incubators, accelerators, and shared-use kitchens. Its mission is to become the world’s leading voice for advancing best practices in food business incubation; and identifying programs, services, funding sources and partnerships that can maximize impacts to food and agribusinesses within regional economies worldwide. A landing page on FoodBIN can be seen at <https://inbia.org/foodbin>. The first Global FoodBIN conference will be held on Sept. 13 at the Rutgers College Avenue Student Center in New Brunswick, NJ. Speakers will represent incubator and accelerator programs from throughout the U.S. and around the globe.

Rutgers Cooperative Extension is continuing its Ultra-Niche Crop Series with the upcoming workshop “Farming Basil.” This workshop, the fifth class in the Ultra-Niche educational series for farmers seeking new crop opportunities, will be held on Tuesday, September 26, 2017 from 5:30 to 8 p.m., simultaneously in Cape May Court House, Bordentown and Bridgewater, NJ. For more information, contact Cape May County agricultural agent **Jenny Carleo** at (609) 465-5115 or email program coordinator **Jennifer Matthews** at JLM479@njaes.rutgers.edu. To register go to Eventbrite: <https://rutgerscmcag.eventbrite.com>. The deadline to register is September 22, 2017.

