

EXECUTIVE DEAN  
OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture  
February 2012

*NJAES Hosts First Statewide Agritourism Conference*

**2012 Conferences Conducted in North, Central, and South Jersey**

Many New Jersey farms view agritourism as an innovative opportunity for diversification and earning additional income, while at the same time enhancing community relations. Creating a venue for the general public to visit farms also gives the opportunity to promote awareness of farming issues and the importance of agricultural sustainability. Research conducted by Rutgers NJAES has shown that 1 out of every 5 New Jersey farms is engaged in agritourism, generating an estimated \$57.5 million in annual revenue statewide.



Recognizing that agritourism is a new consumer-centric business model for many farmers—one that is a departure from the traditional production-wholesale marketing paradigm—the Rutgers Cooperative Extension agritourism working group conducted three regional farmer workshops to help farmers develop marketing and public communication plans, evaluate farm safety, prepare business plans, assess insurance needs, and understand current state regulatory issues.

Funded by a USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant, in collaboration with New Jersey Farm Bureau, New Jersey Department of Agriculture and USDA, the conference was held in three separate locations to accommodate attendees in north, central and southern New Jersey: January 24 in Pittstown, NJ; January 25 in Westampton, NJ; and January 26 in Clayton, NJ.



**Jenny Carleo** makes a presentation at the first annual Agritourism Conference

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Rutgers agricultural agents and extension specialists presented information on various aspects of agritourism. Samantha Rozier-Rich, tourism extension specialist and Sue Colucci, area specialized agent, both with North Carolina State University, presented information on "Using Communication Technology to Expand Your Business." The morning sessions focused on "The Potential for Agritourism in New Jersey," while the afternoon sessions covered "The Realities of Agritourism."

In addition to presentations from working group members, **Luanne Hughes** (family and community health sciences educator, Gloucester County) presented "Using Health and Nutrition to Market Fresh Produce." Working group members include agricultural and resource management agents **Michelle Infante-Casella** (Gloucester County), **Stephen Komar** (Sussex County), **Bill Bamka** (Burlington County), **Jenny Carleo**, (Cape May County). Other NJAES collaborators included **Meredith Melendez** (senior program coordinator, Mercer County), **Brian Schilling** (extension specialist in agricultural policy), **Lucas Marxen** (Food Policy Institute research analyst) and **Jack Rabin** (associate director of farm programs). The work of the NJAES team is



L-R: Presenters at the conference included **Stephen Komar**, **Jenny Carleo**, **Bill Bamka**, **Michelle Casella**, **Brian Schilling**, Sam Rozier-Rich, Sue Colucci, and **Jack Rabin**

enhanced by its partnership in a multi-state initiative known as the East Coast Agritourism Working Group.

Attendance and feedback from the conference indicate a welcome response by New Jersey growers. Originally budgeting for 50 attendees at each site, agritourism working group leader Infante-Casella reports that attendance exceeded 200 participants at the three locations. Comments from attendees reflect the value they derived from the conference, including statements like: "The program

was worth more than \$100" (a modest \$10 registration fee was charged)! "This program far exceeded my expectations!" "The program was well thought out, hit many subjects, and was good for people starting out in agritourism and for those of us who have done this for years."

Agritourism helps to diversify product lines and markets; allows direct feedback from consumers about preference for products and services; and creates a "culture of understanding" for what it takes to be a commercial farmer – thus, reducing conflicts over farm practices and strengthening public support for the existence of farms. According to Infante-Casella, the NJAES Working Group plans to continue programs like this in the future and will keep developing the website and outreach using many delivery methods like webinars. Visit the Agritourism in New Jersey website at <http://njsustainingfarms.rutgers.edu/agritourism.html>.



## Spotlight

### **Annie's Project Adds Distance Learning Component to its Training of Women Farmers**

Using a unique combination of in-person education and distance learning, Annie's Project New Jersey 2012 has brought farm business management education to even more women across the Garden State. Sixty two women graduated in 2011 and another 75 have taken the course in 2012.

A blend of video, voice and webinar technology has expanded the audience for the nationally recognized Annie's Project. The live sessions were broadcast and recorded each week, allowing women to watch a lecturer from over 100 miles away as well as the opportunity to watch the video again. The "live" sessions rotated each week to one of the three locations, linking the groups of women together while still allowing networking within each local group. Videos of the "live" sessions will be available to others who wish to broaden their knowledge on a specific topic, or learn something completely new.



**Jenny Carleo**, left, conducts a farm survey in Sussex County with **Meredith Melendez** (senior program coordinator, Mercer County) as part of the Annie's Project New Jersey 2012. Photo by **Jack Rabin** (associate director, Farm Programs, NJAES)

This technology has taken a classroom of 25 women and multiplied it to an incredible network of 75 women from all agricultural areas across the state.

According to **Jenny Carleo** (agricultural and resource management agent, Cape May County), "The distance learning aspect of this project both expands our access to valuable information and facilitates conservation of economic resources."

Annie's Project New Jersey 2012 brought together an equine professional from

one end of the state and a hay grower from another end, a farm market owner and a market grower from neighboring counties and alpaca breeders who had never met before, only to realize how many similar experiences they have had. "Distance learning enables this to happen, bringing women in agriculture from all over the state together into a smaller, closer community," Carleo adds.

Read more here at <http://www.mycentraljersey.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2012302130015>. Visit Annie's Project New Jersey at <http://aesop.rutgers.edu/~farmmgmt/anniesproject.html>.

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## Faculty and Staff Activities and Accomplishments

### NJAES Equine Educator Wins US Harness Writers Association Award

Karyn Malinowski (professor of Animal Science; director of the Rutgers Equine Science Center) won a prestigious national award from the United States Harness Writers Association (USHWA). Malinowski received the LeeAnne Pooler Unsung Hero Award during the USHWA's annual Dan Patch Awards Dinner on February 12, in Orlando, FL. Standardbred Breeders and Owners Association of New Jersey President Tom Luchento praised Malinowski. "She has been a treasured member of the equine community in New Jersey for many years and now the rest of the country will learn about her contributions through this much deserved honor." The Unsung Hero award is given each year by USHWA to a member of the harness racing community who may otherwise go unrecognized for his or her selfless achievements. Malinowski avidly promotes the success of the equine industry and its future in New Jersey. Read more on Malinowski's award at [http://www.esc.rutgers.edu/news\\_more/press\\_release/02\\_13\\_12\\_USHWA.htm](http://www.esc.rutgers.edu/news_more/press_release/02_13_12_USHWA.htm).



## Outreach Efforts: Public/Community Service

### Blueberry Development Calculator Tool Now Available

NJAES recently launched a user-friendly web tool that calculates degree days and compares both degree days and chilling unit data from year to year. Data are also presented for

A screenshot of a web-based "Degree Day Calculator" tool. The header is red with the Rutgers logo and "School of Environmental and Biological Sciences". The main title is "Blueberry and Cranberry Research Station". Below that is "Degree Day Calculator v1.5". The form includes a dropdown menu for "Station" set to "Hammonton (2000-present)", a "Year" field set to "2012", and input fields for "Day (1-340)" (47), "Biofix Date" (23), "Threshold" (40), and "Temperature Cap" (0). A "Calculate" button is present. A note at the bottom states: "The default setting is for the most recent day. The data are updated at 3am the following day." On the left side of the screenshot, there is a sidebar with the Rutgers logo and text: "Degree Day Calculator Philip E. Marucci Center for Blueberry and Cranberry Research and Extension".

budbreak, bloom, harvest, and thrip emergence. The online tool was developed by **Peter Oudemans** (specialist in plant pathology) and **Rob Muldowney** (NJAES research computing consultant). The calculator – partial screenshot is

shown – is available at the Rutgers Philip E. Marucci Blueberry and Cranberry Research and Extension website at <http://pemaruccicenter.rutgers.edu>.



## Mark Your Calendars!

### Grape Expectations

**WHEN:** February 25, 2012, 8:30 a.m.

**WHERE:** Forsgate Country Club, 375 Forsgate Drive, Monroe Township, NJ.

**WHAT:** A symposium featuring lectures in grape growing, winemaking and marketing

**MORE INFO:** Contact Gary Pavlis, [pavlis@njaes.rutgers.edu](mailto:pavlis@njaes.rutgers.edu), or call 609-625-0056.

[http://events.rutgers.edu/pdfs/2012\\_GEbrochure2.pdf](http://events.rutgers.edu/pdfs/2012_GEbrochure2.pdf).

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Community Gardens Conference

**WHEN:** March 3, 2012, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**WHERE:** The Frelinghuysen Arboretum, Morristown, NJ.

**WHAT:** Featuring a series of roundtable discussions for gardeners, coordinators and activists, and providing a forum for solutions to challenges to sustaining community gardens in New Jersey, sponsored by the Friends of The Frelinghuysen Arboretum and Rutgers Cooperative Extension.

**MORE INFO:** Contact Peter Nitzsche, [nitzsche@njaes.rutgers.edu](mailto:nitzsche@njaes.rutgers.edu), or call 973-285-8300, ext. 2

<http://www.arboretumfriends.org/>.

### North Jersey Fruit Meeting

**WHEN:** March 7, 2012, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**WHERE:** Warren Grange #2, 102 Asbury Broadway Road, County Route 643, Asbury, NJ.

**WHAT:** A presentation on fruit production for commercial farmers only.

**MORE INFO:** Contact Win Cowgill, [cowgill@njaes.rutgers.edu](mailto:cowgill@njaes.rutgers.edu), or call 908-788-1339.

### New Jersey Compost Operator Certification

**WHEN:** March 23, 2012, 8:30 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.

**WHAT:** A workshop for composting facility operators in New Jersey, sponsored by Rutgers Office of Continuing Professional Education.

**MORE INFO:** Contact Carol Broccoli, [broccoli@njaes.rutgers.edu](mailto:broccoli@njaes.rutgers.edu), or call 732-932-9271, ext. 618.

### New Jersey Breeder and Young Farmer Symposium

**WHEN:** March 31, 2012, 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

**WHERE:** Round House Barn, College Farm Road, George H. Cook Campus, New Brunswick, NJ.

**WHAT:** Supported by First Pioneer Farm Credit and Hart Agency/Farm Family Insurance, this symposium is a day-long program designed to instruct young farmers on a number of important topics.

**MORE INFO:** Contact Lynn Mathews at the New Jersey Department of Agriculture at 609-292-2888 or write PO Box 330, Trenton, NJ 08625-0330.

<http://www.nj4h.rutgers.edu/pdfs/2012-livestock-symposium-regform.pdf>.

This report is produced by the Office of Communications and is available online at <http://execdeanagriculture.rutgers.edu/boa/>.

For information or to provide comments, please contact Paula Walcott-Quintin at [quintin@aesop.rutgers.edu](mailto:quintin@aesop.rutgers.edu) or 848-932-4204.

