

A REPORT FROM THE  
EXECUTIVE DEAN  
OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture  
February 2018



Ralph Engel

The New Jersey State Golf Association announced the formation of the NJSGA Hall of Fame. The inaugural class, which boasts both famed players and those who have made a unique and lasting impact on the game of golf, includes the late **Ralph Engel**, research professor in turfgrass management. Engel initiated the two-year Rutgers Winter Turf Management Course in 1962 and, as program administrator and as an instructor, he graduated over 1,000 students. He earned his doctorate at Rutgers (1951) and devoted his life to turf development, focusing on improving the quality of turfgrasses and spearheading early research in weed and insect control. Engel's efforts gained universal recognition and, in 1993, he won the USGA's Green Section Award. During his early years in New Jersey, Engel pioneered the concept of turfgrass visitation service, conducting consulting visitations with superintendents at golf association clubs. These visitations became the basis for the current USGA Green Section Turf Advisory Service.



Dan Kluchinski

Agricultural agent **Dan Kluchinski** was honored posthumously on February 7 with a Distinguished Service to Agriculture citation by the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture during the State Agricultural Convention in Atlantic City. In a press release, Secretary of Agriculture Douglas H. Fisher said, "While we are saddened by Dan's recent passing, he leaves a legacy that will be carried on by those who knew him and those involved in New Jersey agriculture." Kluchinski passed away on Oct. 16, 2017. His area of expertise included agronomy and sustainable agriculture, and he conducted research on the use of municipal collected tree leaves as a soil amendment. Kluchinski served as department chair and associate director of extension from 2003 to 2017, and was the first Rutgers faculty member to serve as an advisor and board member for the Northeast Organic Farming Association-NJ. He was a long-time member of the American Society of Agronomy and served in numerous leadership roles with the National Association of County Agricultural Agents.

A multi-year study conducted on 48 farms in New Jersey and Pennsylvania by professor **Rachel Winfree** in the Department of Ecology, Evolution, and Natural Resources and colleagues, demonstrated the relationship of diversity in wild pollinators and crop pollination in accordance with spatial scale. The research showed that to provide crop pollination in natural systems, the number of bee species must increase by at least one order of magnitude compared with that in limited-scale field experiments. The study was published in *Science*. The researchers observed, collected, and identified more than 100 species of wild bees pollinating watermelon, blueberry and cranberry crop flowers on the farms, finding that more than half (55) of these species were needed for pollination at one or more farms in one or more years. They estimated that wild pollinators provide as much as half the crop pollination that occurs worldwide. At a time when domestic honeybees in North America are plagued with colony collapse and other problems, the role of wild pollinators is essential. "Farmers can plant fallow fields and road edges

---

**RUTGERS**  
THE STATE UNIVERSITY  
OF NEW JERSEY

School of Environmental and Biological Sciences and New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station  
SEBS.RUTGERS.EDU • EXECDEANAGRICULTURE.RUTGERS.EDU • NJAES.RUTGERS.EDU

with flowering plants, preferably plants whose flowering periods are different, because wild pollinators need to be supported throughout the growing season,” Winfree said. “They can reduce pesticide use and avoid spraying during crop bloom when more bees are in the crop field.”

In the spring of 2017, The Clearing Corporation Charitable Foundation endowed \$1 million to develop a new agribusiness scholars program to be launched in fall 2018 at Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences. Named the Clearing Corporation Charitable Foundation (CCCCF) **Agribusiness Scholars Program**, it will equip high achieving students with the knowledge, leadership qualities, analytical skills, and experiences required for successful careers in the domestic and global agribusiness sector. CCCF has challenged Rutgers to raise additional funding by March 31, 2018 and has agreed to match donations on a dollar-for-dollar basis, up to \$250,000. This challenge will help increase the \$1 million endowment to support the Agribusiness Scholars Program. For more information, visit: [clearingagscholars.rutgers.edu](http://clearingagscholars.rutgers.edu).

The Organic Farming Research Foundation's 2018 Conference was held on January 26 in partnership with the Northeast Organic Farming Association-NJ (NOFA) and Rutgers NJAES, and was held on the Rutgers–New Brunswick campus. The day-long session included presentations by researchers from Rutgers, University of Maine, University of West Virginia, New York University, University of Hawaii, and USDA-ARS North Dakota. Topics ranged from fertility, soil health, and climate change to animals, pests, nutrition, biodiversity and the environment, and concluded with sessions on economics and marketing.

The article, "Evaluation Checklists for Agritourism and Direct Marketing Operations: Farmer and Extension Resources," appeared in the February issue of *Journal of Extension*. The **Rutgers Agritourism Training Team** created a series of checklists designed for agritourism and direct marketing operators as part of an educational curriculum. Checklists were specifically crafted for farmer self-assessment or for evaluation in cooperation with extension professionals. A primary training goal was to aid farmers with identifying operational improvements and adopting best practices in the areas of farm safety and liability management. Checklist topics included general farm safety conditions, animal safety protocols, emergency response procedures, liability management, employee training and management, food safety, and parking and traffic management, with the goal to improve farm visitor safety. The team consists of agricultural agents **Michelle Infante-Casella** (Gloucester), **Stephen Komar** (Sussex), **Meredith Melendez** (Mercer), and extension specialist in agricultural policy **Brian Schilling**, and **Lucas Marxen**, assistant director of research technology, Office of Research Analytics.

#### Events:

Blueberry Growers School, March 28, 2018—9:00am–4:00pm, Berks County Ag Center, 1238 County Welfare Rd., Leesport, PA. Registration: [extension.psu.edu/blueberry-growers-school](http://extension.psu.edu/blueberry-growers-school). For both current and prospective blueberry growers, topics to be covered include site selection, variety selection, pest management, fertilization, pruning, and marketing of blueberries. Included among the speakers are Marucci Center for Blueberry and Cranberry researchers **Peter Oudemans**, extension specialist in plant pathology, and **Mark Ehlenfeldt**, research plant geneticist, USDA-ARS.

