

A REPORT FROM THE  
EXECUTIVE DEAN  
OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture  
May 2019

Governor Murphy's efforts to advance renewable energy include directing state agencies to develop an Energy Master Plan that puts New Jersey on the path to 100 percent clean energy by 2050, with a goal of producing 3,500 megawatts of energy from offshore wind by 2030. Other states in the northeast are developing similar plans, inspiring expansive development of the offshore wind energy industry in the Northeast. The first wind farm in the U.S. was built in 2016 off Rhode Island as a pilot project, while plans are in development for the construction of additional wind farms from North Carolina to Massachusetts. Faculty and staff from several Rutgers departments, including NJAES, have been conducting research, education, and stakeholder engagement as the industry develops. The focus has, so far, included oceanographic and atmospheric science, engineering, marine sciences, business, and other disciplines. Scientists within the Department of Marine and Coastal Sciences include assistant professor **Josh Kohut** and director of atmospheric research **Joseph Brodie**, who are conducting research on the ecology, oceanography, and available wind resources within the New Jersey location being considered for offshore wind development. **Douglas Zemeckis** and colleagues are collaborating with fisheries stakeholders to identify their concerns as well as the research priorities with respect to the compatibility between offshore wind energy development and fishing activity. Kohut and Zemeckis recently presented an update to the NJAES Board of Managers and the Monmouth County Board of Agriculture on offshore wind energy development and potential concerns related to agriculture and other industries in New Jersey. In May, Ørsted U.S. Offshore Wind signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Rutgers that will support academic research activities related to offshore wind energy at the Rutgers University Center for Ocean Observing Leadership (RUCOOL), located in the Department of Marine and Coastal Sciences.

Extension departments of Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) and Family and Community Health Sciences (FCHS) are both searching to fill part-time positions in Cape May County to continue the collaborative programming and outreach following the retirement of **Marilou Rochford** (FCHS) in February and the departure of **Jenny Carleo** (ANR) in April. Carleo has joined North Carolina State University as an area specialized agent. Both departments are developing faculty position searches that will begin in the coming months. Rochford was the FCHS educator and department head, while Carleo served as agricultural agent. County freeholders honored Rochford for her 25 years of service and Carleo for her 13 years of service.

An increasing number of customers are bringing animals when they visit farm markets, pick your own farms, or agritainment activities. Animals can pose a food safety risk to produce, introduce disease to farm animals, frighten or upset farm animals, and pose a risk to employees and visitors. County agricultural agents **Wes Kline** (Cumberland) and **Meredith Melendez** (Mercer) published guidelines in the May 3 *Plant & Pest Advisory* article, "Are you required to let the public bring their animals onto your retail farm?" The post covered Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations regarding service dogs, provided sample policies for farms to follow, and how to reduce risk from outside animals.

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The New Jersey Turfgrass Association (NJTA) supports the Rutgers Center for Turfgrass Science by funding research, student scholarships, staff salaries, equipment, building/farm repairs, and other expenses through fundraising efforts such as the annual Rutgers Turfgrass Research Golf Classic. The event began 24 years ago, raising between \$10-\$15,000 initially. Since then, the event has grown, with the May 6, 2019, classic at Fiddler's Elbow Country Club raising approximately \$100,000. Rutgers Center for Turfgrass Science director **Bruce Clarke** embraces working closely with industry partners. The event provides the opportunity to hear the impacts of research and education firsthand as well as celebrating the industry/university partnership.

### In the News

According to the most recent USDA Census of Agriculture, from 2012 to 2017 there was a decrease of about 15.5 percent in the New Jersey horse and pony population. In April, *NJ.com* interviewed **Karyn Malinowski**, director of the Rutgers Equine Science Center (ESC), who explained that the drop in the horse population is primarily due to the state withdrawing purse enhancement awards in 2011 that were used to bolster the New Jersey's horse racing purses. A study by the ESC found that thoroughbred racing purses dropped from \$47.5 million in 2010 to \$22.7 million in 2013, and harness racing purses dropped from \$30.7 million to \$17.9 million in the same period. Because of this reduction, fewer horses are being bred for racing, affecting the state's entire horse racing industry, causing many longtime horse racing farms to close. On a positive note, in anticipation of an increase in purse structure and breeder incentives from a recent \$20 million appropriation (annually for five years) from the state, Malinowski indicated that there are already signs of reinvestment in race horse breeding in the state.

*Fresh Plaza and Perishable News* featured the downy mildew resistant (DMR) basil varieties developed by Rutgers researchers, led by **Jim Simon**, distinguished professor in the Department of Plant Biology. The DMR varieties 2018 field trials resulted in significant increases in organic and conventional basil yield. With the high consumer demand for basil, this can help the industry avoid increasing loss due to downy mildew. The Rutgers DMR varieties were awarded a U.S. patent in December 2018.

*The Packer and Fruit Grower News* reports the New Jersey Peach Promotion Council has been funding research on new and novel peach varieties, conducted by Gloucester County agricultural agent **Hemant Gohil**, and **Dan Ward**, extension tree fruit specialist at the Rutgers Agricultural Research and Extension Center. Their focus has been on determining optimum maturity, handling protocols, and storage characteristics on peach genotypes to maximize quality. The most recent results are five new peach and nectarine varieties -Brigantine, Evelynn, Silverglo, Selena, and Tiana - developed by tree fruit breeder **Joe Goffreda** at Rutgers Fruit and Ornamental Research Extension Center. These five varieties recently received U.S. plant patents licensed to Adams County Nursery in Aspers, PA.

### Of Interest:

The following new fact sheet is now available on Publications: FS1303 Classic and Novel Dessert Apple Varieties for Commercial Orchards in New Jersey. Muehlbauer, M. [njaes.rutgers.edu/fs1303](http://njaes.rutgers.edu/fs1303)

