

EXECUTIVE DEAN OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture
June 2020



Robert M. Goodman

Robert M. Goodman will be stepping down after a 15-year tenure as Executive Dean of the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences and Executive Director of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station on June 30, 2020. Upon his arrival at Rutgers in 2005, he reshaped the culture of the school, aligning it more centrally to the mission of “The State University of New Jersey,” and reinvested in its faculty and infrastructure. As Executive Director of NJAES, Goodman strengthened relationships with stakeholders across the state. He steered the experiment station to be more focused on engagement and entrepreneurialism, initiated business incubators in the food and alternative energy sectors, and set the experiment station on a more sustainable path to relevance in areas central to the mission of Rutgers as the state’s land-grant university. His commitment to applied engagement and entrepreneurship also reached global audiences through his leadership as principal investigator of the “New Agriculture for a New Generation” project in Greece. In addition to resurrecting the teaching of agriculture to undergraduates, he led the creation of several new centers and institutes, including the world-class Rutgers Center for Ocean Observing Leadership and the New Jersey Institute for Food, Nutrition, and Health. Goodman was appointed a University Professor by the Rutgers Board of Governors. [Read more about his legacy.](#)



Bradley I. Hillman

Brad Hillman, who has served as NJAES Director of Research for 14 years, is stepping down from this role on June 30, 2020. He returns to the faculty as professor in the Department of Plant Biology. Hillman was responsible for overseeing NJAES’ off-campus research centers and farms around the state. In addition, he was instrumental in the development of the fertilizer certification program in response to the 2011 state fertilizer law. He oversaw the creation of the Center for Vector Biology, which has continued to grow in response to the increasing pressure from invasive species entering the region, and the increasing threat of ticks and mosquitoes as public health risks. Hillman’s office has been responsible for the effective use of USDA–NIFA Federal Capacity funding through Hatch, Multistate, McIntire-Stennis, and Animal Health programs and of state resources directed to the experiment station. He also oversees intellectual property associated with NJAES scientists, such as plant variety patents and royalties.

New Jersey agricultural employers were invited to learn directly from New Jersey departments of Health, Labor, and Agriculture on the expectations for implementation of the “NJ COVID-19 Guidance for Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers, Their Employers & Housing Providers” in a Webex webinar hosted by Rutgers Cooperative Extension on June 16. The free webinar was recorded and will be posted to the onfarmfoodsafety.rutgers.edu website. The NJDOH partnered with the NJDA and the NJDOL to create this guidance for agricultural employers focusing on precautions to help protect farm employees from



COVID-19 on New Jersey farms and in farm labor housing. The webinar reviewed the guidelines and addressed questions from participants.

Rutgers Equine Science Center (ESC) has launched a fundraising initiative for a large-scale research project focusing on Equine Assisted Activities & Therapies (EAAT) for veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)—coinciding with June’s “Month of the Horse” in New Jersey. The research project will focus on the horse-human bond, and how both are affected during these therapy sessions. In addition to funding the research, the goal is to cover the costs associated with the veterans who will be volunteering their time. According to ESC director **Karyn Malinowski**, this will be the first time EAAT research will measure the same physiological markers of stress and well-being simultaneously in both the horses and veterans. The 8-week research trial, run by doctoral candidate **Ellen Rankins**, will collect data during the trial and a follow-up period to observe how long these changes are sustained over time. There has been an outpouring of support for the project, with the goal of scientifically documenting the efficacy of these therapies for inclusion in insurance coverage. Donations can be made [here](#).

In the News:

While the presence of animals is well-known for its therapeutic effects, the restorative power of plants may not receive as much attention—but anyone who has marveled at the growth of sprouts, relished the fragrance of herbs, or calmed in the presence of greenery, has an awareness of their benefits. The nationally syndicated *American Family Farmer* radio show hosted a podcast in June featuring agricultural and natural resources agent **Joel Flagler** (Bergen County), a registered horticultural therapist. Flagler has developed the first curricula in [Horticultural Therapy](#) (HT) for Rutgers, which is one of a few accredited, university-based programs in the U.S. He has also created over 40 HT programs in New Jersey, structured to meet the needs of diverse populations including veterans, post-stroke seniors, developmentally disabled individuals, correctional youth, and other special needs populations. [Listen to Flagler’s comprehensive overview](#) of what this effective modality entails (discussion begins at 7:17 minute mark).

Of Interest:

The following new bulletins and updated fact sheet are now available on [NJAES Publications](#):
[E361 Ecology and Management of the Groundhog \(*Marmota monax*\)](#). **Kerwin, K.** and **Maslo, B.**

[E362 Economic Contribution of Agriculture to the New Jersey Economy](#). **Sullivan, K.**, and **Schilling, B.**

[FS358 Important Diseases of Tomatoes Grown in High Tunnels and Greenhouses in New Jersey](#).
Wyenandt, A., **Both, A.J.**, and **Kline, W.**

