

A REPORT FROM THE
EXECUTIVE DEAN
OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture
January 2021



With restaurants and supply chains disrupted due to the global coronavirus pandemic, two-fifths of the commercial fishermen surveyed from Maine through North Carolina did not go fishing earlier in 2020, according to a [Rutgers study that also documented their resilience and adaptation](#). Of those who kept fishing, nearly all reported a decline in income compared with previous years. The fishing industry has been severely impacted by the pandemic due to the loss of restaurant sales, disruptions in export markets, and a decline in seafood prices. Before the pandemic, 70 percent of seafood spending in the U.S. took place in restaurants. The survey found that fishermen used a number of strategies to adapt to the pandemic, including selling their catch directly to consumers, participating in residential delivery programs and community-supported fishery programs, and switching the species of fish they target.

James (Jim) Murphy, extension specialist in turfgrass management, and **Stacy Bonos**, professor of turfgrass breeding, [have been named director and associate director respectively of the Rutgers Center for Turfgrass Science](#), effective January 1, 2021. Bonos was also named director of the NJAES turfgrass breeding program. The center has been led by **Bruce Clarke**, extension specialist in turfgrass pathology, who served as director since July 1993, and **William (Bill) Meyer**, professor of turfgrass breeding, who served as associate director since joining the faculty in 1996.

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of New Jersey announced the development of "[The New Jersey Golf Industry Best Management Practices](#)" guide which was created by the GCSANJ BMP Committee and scientists at Rutgers. The best management practices guide covers all aspects of course maintenance with a focus on sustainability and protecting the environment as foundations for its use. It also serves to provide guidelines for superintendents and acts as a resource for stakeholders, including regulators, lawmakers, general managers, and local communities. NJAES extension specialists in turfgrass, weed science, entomology, and water resources were contributors to the guide.

In 2019, 4-H agent **Laura Eppinger** (Salem) received a teaching supply stipend to help youth learn agriculture safety lessons, such as ear protection during tractor use and zoonosis prevention, from the Children's Agriculture Injury Prevention network. In 2020, since all Rutgers 4-H youth programming pivoted to distance and online learning, Eppinger has been adapting these ag safety lessons to be delivered in interactive ways with software such as Zoom and Kahoot. A Zoonosis Prevention trivia game will be delivered for a youth audience at the March 27 "Rutgers 4-H Junior Breeders Livestock Symposium." To request an online ag safety program for youth, or to receive training on using Kahoot to teach ag safety, contact Eppinger at eppinger@njaes.rutgers.edu.



NOFA-NJ held a Zoom session on Hemp Production on January 15 to discuss growing hemp, diseases and insects, and production practices, like harvesting, cleaning, and processing. Agricultural agents **William Bamka** (Burlington) and **Stephen Komar** (Sussex) were presenters. As part of the [Rutgers Hemp Working Group](#), Bamka and Komar focus on agronomy and production of hemp in New Jersey. USDA published a final rule on January 15, 2021, that provides regulations for the production of hemp in the U.S. that goes into effect on March 22, 2021. The final rule builds on the interim final rule published October 31, 2019, that established the U.S. Domestic Hemp Production Program.

Of Interest

To streamline the pesticide exam process, [a new online Pesticide Applicator Certification Exam Registration \(PACER\) system](#) has been created by Rutgers Office of Continuing Professional Education, in partnership with NJDEP. Those interested in taking a pesticide exam must register through the PACER system at pacer.rutgers.edu. The registration PACER system and exams are available 24/7.

According to the [2020 summary by the Office of the New Jersey State Climatologist](#), the statewide annual temperature of 55.5° was 2.6° above the 1981–2010 average and ranked second warmest since 1895. The first two decades of this century have included 15 of the 21 warmest years, with eight within the past 10 years. The 2020 average was 3.7° above the average from 1895–2020. The average maximum of 65.2° was 2.2° above average (1981–2010), ranking 3rd warmest. The average minimum of 45.8° was 3.0° above average, ranking 2nd warmest. All regions of New Jersey ranked second warmest. Annual precipitation averaged 50.96", which is 4.60" above normal and ranks as the 27th wettest.

In 2020, the Clifford E. and Melda C. Snyder Research and Extension Farm in Pittstown continued its annual produce donations, providing 79,409 pounds of fresh produce to food banks and soup kitchens.

Events

Rutgers Equine Science Center's 2021 Horse Management Seminar will be held virtually. This year's program will be divided into three weekly webinars beginning the first Monday in February. Each week's webinar will be held from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. and features two guest speakers followed by a panel Q&A session. [Meeting Registration - Zoom](#)

RCE's Organic Farm Advisory on February 3, 2021, from 10 a.m. - noon will be a virtual meeting using the Zoom platform. There will be a discussion of organic grower needs, current Extension research, and future organic research potential in New Jersey. To register, go to: [Online Survey Software | Qualtrics Survey Solutions](#). For information, contact **Meredith Melendez** (Mercer) melendez@njaes.rutgers.edu.

The New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association is holding [ProFACT trainings for professional fertilizer applicators](#). Extension specialist in nursery production and management **Raul Cabrera** will be conducting the session in Spanish on February 10 and extension specialist in turfgrass management **Jim Murphy** will conduct the session in English on March 10.

