

A REPORT FROM THE
EXECUTIVE DEAN
OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture
March 2021

The New Jersey Annual Vegetable Meeting was held virtually from February 22-25. The NJAES extension agents, specialists, and staff of the Vegetable Working Group diligently planned and executed the virtual event, which attracted more than 100 participants across three sessions of concurrent programming each day. In lieu of the Vegetable Growers Association annual grower awards, agricultural agent **Michelle Infante-Casella** (Gloucester) created a “tribute video” to honor all New Jersey farmers’ essential frontline work, which is posted on the new [VGANJ website](#) created by VGANJ Vice President, Jennifer LaMonaca. Each year, Rutgers Cooperative Extension publishes the proceedings of the New Jersey Vegetable Meeting with summaries of presentations given during the educational sessions. The 2021 proceedings publication, along with archived proceedings dating back to 2009, is now posted on the [Rutgers Vegetable Online Resources](#) webpage and recordings of all the 2021 sessions will be available for viewing on the [NJAES/RCE YouTube channel](#).

This month, NJAES faculty and staff hosted and presented at the 30th Anniversary Rutgers Turfgrass Symposium and the Central Jersey Turf and Ornamental Institute, in addition to presenting educational sessions for the New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association and the New Jersey Nursery & Landscape Association.

In grant funding news, Marine agent **Doug Zemeckis** (Ocean, Monmouth, Atlantic counties) serves as co-principal investigator or technical advisor on three shellfish research projects that were awarded funding in February: “Continued Testing into How Cutting Bar Modifications Can Reduce Bycatch and Increase Catch Efficiency in the Atlantic Sea Scallop Dredge Fishery;” “Testing the Efficacy of a Hybrid Floating Bag and Bottom Planting Method to Grow Oysters”; and “Mobile Oyster Aquaculture Farming Unit.”

Of Interest

The [2020 NJAES Annual Report](#) is available to stakeholders in an online-only format. The report highlights the activities over the course of the past year, most of which took place under stay-in-place orders that resulted in the suspension of face-to-face research and extension programs. The report captures a wide cross-section of the virtual programs that fulfilled NJAES’ mission of providing solutions to various stakeholders across the Garden State. Key areas of research and economic development are also highlighted, while fundraising support rounds out a comprehensive look at the broad impact of NJAES on the lives of New Jersey residents, communities, and businesses.



The 2021 updated version of the “Mid-Atlantic Field Crop Weed Management Guide” is available for ordering online at <https://extension.psu.edu/mid-atlantic-field-crop-weed-management-guide>. The guide is produced by Penn State Extension in cooperation with weed scientists from University of Delaware, University of Maryland, Rutgers University, Virginia Tech, and West Virginia University. It covers weed management for field corn, sorghum, soybean, small grains, and forage and pastures.

A new packing line has been installed at Rutgers Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Upper Deerfield for training and demonstration targeted to growers, including workshops on how to clean and sanitize equipment. Two workshops are planned for 2021 by the [On-Farm Food Safety](#) team agricultural agents **Wes Kline** (Cumberland) and **Meredith Melendez** (Mercer).

To understand and evaluate the needs of livestock producers in New Jersey, extension personnel have developed the 2021 Rutgers Livestock Processing Needs Assessment Survey. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the status of livestock slaughtering and processing capabilities in New Jersey; assess the needs of the livestock industry as it relates to livestock processing and marketing; and to determine any additional needs that would enhance the profitability of the livestock industry in New Jersey. Participation in the survey is requested of those who raise livestock and poultry that ultimately are marketed as a processed meat product. The survey will help determine the status of the industry as well as the challenges and opportunities for future growth. To participate in this study, click this link and participate before April 9: <https://go.rutgers.edu/RUMeatProcessing>.

In the News

Agricultural agent **Rick Van Vranken** (Atlantic) authored [Here Are Some New Ideas to Help Agritourism Grow](#), which was published in the March 3 issue of *Growing Produce*.

In Memoriam

Raymond J. “Ray” Samulis, 69, passed away on February 24. He served as agriculture and natural resource agent for Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Burlington County and retired in 2017 after 41 years of service. His primary responsibilities were vegetable crops, especially sweet corn; cranberries; and farm safety. In 2010, Samulis was granted funding for instituting the “AgrAbility” program, which assists farmers in dealing with disabilities that prevent them from completing their farming activities. He served as co-director of the Mid-Atlantic AgrAbility Project. Samulis received many awards during his long career, including distinguished service awards from New Jersey Farm Bureau, New Jersey Nursery Landscape Association, Burlington County Board of Agriculture, Pesticide Association of New Jersey, National Association of County Agricultural Agents, and the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture. Samulis, who continued to be engaged with the agricultural community during his retirement, earned the respect and admiration of his colleagues and clientele, young and old alike. Read his [In Memoriam](#).

