

A REPORT FROM THE  
EXECUTIVE DEAN  
OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture  
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Bruce Clarke

**Bruce Clarke**, extension specialist in turfgrass pathology in the Department of Plant Biology, retired on January 1. Clarke, who served for one year in an interim capacity, was named director of the Center for Turfgrass Science in 1994 and remained in that position until the end of 2020. Under Clarke's leadership, the Rutgers program emerged as a center of scientific and educational excellence. He served on the board of the International Turfgrass Society from 2001-2021 as a director, president, and past president. His research and extension programs focused on the identification and control of biotic and abiotic diseases of cool season turfgrasses and integrated pest management strategies to reduce fungicide use. Clarke's work on the biology and control of anthracnose, summer patch, gray leaf spot, and best management practices for the control of these diseases are cited as some of the most important achievements affecting the playing conditions of golf courses worldwide. Highly respected by the industry, he has received many accolades including New Jersey Turfgrass Hall of Fame induction; the John Morley Distinguished Service Award from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America; and the 2020 Nebraska Turfgrass Association Presidential Award in recognition of his significant contributions to the turfgrass industry in Nebraska and the nation. In Clarke's honor and to continue his vision for turfgrass science, the turfgrass industry and friends have created an endowed fellowship in his name to support graduate education. Information on the endowment will be included in an upcoming report. [Newsroom: Clarke Retirement](#)

Increasing adoption of agricultural practices such as cover cropping, grazing management, and agroforestry can increase the amount of carbon stored in soils to help combat climate change, according to a new report by researchers from Rutgers and the University of Maine. The [study](#), titled "*Ecosystem Service Valuation Approaches and Carbon Mitigation Considerations for Garden State Agriculture*," explores how New Jersey's plants and soils can help to absorb and store carbon dioxide from greenhouse gas emissions. New Jersey's farmlands, forests, and wetlands together can offset nearly eight percent of the state's greenhouse gas emissions. Study co-authors include **Marjorie Kaplan**, associate director of Rutgers Climate Institute, **Stephanie Murphy**, director of Rutgers Soil Testing Lab, and **Mark Robson**, Distinguished Professor of plant biology. [Rutgers Study Unveils New Carbon Mitigation Solutions to Combat Climate Change.](#)

#### Of Interest

The Greenwood Ave. Farmers Market was established in Trenton to address concerns of food access in the heart of New Jersey's capital. Since its beginnings, the market has prioritized community involvement and engagement, and has established itself as a safe gathering spot and social hub in addition to being a source of healthy food within the Chambersburg/Southeast Trenton neighborhood. Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Mercer County Family and Community Health Sciences educator **Michelle Brill**, who retired January 1, coordinated a collaborative publication looking at the



development and success of this community effort: [The Greenwood Avenue Farmers Market: Established 2015, A 5-year Reflection and a Glance Ahead.](#)

The *2022-2023 Mid-Atlantic Commercial Vegetable Production Recommendations Guide* will be available in hardcopy and online this winter. The latest version is a collaborative effort among Rutgers Cooperative Extension personnel and 45 Extension professionals in five other mid-Atlantic states (PA, DE, VA, MD, and WV). The new guide is 464 pages with up-to-date recommendations on varieties, cultural practices, pesticide safety, and pest control options. The guide also includes a new crop section on producing edamame and updated recommendations on controlling important insect pests and diseases in the greenhouse. Please contact your county agent or grower association to obtain the guide.

An updated bulletin is available: [2022 Commercial Cranberry Pest Control Recommendations for New Jersey \(Rutgers NJAES\)](#). **Besancon, T., Oudemans, P., and Rodriguez-Saona, C.**

A “Livestock Marketing Virtual Needs Assessment Roundtable and Producer Discussion” meeting was held online on January 24. This web-based producer forum was held to highlight the challenges and opportunities for livestock marketing in New Jersey. The meeting involved staff from Rutgers Cooperative Extension and NJDA, producers, and others interested in direct marketing of livestock and value-added meat and poultry products. [Livestock Marketing Virtual Needs Assessment Roundtable and Producer Discussion 1-24-22](#)

### **In the News**

*Modern Farmer* and *Smithsonian Magazine* quoted plant biology professor emeritus **Tom Orton** on the use of the Rutgers tomato by the tomato processing industry ending around the 1950s – 60s as harvesting methods advanced, in the article [The Legacy of Campbell Soup’s Tomato Breeding Program](#).

*NJBIZ* and *Yahoo Finance* quoted Distinguished Professor **Jim Simon** in the article, [Soli Organic Announces Seed Genetics Partnership with Rutgers University, Deploys Precision AI Technology to Boost Plant Resource Use Efficiency \(yahoo.com\)](#). The multi-year R&D partnership will prioritize optimizing organic seed genetics for indoor cultivation, with a focus on yield and consumer-desired attributes using state-of-the-art instrumentation to analyze seed genetics of a selection of produce. In addition, the partnership will identify and further optimize flavor, aroma, nutrition and yield traits for indoor cultivation and explore opportunities to bring to market new types of produce that, while not feasible for commercial organic outdoor cultivation, can be grown organically indoors.

### **Events**

[New Jersey Agriculture Convention and Trade Show](#), Feb 8-10, Atlantic City, Harrah’s Resort and Waterfront Conference Center. Educational sessions include a full range of topics such as Organic Production, Soil Health, Agrivoltaics, New Crops & Innovative Marketing Ideas, Food Safety and Mandatory FSMA Produce Safety. There will also be a session for the Beginner Farmer. Pesticide credits will be offered at most of the sessions.

