

## JULY 2022

### Rutgers NJAES Board of Managers Hosts Legislators at its July Meeting



*L-R: Anissa Esposito, Zoe Stokes, Glenn Beebe, Jeremy Posluszny, Asw. Marilyn Piperno, and Asm. Roy Freiman*

The Board of Managers (BOM) held its July meeting at the [Rutgers Specialty Crop Research and Extension Center](#) in Cream Ridge, NJ. In attendance were Assemblyman Roy Freiman, Chair of the Assembly Agriculture and Food Security Committee; Assemblywoman Marilyn Piperno; Glenn Beebe, Jeremy Posluszny (*SEBS'20*), and Zoe Stokes, aides to Assemblyman Ronald Dancer; Anissa Esposito, aide to Asw. Marilyn Piperno; and John Ciufo (Executive Director Economic Development, Monmouth County). Marty Bullock, a local farmer from Monmouth County, brought his tractor and hay wagons and drove attendees around the farm. They learned firsthand from the faculty about the research taking place at the center.

Rutgers-New Brunswick Chancellor-Provost Francine Conway, who oversees all New Brunswick-based units, including SEBS and NJAES, expressed support for NJAES and the importance of stakeholders such as the BOM in carrying out the experiment station's core mission of research and outreach. Chancellor Conway also formally introduced **Laura Lawson** as the recently named permanent Executive Dean of SEBS and Executive Director of NJAES.

### National Blueberry Month is Celebrated in July

[National Blueberry Month](#) is celebrated in the month of July. [NJAES fact sheet, FS553, captures the history](#)



of the Highbush Blueberry, the state fruit of New Jersey, which saw the first commercial crop sold in 1916. Early breeders and growers like Elizabeth C. White of Burlington County and Frederick Coville of USDA who selected and bred wild specimens of the highbush blueberry led to the establishment of the blueberry. The [current innovative research of the Rutgers Blueberry Working Group](#), in collaboration with the Rutgers-based USDA-ARS team at the [Philip E. Marucci Center for Blueberry and Cranberry Research and Extension](#), built on this early

research and has led to the remarkable development of this [high-value crop](#) in the U.S. and worldwide. In 2021, [blueberries in New Jersey had a production value of \\$78 million](#). New Jersey annually ranks in the top six in the U.S. in the production of blueberries, with NJ farmers harvesting 41 million pounds on 7,500 acres last year.

### Legislative Tour of Rutgers Food Innovation Center

Rutgers internationally recognized food incubation center, [Food Innovation Center](#) (FIC) welcomed Assemblyman Roy Freiman, Assemblyman Herb Conaway, Assemblywoman Sadaf Jaffer, Assemblywoman Beth Sawyer (*whose district encompasses FIC*), Assemblyman Brian E. Rumpf, and legislative staff, for a tour of the facility located in Bordentown, NJ. FIC co-founder Peggy Brennan-Tonetta, director of Resource

and Economic Development, NJAES, gave a presentation on the history, programs, and impacts of the center. FIC Executive Director Nolan Lewin led the tour, during which legislators met FIC clients including [SunDial Foods](#), a plant-based chicken wing company based in NJ, whose innovative product is gaining significant attention from investors interested in plant-based foods, and [FullBlue360](#), which has a propriety growing process that enables blueberry production in greenhouses in urban environments. The company also produces blueberry-based products at the center, such as jams and sauces, that are sold online.

The first class in the **Rutgers Beginner Farmer Training Program** reached an exciting milestone in mid-July when participants harvested and distributed their third round of weekly consumer supported agriculture (CSA) farm shares to customers. CSA supports New Jersey farmers and provides customers with fresh, nutrient-rich and locally grown products. More familiarly called [RU Ready to Farm](#), the program guides beginner farmers step-by-step through the stages of planning for and operating a successful farm. In just one year, these beginner farmers have translated that education into the successful management of a communal plot of land for their CSA business located at the **Rutgers Specialty Crop Research and Extension Center** in Cream Ridge. The first shares included garlic scapes, lettuce, arugula, scallions, turnips, kohlrabi, slicing cucumbers, pickling cucumbers, zucchini, carrots, flowers and two different varieties of kale. **William Hlubik**, county agent and county extension department head, RCE of Middlesex County, directs the program, which was launched in [2021 with a \\$515,000 USDA-NIFA grant](#).

## Of Interest

The following new fact sheets are available on [NJAES Publications](#):

[FS1344 - Canada Thistle Life Cycle Disruptions for Effective Control in Specialty Crops](#)

**Melendez, M. and Besacon, T.**

[FS1345 - School Garden Produce Safety Good Gardening Practices Checklist](#)

**Melendez, M., Kline, W. and Matthews, J.**

On July 18, 2022 the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a supplemental notice of proposed rulemaking to extend the compliance dates for the pre-harvest agricultural water provisions as outlined in the recent 2021 [agricultural water proposed rule](#). The 2021 agricultural water proposed rule, if finalized, will require farms to conduct annual systems-based agricultural water assessments to determine and guide appropriate measures to minimize potential risks associated with pre-harvest agricultural water. The FDA is now proposing extended compliance dates for those proposed pre-harvest requirements and is also providing clarifying information about the enforcement discretion policy for the harvest and post-harvest agricultural water requirements. Read more at the [Plant and Pest Advisory article](#) from **Wesley Kline**, county agent, RCE of Cumberland County

## In the News

**Michelle Infante-Casella**, county agent and county extension department head, RCE of Gloucester County, was interviewed and provided quotes for the article:

[South Jersey farmers say Americans need to start buying local produce or they won't survive \(Inquirer.com\)](#)

## Events

Snyder Research Farm Open House and Tomato Tasting will be held August 31, from 1 to 7 p.m., at 140 Locust Grove Rd., Pittstown, NJ. Register at [Snyder Research and Extension Farm Open House and Tomato Tasting](#).