March 2023

NJDA and RCE Launch Comprehensive Urban Agriculture Strategies Report and Web Portal

Garden at the Center for Environmental Transformation in Camden, NJ.

New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA) and Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) Office of Urban Extension and Engagement announced the new Urban Agriculture Strategies for the State of New Jersey Report and launched the associated web portal. Both the portal and the report that frames the Garden State's challenges and opportunities were developed as a partnership among NJDA, RCE, urban farmers, growers, and other stakeholders engaged in urban agriculture advocacy, preservation, resources, and policy. Several case studies in the report demonstrate the variety of pathways that the Garden State can take to create greater food security for its residents. Rutgers Office of Urban Extension and Engagement is focused on serving constituents in urban agriculture and working with community partners to identify significant urban agricultural sites across the state.

Inaugural Rutgers Shellfish Research Symposium Brings Together Growers and Researchers

The inaugural Rutgers Shellfish Research Symposium, in partnership with the New Jersey Aquaculture Association and the Haskin Shellfish Research Laboratory, was held on January 18 at the NJAES Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve. The symposium was organized by **Michael DeLuca**, director of the Rutgers Aquaculture Innovation Center, and Michael Acquafredda, (GSNB'19) a Rutgers graduate of the doctoral program in Ecology and Evolution, who currently serves as a postdoctoral research associate with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The symposium was an opportunity for more than 45 New Jersey shellfish growers, resource managers, grant funders, students and conservation groups to connect directly with researchers studying aquaculture and shellfish ecology in the state. Key priorities included the potential avian impacts on floating gear, advances in culture of shellfish for habitat restoration, genetics to improve survival of hard clams and future workforce development.

Six-Week *Annie's Project* Training for New Jersey Women Farmers

Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) completed its training course, "Annie Goes Online: Risk Management On Your Kitchen Table," held via Zoom from January 11 through March 1. The six-week course is part of RCE's **Annie's Project New Jersey**, which was launched in 2011 to educate and train new, aspiring, and current farm women on risk management strategies and provide tools for successful business management. The course covered the five areas of farm risk: Production, Marketing, Financial, Legal, and Human. It also covered topics specific to urban farming, which include short-term leases, soil quality and contaminants (lead and other heavy metals), access to land, capital and resources, identifying water resources, right-to-farm issues, climate change impacts, food safety issues, and hydroponic farming as a solution to the challenges of soil contamination and water availability.

Of Interest

The following new fact sheets are available on NJAES Publications:

FS1352: Share Tables: An Easy Way to Reduce Food Waste and Alleviate Food Insecurity
Shukaitis, J., Elnakib, S., and **Rowe, A.**

E374: Emerging Diseases of Hemp in New Jersey
Rajmohan, N.; Komar, S.; Bamka, W; Buckley, R.; Brown, K.; Infante-Casella, M.; Cabrera, R.; Gianfagna, T.; Simon, J.; and **Wyenandt, A.**

Carol Byrd-Bredbenner, Distinguished Professor of Nutritional Sciences and director of the graduate program in Nutritional Sciences, was one of 20 nationally recognized scientists appointed to serve on the 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Dietary Guidelines serve as the foundation for national nutrition programs, standards, and education in the U.S.

A new Agricultural Products website has been launched to showcase Rutgers long and proud history of breeding agricultural crops, with improved qualities, to meet the needs of select industries. The website features a wide variety of agricultural products, including cranberries, dogwoods, basil, hazelnuts, and turfgrass. The comprehensive website was developed through a joint collaboration among NJAES, Rutgers Research Communications, and Innovation Ventures, the unit of Rutgers Research that is dedicated to transforming university research into "products, services, and partnerships for the public good, and generating value for the university and New Jersey."

New Jersey-based clean-tech company, Princeton NuEnergy Inc. (PNE), incubated at the **Rutgers EcoComplex** in Bordentown, was awarded a $12 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy. Since the beginning of its innovation journey in 2019 to recycle, repurpose, and commercialize lithium-ion battery materials, PNE has been supported at the EcoComplex, NJAES' business incubator for clean energy and environmental innovations.

An important supplement is available for the 2022-2023 Mid-Atlantic Commercial Vegetable Production Recommendations, found on the NJAES publications webpage.

Grants

Rutgers On-Farm Food Safety Team: **Meredith Melendez**, agricultural agent (Mercer County), **Wesley Kline**, agricultural agent, and **Jennifer Matthews**, senior program coordinator, (Cumberland County), were awarded a three-year, $400,000 grant from USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture for the project, "Planting the Seeds: Teaching the value of food safety to new and beginning farmers," which seeks to empower growers on small and medium farms to achieve early success in food safety.

The Rutgers team of **Brian Schilling, Stephen Komar, James Simon, William Bamka, Thomas Gianfagna, Nimmi Rajmohan, Qingli Wu, Raul I. Cabrera,** and **C. Andrew Wyenandt** were awarded a one-year grant of $300,000 from the New Jersey Department of Agriculture for the project, "New Jersey Hemp for Fiber Production, Processing and Commercialization." The research for this project is focused on evaluating industrial hemp varieties at three NJAES farms: Clifford E. & Melda C. Snyder Research & Extension Farm (Pittstown), Rutgers Agricultural Research and Extension Center (Bridgeton), and Rutgers Specialty Crop Research and Extension Center (Cream Ridge).