

January 2025

Prof. James White and Team Win Rutgers Agriculture Innovation Award



James White, Professor in the Department of Plant Biology, and members of his lab [were recognized with the Agriculture Innovation Award](#) for “innovations regarding endophytic microbes with applications in agriculture.” They were presented with the award at the inaugural Rutgers Innovation Awards, which recognize researchers who have translated world-class research into an invention or innovation that would benefit society. Pictured, L-R:

Prabhas V. Moghe, executive vice president for Academic Affairs and chief academic officer; Michael E. Zwick, senior vice president for Research; Ag Innovation Award team members Ivelisse Irizarry and Kathryn Kingsley; Ag Innovation Award winner James White; Deborah Perez Fernandez, executive director of Technology Transfer; and Vincent Smeraglia, executive director of New Ventures. Photo credit: Rutgers Office for Research.

Prof. Josh Kohut Appointed SEBS Dean of Research & NJAES Director of Research



Josh Kohut, professor in the Department of Marine and Coastal Sciences, [has been appointed the SEBS Dean of Research/NJAES Director of Research](#), effective January 1. In his new role, Kohut will work closely and collaboratively with faculty, department chairs, staff, and administration to support Rutgers’ land-grant mission and research excellence as a top-tier public research institution. He will oversee all aspects of our research enterprise, including federal capacity funds and compliance, assuring all research follows appropriate ethical standards, financial sustainability, and academic excellence.

Rutgers-managed Forest Brought Under Additional Protection of National Organization



Mettler’s Woods, part of the William L. Hutcheson Memorial Forest Center, a 500-acre preserve managed by Rutgers and one of the state’s last remaining virgin forests, [was chosen for preservation by the Old-Growth Forest Network](#). The Rutgers-managed forest, deemed a “sanctuary of biodiversity,” was inducted during a simple ceremony held on site under a canopy of trees, some of which have stood since the Revolutionary War. A National Natural Landmark, Mettler’s Woods is one of three patches of virgin woods remaining

in New Jersey, and one of the last uncut, unburned oak-hickory forests in the country. Pictured, L-R: Brian Kane, Mid-Atlantic Manager of the network; Myla Aronson, assistant professor, Department of Ecology, Evolution and Natural Resources; and Laura Lawson, Executive Dean, School of Environmental and Biological Sciences. Photo credit: Lori Nardoza.

Of Interest

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

[FS1242: Building a Better Bagged School Lunch](#)

Forbes, M., Hughes, L., and Pavlovsky, J.

[FS073: Forage Substitutes for Horses](#)

Williams, C. and Ralston, S.

[FS714: Analysis of Feeds and Forages for Horses](#)

Williams, C. and Ralston, S.

[FS1067: Metabolic Problems in the Horse: Sorting out the Diagnosis](#)

Williams, C. and Liburt, N.

Recent Hire

Patty J. Oehmke joins [Rutgers Cooperative Extension \(RCE\) as a Family and Community Health Sciences \(FCHS\) Professor of Practice in the area of wellness](#). She will lead initiatives in student wellness on the Cook Campus at Rutgers–New Brunswick and provide leadership in coordinating existing services and resources on campus, as well as bring programs offered through RCE to engage students on campus.

Recent Honors

Mark Robson, Distinguished Professor of Plant Pathology and dean of the Rutgers School of Graduate Studies, [was presented a “Friend of Thai Science Award”](#) at the Royal Thai Embassy in Washington D.C. in recognition of his “significant contributions to Thai higher education, science, research and innovation” based on his decades-long efforts in Thailand to teach and promote public health and environmental science.

Kathleen Howell, associate director, RCE, [won a Rutgers Gateway Award](#), which recognizes staff, faculty or a team of employees who go to exceptional lengths to remove barriers to build a more positive work environment. Howell was recognized for her efforts that “have positively shaped tens of thousands of New Jerseyans’ experience with Rutgers in their own communities.”

FCHS SNAP-ED Team won a [Rutgers Outstanding Service Award](#), which recognizes faculty, staff and/or a team that demonstrate a relentless determination to make a lasting difference beyond the university’s borders, and for displaying “a demonstrated commitment to moving society toward a greater common good and encourage constructive collaboration in service to our local and global communities.”

Grants

Christopher Obropta, extension specialist in the Department of Environmental Sciences, was awarded \$10,160,893 for projects related to Stormwater Management and Neighborhood Resilience for Disadvantaged Overburdened Communities – Newark, Paterson, and Perth Amboy – and for Green Infrastructure Training and Enhanced Entrepreneurship for the period October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2029. This funding is part of an award of \$72,493,449 to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration through the 2024 Climate Resilience Regional Challenge for DEP’s proposal, “Building a Climate Ready NJ.”

Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station is an equal opportunity program provider and employer.