Faculty and Staff Activities and Accomplishments

Jim Murphy (turf management specialist) received the 2007 Recognition Award from the New Jersey Turfgrass Association at the Green Industry Expo in December for his research and extension efforts in support of the turf industry in New Jersey.

At the annual meeting of the New Jersey Food Processors Association (NJFPA), held on January 23, 2008, Lou Cooperhouse (director, Rutgers NJAES Food Innovation Center) was elected as one of three incoming directors. The NJFPA traces its roots to 1904 and was chartered in 1934 to further the needs of its member companies, which represent all facets of the New Jersey food-processing industry, including meat and poultry, seafood, dairy products, specialty foods, fruits and vegetables, and cereals and grain products.

Donald Schaffner (Food Science) has been named a theme leader for the Event Modeling Theme at the National Center for Food Protection and Defense at the University of Minnesota. The goal of the Event Modeling Theme is to develop dynamic, real-world models of both food contamination events and public health responses. Schaffner has also been named co-chair of the organizing committee for the 6th International Conference on Predictive Modeling in Foods, slated to be held in the United States in fall 2009.

Rutgers Global Institute for BioExploration (GIBEX) was featured in a front-page Star-Ledger article titled “Harvesting the Power of Plants.”

Biotechnology Center for Agriculture and the Environment Director Gerben Zylstra traveled to Washington, D.C., February 13–15 for a National Institutes of Health study section charged with reviewing proposals under the Fogarty International Research Collaboration Award (FIRCA) program.

Jack Rabin, associate director of Farm Programs at the Rutgers NJAES, spoke with WNYC’s Brian Lehrer about the resuscitation of the “Ramapo Tomato” for this summer’s growing season.

Alan Robock (Environmental Sciences) is featured in an article in Newsweek titled “The ‘Geo-Engineering’ Scenario.”

Steven Handel (Ecology, Evolution, and Natural Resources) has provided some advice regarding vermin in the January 29 issue of the New York Times.

Student Activities and Accomplishments

Suzanne Pilaar (undergraduate; Paleoecology and Evolutionary Anthropology) is among three Rutgers students (and 45 nationwide) chosen to receive a prestigious scholarship from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to pursue graduate studies at the University of Cambridge. The Gates Cambridge Scholarships cover all fees and living expenses for a student’s full-time master’s or doctoral studies at
Cambridge. Depending on the student’s program of study, a scholarship’s value could exceed $50,000 annually for one to four years. Pilaar has conducted research at Rutgers; the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.; and the American Museum of Natural History in New York. Before she begins her studies at Cambridge, she will spend the summer excavating at a 4,000-year-old site in southern Turkey. She is founder of the Rutgers chapter of Lambda Alpha, a national honor society, and serves as president of the university’s Anthropology Club. She will study in St. John’s College at Cambridge University, where she will examine the human diet and use of animal resources in early societies.

Jessica McCormick (graduate program in Biochemistry and Microbiology) has been selected to receive the 2007 Robert S. and Eileen A. Robison Scholarship Award. McCormick was chosen based on her accomplishments in her academic program, for past and present leadership roles in the university and the community, and for her future plans to help others in meaningful ways. The award provides for an honorarium of $250. McCormick’s name will be engraved on a brass plate and attached to a plaque located in the departmental awards room in recognition of this scholarship award.

Ari Novy (Landscape Architecture; Graduate Program in Plant Biology) was awarded second place at the recent Northeast Region of the American Society for Horticultural Science meeting for his paper with JeanMarie Hartman, Peter Smouse, Lena Struwe, C. Miller, W. Skaradek, and Stacy Bonos entitled “Can Population Genetics Studies of Spartina alterniflora (Smooth Cordgrass) Affect March Restoration Horticultural Practices?”

Jonathan Baldasare (undergraduate; Food Science) was awarded the second installment amount of $500 from the Institute of Food Technologists Foundation in January 2008. The full scholarship amount was $1,000.

Mohamed Najjar Badaoui (graduate student; Food Science) was awarded the second installment amount of $1,000 from the Institute of Food Technologists Foundation in January 2008. The full scholarship amount was $2,000.

Kristen Barlett-Healy (graduate program in Entomology) was named a runner up in the 2007 American Mosquito Control Association’s Student Paper Competition for the Hollandsworth Prize.

Ben McGraw (graduate program in Entomology) received the 2nd place Presidents Prize at the 2007 Entomological Society of America Annual Meeting in San Diego, CA.

Jessica Ware (graduate program in Entomology) received the Student and Young Professional Participation Award from the Entomological Society of America, which came with a $50 honorarium.

Grants

Tony Broccoli (Environmental Sciences), Kristy Dahl (Center Environmental Prediction), and Jennifer Francis (IMCS) received a grant of $110,000 from the Rutgers University Academic Excellence Fund for their proposal entitled “Building the Rutgers Climate and Environmental Change Initiative.”
Mark Miller (Environmental Sciences) will be funded at a level of $200,000/year for three years by the Department of Energy’s Atmospheric Radiation Measurement Program ($604,000 total) for “Site Science for the ARM Mobile Facility (AMF).”

Beth Ravit and Peter Strom (both of Environmental Sciences) received a grant of $67,000 from the Western Monmouth Utilities Authority for “Optimizing Treatment Processes that Kill Phragmites australis Biomass and Pathogens in Reed Bed Sludge Residues.”

David Gimenez, PI, Peter Strom (both of Environmental Sciences), and A. Adewunmi have received $25,000 from the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station for “Fate and Behavior of Alkylphenol Ethoxylates in Land-Applied Alkaline-Stabilized Biosolids.”

Alan Robock, PI, Georgiy Stenchikov, co-PI (both of Environmental Sciences), and Martin Bunzl, co-PI (Philosophy) have received an NSF Climate Dynamics grant in the amount of $549,429 for “Collaborative Research in Evaluation of Suggestions to Geoengineer the Climate System Using Stratospheric Aerosols and Sun Shading.”

Lisa Rodenburg (Environmental Sciences) and Robert Miskewitz (EcoComplex) have received a $30,000 grant from the New Jersey Water Resources Research Institute for “Volatilization of PCBs from the Tappan Zee region of the Hudson River.”

Loredana Quadro (Food Science) was awarded an NIH grant of $1,621,544 (direct + indirect cost) for “The Role of Beta-Carotene in Maternal-Fetal Nutrition.”

Henryk Daun, PI, and Paul Takhistov, co-PI (both of Food Science), received funding from the State of New Jersey for three years in the total amount of $75,000 for their grant titled “Quality Audit in the New Jersey Food Distribution Program.”

George Hamilton (Entomology) and G. Williams received a $60,000 USDA NE Regional IPM grant for “Development of Novel Application Technology for the Control of the Asian Tiger Mosquito in Urban Environments.”

Albrecht Koppenhöfer (associate extension specialist) received $26,500 from Rutgers Center for Turfgrass Science for “Biological Control of Lepidopteran Turfgrass Pests.”

Stacy Bonos, Bingru Huang, and T. Gianfagna (all of Plant Biology and Pathology) received $50,000 for two years from the U.S. Golf Association for “Confirmation of QTL Markers for Dollar Spot Resistance in Creeping Bentgrass.”

Bingru Huang, Stacy Bonos, and Faith Belanger (all of Plant Biology and Pathology) received $89,912 for three years from the U.S. Golf Association for “Identification of Quantitative Trait Loci Associated with Drought and Heat Tolerance in Creeping Bentgrass.”
Albrecht Koppenhöfer (associate extension specialist) and V. Fournier received $19,380 from the U.S. Golf Association for “Optimizing Oriental Beetle Mating Disruption through a Better Understanding of the Beetle’s Dispersal Behaviors.”

Jim Murphy (extension specialist in turf management), and Bruce Clarke (specialist in turfgrass pathology) received $30,000 for two years from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America and the GCSAA New Jersey Chapter for “Management Practices Effects on Anthracnose Severity of Annual Bluegrass Putting Green Turf.” Murphy and Clarke also received $90,000 from U.S. Golf Association for “Development of Best Management Practices for Anthracnose Disease on Annual Bluegrass Putting Green Turf.”

Jeannette Rea-Keywood (Cumberland County 4-H agent), Pamela Cooper, and Kelly Leman received a $15,000 competitive grant for the Autistic Youth Explore Science Through Horticulture and Gardening Program from the Ronald McDonald Foundation.

The Norwegian Research Council recently approved funding for a research study to assess the winter hardiness of Velvet Bentgrass in the northern hemisphere. The project will be coordinated by Bingru Huang, Stacy Bonos, and Jim Murphy (all of Plant Biology and Pathology) in association with scientists from Cornell University, Scandinavia and the University of Guelph in Canada.

Development

During the first week of February, Steven Handel spoke with Rutgers’ Alumni and Friends in three Southern California cities (San Diego, Irvine, and Los Angeles). The topic presented was restoring urban environments by using modern ecological science. Handel spoke about his work with California’s Great Park. The topic was well received by the audience and Handel has since received rave reviews from alumni with requests to speak with additional, targeted organizations in California where there is potential for funding. During this trip, Marie Prieur, director of development, also had the opportunity to meet with several potential donors, alumni, and retirees. She plans to keep in touch with these individuals, apprising them of events and news from the school and experiment station.

Publications and Editorships

Donald Schaffner (Food Science) traveled to Rome, Italy, at the request of the World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations for five days in January. Schaffner worked with a colleague from the University of Tasmania to edit the final draft of the “FAO/WHO Guidelines on Risk Characterization of Microbiological Hazards in Food.”

Peter Shearer (associate extension specialist) is a contributing author for the 2008 Mid-Atlantic Berry Guide for Commercial Growers published by The Pennsylvania State University Press. Albrecht Koppenhöfer (associate extension specialist) is the author or co-author of several chapters in Field Manual of Techniques for the Application and Evaluation of Entomopathogens (2nd ed.) and Handbook of Turfgrass Management and Physiology.
Conferences, Seminars, and Other Events

The Rutgers NJAES Food Innovation Center has been leading a comprehensive study to better understand New Jersey’s farmer’s markets, identify best practices, and benchmark measures of success. It is anticipated that this research will result in improved profitability for farmer participants in New Jersey farmer’s markets, and create new opportunities and destinations for the state’s rural and urban municipalities. An extensive survey has been conducted and focus groups and interviews have been held. A series of three forums will be held to highlight the findings of the center’s research efforts. These will be free and will be held on:

- April 1 – from 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Holly House in Rutgers Gardens, Log Cabin Road and Ryders Lane, New Brunswick
- April 2 – from 2:30 to 6:00 p.m. in the Freeholder’s Meeting Room on the first floor of the Passaic County Administration Building Annex, 317 Pennsylvania Avenue, Paterson, NJ
- April 3 – from 9:30 to 1:00 p.m. at the Food Innovation Center, 87 East Commerce Street, Bridgeton, NJ

For more information on these forums and to register to attend these free seminars, please see [http://www.foodinnovation.rutgers.edu/FarmersMarketRegistration.pdf](http://www.foodinnovation.rutgers.edu/FarmersMarketRegistration.pdf).

The 50th Anniversary of the South Jersey 4-H Teen Conference (SJTC) was celebrated in 2007 at the Clarion Hotel in Egg Harbor Township, New Jersey. “Back to the Future with 4-H” was the year’s theme. SJTC is held annually and focuses on leadership and personal development. Approximately 160 4-H teens in grades 8 to 13 from 10 southern and central Jersey counties participated. Two teen delegates are elected from each county to attend a planning meeting in October to vote on a theme for the conference. The conference included interactive workshops, a formal banquet, community service, team-building activities, and socials.

Rutgers NJAES Cooperative Extension personnel continue to collaborate with the NJ Environmental Federation, NJ Department of Environmental Protection, and others to develop and conduct Integrated Pest Management (IPM) trainings focusing on the landscape and turf component for school district IPM programs. A session was held on December 6, 2007 in Sparta, NJ. Fifty-four principals and facilities managers/head custodians attended. Madeline Flahive DiNardo (Union County agricultural agent) presented. Ratings of the training were excellent. At year end, 1,008 IPM coordinators had been trained at 17 training sessions held across New Jersey.

A number of Biotechnology Center for Agriculture and the Environment faculty, postdocs, and graduate students took part in the second annual symposium on “Microbiology at Rutgers,” held February 7–8. The keynote speaker was Eungbin Kim, a former postdoctoral associate in the lab of Gerben Zylstra, who introduced him. Nilgun Tumer gave a presentation on “New insights into the targets of ribosomal inactivating proteins and trichotheccene mycotoxins,” and Tom Leustek gave another on “Use of microbial genomic resources to uncover variations in metabolic pathways.” Fourteen graduate students and postdocs representing six Biotech Center labs contributed 15 posters. Max Häggblom was one of three symposium organizers.
The Annual Turfgrass Research Golf Classic was held on May 7 at the Fiddler’s Elbow Country Club in Far Hills, NJ. This was a very successful event, with 310 golfers from 10 states. The golfers filled all three courses at the Club. This is the twelfth year of this industry/Rutgers University partnership that has raised over $750,000 for turfgrass research and outreach efforts in the region. The Turfgrass Industry in the Northeast awarded over $85,000 in scholarships to Rutgers students in the undergraduate and graduate turfgrass programs at the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences and to students in the NJAES Office of Continuing Professional Education’s two-year Professional Golf Turf Management Program. Scholarships were presented at the annual awards banquet on November 10. The New Jersey Turfgrass Foundation provided a $50,000 gift to the Center for Turfgrass Science at the Green Industry Expo on December 5 to support turfgrass research, teaching, and outreach activities in 2008.

FYI

Mark your calendars for the 90th Ag Field Day celebration! Join us April 26 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the G. H. Cook Campus. For more information on the event and to register as a vendor or exhibitor, please visit http://agfieldday.rutgers.edu/.

Dean’s Corner

Dear Cook Community:

I am pleased to note the completion of renovations to the first floor of Lipman House, which is the new home of a “smart” classroom. Several classes are already being taught in the new facility on the first floor, in what is now being called Lipman Learning House. The new space is particularly well suited for activities related to our partnership with the Liberty Science Center (LSC) and involvement in the National Science Foundation’s (NSF) Centers for Ocean Sciences Education Excellence-Networked Ocean World (COSEE-NOW). COSEE is focused on research, development, and testing of new products for the better delivery of ocean science education. COSEE-NOW, led by Janice McDonnell, is specifically focused on using real-time data from ocean observatories to improve ocean literacy in both formal classroom (k-16) and informal settings like the LSC.

Lipman Learning House serves as the focal point for COSEE-related activities. These include a National Science Foundation pilot study of Communicating Ocean Science to Informal Audiences, a course being test taught to Rutgers undergraduate and graduate students in Lipman Learning House in collaboration with Liberty Science Center. Similarly, the Ocean Methods course is being redesigned to take advantage of the proximity to Passion Puddle as a hands-on test bed that will include PuddleNet wireless access.

Lipman Learning House is a space well suited to teaching students through hands-on learning and long-term research projects. It is also designed to allow researchers from across the university to study how best to teach students. A collaboration with the Graduate School of Education to explore how students learn is already well underway.
This is a truly exciting development that will greatly improve not only our students’ science literacy, but also that of students at all grade levels in schools across the country.

Best regards,

[Signature]

Robert M. Goodman
Executive Dean of Agriculture and Natural Resources
Executive Director of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station
Executive Dean of the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences

Photos courtesy of Janice McDonell

Please send contributions, photos, and questions to Amanda Kolling, kolling@aesop.rutgers.edu. Photos must be of high resolution and should add to the editorial value of a submission. Issues of the Dean’s Monthly Message are published on the last Monday of each month. Deadline for submissions is one week prior to publication.