Faculty and Staff Activities and Accomplishments

Paul Falkowski (IMCS) been elected to fellowship in the American Academy of Microbiology. The Academy, the honorific leadership group within the American Society for Microbiology, recognizes excellence, originality, and creativity in the microbiological sciences. As a newly elected Fellow, Falkowski will be recognized at the Academy Fellows Luncheon and Meeting at the 108th ASM General Meeting in Boston, MA, on June 4.

Professor Emeritus C. Reed Funk and Thomas Molnar (Plant Biology and Pathology) were featured in a Star-Ledger article on hazelnut breeding.

The Rutgers Coastal Ocean Observation Laboratory has been asked to participate in the Africa Partnership Station (APS), one in a series of activities designed to build maritime safety and security in Africa in a comprehensive and collaborative manner. The APS responds to specific African requests for assistance, is aligned with broad international community and U.S. objectives, and is reflective of the mission of the U.S. Africa Command. It seeks to take partnerships into action in a concerted interagency and multinational effort to promote maritime governance around Africa. APS is inspired by the belief that effective maritime safety and security will contribute to development, economic prosperity, and security ashore.

Nilgun Tumer (Plant Biology and Pathology) served on two review panels last fall for federal research agencies in Washington, D.C. The National Science Foundation panel on genes and genomes met October 16–18. At the National Institutes of Health, Tumer served on the panel titled “Cooperative Research Partnerships for Biodefense.” The panel met October 22–24.

James Ford Nussbaum and Galileo Productions have been named silver award winners at the International Academy of the Visual Arts’ 2007 Davey Awards for “Jump!” produced for Rutgers NJAES 4-H. “Jump!” is a short video profiling the NJ 4-H Double Dutch Jump Rope Team from Cumberland County.

James Lashomb, specialist in ornamental pest management, received the NJNLA Distinguished Service Award from the New Jersey Nursery & Landscape Association at their Annual Dinner and Awards Ceremony on December 4.

Barbara O’Neil, specialist in financial resource management, and her eXtension Financial Security for All Community of Practice Leadership Team were awarded the Association for Financial Counseling and Planning Education, Outstanding Consumer Financial Information Award.

Bill Sciarrappa, Monmouth County agricultural agent, received an honorary award as “Master Gardener” at the graduation dinner held November 9 at the Hominy Hill Golf Course in Colts Neck.
**Nurgul Fitzgerald**, specialist in health promotion and behavior, was appointed, by the Department of Health and Senior Services Commissioner Fred M. Jacobs, to the New Jersey Diabetes Advisory Council. The Council is being established as a part of the requirement of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Cooperative Agreement with State-based Programs to incorporate multi-disciplinary planning efforts to reduce the burden of diabetes. Fitzgerald was also interviewed by Turkish Radio Television’s International channel (TRT-INT) regarding obesity, lifestyle, and related issues facing immigrants to the United States. The program was broadcasted worldwide via satellite and internet.

**Alan Robock** (Environmental Sciences) is featured in a *Newsweek* article on “geo-engineering” climate change.

**John Worobey** (Nutrition) was elected to the Board of Directors of the Rutgers Community Health Foundation.

**Lily Young** (Environmental Sciences) served on a grants panel for the Coastal Research and Resource Center–NOAA at the University of New Hampshire, January 7–10.

**Nathan Yee** (Environmental Sciences) served as a panel member for the U.S. Department of Energy, ERSP Program (2007) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Processes Program (2007).

**Student Activities and Accomplishments**

**Emily Merewitz** (graduate program in Plant Biology) won the first place award in the graduate student oral competition of the Northeast American Society Hort Science for her presentation entitled “Identification of quantitative trait loci associated with drought tolerance of creeping bentgrass” at the Society’s annual meeting, January 3–5.

**Grants and Development**

**Ellen Williams**, Monmouth County 4-H agent; Arlene Sciarappa, director, 21st CCLC Easter Seals New Jersey; **Bill Sciarappa**, Monmouth County agricultural agent; **Rachel Tansey**, FCHS program associate, **Shareese Porter**, senior program coordinator, FCHS; **Virginia Krzyzanowski**, 4-H program associate; and **Diane Zahorsky**, County Extension horticulturist, received $2,500 for Building Skills For Youth and Families Through Horticulture, Nutrition and the Arts, from Cultivating Youth and Communities for Positive Futures, New Jersey Children, Youth And Families At-Risk grant.

**Sharon Kinsey**, Camden County 4-H agent, received $4,000 in funding for two mini-grants for CHARACTER COUNTS! Everywhere, All the Time and Growing Junior Master Gardeners in Camden, NJ from Cultivating Youth and Communities for Positive Futures, New Jersey Children, Youth and Families At-Risk grant.

**Tamara Pellien**, Bergen County 4-H Program Associate, and **Jennae DuBois**, Passaic County 4-H Program Associate, received $4,000 in a mini-grant for Junior Master Gardeners from Cultivating Youth and Communities for Positive Futures, New Jersey Children, Youth and Families At-Risk grant.
Rutgers Fruit and Vegetable IPM/ICM Programs in the Northern New Jersey Highlands Region received $75,000, FY08, from the NJ Highlands Council. (Win Cowgill, Hunterdon County Agricultural Agent; Dean Polk, State Fruit IPM Agent; Kris Holstrom, Program Associate; and George Hamilton, Extension Specialist in Pest Management.)

**Nathan Yee** (Environmental Sciences) and **Tamar Barkay** (Biochemistry and Microbiology) received $996,810 for “Reduction of mercury in saturated subsurface sediments and its potential to mobilize mercury in its elemental form” from the U.S. Department of Energy.

**Chris Obropta** (Water Resources Program), in cooperation with the NJDEP Division of Water Supply, was awarded $300,000, as part of the EPA Pollution Prevention Grants Program to develop a model community-based water conservation program. The Water Resources Program received a $38,000 grant from the New Jersey Marine Sciences Consortium for the “Water Resources Education Initiative” to plan and hold two conferences and expand the existing “Stormwater Management in Your Backyard” program. The Water Resources Program also received a $79,918 subcontract from Stevens Institute of Technology for “In-Situ Measurement and Investigation of Sediment/Water Column Exchange.”

**Alan Robock** (Environmental Sciences) received $5,000 from Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station’s Internal Hatch Awards Program for “The Global Soil Moisture Data Bank and Geoengineering.”

Cipriano Landscape Design, based in Ramsey, New Jersey, kicked off its Keeping It Green Foundation with a $10,000 donation to Rutgers University for four $2,500 scholarships to recipients in the Department of Landscape Architecture and the Department of Plant Biology and Pathology. Scholarship recipients will be named this spring, with the scholarship taking effect in fall 2008. Designed to foster eco-friendly practices, Cipriano’s Keeping It Green Foundation encompasses scholarships, internships, and workshops to promote environmental responsibility. As part of the company’s new Keeping It Green program, Cipriano’s goal is to collaborate with Rutgers to develop activities that foster awareness for environmental conservation. The Cipriano Keeping It Green Foundation is the company’s latest step in integrating environmental conservation into its everyday practices. Photo (l. to r.): Chris Cipriano, president of Cipriano Landscape Design and Marie B. Prieur, director of development.

**Publications and Editorships**

**Daphna Havkin-Frenkel** (Biotechnology Center for Agriculture and the Environment) and **Faith Belanger** (Plant Biology and Pathology) are co-editors of a new book titled *Biotechnology in Flavor Production* that has been published by Blackwell Publishing. **Rong Di** (Plant Biology and Pathology) has a chapter in the book titled “Increasing the methional content in potato through biotechnology.”
Daniel Hoffman (Nutrition) was named co-executive editor of the journal *Appetite*. Hoffman was also invited to give commentary on obesity prevention programs in the journal *Reports in Public Health*.

John Worobey (Nutrition) authored a chapter titled “Risk factors for obesity in early human development,” which appeared in Fitzgerald, H.E., and Mousouli, V. (Eds.), *Obesity in Childhood and Adolescence* (Vol. 2), Westport, CT: Praeger. Worobey was also reappointed for a three-year term to the editorial board of the *Journal of Nutrition Education & Behavior*.

Conferences, Seminars, and Other Events

The Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station Center for Urban Environments (CUE) recently launched two pilot programs in the New Brunswick area: Volunteer Leader Development for Latino Audiences and CUE Youth Research Team. Volunteer Leader Development project principals are Lydia B. Blalock, assistant extension specialist for youth development, Laura K. Bovitz, County 4-H Agent for Middlesex County, and Niki Learn, CUE program coordinator; Youth Research Team project principals are Lydia B. Blalock and Niki Learn.

The Center for Turfgrass Science held its 17th annual Turfgrass Research Symposium on January 10–11. The program, which featured a keynote presentation on biofuels by Tom Voigt (Univ. of Illinois–Urbana Champaign), included talks on a variety of basic and applied turfgrass research. On November 7, a special seminar for the Microbial Source Tracking Group was held at the Monmouth County Extension office organized by Bill Sciarappa, Monmouth County Agricultural Agent, and Monmouth University Associate Dean John Tiedemann. Forty-four participants attended the program that centered on new PCR-technology and emerging programs to identify the source of indicator bacteria and pathogenic microorganisms. Collaborators included representatives from EPA Region 2, NJDEP, County Boards of Health, watershed managers, and environmental organizations. At the end of the day, SEBS Dean of Academic Affairs Jerry Kukor began to forge a new MST effort among RCE, the Water Resources Department, and the Rutgers Biotechnology Departments.

Rutgers Water Resources Program co-sponsored “Stream and Riparian Corridor Restoration Workshop: Innovative Approaches to Stream Stabilization and Restoration” with the North Jersey Resource Conservation and Development Council. The Workshop was sponsored by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and was hosted by the Clifford and Melda C. Snyder Research and Extension Farm. The course trained more than 80 professionals from New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania on stream stabilization techniques.

Joel Flagler, Bergen County agricultural agent, initiated a specialized Horticultural Therapy and Training Program for youth ages 14–21 with impaired cognitive ability in collaboration with the Bergen County Special Services School District.

Brian Oleksak, agricultural program associate, with Mark Vodak, specialist in forestry, hosted the North Jersey Forest Stewardship Meeting on October 4. Thirty woodlot owners from northern New Jersey attended the program, “Insects and Diseases of North Jersey Woodlots.”
An exploratory visit (January 15–19) was made by a group of School of Environmental and Biological Sciences faculty to the university system in Oaxaca, Mexico, to evaluate possible collaborations between Rutgers and the Oaxacan universities with respect to educational and scientific outreach to Mixtec and Zapotec indigenous populations in New Brunswick. The visiting team of faculty included Peter Guarnaccia (Human Ecology), Ariel Igal (Nutrition), Tom Montville (Food Science), and Jim White (Plant Biology and Pathology). The team was accompanied to Oaxaca by Antonio Paredes (a representative of the New Brunswick organization Lazos America Unida). In Oaxaca, the team visited with the rector (president) of the Oaxaca University System, directors of research institutes, faculty, and indigenous community members. The visit to Oaxaca will be followed by a visit of faculty from the Mixtec Technological University to Rutgers University and the New Brunswick community of immigrants.

Bill Sciarappa, Monmouth County agricultural agent, organized a Rain Garden Construction Seminar on November 20 that was attended by 25 landscapers. The purpose was to train professionals in building landscaped water recharge systems for homeowners and municipalities. Rutgers NJAES Cooperative Extension of Monmouth County Program Assistant Vivian Quinn gave a presentation on rain gardens, and together with Brian Hulme, program assistant, led a tour of the newly constructed rain garden at the County Ag Building. Rich Obal, Monmouth County agricultural agent, and horticulturalist Diane Zahorsky discussed proper plant selection. Union County Agricultural Agent Madeline Flahive DiNardo, talked about her successful efforts in North Jersey, and Chris Obropta, specialist in water resources, provided important technical details.

Future Farmers of America held their annual Career Development Day on the G. H. Cook Campus on November 15. Approximately 200 students from 27 high schools attended to test their agricultural skills in various disciplines. Monmouth County Program Assistants Vivian Quinn and Brian Hulme, and Monmouth County Agricultural Agent Bill Sciarappa managed the vegetable identification and fruit judging sessions.

Rutgers NJAES Cooperative Extension personnel continue to collaborate with the New Jersey Environmental Federation, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, and others to develop and conduct IPM trainings focusing on the landscape and turf component for school district IPM programs. A session was held on November 15 in Bordentown, NJ. More than 100 principals and facilities managers/head custodians attended. Bill Hlubik, Middlesex County agricultural agent, presented.

FYI

Rutgers NJAES Seminar Series on Raw Milk
Rutgers Ramapo Tomato Orders
The New Ocean County Cooperative Extension Website
The New Rutgers TEEM Gateway Website

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.
Please join me on Wednesday, February 13, at 5:00 p.m. for Garden State Harvest: New Jersey’s Agricultural Heritage Exhibition Opening Reception. New Jersey’s dynamic agricultural heritage from pre-colonial times to the present will be highlighted in this exhibition. The display will feature diaries, letters, journals, broadsides, trade catalogs, photographs, and museum objects illustrating agriculture’s broad impact on our state’s history and culture. The guest speaker at the exhibition opening will be Charles Hampton Harrison, author of Tending the Garden State: Preserving New Jersey’s Farming Legacy (Rivergate Books, 2006). The exhibition will run February 5–April 30, 2008.

The reception will be held in the Remigio U. Pane Room, 1st floor of Archibald S. Alexander Library on the College Avenue Campus. To RSVP, please call 732-932-7505, or send an email to events@rci.rutgers.edu. If you need assistance with parking for this event, please indicate as such with your RSVP.

Additional events will be held in conjunction with this exhibition in March and April. I will be giving a presentation titled “How New Jersey Agriculture Leads the Nation: Looking Back to Look Ahead” on March 13 at 5:00 p.m. Mark Robson will be leading a panel discussion titled “The Transformation of New Jersey Farms: Rutgers Cooperative Extension Agent Perspectives” on April 10 at 5:00 p.m. Both of these events will be held at Alexander Library.

One additional note as we head toward Super Bowl XLII—I’m sure that you all noticed that the turf on Lambeau Field during the Packers v. Giants game was particularly nice. That’s because that turf has its “roots” right here at Rutgers. Perhaps that East Coast turf was just the edge the Giants needed to pull off their overtime win!

Best regards,

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