Mark Robson, dean of agricultural and urban programs, has made good progress in revising the agricultural sciences major. Among the classes that are being explored as additions to the new curriculum are Sustainable Agriculture; Value-Added Agriculture; Controlled-Environment Agriculture; Precision Agriculture; Energy-Efficient Farming; Direct Marketing; Agrotourism; Applied Economics; and Farm Management. In addition to the traditional classes on campus, there are plans to utilize the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station’s nine off-campus research centers and 21 county cooperative extension offices. We hope to partner with government and industrial scientists, as well as develop a core of “farmer faculty” who will help to provide leadership, instruction, and experiential learning components for this initiative.

Our commitment to offering students a range of courses and programs of study in the agricultural sciences comes at a critical time in our state’s and nation’s history. There is a need for more teachers of agriculture and horticulture, technical professionals for industrial and governmental positions, as well as specialized positions in occupational and horticultural therapy, and cooperative extension professionals. Rutgers has the opportunity to be a leader in educating the next generation of agriculture professionals.

Prior to summer 2008, the closest John Bolton (’10 Plant Biology and Pathology) came to farming while growing up in Woodbury, NJ, was riding his bicycle around nearby farms with his friends. Although his grandfather had grown his own food, John had no experience with farming and certainly had not considered pursuing agricultural sciences as a career. But now, armed with his summer 2008 Undergraduate Research Farm Internship with the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences and the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, John is contemplating graduate school research options in plant breeding. (Read more)

Daniel Hoffman, an associate professor with the Department of Nutritional Science in New Brunswick, admits that some people don’t fully understand his job description. Part physiologist, part epidemiologist, and part nutritionist, Hoffman studies the biological and environmental factors that influence health in some of the poorest nations of the world. From North Korea to Brazil, he has examined a range of health issues, especially obesity in children. (Read more)
As the cold, dry climate of the western Antarctic Peninsula becomes warmer and more humid, phytoplankton—the bottom of the Antarctic food chain—is decreasing off the northern part the peninsula and increasing further south, Rutgers marine scientists have discovered. In research to be published tomorrow in the journal Science, Martin Montes-Hugo and Oscar Schofield report that levels of phytoplankton off the western Antarctic Peninsula have decreased 12 percent over the past 30 years. (Read more)

Christening RU27

On May 19, 2008, Rutgers University’s Coastal Ocean Observation Lab (RU COOL) attempted the first transatlantic flight by an autonomous underwater vehicle. That glider, RU17, made it within days of the Azores, a Portuguese archipelago, before succumbing to what may have been an overly curious shark.

This spring, researchers and students from RU COOL will attempt the transatlantic mission again—this time with the new and improved RU27. This glider is longer, providing more room for batteries, and is painted with a special nonstick coating to deter “biological interactions.” It can also move backwards and dive deeper into the ocean. On March 23, RU27 was officially christened by Zdenka Willis, director of the NOAA IOOS program. Jeffrey Osowski, vice president of learning and teaching at the Liberty Science Center, was also present.

Depending on weather and ocean conditions, RU27 is set to fly on April 13. To follow RU27’s progress, visit RU COOL’s mission page.
Rutgers Against Hunger Stocks Local Food Pantry

In March, RAH partnered with the Greater New Brunswick Charter School (GBCS) to build a new food pantry. Over half of the children enrolled in the school are on the free or reduced-price lunch program and many of these families are struggling in the current economy. Teachers and administrators have noticed an increase in the number of children who are malnourished, tired, and having difficulty concentrating because they are not getting the nutritious foods their bodies need.

The GBCS was the recipient of two large donations from the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences and the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station. Martin Hall kicked things off with a fierce competition between the first floor and the second and third floors combined for quantity of food donated. In less than one week’s time, more than 1,000 items of food were collected. The second and third floors won the competition in a close race to the finish.

The second contest was a challenge issued by Dean Goodman to all departments, centers, and institutes in the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences and the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, to top Martin Hall’s donation. The winning department would receive $1,000 to go toward research. The winner of that contest was the Department of Entomology. On March 27, Dean Goodman delivered more than 10 boxes of food to the GBCS food pantry as a result of the interdepartmental challenge.

The food pantry is still in urgent need of donations. Fruit, fruit juice, and ready-to-eat meals are most welcome. For more information, please visit http://rah.rutgers.edu.

FIC Teams with the Community Food Bank of New Jersey

Rutgers NJAES Food Innovation Center is assisting the Community Food Bank (CFB) of New Jersey in the identification and implementation of new sources of funding derived from branded products produced at the CFB facility in Hillside, NJ. The CFB developed and introduced two bagel crisps products in 2008, branded “Grains for Good,” and has received very favorable
results in its market sales thus far. The FIC is assisting CFB with a product manufacturing and commercialization plan to manufacture Grain for Goods Bagel Chips in greater volumes over the months ahead, which will enhance the job training opportunities that the CFB provides.

The CFB project was launched after a feasibility study was conducted by a team of graduate students from the Rutgers Business School’s (RBS) Team Consulting Program, which validated public receptiveness to this concept. This project was led by FIC Director Lou Cooperhouse, who is also an adjunct faculty member of RBS. This project recently received recognition in a Wall Street Journal article.

Faculty and Staff Activities and Accomplishments

Mark Robson (dean, agricultural and urban programs) received a distinguished alumnus award for accomplishments in biological sciences during the 6th Annual Distinguished Alumni/ae Awards Reception and Dinner held on March 6. The award recognizes Robson’s “important contributions to the field of environmental health through research, teaching, and service.” Florence K. L. Tangka, an alumna of Cook College and senior economist in the Epidemiology and Applied Research branch of the CDC, received the distinguished alumna award in social and behavioral sciences. Ann Marie Carlton received her M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from Rutgers. Her adviser was Barbara Turpin. She is now a research scientist in the Atmospheric Modeling Division of the U.S. EPA. Carlton received the distinguished alumna award for early career accomplishments.

Joan Erhenfeld (Ecology, Evolution, and Natural Resources) had her letter to the editor published in the January 26 issue of Nature.

Carey Williams (specialist in equine management) has been voted vice chair of HorseQuest. She has been a part of this organization since its inception in 2005. She accepted the nomination while attending the eXtension HorseQuest Community of Practice meeting in Louisville, Jan. 5–7.

Barbara O’Neill (Financial Resource Management specialist) was interviewed on Feb. 18 for a segment on the NBC Today Show about online investing courses. O’Neill has also been selected by the Jump$tart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy to receive the 2009 William E. Odom Visionary Leadership Award at the annual Jump$tart dinner in Washington, D.C., on April 1. The Odom Award is the highest award given nationally for individual contributions that further personal financial education/literacy among students in kindergarten through college. Mr. Odom, former chairman of Ford Motor Credit Company, was the inspiration for the award and its first recipient.

Don Schaffner (Food Science) is the recipient of the International Association for Food Protection’s (IAFP) 2009 Elmer Marth Educator Award. The award comes with a plaque and a $1,500 honorarium. It is presented for outstanding service to the public, IAFP, and the arena of education in food safety and food protection.
Mukund Karwe (Food Science) has been selected as this year’s recipient of the William Cruess Award for Excellence in Teaching. This is the highest national teaching award of the Institute of Food Technologists and will be conferred at the association’s annual meeting in California this June. Karwe was also recognized for his food science/Culinology work at Bergen County Technical Schools during a February Paramus Board of Education meeting.

Rutgers NJAES Food Innovation Center has formed a strategic partnership with the New Jersey Food Processors Association to strengthen and grow the organization, provide new services for its membership, and widen its reach within New Jersey. The center will take on a portion of the association’s administrative and marketing duties, manage its website and membership communications, and assisting with long-term strategic planning.

An articulation agreement between Mercer County Community College (MCCC) and the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences was recently signed. The purpose of this agreement is to enable students who graduate from MCCC to continue their education and obtain a Bachelor of Science in Food Science from Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences. Students completing the associate in science degree with an emphasis on Culinology may transfer 74 credits toward a B.S. in Food Science (general food science option), allowing them to complete their Rutgers degree in four to five years of part-time study or two years of full-time study.

The following awards were presented at the annual meeting of the New Jersey Association of 4-H Agents held on Feb. 26 in Mount Holly:

- Friend of 4-H: Karyn Malinowski (Equine Science Center)
- Volunteer of the Year: Wallace Warren, Gloucester County 4-H Volunteer. It was also announced that Warren will be the recipient of the state and regional Lifetime Volunteer Salute to Excellence Award, to be recognized by the Northeast Region later this year.
- Excellence in 4-H Programming: Lisa Rothenburger (Somerset County 4-H agent), Rachel Lyons, (Morris County 4-H agent), and Theresa Yost (Morris County 4-H program associate) for Be the Change Service Learning Summer Day Camp; Susan Makres (Atlantic County 4-H program associate) and Joanne Kinsey (Atlantic County FCHS educator) for Family Fun Nights; Rachel Lyons (Morris County 4-H agent), Gloria Kraft, (Burlington County 4-H agent), Macy Compton (state 4-H program coordinator), and Karen Mansue (Ocean County 4-H program associate) for New Jersey Operation Military Kids; Laura Bovitz (Middlesex County 4-H agent), Rachel Lyons, Lisa Rothenburger, Alayne Torretta (Warren County 4-H agent), Jennae DuBois (Passaic County 4-H program associate), Tamara Pellien (Bergen County 4-H program associate), Jim Nichnadowicz (Union County 4-H agent), Terri Yost, and Abbie Kesely (Middlesex County 4-H program assistant) for North Jersey Teen Conference; Jeannette Rea-Keyword (Cumberland County 4-H agent) and Donna Griebau (Cumberland County 4-H program assistant) for
the “Robotics Explorer” 4-H Enrichment Program; Linda Strieter (Gloucester County 4-H agent), Peggy McKee (former Gloucester County 4-H program associate), Luanne Hughes (Gloucester County FCHS educator), and Mary Cummings (Gloucester County Ag program associate) for Seeds to Success Youth Farm Stand; Lisa Rothenburger and Carol Ward (Somerset County 4-H agent) for Somerset County TOPS Camp; Tamara Pellien for the Art of Communication.

Awards announced that will be received in October at NAE4-HA:
- Distinguished Service Award – Macy Compton
- Meritorious Service Award – Carol Ward

Two tall fescue varieties (50-9440 and 50-9460) developed by the Turfgrass Breeding program received awards in France for distinction, uniformity, and stability, and for turf performance. The French Recommended List is the official inscription list for the county which gives one the license to sell the varieties in France.

Student Activities and Accomplishments

Christine Duncan (graduate student, Endocrinology and Animal Biosciences) received a grant in aid of research ($1,000) from the Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology for her proposal “Sex-limited regulation of growth in Sceloporus lizards.”

Alison Golinski (graduate student, Animal Sciences) has been selected for a Fulbright award to visit the Czech Republic in 2010. Her Fulbright project will build on research that she has already initiated with Lukáš Kratochvíl at Charles University in Prague, investigating the hormonal regulation of sexual dimorphisms in closely related species of eyelid geckos.

The following Animal Sciences students competed in the Northeast Student Affiliate (NESA) of the American Society of Animal Science/American Dairy Science Association Annual Student Competition.
- Animal judging (placement out of 186): Kristene Welch (12); Rachel Waltzer (25); Sara Omar (29); Michele Zaccaro (32)
- Paper presentations (out of 50 participants): Michele Zaccaro and Angela Serrani (top 30%)
- Research presentations (out of 14 participants): Kristene Welch (3rd); Jennie Zambito (4th); Lisa Fiorenza (5th)

The following graduating seniors are recipients of the Ecology, Evolution, and Natural Resources’ Outstanding Student Awards:
- Dimilry Gershenson, M. Buell Outstanding Student in Ecology
- Stevie N. Steffey, R. Locandro Outstanding Student in Natural Resources
- Samuel D. Joseph, J. Applegate Outstanding Student in Wildlife Conservation
- Carolyn E. Haines, E. B. Moore Outstanding Student in Forestry Award
- Jeremy Feinberg (graduate program in Ecology and Evolution) received a Bevier Fellowship for the 2009–2010 academic year.
Rutgers undergraduate **Nutritional Sciences** majors who are members of the Kappa Omicron Nu honor society provided Elijah’s Promise clientele with tips on healthy eating during a Rutgers Against Hunger Health Fair held at the soup kitchen.

**Grants and Gifts**

A complete list of grants received can be found [here](#).

**Chad Ripberger** (Mercer County 4-H agent), received $45,650 from National 4-H Council to serve as project director of 4-H SET (Science, Engineering, and Technology) in Urban Communities. The contract is renewable for up to three years.

**Nilgun Tumer** (Plant Biology and Pathology; Biotechnology Center for Agriculture and the Environment) has been awarded an NIH grant of $2.9 Million for four years to study “Small molecule inhibitors of Shiga and ricin toxins.” This is a joint application with the Mayo Clinic and Walter Reid Medical Center. Mayo is the lead institution with multiple PIs.

**Publications and Editorships**


**Nurgul Fitzgerald** (Health Promotion and Behavior specialist) was appointed to a second three-year term with the Editorial Board of the *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*.

**Conferences, Seminars, and Other Events**

The 32nd Annual Trade Show and Educational Conference was held Feb. 25 at the Meadowlands Exhibition Center. The event was hosted by the New Jersey Landscape Contractor’s Association. RCE Bergen County has been a proud partner of the association since its inception in 1977. For the past 21 years, **Joel Flagler** (Bergen County Agricultural and Resource Management agent) has coordinated and chaired the educational program. The event is aimed at professional improvement and timely updates for 1,500–2,000 professionals each year. This year’s conference featured Jim Murphy (Extension specialist in turfgrass management) speaking on organic turf care and **Madeline Flahive DiNardo** (Union County Agricultural and Resource Management agent) lecturing on rain gardens.
Nina Fefferman (Ecology, Evolution, and Natural Resources) is one of only two Rutgers nominees for the Packard Fellowship for Science and Engineering Award for 2009. The fellowship would “allow the nation’s most promising professors to pursue science and engineering research early in their careers with few funding restrictions and limited paperwork requirements. Every year, the Foundation invites the presidents of 50 universities to nominate two professors each from their institutions. Nominations are reviewed by an advisory panel of distinguished scientists and engineers. The panel then selects 20 Fellows to receive individual awards of $875,000, payable over five consecutive years.”

Rick Lathrop (Ecology, Evolution, and Natural Resources) was invited to present a paper at the Atlantic Estuarine Research Society’s annual spring meeting at Ocean City, MD, on March 6. The talk was titled “Assessing the impact of land use change on the Barnegat Bay estuary.”

Beth Ravit (Environmental Sciences) was an invited speaker to the National Parks Service Jamaica Bay Oyster Restoration Project; the New School Oyster Gardening Design Project, and the New York City Oyster Gardening Program Lecture Series; Oyster Reef Restoration in an Urban Estuary: Are We Ready? Ravit was also an invited guest on the Leonard Lopate NPR radio program to discuss oyster restoration in the New York/New Jersey harbor estuary.

Alan Robock (Environmental Sciences) gave the following invited presentations: “The global soil moisture data bank and scales of soil moisture variations with applications to network design” at the National Integrated Drought Information System Workshop in Oak Ridge, TN, March 3–5; “Smoke and mirrors: Is geoengineering a solution to global warming?” at the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, CA, on Feb. 23; and “Climatic consequences of nuclear conflict” at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, CA, on Feb. 24.

Peter Strom (Environmental Sciences) gave an invited presentation titled “Troubleshooting bulking sludge and foam operation issues in wastewater treatment plants” at the NJWEA Technology Transfer Seminar in Eatontown.

Barbara Turpin (Environmental Sciences) gave an invited seminar titled “Secondary organic aerosol formation through aqueous photochemistry (cloud processing)” at Arizona State University in February. She also provided an invited platform presentation on the same topic at the Atmospheric Chemical Mechanisms Conference.

Rutgers NJAES Food Innovation Center has developed a three-hour course designed to provide unemployed community residents wishing to enter the food production industry with an overview of best practices in food processing and food safety. This course is being offered free to community residents thanks to funding received by Gloucester County College from a community-based job training grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. All who attend the class receive a certificate of completion. There is no cost to attend, but individuals must register. Classes are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Registration and course information can be found here. In the coming months, the Food Innovation Center will offer a curriculum of six classes that provide classroom and hands-on training, which will be made available to unemployed and displaced individuals via referrals from county Workforce Investment Boards.
William Hallman (Food Policy Institute) was an invited panelist on Rx to Fight Hunger. Executive Dean Bob Goodman, who assisted the sponsors in planning the conference, convened the panel discussion titled “Food banks, food gardens, and sustainable foods.” Other members of the panel included Kathleen DiChiara, president and CEO of the Community Food Bank of New Jersey; George Braley, senior vice president of government relations and public policy at Feeding America; and Frederick Kirschenmann, president of the Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture. The conference, held at the Liberty Science Center, was sponsored by the Healthcare Institute of New Jersey and the Merck Company Foundation.

Nurgul Fitzgerald (Health Promotion and Behavior specialist) gave an invited talk titled “Promoting Health in New Jersey” at the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) Support Network Meeting in New Brunswick on Jan. 14.

William Sciarappa (Monmouth County Agricultural and Resource Management agent) coordinated the Central Jersey Vegetable Growers Meeting on Feb. 6 in Freehold. Over 130 participants received agricultural information from New Jersey Farm Bureau President Richard Nieuwenhuis, Monmouth County Board of Agriculture President Tom Frieberger, as well as from New Jersey Department of Agriculture, USDA-Farm Service Agency, and USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service. Speakers from Rutgers NJAES Cooperative Extension included Pat Hastings (program associate); Gerry Ghidiu (specialist in vegetable entomology); Brad Majek (specialist in weed science); Andy Wyenandt (specialist in vegetable pathology); Wes Kline (Cumberland County Agricultural and Resource Management agent); Bill Hlubik (Middlesex County Agricultural and Resource Management agent), and NJAES Associate Director Jack Rabin.

Carol Byrd-Bredbenner (Nutritional Sciences) presented “Tailored communication trumps ‘one size fits all’” at Food 3000 in Tourettes, France.

Sandra Goodrow (Water Resources Program) presented “The Assicunk Creek Headwater Restoration and Protection Plan: Water Quality, Site Evaluation and Next Steps” at the NRCS Friendly Farms Soil Health Workshop on February 26 at the Burlington County Soil Conservation District Building in Burlington County. Approximately 45 people were in attendance.

Christopher Obropta (Water Resources Program) presented “Goose Management through Habitat Restoration” at the Goose Management Workshop, Bergen County Community College, Paramus, March 3. Approximately 75 were in attendance. He also presented “Cost-Effective Stormwater Management for Public Works Yards” at the Annual Township Engineers and Public Works Directors Meeting for the Whippany River Watershed Action Committee, Florham Park, on March 4 and “Careers in Water Resources” at the Environmental Career Day for New Jersey’s AmeriCorps, Rutgers EcoComplex, Bordentown, on March 13.

International Projects

The following students are recipients of the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences International Summer Scholarship:
Ty Triplett, Junior, Landscape architecture, gardens, and landscapes of Tuscany
Joshua Weiner, Sophomore, EPIB, Global PACT Thailand
Sara McClurg, Sophomore, EPIB, Primatology in Kenya
Manoj Thakore, Junior, Biotechnology, Summer in Belize
Nicholas Guido, Junior, Biotechnology, Coral research in Caribbean
Shannon Storey, Junior, Environmental Sciences, Australia
Vanessa Allen, Junior, Environ Economics, International Food Law
Sean Lee, Junior, Biology, Primatology in Kenya

Ilya Raskin (Plant Biology and Pathology; Biotechnology Center for Agriculture and the Environment) and his team hosted a student from Rhodes University, South Africa, March 2–6, for training through the Global Institute for BioExploration (GIBEX) program. Gili Joseph trained Candice Bromely to perform 10 screens-to-nature assays, and Slavik Dushenkov taught data management for the database operations. Candice is a student of Mike Davies-Coleman, the head of the Department of Chemistry at Rhodes University. His program will use GIBEX screens to study biological activity of extracts from marine organisms.

Mark Your Calendar!

Food Innovation Center Incubator Tour
WHEN: April 16 and May 6 at 1:30
WHERE: 450 E. Broad St. (Route 49), Bridgeton
WHAT: Free tours of FIC’s business incubator facility
MORE INFO: Registration required: http://foodinnovation.rutgers.edu/fictour.html

2009 Celebration of Excellence Awards Dinner
WHEN: April 23, 5:30–9 p.m.
WHERE: Cook Campus Center
WHAT: Dinner to recognize faculty, staff, students, and volunteers at the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences and the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station for outstanding professional contributions to the university and community. $15/person; RSVP required.
MORE INFO: Contact Patricia Kastner, kastner@sebs.rutgers.edu, 732-932-7000 ext. 4211

Rutgers Day/Ag Field Day
WHEN: April 25, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.
WHERE: New Brunswick Campus
WHAT: A celebration of Rutgers with tours, performances, exhibits, presentations, hands-on activities, and more on New Brunswick’s Cook, Douglass, College Avenue, and Busch campuses. The traditional Ag Field Day continues as part of the Rutgers Day celebrations. All are welcome to this free event.
MORE INFO: Contact Patricia Kastner, kastner@sebs.rutgers.edu, 732-932-7000 ext. 4211

This report is produced by the Office of Communications. For information or to provide comments, please contact Amanda Kolling at kolling@njaes.rutgers.edu or 732-932-7000, ext. 4205.