



## Agent's Overview

Every growing season an agent sees examples of why we admire our agricultural clients. We appreciate your farming skills, hard working attitude, project management, equipment expertise, diverse personalities, solid character and especially a risk taking courage. Occasionally, a situation occurs that makes anyone "afraid" of this risky agricultural life – the unpredictability of Mother Nature with unexpected floods, drought, disease and pestilence. To add to these vagaries of nature, just when you think everything is under control and the crop is made it **hails!** Hail is very *scary*. It's not supposed to come in mid-August along with 70 MPH

winds and several inches of sideways rain. but it did this year in several NJ areas including one of our own Rutgers Research farms (Pittstown). Our tomatoes, peppers, melons and all kinds of specialty vegetable crops were all elaborately arranged in test blocks, the fruit trees were loaded with ripening fruit and the field crops were growing rapidly – all to be pelted with icy little rocks from above – p. 7.

We Ag agents scurry to recover and salvage the farm trials; but at least we're not in financial risk like you can be. We did have to prematurely end much of our best laid plans and cancel several scheduled grower meetings including the fantastic Tomato Tasting Day where upwards of 1,000 people

attend. One take home message from this severe weather event might be to more strongly consider crop insurance when available. If you're interested in learning more, contact Rutgers Agent Dave Lee in Salem County.

We all learned the hard way here and hope you have fared much better this summer. I realize that tomato and pepper prices are in the dumper because of the southeast early spring freeze-out, and follow-up late planting, but at least there is a good crop in NJ. We can again feel a bit of your pain and anxiety and remain impressed by your endless capability to recover and keep on going amidst risk and adversity. An ounce of luck can be worth a bushel of brains. *Bill Sciarappa*



## 2007 Monmouth County Fair

By Vivian Quinn

East Freehold Park is clean and quiet after the almost rain-free 33<sup>rd</sup> Monmouth County Fair held July 25 - 29. Once again thousands of adults and children enjoyed the annual event sponsored by the Monmouth County Park System and the 4-H Association whose theme was "Get Caught in Our Web."



2007 Fair Chair Drew D'Apolito & 4-H Agent Ellen Williams

Monmouth County Master Gardeners outdid themselves with displays and information for the public. This was the place to be if you wanted to know about plants, insects or sustainable gardening practices. Diane Zahorsky, Home Horticulturist and Master Gardener Coordinator, reported that the many displays, especially the but-

*(Continued on page 2)*



Caralee Zupa - Animal Science Intern Rutgers Co-op Education

Home and Garden Tent Chair Fran Lorelli said "I am very pleased and think it is going to be a record year." Veteran judge Carleen Kierce felt that the vegetable competition had increased entries of higher quality and variety. Rich Obal, County Agriculture and Resource Management Agent, agreed saying, "It is a fabulous, excellent year for entries. The overall quality and number of entries are up."



Diane Zahorsky, Rutgers Master Gardener Coordinator

## Monmouth County Mosquito Extermination Commission at Your Service

Through mid-August, mosquito numbers have been relatively low this year despite rainfall in excess of 8 inches above normal. Overall, July numbers for the County have been the 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest in 30 years. There have been isolated areas, however, where mosquito populations have been high. If you are in a "hot spot," call the Monmouth County Mosquito Extermination Commission at 732-542-3630 and put in a request for service. A mosquito inspector may visit your property and will treat any standing water where mosquito larvae are found. We seek to reduce mosquito larvae habitat by eliminating stagnant water through maintaining ditches and/or desnagging streams. The MCMEC uses a variety of pesticides to kill mosquito larvae based on environment and the stage of mosquito development. These in-

clude natural predators such as mosquito fish and Bti derived from a natural occurring bacteria. Our strategy is to control mosquito larvae with targeted pesticides before they become adults; unless there is evidence of disease such as West Nile virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis. All of our services are available to public or private property owners and are free of charge.

Since 1999 when West Nile virus first appeared in Monmouth County, August through September have been the peak period for disease transmission between mosquitoes and mammals, including humans and horses. So far in 2007, there is little evidence of West Nile virus in Monmouth County; however, the MCMEC reminds property owners to be vigilant in emptying buckets of water, changing water in horse troughs, filling in tire ruts, cleaning gutters, keeping tires in-



Investigate stagnant water sites

doors, and removing water from tarps and other containers. Limit your and your animals' exposure to mosquitoes by staying indoors at dawn and dusk and maintaining window screens in homes and barns. You can significantly reduce the risk of West Nile virus and EEE virus to your horses by having them vaccinated. For more info visit the MCMEC website at [www.visitmonmouth.com/mosquito](http://www.visitmonmouth.com/mosquito). Vicki Thompson - Asst Supv Monmouth Cty. Mosquito Commission

terfly displays, were a huge hit. "The Master Gardeners got the word out to the public out about our Rutgers Master Gardener program. It was teamwork at it's best," said Zahorsky.

Fair Chair Drew D'Apolito's biggest worry was the weather, which threatened but held out until the last few hours. This year the fair opened at 5 p.m. on Friday instead of the morning. Drew said it was a "heartbreak move" but management made the bittersweet decision based on attendance. Ellen Williams, 4-H Agent, missed the Friday camp day participation. However, during the quiet



**"The Master Gardeners got the word out to the public about our Rutgers Master Gardener program. It was teamwork at it's best."**  
*Diane Zahorsky*



Friday hours 4-H'ers were seen tending their animals for the upcoming competitions and certainly "caught many in their web" during the Fair's five day run. Caralee Zupa, an Animal Science Intern from Rutgers Co-op Education Department, said "I love the Fair and animals. I come all the time but this is my first year helping out."

The rides, old tractors, competitions, demonstrations, animals and the enticing aroma of food are now just a memory of another successful county fair. It won't be long before the preparation starts for the 2008 Fair, which is a culmination of a year's work.



Visit <http://rides.webshots.com/album/560060708heeEfC> to see antique tractors from the Monmouth County Fair

## Monmouth County Farms Host Government Leaders

On July 31, the NJ Legislatures' Farm Tour was held in Monmouth County and sponsored by the New Jersey Agricultural Society working closely with the State Department of Agriculture. Sites on the tour included the Horse Park of NJ in Allentown, Perretti Horse Farms in Cream Ridge, Battleview Orchards in Freehold and Four Seasons Nursery in Manalapan. The bus tour was designed to inform New Jersey legislators and policy makers about the farms, nurseries, equine operations and food related businesses in their districts. A take home message for the group was spoken by Scott Applegate, a 4th generation farmer at Battleview Orchards, "If you're not changing with times, you're not going to make it." It's particularly important at this time that state and national regulators make these difficult transitions in agricultural production as easy as possible.

Agricultural Agent Rich Obal from Monmouth County helped inform the bus load with a historical overview and current agricultural facts about our area which

is summarized as follows.

Monmouth County has been an important agricultural area since colonial days. The early English settlers came to the Freehold area where they noticed corn fields cultivated by the Delaware Indians, in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. Monmouth County's early economy was based on subsistence farming. Commercial farming developed during the early part of the 1800's with grain, hay, and nonperishable livestock items sold. Following the Civil War, the production of perishables including milk, eggs, fruits, and vegetables became more prominent. While the rise of the county's manufacturing industry in the late 1800's diminished the prominence of agriculture, farming has remained an important component of Monmouth's economy.

Despite rapid development and a growing population (600,000 in 2006), the agricultural industry in Monmouth County remains economically viable because of its diversity and dynamic character. Today, there are over 56,000 acres of land devoted to Agricultural and

Horticultural use in the County. Cropland and permanent pasture comprise nearly 40,000 acres of the total. Total farm sales in 2006 were conservatively estimated at \$88 million (4<sup>th</sup> in state). In New Jersey, Monmouth County ranks:

### Ornamental Plant Production

2<sup>nd</sup> in the number of nurseries - 202  
 2<sup>nd</sup> in nursery stock acreage - 3,710  
 2<sup>nd</sup> in greenhouse production  
 3<sup>rd</sup> in sod production - 1,200  
 3<sup>rd</sup> in Christmas Tree Farms (48)

### Equine

2<sup>nd</sup> in number of horse farms - 960  
 2<sup>nd</sup> in equine acres - 19,900  
 1<sup>st</sup> in the number of breeding, Training facilities, and Racetracks

### Field Crops

6<sup>th</sup> in Soybean production - 5,300  
 7<sup>th</sup> in Hay production - 4,400 acres

### Vegetables

1<sup>st</sup> in Asian Vegetable Production - 1,000 acres  
 1<sup>st</sup> in Pumpkins - 900 acres  
 1<sup>st</sup> in Roadside Farm Markets - 50+  
 2<sup>nd</sup> in Community Farmers Markets  
 3<sup>rd</sup> in Sweet Corn - 550 acres  
 5<sup>th</sup> in Pepper Production - 200 a  
 5<sup>th</sup> in Tomato Production - 150 a

## Rutgers Gardens Open House "The Nature of Our Heritage"



L-R Rutgers Gardens Director Bruce Crawford, RU intern Timisha Woods, Ag Agent Bill Sciarappa



A casual & successful day for Resource Director Mike Green & Exec. Dean Bob Goodman of RU-SEBS



Ag Agent Rich Obal staffs the "Ask the Expert" table with help of Master Gardeners

Since 1965 Rutgers Gardens has invited the gardening public to see the latest floral introductions and suggestions on how they can be displayed. This year over 1,500 attendees saw colorful new plantings and the Ethnic Vegetable

garden. The expanded focus was on adding plants of international interest to your garden with the theme "The Nature of Our Heritage."

The day included tours, lectures, rare and unusual plant auction, demonstrations, the ever popu-

lar "Ask the Expert" table, a Jersey Fresh Farmer's Market, and a future Perspective of the Rutgers Gardens Tour. The work of dedicated staff, volunteers and both Monmouth County Ag Agents was evident throughout the day.

## Gardens Grow at Monmouth County Ag Building



**Rain Garden** - The latest addition to the Ag Building, is under construction. A rain garden is a landscaped, shallow depression that allows rain to be collected and seep naturally into the ground. This helps recharge groundwater and prevents polluted runoff. Plants help filter pollutants from the water and create a habitat for birds, butterflies and beneficial insects. Our garden will receive runoff from a parking lot that carries potential pollutants such as petrochemicals, sediment, road salt, fertilizers and herbicides. The design is peanut shaped and 50 ft. x 25 ft. x 9 inches deep with a 15 inch berm. It will be landscaped with trees, shrubs and plants that are suitable for wet and dry sites. In addition to this area being a solution to pollution, the garden will serve as a demonstration site for educating the public.



**4-H Bird and Butterfly Rain Garden** - This garden is at the south east side of the Ag Building and was coordinated and planned as an Eagle Scout project.

The focus of this garden is to educate the public in creating a wildlife friendly habitat for birds and butterflies, how to create a rain garden, and to encourage the use of native plants.

The garden consists of a gravel path, garden benches, bird houses, feeders and bath and a variety of plants, shrubs and trees which provide food or shelter. This demonstration garden will educate the public about environmental stewardship and serve as a sanctuary for both children and adults to enjoy the beauty of nature for years to come.



**Grow Team Garden** - The Master Gardeners constructed this children's garden in 2007 for the purpose of conducting a Junior Master Gardener program. The classes are over but Master Gardener volunteers continue to harvest and donate the produce each week.



**Plant-A-Row Garden** - Started in 2006 by the new class of Master Gardeners, they donated 1,600 lbs of produce last year. The Plant-A-Row garden is now protected by a deer fence thanks to our county. To date in 2007, over 800 lbs. of produce have been harvested and donated to food banks.

To apply for the Master Gardener program, call 732-303-7614 or download application at <http://www.visitmonmouth.com/07050coopext/>

To learn more about **Rain Gardens** as seen above click on <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pid=FS513> and attend a special seminar at the RCE offices of Monmouth County on Saturday, Oct. 20 entitled "Streamside Living." To register call the NJAES Office of Continuing Professional Education at 732-932-9271 or <http://www.cookce.rutgers.edu/>

## 2007 RUTGERS TURFGRASS RESEARCH FIELD DAY - AUG 1



The **Adelphia Research Farm in Monmouth County** set the stage for the 2007 Rutgers Landscape and Sports Research Field Day. Over 400 turfgrass maintenance professionals, researchers, and educators attended this annual event. **A new attendance record!**

Highlights included the latest information on weed, insect, and disease control. Showcased, was the field evaluation of the newest and future turfgrass cultivars; that have been bred or introduced by Rutgers University. Demonstrations of the latest equipment and technology for the turf maintenance professional were on display. This annual event was sponsored by the NJ Turfgrass Association, Sports Field Managers Association of NJ, NJ Golf Course superintendents Associations, and the NJ Landscape Contractors Association (NJLCA).

## Classic Tomatoes & New Crops Presented at Chef's Day



Ag Agent Pete Nitzsche prepares tomato taste test with Monmouth County interns & Master Gardeners



NJAES Associate Director Jack Rabin tours & rates trials for NJ chefs & their culinary crews



Ag Agent Win Cowgill serves up some tasty new peach varieties from his trials

The end of July saw another annual Chef's Day at Snyder Research Farm in Pittstown. Approximately 100 of New Jersey's chefs and restaurateurs held their annual meeting at the farm's facilities. After their conference they were treated to the best fresh produce this state has to offer. Not only was this a treat for those attending, but a key marketing strategy for up and coming Jersey Fresh produce. These attendees are highly influential in the purchasing of standard and niche culinary fruits and vegetables. Among those offering tastings were the Monmouth County Extension Office with participation in a hybrid tomato trials of classic fruit from the past and their on going ethnic crop study. This study has been following the demands of recent immigrant populations such as Asian, Hispanic, and African peoples and what they are looking to purchase. Some examples of what has been grown include Hispanic peppers,

Asian-Indian leafy greens, and African gourds. The final outcome of this study is intended to create a new niche market for NJ growers and chefs to exploit.

Other presenters were Professor James Simon with his basil varieties and African teas; Pete Nitzsche with a wide variety of Jersey Tomatoes and Win Cowgill with the peach breeds from the Cream Ridge Research Farm. The culinary expert attendees were intrigued by the possible new dishes that could be created for their customers using these raw materials. The day ended with a tour of the farm and its facilities. This collaborative event was simply another example of how the Rutgers Cooperative Extension and the New Jersey Ag Experimental Stations are taking research from the university and applying it to the real world where it can be enjoyed by the consumers and made profitable for the growers.

# AGENCY UPDATES

## Crop Disaster Program (CDP) –

The President has signed into law the “U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans’ Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act of 2007. This Act provides, among other things, about \$3 billion in agricultural disaster aid for America’s farmers and ranchers. Specifically, the 2007 Act provides funds for a Crop Disaster Program (CDP), Livestock Compensation Program (LCP), Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), and Dairy Disaster Assistance Program (DDAP). Of primary interest to our counties is the CDP which covers quantity and quality losses from natural disasters and related conditions that occurred in 2005, 2006 and 2007 if the crop was planted before February 28, 2007, or in the case of prevented planting would have been planted before February 28, 2007. Producers who incurred qualifying losses in 2005, 2006, or 2007 must choose only **one year** to receive benefits. **Only producers who obtained crop insurance coverage or coverage under the Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance**

**Program (NAP) for the year of loss will be eligible for assistance. Quantity losses must be in excess of 35 percent to be eligible.** The payment rate is set at 42 percent of the established price. Signup will be available in the fall. Please watch future newsletters for signup period dates.

**Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)** - A spin off of the Conservation Reserve Program, CREP allows farmers and ranchers to voluntarily idle environmentally sensitive land, decrease erosion, restore wildlife habitat and safeguard ground and surface water. CREP is a partnership with federal and state government and is limited to specific geographic areas. Like CRP, CREP contracts require a 10 to 15-year commitment to keep lands out of agricultural production. CREP provides annual rental rate payments to participants who enroll eligible land. There are also maintenance payments, cost-share of up to 50 percent on practices installed, and other sign-up incentives for participants to incorporate select combinations of environmentally beneficial practices. Land must be owned or

**Crop Insurance Website**  
<http://salem.rutgers.edu/cropinsurance/index.html>

**CROP INSURANCE CLOSING DATES**  
**SEPTEMBER 30** - Barley, Wheat  
 Forage Production - New  
**NOVEMBER 20** -  
 Apples, Peaches,  
 Blueberries & Cranberries  
**DECEMBER 31** - Potatoes

leased for at least one year prior to enrollment to be eligible, and must be physically and legally capable of being cropped in a normal manner. The acreage must also meet cropping history and other eligibility requirements.

## **FSA Emergency Loans Now Available - Presidential Major Disaster Declaration M1694**

If you suffered physical and/or production losses due to the severe storms and inland & coastal flooding that occurred from April 14, 2007 through April 20, 2007, you may be eligible for a low interest emergency loan. Applications must be filed by 12/27/07 at the local county office. Please contact Ginny Brophy at (908)852-2576, ext. 2 for information.

## **New Jersey Unveils in-state Certification Program**

New Jersey has become the 17<sup>th</sup> state in the nation to gain accreditation from USDA to offer in-state certification services to farmers and processors who want to enter the organic market. NJ Secretary of Agriculture, Charles Kuperus, said the certification program would allow the state to assist organic growers with marketing Jersey Organic products, similar to the Jersey Fresh brand for general produce.

The New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA) was directed to establish an organic certification program through legislation signed into law in September 2003. The law required the establishment of certification procedures for “certified organic” and “transitional sustainable,” and the designing of a label to be affixed to agricultural products that receive certification.

The accreditation allows the department to certify crops, wild crops, livestock and handling operations to the National Organic Standards, which can be found at [www.ams.usda.gov/nop/NOP/NOPhome.html](http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/NOP/NOPhome.html). Overseeing the process was Erich Bremer, NJDA’s Organic Certification Program Supervisor.

With NJDA taking over the regulatory aspects of organic certification, Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Jersey will focus on education, technical support and training for existing and converting organic farmers, along with expansion of marketing opportunities and networks that are linked to local communities.

NJDA expects to have at least 52 organic farms in New Jersey, with 2,228 acres in organic production and \$2.8 million in organic sales. The program also has certified 18 organic food processors and handlers.

For more information about New Jersey’s Organic Certification Program, visit  
[www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/md/prog/jerseyorganic.html](http://www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/md/prog/jerseyorganic.html).

# CALENDAR

## SEPTEMBER

**4-9 - Florida Tomato Conference.**  
(407)660-1949  
**25 - RCE Extension Conference**  
**27 - Rutgers Twilight Farm Tour**  
Bridgeton, NJ 856-455-3100

## OCTOBER

**5 - Equine Pasture Seminar**  
RCE Ag Bld., Freehold. Info at  
[www.esc.rutgers.edu/](http://www.esc.rutgers.edu/)  
**6 - Equine Farm Workshop - Stargate**  
Farm, Allentown, NJ - same as above  
**20 - Streamside Living in Monmouth**  
County - RCE Ag Building, Freehold.  
Register: call 732-932-9271;  
<http://www.cookce.rutgers.edu/>  
**23 - Stream Restoration RCE Ag**  
Building - register same as above

## NOVEMBER

**13 - Nursery Mtg. Producing & Mar-**  
**keting Plants for Plant Habitats.**  
RCE Cumberland. 856-451-2800.

## DECEMBER

**11-13 - New England Vegetable &**  
**Berry Conference - [www.nevbc.org](http://www.nevbc.org)**

## JANUARY 2008

**15-17 - NJ Vegetable Growers An-**  
**ual Meeting & Trade Show - Trump**  
Taj Mahal, Atlantic City

Special Red Oak planted for Freeholder Emeritus Ted Narozanick in front of the Agricultural Building he long envisioned and was instrumental in its construction



Hail destruction on  
vegetables, fruit &  
structures  
August, 17 2007  
Pittstown, NJ



**MONMOUTH COUNTY BOA**  
7:30 PM  
9-18, 10-16, 11,20, 12-18

**BASIC PESTICIDE TRAINING**  
**CORE—9 am - 1 pm**  
10-10, 11-13, 12-11  
**Category 3A & 3B**  
3A - 10-25 9AM - 3 PM  
3B - 11-27 - 9 AM - 3 PM  
To register call 800-524-9942

Held at  
**Rutgers Cooperative Research & Extension, Ag Building**  
4000 Kozloski Rd.

**PESTICIDE CONTROL**  
**PROGRAM WEBSITE**  
Go to website: [www.pcpnj.org](http://www.pcpnj.org)

**RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION**  
**MONMOUTH COUNTY**  
**New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station**

4000 Kozloski Rd, PO Box 5033  
Freehold, NJ 07728  
Agriculture: 732-431-7260  
Family & Consumer Science: 732-431-7271  
4-H: 732-431-7263;7264  
Fax: 732-409-4813

Rutgers Cooperative Extension— Agriculture, Family and Community Health Sciences, 4-H Youth Development, Resource Management, and Marine Studies— welcomes this opportunity to send you the enclosed materials for your information and use. Educational programs and information are provided to all people without regard to sex, race, , national origin, or handicap

Richard G. Obal  
County Agricultural Agent

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THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY  
**RUTGERS**

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