



Agent's Overview

The visionary Jersey Fresh Program initiated by former NJ Secretary of Agriculture Art Brown continues to shine ever more brightly. Art recently visited our Monmouth County Extension Offices for a pleasant chat and kindly posed in front of our Master Gardener P.A.R. garden (see photo). The Jersey Fresh Program of growing, sourcing and buying local produce resonates with the enhanced economic, social and environmental consciousness of today's consumers. Food security concerns are alleviated by knowing the local farmer and how they produce, handle and transport our food. Freshness and taste are most always better with locally grown produce over imports – Garden State farmers really know how to grow and have access to the newest technology and information.



As transportation costs rise, we see economic advantages in short trips to local markets versus long hauls. We now hear about “Carbon Footprints” as an indication of the true cost to planet Earth with such extravagant transport waste. We see alternative fuels like bio-diesel, ethanol, solar and wind power rising from agricultural enterprises.

And now emerging is the understanding that regional farms serve as agro-ecosystems which may well be our best investment yet in maintaining water quantity. Some may say “Heck, we get forty-five or fifty inches of rainfall a year – we’re not the dry South West or the Sahara”. Au contraire monsieur. Our rapid loss of farmland and rapid increase in impervious surface with urban sprawl has led to a rapid loss in water quantity and quality.

(Continued on page 5)

Landmark Clayton Farm joins Preservation Program

Five years ago Ross and Debbie Clayton decided to preserve their farm on Route 537. On Oct. 15, the 139-acre farm became the latest entry into the Farmland Preservation Program through a partnership effort among Freehold Township, Monmouth County and the State Ag Development Committee. To date, a total of 160 farms covering 12,178 acres have been preserved, with Monmouth County ranking 3rd in the state for preserved land.

Attending the event were Freeholder Deputy Director Lillian G. Burry and NJ Agriculture Secretary Charles Kuperus, Freehold Township Deputy Mayor David Salkin, Committeeman Raymond Kershaw, Freeholder Emeritus Ted Narozanick and County Ag Development Board and Planning Board leader/Director Harriett Honigfeld

Freeholder Burry said, “Monmouth County is very happy to do its part in protecting this and other farms. This land represents Monmouth County’s history, what it is now and what it will be for many years to come.” Secretary Kuperus applauded the Clayton family’s decision to preserve their farm, which will be enjoyed by many for years to come. According to Deputy Mayor Salkin, the Clayton preservation was a top priority which has been accomplished.

Ross and Debbie were elated to finally be a part of the Farmland Preservation Program and to ensure that their land will be a part of Monmouth County’s agricultural community forever. The farm was beautifully decorated for the fall season

(Continued on page 2)



Harriett Honigfeld, Secretary of Agriculture Charles Kuperus, Freeholder Lillian Burry, Freeholder Emeritus Ted Narozanick & Freehold Township Deputy Mayor David Salkin surround the Clayton family to celebrate Farmland Preservation

NJ is the Garden State for a Reason

The average family in New Jersey is now three generations away from living a life based on agriculture. Their idea of a farm is an idealized abstraction: a bucolic setting under blue skies with puffy white clouds overhead. There is a disconnection when it comes to understanding the pressures that the average family farm is under to maintain its livelihood.

Many farms in New Jersey have been in existence since the state was first chartered. They have weathered the good times and the bad, through many generations. As many industries have risen and fallen in our State, these families have remained committed to improving technology and land management practices. They have done this because agriculture is the manifestation of sustainability and the harmony between humanity and our Earth.

As long as this harmony has persisted, agriculture has been the measure of the success of our societies. It is the only industry which has outlasted every state.



Monmouth County BOA Officers 2008

Your help is needed to find the best way for our County of Monmouth to contribute the most to this relationship. By becoming a member of The Monmouth County Board of Agriculture, you can work to make it happen.

If you have an interest in agriculture, are concerned about how we can sustain agriculture, or have some ideas that might help us, come to a meeting and find out how to help NJ keep its centuries-old balance between humanity and the earth through the practice of agriculture.

- The Board's function is to:
1. Assume leadership in planning programs related to agricultural and rural issues.
 2. Aid the farmers of the county in the development of the most profitable and sustainable types of agriculture.
 3. Help investigate and solve technical problems relating to crop production.
 4. Promote among young people a genuine interest in farming and rural life.
 5. Report to the State Secretary of Agriculture annually, the results of agriculture and horticulture industries in the county.
 6. Cooperate with other groups, agencies and organizations to accomplish these objectives.
- The Board meets on the third Tuesday of each month, September to June. They meet at the Agriculture Building on Kozloski Rd. in Freehold at 7:30 PM.

New Jersey is counting on YOU!

Nyna & Curtis McKittrick

The third-generation Clayton Farm was added to family holdings in 1918 when Roscoe Clayton — grandfather of current farm operator Ross Clayton — relocated from a Manalapan site to Route 537 in Freehold Township because he sought more acreage and better soil. Prior to Clayton ownership, the farm was known as the Thomas Smith Farm in 1800 and the James Parker Farm in the 1850s.

For more history, read the Summer 2005 Changing Times
<http://co.monmouth.nj.us/>



Kuperus, Honigfeld, Burry & Narozanick



(Continued from page 1)

with products grown by the family. Secretary Kuperus commented that Debbie's mums were the best he has seen in the state.

In spite of over development in this densely populated state, we can take solace in the Secretary's words. "This investment is very strategic because people that live here are going to always benefit from the products grown on this farm. It may not be the Claytons, but one thing we do know is the land has been preserved."

CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

18 - New Equine Rules - Board of Ag Meeting - 7 PM - Ag Bldg., Freehold 732-431-7260

DECEMBER

3-5—Poinsettia Open House - 9 AM to 3 PM. Floriculture Greenhouses, SEBS New Brunswick
10, 11 - NJ Green Expo Turf & Landscape Conference - Trump Taj Mahal, contact Cece 973-812-6467

JANUARY 2009

7-9 Mid-Atlantic Nursery Trade Show—Baltimore Convention Center. 800-431-0066 www.mants.com
13-15 Atlantic Coast Agricultural Convention and Trade Show, (NJ Vegetable Meeting); Trump Taj Mahal, Atlantic City. Mel Henninger at 732-932-9711 x120.
14-15 NJ Nursery & Landscape Trade Show—Garden State Exhibit Center Somerset. 800-314-4836.

FEBRUARY 2009

3-5—2009 Mid-Atlantic Fruit & Veg Convention, Hershey Lodge. 717-694-3596.
6 Feb - Central Jersey Veg Meeting, Ag Building, Freehold - 732-431-7260
10-11 - 2009 NJ State Ag Convention, Crown Plaza Hotel, Cherry Hill
10-12 - Empire State Fruit & Veg Expo, Oncenter Convention Center, Syracuse 315-687-5734.

MARCH 2009

8 - Central Jersey Turf & Ornamental Meeting - Battleground Club, 732-431-7260
28 & 29 Horses 2009
www.esc.rutgers.edu

PESTICIDE CONTROL PROGRAM WEBSITE
 Go to website: www.pcpnj.org

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THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
RUTGERS

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Convention

Atlantic Coast Agricultural Convention and Trade Show (formerly NJ Vegetable Meeting)
 Atlantic City, NJ <http://www.njveggies.org/convention.htm>



A new Rutgers online resource for vegetable growers. Easily access all vegetable info in one spot. Log in and sign up to receive new content as it becomes available.
www.njveg.rutgers.edu

MONMOUTH COUNTY BOA 7:00 PM - 11-18
 7:30 PM - 12-16, 1-20, 2-17

BASIC PESTICIDE TRAINING CORE—9 am - 1 pm - 11-25, 12-9,
 2009 1-6, 1-27, 2-17, 3-10, 4-14, 5-5, 6-2

Category 3B - 9 AM - 3 PM - 11-18, 1-13, 3-24, 4-21
Category 3B - 3 PM - 9 PM - 6-16-09

Category 3A - 3 PM - 9 PM - 5-19-09
 To register call 800-524-9942

Held at Rutgers Cooperative Extension Ag Building
 4000 Kozloski Rd. Freehold, NJ - 732-431-7260

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

Bill Sciarappa
 County Agricultural Agent

AGENCY UPDATES

USDA - USDA Designates 10 New Jersey Counties As Primary Natural Disaster Areas - Decision Allows Farmers and Ranchers to Apply for USDA Assistance.

Paul Hlubik, Executive Director of USDA's Farm Service Agency in New Jersey announced that the USDA has designated Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Mercer, Monmouth, Ocean and Salem counties as primary natural disaster areas because of losses caused by the combined effects of high winds, excessive rain, flash floods and hail that occurred from May 12 through August 10, 2008; and also because of losses caused by drought and high temperatures that occurred during the period June 10, 2008, and continuing. Farm operators in Hunterdon,

Middlesex, and Somerset counties in New Jersey also qualify for natural disaster benefits because their counties are contiguous.

All counties listed above were designated natural disaster areas September 17, 2008, making all qualified farm operators in the designated areas eligible for low interest emergency (EM) loans from USDA's Farm Agency (FSA), provided eligibility requirements are met. Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for loans to help cover part of their actual losses.

Additional information is also available online at: <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov>

FSA - County Committee Elections – Just a reminder: Be watching your mailbox for your official county office committee election ballot starting early next month. Ballots will be mailed to all eligible voters starting on November 3, 2008. If, for some reason you don't receive a ballot, feel free to notify the county FSA office. Completed and signed ballots are due back in the county by the close of business on 12/10/08.

New Farm Bill Disaster Programs – To be eligible to participate in the new Farm Bill's Supplemental Agriculture Disaster Assistance Programs, producers **MUST** purchase at least catastrophic risk protection (CAT) level of crop insurance for all insurable crops and/or Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage for all non-insurable crops. The most critical issue for eligibility is that every crop (including Forage and graze) must be covered by either the Crop Insurance (RMA) or NAP (FSA) applicable deadlines for 2009.

New NAP Service Fee Rate Schedule – The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act (Farm Bill) of 2008, which is now law, increased the administrative service fees for the Noninsurable Crop Disaster Assistance

Program (NAP) from \$100 to \$250 per crop, from \$300 to \$750 maximum per county, and from \$900 to \$1,875 per producer for all counties. If you have coverage and suspect serious crop damage, and in order to benefit from your NAP coverage, you must report it to our office and file a notice of loss within 15 calendar days after the disaster occurrence or the date the damage to the specific crop acreage is apparent. That way we can send someone out to make an inspection while the crop is still in the field. As a reminder, the deadline to purchase NAP coverage for some 2009 crops including Apples, Apricots, Barley, Blueberries, Caneberries, Cherries, Christmas Trees, Clover Cranberries, Fin Fish, Cut Flowers, Grapes, Sod, Honey Mixed Forage, Nectarines, Nursery, Onions, Peaches, Pears, Plums, Rye, Scallions, Strawberries, Walnuts, and Wheat has been extended to December 1, 2008 for this year only. Additional crops have sales closing dates of Dec. 31, 2008 and March 31, 2009. Please check with this FSA office (732-462-0075) for your specific crops.

Date to Remember!

December 1, 2008 – Extension date for many crops' Sales Closing dates for 2009 NAP.

December 1, 2008 – Deadline submit COC Election ballots to this office.

Equine "News Update"

The Equine Science Center newsletter, "News Update", is available for download at www.esc.rutgers.edu/downloads/ESC_Fall_08_Newsletter.pdf

Topics for the Spring 2008 issue include a preliminary look at the schedule for "Horses 2009"

www.esc.rutgers.edu/Horses2009 information about our upcoming annual Equine Science Update and photos from our July 2008 Open House

www.esc.rutgers.edu/news_more/press_release/esu08_release.htm

The deadline for Equine Science Update registration is Monday, November 24, 2008. Download the registration form at

www.esc.rutgers.edu/downloads/ESU_2008_Invite_and_Directions.pdf



Halloween Season in Monmouth County

Survey shows how high prices, local food, environmental & food safety concerns sway consumer views

AMES, Iowa -- Rising fuel and food prices, coupled with increased concern about environmental impacts and safety of the food supply, are changing the perceptions of American consumers, according to a recent nationwide survey conducted by the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture.

The survey showed that consumers are re-assessing their shopping and eating habits to cut fuel use, would consider carbon food labels as long as their costs do not increase, worried more about natural habitat loss than greenhouse gas emissions, and were much more likely to view local food as having traveled 100 miles or less from the farm to point of sale than coming from their state or region.

These are the views of a representative, nationwide sample of more than 750 consumers who participated in a web-based survey

conducted by the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture in August 2008. Their responses are summarized in a new Leopold Center report, "Food, Fuel and the Future: Consumer perceptions of local food, food safety and climate change in the context of rising prices."

Survey respondents were more likely to respond to rising food and fuel prices by taking fewer vacations, buying more food items on sale, eating out less, and purchasing fewer desserts (compared to other food categories). A minority of respondents (17 percent) were very likely to cope with rising prices by increasing their purchases at farmers markets or by canning or freezing more fruits and vegetables. While 55 percent of the respondents perceived the U.S. food system to be safe, that number had dropped from 70 percent in a similar Leopold Center survey conducted in July 2007. There was clear concern with a

global food supply chain system - only 15 percent of respondents viewed such a system as safe, compared to 74 percent for a local system and 73 percent for a regional system.

More than 50 percent of respondents saw value in retailers putting carbon labels on their food products, with the vast majority only willing to encourage the labels if their costs did not increase. Fifty percent of respondents perceived the loss of natural habitat as more important an environmental issue than climate change, with more than 40 percent viewing water pollution as more important.

How far can food travel and still be considered "local"? More than two-thirds said that local food traveled 100 miles or less from the farm to point of purchase, while only a third viewed the definition as grown in their state or region. *By Rich Pirog*

New Rules Expand Right-to-Farm Protection for Equine Farms

The State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) has adopted new rules that expand the list of equine-related activities eligible for right-to-farm protection and set the standards for farmers to qualify for that protection.

These rules extend right-to-farm protection to embrace the wide variety of equine-related activities that commonly take place on New Jersey's horse farms. As a result, equine farms that operate in accordance with accepted agricultural management practices will be able to more fully realize the protections of New Jersey's Right to Farm Act.

The Right to Farm Act protects responsible commercial farmers from public and private nuisance actions and unduly restrictive municipal regulations. The rules adopted by the SADC extend eligibility for right-to-farm protection to the boarding, keeping, training and rehabilitation of horses. Also covered by the rules are associated complementary activities, including clinics, open houses, demonstrations, educational camps, farm events, competitions and rodeos, as long as these complementary activities are related to the marketing

SAVE THE DATE:
Tuesday, NOV. 18 - 7 PM
Ag Building, 4000 Kozloski Rd.
Freehold, NJ
SADC will give a presentation on
new equine rules & equine AMP
followed by BOA Meeting

of horses that are raised, bred, kept, boarded, trained or rehabilitated on the farm, and are in compliance with municipal requirements.

Among the criteria for right-to-farm protection, farms must meet the Act's definition of a commercial farm and be in conformance with agricultural management practices (AMPs) adopted by the SADC. The rules adopted by the SADC detail what income may be used to satisfy the production requirements to qualify as a commercial farm. The rules also require an equine operation to secure and be in compliance with a farm conservation plan prepared in accordance with the NRCS Technical Guide.

The rules establish an AMP for equine activities that sets the standards equine farms must meet to qualify for right-to-farm protection. They cover everything from stocking rates and manure management to the maximum allowable extent of

equine-related buildings, parking areas and other improvements. The limit on improvements is intended to ensure equine farms qualifying for right-to-farm protection retain a reasonable agricultural production component or capacity.

The AMP allows a county agriculture development board to set the maximum limit for equine-related improvements within an allowable range. That range is 15 to 25 percent of the first 150 acres. Total usable area includes all land on the farm that is available for farming (i.e. the gross lot minus any unusable wetlands and the area devoted to the farm's house).

While these rules apply to all equine farms, owners of preserved farms should be aware that farmland preservation deed restrictions may be more restrictive. Further, equine-related service activities continue to be allowed on preserved farms as long as they are "ancillary" to equine production. The new rules were published in the August 4 New Jersey Register, which can be accessed through www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc/ruleprop/ or David Kimmel at (609) 984-2504.

Poinsettia Open House

The Open House will take place Dec.3-5, 9am-3pm at the Floriculture Greenhouses that are located behind Blake Hall, off Nichol Avenue on the Cook Campus. Regardless of whether you sell them, buy them, or just enjoy a colorful display, it will be a chance to see what's new, and learn more about growing, handling, and marketing this important crop.



This year, we are finishing the crop (over 100 cultivars) under two different temperature regimes to evaluate the energy conservation potential of this approach. One temperature regime will be the traditional day and night temperatures the other will be a temperature regime characterized as "cold production" touted as a way to save on energy costs.

We are implementing Vapor Pressure Deficit (VPD) sensing as an irrigation management

method in conjunction with trickle irrigation for Poinsettia production. Vapor Pressure Deficit sensing is an aspect of humidity measurement and monitoring that is used in conjunction with the irrigation control system to indirectly estimate a crops need for irrigation and manage the timing of irrigations.

Anyone interested in energy conservation or irrigation management should find the open house of interest. The program is informal and free of charge. Call Ms. Nickie Graf at 732-932-9301.



(Continued from page 1)

When I was growing up in the 50's and 60's in Monmouth County, we locals thought nothing of sipping the cool, clean water gushing from our abundant freshwater springs and streams. We would even fill up gallons more for home use. Now-a-days, much of that fresh groundwater has been filled in, paved over and polluted. Water levels have dropped precipitously as the thirsty draw from the expanded resident population has increased. We Ag and Resource Management Agents have seen wells dry up from the fifteen to a hundred feet depths or more. What is hard to understand is that farm diversion amounts are being significantly lowered and there have been some misguided actions to charge farmers for their historic water use. This isn't right for many reasons.

First of all, our farms intercept and recharge more water back into the ground than they actually utilize - as much as two inches of rainfall an hour - their loamy soils quickly soak up and infiltrate rainfall like a sponge and store it for future use. Malls don't have this kind of storage, nor urban centers and certainly not quarter acre suburban housing lots. Therefore, I strongly agree that farmers should receive environmental tax credits for capturing drinking, irrigation and recreational water - rural water that is often otherwise wasted in suburban and urban settings by an antiquated stormwater run-off system. This system actually shunts most of our fresh rain to the salty Atlantic Ocean or brackish Delaware River - never to be imbibed. The concentrated increase in sediment, bacteria, petrochemicals, and excessive nutrients causes our water quality to decrease as well and creates human health hazards and major expenses for water authorities.

Every day people taste, smell and see these problems and then switch over to bottled water. My own family now buys one of the lower cost brands that when multiplied on an individual bottle basis costs about \$3.00 a gallon - about the same as gasoline.

Maybe it should be valued that high because water is truly essential to life. Some experts in water quality predict "Water Wars" really heating up within a decade on our East Coast. The complacency we've experienced for generations with our energy policy may be dwarfed down the line by the lack of current concern, effective policy and the true value assessment that we attribute to our water resources. Before it comes to that, let's encourage lawmakers to "go with the flow" and incentivize our farmers in maintaining their farms as environmental recharge areas that will continue to provide ample and clean Jersey Fresh water for the next generations. Let's encourage DEP and NRCS officials to develop more environmental options, economic incentives and tax credits for agricultural investments in natural resources. We have an excellent agri-environmental arsenal of BMP's like IPM, bio-control, crop rotation, no-tillage, trickle irrigation, soil building, erosion control and cover cropping/carbon sequestration. Yes, our new agriculture can even farm the clouds and really keep NJ Green in many more ways than Art may have initially imagined.

Locally received rainfall is one of our most precious gifts, yet is taken-for-granted. Fortunately, there is now a scientific method to calculate the true value of water conservation. Previously one had to use up a natural resource like water or soil to put a price on it. We can now economically measure the value of local resources when they are not used but regularly recycle in perpetuity. This foresighted approach to being "Environmentally Green" may place farm owners and operators in a better light and in a stronger position to be treated fairly. NJ decision-makers should more appropriately reward farmers, homeowners, property owners and open space municipalities for their active involvement in water conservation through bio-detention basins, created wetlands, swales, and rain gardens. Even passive collection in the fallow fields, farmed land and forests of commercial acreage should qualify.

Open space advocates and farmers have graced us with a very valuable bank account of natural capital. Let's not squander these Jersey Fresh groundwaters, aquifers and soils any longer and take steps to replenish diminishing supplies and reward those land owners accordingly. Beyond food, feed, and fiber, farmers need to be better recognized as environmental stewards in harvesting tomorrow's liquid crop. This changing perspective brings new meaning to the phrase "Keeping NJ Green".

Bill Sciarappa