



Changing Times



Volume 1, Issue 1

Fall 2003

Welcome to our first issue of *Changing Times*. As a quarterly publication, this agricultural newsletter aims to connect people and communicate information on current events, ag issues, and cropping practices in Central New Jersey. There's plenty of new meetings and farm tours, new ag programs and regulations, new weather patterns, new crop varieties and markets, and new land use controversies as re-zoning and Right-to-Farm issues. We'll also add in a little history, nostalgia and humor to better compare, understand and cope with our ever-changing situation.

These times are truly tougher than ever. Ag viability in our Garden State is a constant challenge. Keeping up with these times is essential for most of us. Your Rutgers Cooperative Extension team in Monmouth County may offer some new solutions to

these emerging farm problems and we definitely can help you connect to a world of experts. Some of the contacts are right next door in our neighboring counties where experienced growers, ag agents, agency groups and industry representatives work and reside. Working in a stronger statewide connection within a web of knowledgeable people will help us all feel more confident and capable in dealing with these changing times. Hopefully you will enjoy this first "Fall Edition." If you feel inspired to communicate, celebrate or commiserate, please contact us with suggestions for the next issue.

Cordially,
Bill Sciarappa
County Agent

2003 MONMOUTH COUNTY BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

Greetings from the Monmouth County Board of Agriculture. Our Executive Board meets on the third Tuesday of most months. Feel free to join us in discussing "what's going on" that can affect your farm business and planning. Our minutes and calendar are posted on the County website www.visitmonmouth.com/07050coopext/MonmouthBoard.asp

While we generally get together at the Monmouth County Extension office, this month we meet at Rutgers Fruit Research and Extension Center in Cream Ridge (Rt. 539 - ¼ mile west of Rt. 537 intersection). That's Tuesday, September 23 - 5:00 PM. We start with a free barbecue for socializing. Bring your wife or husband and other family members. At 6:00, we begin a short farm tour around the research station. We'll look at some new crops for these changing times - tofu soybeans, specialty vegetables, nursery crop trials, ½ year strawberries, organic grape studies and other fruit demonstrations. At 7:30 our business meeting is called to order in the conference room. Hope to see you all then.

Marty Bullock



L to R—Tom Freiberger, Vice Pres.; Marty Bullock, Pres.; Bill McCormack, Sec.; Ross Clayton, Treasurer

P.S. Please call Terry 732-431-7260 to confirm your attendance at Cream Ridge so that we can order the proper amount of food and beverage.



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Farmland Preservation

Freeholder Harry Larrison, Jr.



The on-going efforts of the Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders and the Monmouth County Agriculture Development Board (MCADB) to preserve the dwindling number of farms in the county continued unabated this past year with the acquisition of 9 farms in six municipalities, adding a total of 565 acres to the farmland bank. Since 1987, the Program has now saved a total of 58 farms, consisting of about 7,200 acres.

The aim of the county's Farmland Preservation Program has always been to preserve in perpetuity as much viable and productive farmland as reasonably possible given our usual fiscal constraints.

Funds for the Farmland Preservation Program are provided through cost sharing agreements between the Freeholders, the State Agriculture Development Committee and individual municipalities. The Freeholders' share is generally paid from funds collected from the Open Space Tax approved by Monmouth County voter in three separate referendums.

In 2002 the following farms were acquired: Keymer Farm, Howell, 65 acres; Blackburn Farm, Colts Neck, 85 acres; Kildee Farm, Manalapan/Marlboro, 165 acres and 53 acres, respectively; McCrane Farm, Colts Neck, 38 Acres; McNabb Farm, Millstone, 38 acres; Reese Farm, Upper Freehold, 62 acres; Lantier Farm, Manalapan, 23 acres; Burke Farm, Manalapan, 17 acres; and Herbst Farm, Upper Freehold, 19 acres.

Preserving farmland makes a lot sense for a lot of reasons. The obvious reason is to help maintain a healthy farming community in Monmouth County. It would be a shame if our children and our children's children could not eat corn, tomatoes and other produce grown here in Monmouth County.

Additionally, preserving farmland helps curb urban sprawl and preserves the environment in Monmouth County.

The MCADB is a ten-member body whose members are appointed by the Freeholders and are charged with administering the Farmland Preservation Program in Monmouth County.

\$110,390 Grant Awarded

NJ Department of Agriculture Awarded \$110,390 in Federal Funds to Explore Emerging Ethnic Markets. The New Jersey Department of Agriculture has been awarded \$110,390 in federal grants to help farmers identify and meet the demand for ethnic produce and goat meat in an increasingly diverse mid-Atlantic marketplace, NJ. Agriculture Secretary Charles M. Kuperus announced today.

"In January, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture proposed a series of economic development strategies to provide more opportunity for farmers and provide greater access to locally grown farm and food products for consumers," said Secretary Kuperus. "Seeking out new ethnic markets for fruits and vegetables and encouraging the production of goat products were among those key strategies. These grants will further our efforts to expand the marketplace for farmers, meet changing consumer demand and position New Jersey agriculture for a strong future."

The grants were awarded under the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Federal-State Improvement Program, which supports agricultural market research and development projects. New Jersey received the second-highest grant allocation of the total \$1.3 million awarded to 20 states and America Samoa.

The grants will fund two New Jersey projects. The first grant will provide \$79,070 to analyze the market for ethnic fruits and vegetables and identify opportunities for New Jersey growers to supply them to emerging markets. These products could include, for example, Asian bok choy, Russian melon varieties, Korean nappa cabbage, Chinese okra and specialty hot peppers. This project will be carried out in cooperation with Rutgers University. The second grant will provide \$31,320 to educate meat goat producers on production techniques and marketing strategies to maximize their economic success. Goat meat is a staple in the diets of many ethnic groups. The New Jersey State Meat Goat Association will partner on this project.



Charles Kuperus, NJ Secretary of Agriculture, visits the Oakhurst Foodtown 8-3-03, encouraging consumers to keep NJ green and growing by buying *Jersey Fresh*

Remember When...



Indeed times are changing, especially in agriculture. In each issue, we would like to publish a "Remember When" article. At the snowy (remember) Central Jersey Vegetable Growers Meeting, Thomas and Elmer Geran recollected the past history of their farm. We would like to hear more stories and encourage you to either use the questionnaire as a guide or just tell a story as you wish. Send stories to Bill Sciarappa, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, 20 Court St., Freehold, NJ 07728, or give Vivian a call at 732-431-7260.

Thomas & Elmer Geran, Father & Son

The Geran Family has farmed in Morganville since American Revolutionary time; Gerans fought in that war. During the early part of the 20th Century, Tom Geran's mother traveled to Guernsey, British Isles, to purchase bulls which may account for their farm holding 27 records for butter fat content in their milk. The farm has also mined peat and still does today, but on a smaller scale. The peat is used for growing hollies, rhododendrons, azaleas and for bedding plants. While Tom's mother managed the farm his father, a lawyer, held office as sheriff, congressman, and U.S. Attorney.

Today, the farm is incorporated as two operations with Tom's son Elmer. The dairy farm has changed to a mixture of agriculture including horse (primarily carriage) boarding, nursery, landscape, Christmas tree and vegetable farming.

The family has witnessed the loss of many neighboring farms. Some have moved to Virginia, South Carolina and Maryland. Others were lost to developers. Buttonwood Farm had a special peach orchard which yielded peaches as red as apples with a wonderful flavor. The Gerans tried to get some cuttings as the bulldozers went pulling down the trees. Unfortunately their cuttings did not prosper.

Looking to the future, the Gerans are quite concerned about Matawan Brook, which runs through their farm. Father and son have attended several seminars on watershed management and are always looking for ways to safeguard the water. Reading pesticide/herbicide labels and spraying less, companion planting and the addition of tick-eating free range guinea fowl are some of the methods practiced to protect the brook. They also attend planning board meetings to keep abreast of potential impacts on the brook.

They enjoy a good relationship with the Rutgers Monmouth County Extension Service. They find everyone most willing to help. In closing Mr. Geran said "Farmers need to be supported by people through the purchase of local farm raised produce."

Do you have a story about the "Good Old Days" in Central Jersey agriculture?

How about a story of a disastrous time? A bumper crop?

Has your family been farming in Monmouth County for many years?

What are you still doing farmwise that has not changed much?

What have you changed or modified?

Where do you see Monmouth County farming going in the future?

We would really enjoy hearing your stories. Thanks



In last month's front page of the Asbury Park Press local news section, this photograph was shown of Manalapan farmer Jimmy Wikoff discussing an experimental soybean plot with Rutgers County Agent Bill Sciarappa. The research project for human food grade soybeans is financed by a \$7,350 grant from the New Jersey Soybean Board. The crop trials are being conducted on 7 grower fields and on 3 Rutgers Research Farms. Marketing studies are being done by the Rutgers FIRE Center-Food Innovation Research and Extension. (Photo Bob Bielk).

GATHERING CHICKENS

The farmer's son was returning from the market with the crate of chicken's his father had entrusted to him, when all of a sudden the box fell and broke open.

Chickens scurried off in different directions, but the determined boy walked all over the neighborhood

scooping up the wayward birds and returning them to the repaired crate. Hoping he had found them

all, the boy reluctantly returned home, expecting the worst. "Pa, the chickens got loose," the boy

confessed sadly, "but I managed to find all twelve of them." "Well, you did real good, son," the farmer

beamed. "You left with seven."



Pesticide Container Recycling

NJDOA TO SPONSOR PESTICIDE CONTAINER & NURSERY POT RECYCLING PROGRAM THIS FALL: The NJ Dept of Agriculture will offer free recycling of empty plastic pesticide containers and nursery pots at five regional collection sites on Sept. 27 and Oct. 3, 8, 9 and 10. Central Region dates are Oct. 9 (Upper Freehold Highway District Yard, Cream Ridge) and October 10 (Burlington County Resource Recovery Complex, Mansfield). For a complete list of collection sites and times, go to www.state.nj.us/agriculture/recyclingpestoons.htm. If you don't have access to the internet, call NJNLA and a complete recycling packet will be faxed/mailed to you.

Non-refillable, high-density polyethylene #2 (HDPE #2) containers used by agricultural, professional and commercial pesticide applicators will be accepted at the collection sites, as will HDPE #2 nursery pots. Containers must be no larger than 55 gals. and properly rinsed. Nursery pots must also be properly rinsed. This program is open to anyone who holds a New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection pesticide license and to state, county and municipal government agencies. Participants must follow the processing guide or material will be rejected.

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection will issue one CORE credit to pesticide license holders for participating in the program. To receive credit, participants must bring their pesticide license to the collection site and must follow the processing steps. Credits will not be issued for recycling nursery pots.

To register for the program, contact Program Manager Karen Kritz of the New Jersey Department of Agriculture at (609) 984-2506 or karen.kritz@ag.state.nj.us. Please provide the estimated size and quantity of the various pesticide containers and nursery pots that will be delivered and to what size.

The fall 2003 agricultural product container-recycling program is a collaborate effort involving the NJ Dept. of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, Atlantic County Utility Authority, Burlington County Solid Waste, Cumberland County Improvement Authority, Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders, Pollution Control Financing Authority of Warren County, Ag container Recycling Council and USAG Recycling, Inc.

HELP

Farmer Marshall Bienstock of Howell needs a replacement transmission for his 30 year old Kan-Sun Crop Drier. He has some similar axial piston motors/pumps from Sperry-Vickers, but is unsure if he needs a charge pump and how to hook up the hoses. If anyone has any information or knowledge, please call Marshall at the farm 732-780-0871 or at home 732-938-6577

Nursery Twilight Meeting

Rich Obal, County Agent

On August 19, 2003, the Rutgers Cream Ridge Fruit Research Station hosted the Central Jersey Twilight meeting. The 70 nursery growers and educators in attendance were able to view current ornamental research activities including pesticide screen through the IR-4 program, insect pests and beneficial insect test plots and plant breeding projects. A demonstration of new digging equipment, disease diagnosis and water management issues; were also presented. This twilight meeting marked the continuing transition of this 250 acre university farm to a research and demonstration site for ornamental and specialty crops.



Enjoying the Cream Ridge wagon tour of research plots are Dr. George Hamilton, IPM Coordinator - Cook College; Dean and Senior Associate Director of Extension Dr. Karyn Malinowski, and NJ Nursery and Landscape Association President Carl Nordstrom.



As part of the field nursery equipment demonstration, this small but powerful Italian model shrub and tree root balling machine received close inspection by the crowd when demonstrated by George Leidig of Autrusa/Imants USA.

CALENDAR OF IMPORTANT EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

Sept. 20-21 - Northeast Small Farm and Rural Living Expo and Garden State Sheep Breeders Sheep and Fiber Festival
Date: 9/20/2003 *Time:* 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM *Location:* Warren County Farmers' Fairgrounds Harmony, NJ

Description: An educational experience for individuals interested in farming and country living. *Cost:* \$5 per adult per day. Children 14 and under free. *Contact:* Everett A. Chamberlain, 908-475-6503

More Info: www.smallfarmexpo.org

Sept. 23 - 5PM - Farm Tour & free BBQ, Cream Ridge Fruit Research and Extension Center. Call 732-431-7260,

OCTOBER

Oct. 2 - Sports Turf Management Field Day Opportunity Snyder Research Farm. Call James Murphy 732/932-9711 x129.

Oct. 9—NJDOA Pesticide Container & Nursery Pot Recycling (see article p. 3)

Oct. 10 - NJDOA Pesticide Container & Nursery Pot Recycling, Burlington Cty. Resource Recovery Complex, Mansfield.

NOVEMBER

Nov. 6 - RCE Stakeholders Meeting. We invite all farmers to provide input into our programs. Call 732-431-7260 for more information.

Nov. 20 - Deadline for USDA Crop Insurance Subsidies for NJ Growers of Apples, Peaches, Blueberries, Cranberries. Call 856/769-0090 for additional info.

DECEMBER

Dec. 4th & 5th - Annual Future of Our Food & Farms Summit - Wilmington Syndhan Hotel, DE. Call 215/568-0830 x10 or contact@thefoodtrust.org

Dec. 9, 10, 11 - NJ Turf Grass Expo and Trade Show, Atlantic City.

Dec 31 - Deadline for USDA Crop Insurance Subsidies for NJ Growers of Potatoes. Call 856/769-0090 for additional info.

JANUARY 2004

Jan 13-15 - NJ Vegetable Growers Association Annual Meeting—Borgata Hotel Casino in Atlantic City, NJ. Info will be provided as available.

January 27 - Mid-Atlantic Fruit & Vegetable Conference, Hershey, PA. Call Bill Troxell 717/694-3596.

February 2004

Feb. 6 - Central Jersey Vegetable Growers Annual Meeting - Freehold Gardens, Freehold, NJ. Call 732-431-7260 for information.

Monmouth County Board of Ag Meetings

7:30 PM - Sept. 16, Oct. 21, Nov. 18, Dec. 16

USMR - CORE Training - 9AM - 1 PM

Sept. 16, Oct 15, Nov 12, Dec. 9

Held at

**Rutgers Cooperative Extension,
20 Court St., Freehold, NJ 07728
732-431-7260**

Rutgers Tomato Website



Drs. Wes Kline and Steve Garrison continue with Rutgers Tomato Research

Rutgers Cooperative Extension is pleased to introduce a new website devoted to the fabulous Jersey tomato at <http://www.rce.rutgers.edu/tomato> or www.rutgerstomato.org

Russ Blair, Cape May County Agricultural Agent, is the website coordinator.

The site is divided into three sections: Grower Section, Food Industry Section and Consumer Section. On the website, growers can get updates on current tomato research being conducted by Rutgers Specialists and Agents. Some research results currently on the website include:

- Variety evaluations trial results of round tomatoes as well as cluster, grape, husk tomatoes, tomatillos and heirloom cultivars;
- Fruit quality research experiments on Calcium uptake efforts on fruit quality;
- Soil fertility; IPM-controlling mites, stinkbugs, and thrips.

Many growers have been interested in information about heirloom tomatoes and the site includes several hundred photos with variety descriptions of popular heirloom varieties. There is also a photographic pictorial of how to construct a high tunnel for early tomato production.

The site has a section for the Food Industry where wholesale buyers can be linked to commercial farmers through the New Jersey Farm Bureau (NJFB) Website. Check out the website when you get the chance.

Information for this article obtained from the Bayshore Grower Commercial Edition Vol. 4, No. 5