



Agent's Overview

The times, "They are A Changing." We now have a dynamic new Dean at Cook. Dean Bob Goodman has a wealth of extension and agricultural experience and ambitious plans to get the university moving more effectively with key clients and important issues (see article below). We also have a new Dean position – Dean Mark Robson – known to many of you from Robson Farms on Route 537 (see article page 5). Furthermore, we have a new name for Cook College soon to be approved as School of Environmental and Biological Sciences based on Cook Campus. This naming process has almost come full circle since I was a student there at the College of Agriculture and Environmental Science.



These new Deans see agriculture fitting well into both environmental and biological sciences and they are also discussing the change of our current extension name Rutgers Cooperative Research & Extension. Yes, it's too wordy and a little confusing. Changing and simplifying this mouthful is expected to clarify our identity to the public by separat-

ing the functions of the academic side of the university from the applied research side of NJAES and RU extension.

Moving to an even less predictable subject, the weather seems to be changing more often than ever. Again this year, after a long dry spell during early spring, we were followed by buckets of rain similar to last fall. Fortunately we did not get the 12 inches in 40 hours that we got then nor the 15 inches that New England received this spring. With these wild weather effects in mind, growers and municipal officials are paying much more attention to extensive flooding problems. Such problems can be alleviated by better built buffers, bridges and dams which are important to prevent soil erosion and non-point

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Engaging Agriculture

Rutgers' new Dean Robert Goodman has quickly grasped the situation at Cook College and proceeded to engage key stakeholders and begin reorganization of infrastructure. He has targeted both external ag leaders such as the NJDA, Farm Bureau and NJVGA as well as internal extension departments. "Bob" has spent considerable time at our Rutgers Research Farms in determining future directions and how best to get there. In visits to our research and extension farm in Cream Ridge, he has come away with a new appreciation of the diversity and ingenuity of applied programs there. Farm Director Dr. Joe Goffreda arranged an all-star team of horti-



culturists in large fruit, grape, strawberry, nursery, specialty vegetable and minor crops to bring a wealth of understanding to the Dean. His responses were very positive. As Executive Director of the New Jersey Agriculture Experiment Station, he has posted a message on the RU website that reads, "The New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES) is home to Rutgers Cooperative Research &

Extension (RCRE). RCRE integrates research and extension through a continuous cycle that starts with dialogue with stakeholders to identify a problem that requires research. We then design and conduct the research necessary to solve that problem, partner with stakeholders to test and implement the solution, and work to bring new problems to the attention of researchers. This requires an ongoing, multidisciplinary collaboration among research and extension faculty and close and continuing communications with stakeholders."

Dean Goodman also requests your input via e-mail at execdean@rcre.rutgers.edu For questions or comments, please take up on his offer.

Sustainable Farming on the Urban Fringe



Beginning Farmers Course

In March 2006, the NJAES Agriculture Research and Extension Center in Upper Deerfield completed its first five-week Beginning 1st Generation Farmer adult course. Unlike other courses, our unique capacity shares hands-on equipment demonstrations together with our crop and business management education. A follow-up NJAES Ag Innovations Day with local vendors is scheduled for August 3, 2006. Contact Center Director Bill Nicholson at 856-455-3133 or nicholson@aesop.rutgers.edu.

Quality Hay Market Initiative

The Rutgers NJAES Snyder Research and Extension Farm initiated a new grower-directed effort in quality grass hay production and marketing. Sustaining profitable farming compatible with local com-

munities and with customer needs lead Snyder and growers to a new effort in hay quality. Quality hay sustains local farms and benefits many equine operations too dependent on costly hay shipped from other regions. In 1996 New Jersey horse owners spent \$46 million on hay and bedding. A 2001 Pennsylvania survey also found \$41 million spent on hay and bedding. This new work enables us to capture more of these markets closer to home, and expands opportunities on preserved land. Donna Foulk of Rutgers Cooperative Research & Extension of Warren County coordinates this effort. She can be reached at 908-475-6503 or foulk@rce.rutgers.edu.

IPM/ICM Delivery with Environmental Weather Data

From landscapers and wine growers who want to know from how many

growing degree days (GDD) have accumulated in their area-so they know when to expect pest emergence-to fine turf and crop managers conserving water through irrigation management, everyone demands timely, accurate, environmental information. The NJAES is redirecting technical support to this statewide effort. It will be lead from the P.E. Marucci Blueberry Cranberry Research and Extension Center in Chatsworth, NJ. Together with the Cooperative Extension IPM delivery team, the Plant & Pest Advisory Newsletter, and the State Climatologist office we will be gathering and delivering valuable information to crop and natural resources managers. For overall information, please contact Jack Rabin at: **732-932-5000 ext. 610 or rabin@aesop.rutgers.edu**.

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source runoff. Soil temperatures are rising like the stream levels and aquifers. Soil moisture is good as well, and the time has arrived for some serious planting.

On the labor and political side of the fence, the controversial changes are critical areas of concern. Immigration issues are not going away anytime soon and we don't mean just here in downtown Freehold – this is nationwide now! Lots of polarity, antagonism and very different viewpoints are evident. From what I see here locally, many farmers, agents, advisors and agencies have little problem with amnesty suggestions or lenient travel plans for farm workers, landscape

operators and food business entrepreneurs. Bear in mind that of the 9 million people in New Jersey, over 1.2 million citizens are first generation immigrants from Hispanic countries and over .6 million residents immigrated from Asian countries. This population surge maintains our economic progress and leads to a total of over 30% ethnic composition within our Garden State. We may not truly be a melting pot, but we certainly are a very mixed salad bowl of various people working together.

Ending on a good note, we have great news in the recognition of one of our own well known growers. Farmingdale's Angelo DiGregorio and members of his family of Twin

Pond Farms were on the front cover and were the subject of the feature article for American Vegetable Grower (see article page 3). This comes on the heels of Princeton's Gary Mount of Terhune Orchards (August 2005) "Apple Grower of the Year" and Pittstown's Jeremy and Meredith Compton of Peaceful Valley Orchards on the cover of American Fruit Grower (February 2006). Our growers do amazing things amidst challenging circumstances and economic situations. Their grassroots examples help lead the way for us all in promoting and sustaining NJ agriculture.

Have a great season.

Bill Sciarappa

REMEMBER WHEN... EMBRACING URBAN SPRAWL

Vivian Quinn & Bill Sciarappa

Everything grown on the DiGregorio Farm has “the family’s heart and soul poured into it,” said Evelyn DiGregorio, wife of Angelo DiGregorio. Twin Pond Farm is owned and operated by Angelo and Evelyn and their three sons, George, Gary and Chris. This friendly and close-knit family work together on the farm and farmstand to make their business successful. They embraced urban sprawl and diversified their operation in order to survive changing times.

Angelo’s father immigrated from Italy in 1921 and initially worked on his godfather’s farm. He then rented five acres of land in Brooklyn, NY, and grew Italian vegetables from 1923 to 1949. Brooklyn farmland quickly disappeared, and in 1950, he moved the farm to Cheesequake, NJ. By 1965, development and a lack of water supply forced the family to start farming in Howell Township.

Angelo was 24 when his father purchased the Howell farm, and the business was turned over to him when he was 26. In 1974, Angelo married Evelyn and continued to farm with his father as he and his wife raised their sons.

Twin Pond started out as a wholesale operation growing Italian

specialty vegetables which were sold to NYC markets. Early on Angelo started to diversify by growing bedding plants and vegetable transplants. Stagnant wholesale produce prices meant they needed to increase production and diversify in order to make more money. At this juncture, Angelo and Evelyn realized their sons wanted to pursue careers in agriculture and that they could pull together and embrace urban sprawl as a family. To accomplish this, in 1990 they opened a retail stand alongside a busy road, which is now relocated and thriving. By 1994, they purchased property on Route 9 and sold under a tent until they constructed a retail farm stand.

Also changing is their wholesale operation, with Philadelphia replacing NYC and a shifting of preferred crops and allotted acreage. Presently, Angelo and his sons have formed a limited liability corporation that owns the business – a newly acquired farm and two farm stands.

Their oldest son, George, became his father’s right hand man, taking over many of the farming responsibilities. Evelyn and her sister took over retail sales for the farm stand. Gary and Chris handle the retail business on Route 9, expanding it to accommodate the demand for landscape supplies, nursery plants and installation of backyard ponds. The business extends into the agri-tourism season with pumpkins, mums, scarecrows, hay bales, etc. The November and December holidays bring pies and seasonal sales and displays; all very different from the early years of selling only wholesale Italian vegetables in NYC.



American Vegetable Grower—Feb. 2006
“Embracing Urban Sprawl” - to read:
[www.visitmonmouth.com/07050coopext/
upload/forms/AmericanVeg.pdf](http://www.visitmonmouth.com/07050coopext/upload/forms/AmericanVeg.pdf)

Evelyn admits that farm life has some rough days, but most days are good. She quoted, “Working together enables the family to spend time together, even if the days are very long.” When the boys were growing up Evelyn and Angelo always knew where they were because their friends enjoyed spending time at the farm, especially to eat.

Twin Pond has a steady customer base, but Evelyn stated that television and newspaper advertisement are also important. Essential to success is Angelo’s progressive approach in producing and marketing high quality, specialty crops. Specialty crop research, locally grown produce and consumer preference are integral parts of the Rutgers Extension program and the DiGregorio family has helped lead the way.

The family survived sprawl and hope to continue to find ways to supply customer demands. Evelyn said, “Whenever someone says we have the best corn around, it makes us want to do even more for our customers.”



Gary & Chris in the height of
Landscape/ornamental season

Horse Farm is County's 100th to be Preserved

Michele and Peter Blaso left the congestion of Bergen County more than seven years ago to buy a farm and raise horses in Upper Freehold. As time passed, rising taxes and encroaching development made the Blaso family think about moving out of state to a more rural area. They put their 21-acre farm up for sale last year and searched for a buyer who would keep it pristine. But the only offers the family received were from developers with plans to subdivide their land and build several houses in conjunction with a project planned across the street. "It broke our hearts to see something this beautiful be put in another housing development," Michele Blaso said.

Instead of following the trend and selling to a builder, Blaso contacted the county and asked for help to save her property. Earlier this month, the Blasos' land became the 100th farm to be preserved in Mon-



Charles Kuperus & Blaso Family

mouth County. On March 28, Charles M. Kuperus, secretary of NJ Department of Agriculture, visited the Blaso farm, where the family raises standard bred horses, to celebrate the milestone with county and local officials. The broodmare So Bright watched in the background as officials hailed the county's latest benchmark. "This is a very special day," Kuperus said. "It sets the stage for the future of our Garden State."

The property will remain the Bolasos', and on the tax rolls, but has a deed restriction that requires the land be used for agriculture, said Matthew Shipkey, Monmouth County's farmland preservation program coordinator. The development rights were bought for \$454,080 through a partnership between the state, county and township. The state contributed \$272,448, the county gave \$108,979 and the township contributed \$72,652.

The county's Farmland Preservation Program is overseen by the Monmouth County Agriculture Development Board and administered by staff of the Monmouth County Planning Board. The Monmouth Conservation Foundation also helped broker the deal to save the property.

Monmouth joins four other counties in the state to preserve 100 farms. The others are Hunterdon, Salem, Warren and Burlington, said Susan Craft, executive



Harriet Honigfeld & Matt Shipkey present symbolic Jersey Fresh products

director of the State Agriculture Development Committee. The county is working on preserving more farms than ever before, Shipkey said. County officials are working to preserve more than 70 farms totaling 3,000 acres, he said. That would add to the 9,486 acres of farmland Freeholder Lillian G. Burry said have been preserved in Monmouth County to date.

The state is also working on efforts to encourage preservation, Craft said. The state plans to streamline the process to shave about six months off the time it takes to preserve land. The state agriculture board is also considering new protections for the equine industry, Craft said. The Blaso family was proud of its role in the achievement.

By **Andrea Alexander** FREEHOLD BUREAU—Asbury Park Press 3-29-06

2006 DEER FENCING PROGRAM ANNOUNCED

NJ Secretary of Agriculture Kuperus announced that a Deer Fencing program will be run cooperatively by the NJ Department of Agriculture (NJDA) and Rutgers Cooperative Research and Extension. The cost-share program will provide fencing material, plus up to 30 percent of the line posts at not cost to qualified farmers who were not awarded fencing in the 2004/2005 program.

This is the second year of the Department's deer fencing program. In 2005, fence, accompanying wire and posts were distributed to 100 farmers throughout the state. A Rutgers Cooperative Research and Extension survey of farmers who participated in previous deer fencing programs indicated that almost 70 percent of wildlife crop loss is attributable to deer. The NJ

Agricultural Experiment Station estimates the economic loss to farmers to be between \$5 million and \$10 million annually.

Farmers can call (609) 292-5532 for more information or go to the NJDA website

www.state.nj.us/agriculture

Robson Farm Twilight Tour

by Bill Sciarappa



Ag Agents Jerry Frecon and Ray Samulis organized an excellent tree and small fruit twilight meeting on May 17 at the Robson Farm and Greenhouse in Wrightstown on Route 537. The Robson Family operates almost 1,500 acres selling both wholesale and retail through three farm markets. While they grow approximately 50 different crops, the tour focused on two-year-old plantings of brambles, apples, matted row strawberries and new

peach plantings of various varieties as well as a unique pesticide containment facility.

We were warmly greeted by our host Neil Robson and then two wagon loads took off. The program was packed with expert extension advice such as IPM monitoring by Dean Polk and fruit insect management by Dr. Peter Shearer. Vegetative management on small fruit was handled by Dr. Brad Majek and summer fruit rots by Dr. Norm Lalancette. A special guest speaker on new bramble varieties and nutrition was Professor Emeritus Dr. Warren Stiles from Cornell University. Farm safety and pesticides were discussed with a hands-on demonstration by Ray Samulis.



Health and pesticides issues were emphasized by Dr. Mark Robson; current Chair Department of Environmental and Occupational Health UMDNJ School of Public Health. Of course the highlight of the trip was having Mark cheerfully drive his tractor with the wagonloads of participants over hill and dale. We all learned a lot of progressive farming ideas and thanked the Robson Family for their warm hospitality and an excellent evening of ag education.

Rutgers Turf Experts Renovate New Turf Course at Monmouth Park for the 2006 Season

New Brunswick, NJ--Horses, horsemen and fans will all find joy in the improvements made to Monmouth Park for the 2006 season.

First and foremost is the new turf course, engineered by turf experts from Rutgers University, which promises to be the centerpiece of an exciting racing season.

"The new turf course was the biggest project this year," said Horace (Smitty) Smith, assistant vice president of operations. "But we also wanted to continue improvements in the stable area. We actually never stop working on the physical plant," he said. "Maintenance and renovation are on-going all year round."

Smith, who has been working at Monmouth in various capacities for 26 years, said the turf course was by far the most major undertaking at Monmouth since the old grass course was built in 1950.

"Over the years, we worked on the old course every season, replac-



ing sod in different areas. We probably resodded the entire course over the years," Smith said. "But there was a big problem. The old course was built on clay, so it never drained properly and the grass never rooted as well as it should."

The new course - a seven-furlong oval with two chutes for mile and an eighth and five and a half-furlong races - was designed by Australian turf specialist Ian Chivers, working under the direction of Rutgers University's Dr. Jim Murphy. Chivers has designed turf courses all over the world.

"Everything was engineered to



promote drainage and plant growth and racing safety," Smith said. "The subsoil and topsoil were scientifically designed and the course drains extremely well now. The turns are banked so the horses can negotiate them safely."

The turf course is scheduled to open on June 24, and the first stakes to be run on the new sod is the \$150,000 Boiling Springs July 4.

"Dr. Murphy and Ian Chivers will have the last word on when the course opens," Smith said. "But if the weather cooperates, we look forward to seeing the first race on June 24."

AGENCY UPDATES

NJDA - NJ Secretary of Agriculture Charles M. Kuperus announced an expansion of the state's agricultural recycling programs to include -- for the first time -- nursery pots, plastic flats, trays and cell packs. "The Department of Agriculture has a strong commitment to ensuring compliance with NJ's mandatory recycling regulations and we have been seeking environmentally-safe ways where farmers can safely dispose of the plastic waste they generate," said Secretary Kuperus. "Farmers benefit by being able to sell their used agricultural plastics and the environment benefits by decreasing the waste stream into the state's landfills."

The cost of disposing of HDPE nursery pots weighing 20,000 pounds can be up to \$580 at a landfill. It is expected that a grower who recycles those 20,000 pounds of HDPE nursery pots can earn as much as \$400.

To date, Cindarn Recycling is the only plastics recycler that has contacted the Department of Agriculture and offered to work directly with farmers to recycle their nursery pots, plastic flats, trays and cell packs. As new plastics recyclers are identified they will be included in the Department of Agriculture's web site. For more details and updated listings, visit www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/md/prog/recycling.html.

Crop Insurance Website

<http://salem.rutgers.edu/cropinsurance/index.html>

CROP INSURANCE CLOSING DATES

MAY 31 - Nursery

JULY 31 - Forage Seeding - New

SEPTEMBER 30 - Barley, Wheat
Forage Production - New

NOVEMBER 20 -
Apples, Peaches,
Blueberries & Cranberries

DECEMBER 31 - Potatoes

RCRE - Pest Management Recommendations for Field Crops Now Available On-Line

The Mid-Atlantic Pest Recommendations for Field Crops is now available on-line. The bulletin, which is prepared by Cooperative Extensive in the Mid-Atlantic States, and is divided into three sections – disease and nematode control, insect control, and weed control. The web site where the bulletin can be found is: www.agnr.umd.edu/MCE/Publications/EB237online/index2.cfm Also, commercial fruit and vegetable guides are available at your county extension office for \$10 and \$14 dollars respectively.

FSA - County Committee Elections – Nominations for candidates for the Farm Service Agency's County Committee election representing Local Administrative Area #1 (Monmouth County, south of Rt. 33) will be accepted starting June 15 through Aug. 1, 2006. Producers who are residents in the LAA holding the election and who participate or cooperate in an FSA program and are of legal voting age may be nominated to serve on the County Committee. Minority and female farmers are encouraged to participate. A nomination form (FSA-669A) and details may be picked up at your local USDA Service Center, FSA county office or download from <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/publications/elections>. Ballots will be mailed to eligible voters beginning Nov. 3, 2006.

Loss Adjuster Wanted – The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) of New Jersey is seeking to hire and train crop Loss Adjusters to work part time with the agency's Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program or NAP. Adjusters are hired on a contractual basis to assess crop losses resulting from natural disasters. Prior to certification, Loss Adjusters earn \$10/hour plus travel expenses. Once certification is complete, the hourly rate jumps to \$13.50/hour. Contact Coleen McGarrity by June 9, 2006 at 609-298-3446 ext. 219 or by e-mail at colleen.mcgarritty@nj.usda.gov. USDA is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

DEP - Latest Irrigation Diversion Permit Information - The Bureau of Water Allocation's office has numerous new staff personnel who are looking at all new permits, renewals, and annual use reports with great scrutiny. Unfortunately, they do sometimes find inconsistencies between past and present information. They have now refined the requirements and have developed a uniform time table they will be adhering to starting in March 2006. They are sending out renewal reminders. 3 to 6 months after the Certification has expired, if a renewal application has not yet been received, the Department will send out a notice that the diversion privileges were lost because no renewal was submitted, and that any wells must be properly decommissioned. The Certification will then be removed from the Department's database. Generally, there will be approximately one year between the first renewal reminder and the notice that diversion privileges can only be reestablished by submitting an application for a new Certification.

CALENDAR

June 2006

June 4-8—10th North American Blueberry Research & Extension Workers Conference—U of Georgia ugatiftonconference.org/blueberry2006

June 21-23 –United Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Assoc. & the USDA Ag Marketing Service’s “Advanced Produce Inspection Training” course; Fredericksburg, Va., 202-303-4300, ext 405

July 2006

July 19 - 2006 Pennsylvania Vegetable & Small Fruit Field Day 8 AM -5 PM, Rock Spring, PA, 814-863-2251 or e-mail mdo1@psu.edu
July 25-27—Penn-Atlantic Nursery Trade Show - Penn. Landscape & Nursery Association. Atlantic City 800-898-3411 www.plna.com

July 26-30 - Monmouth County Fair
www.monmouthcountyparks.com/fair/fair_main.asp

2006 County Fairs

www.nj4h.rutgers.edu/fairs

Atlantic County 4-H Fair	Aug. 10-12
Bergen County 4-H Fair	June 10
Burlington County Farm Fair	July 19-22
Camden County 4-H Fair	Aug. 5
Cape May County 4-H Fair	July 20-22
Cumberland County Fair	July 3-8
Essex County 4-H Fair	May 17-21
Gloucester County 4-H Fair and New Jersey Peach Festival	July 27-30
Hunterdon County 4-H & Ag Fair	Aug. 23-27
Mercer County 4-H Fair	July 1
Middlesex County Fair	Aug. 7-13
Monmouth County Fair	July 26-30
Morris County 4-H Fair	July 28-30
Ocean County Fair	July 11-16
Passaic County Fair	July 19-23
Salem County Fair	Aug. 8-11
Somerset County 4-H Fair	Aug. 16-18
Sussex County Farm & Horse Show/New Jersey State Fair	Aug. 4-13
Warren County Farmers’ Fair	July 30 – Aug. 5

MONMOUTH COUNTY BOA
 7:30 PM
 6-20, 9-19, 10-17, 11-21, 12-19

BASIC PESTICIDE TRAINING CORE—9 am - 1 pm
 6-6, 7-27, 10-17, 11-14, 12-5
Category 3A & 3B
 10-24 & 11-28 9 AM—3 PM
 To register call 800-524-9942
<http://www.njpma.com/nj/events/article.asp?EventID=39>
Held at
Rutgers Cooperative Research & Extension, Ag Building
4000 Kozloski Rd.
Freehold, NJ - 732-431-7260

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

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Rutgers Cooperative Research & 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

*Changing Times is produced and edited by Bill Sciarappa and Vivian Quinn - sciarappa@rcrc.rutgers.edu
 Past Issues on the web www.visitmonmouth.com/07050coopext*



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