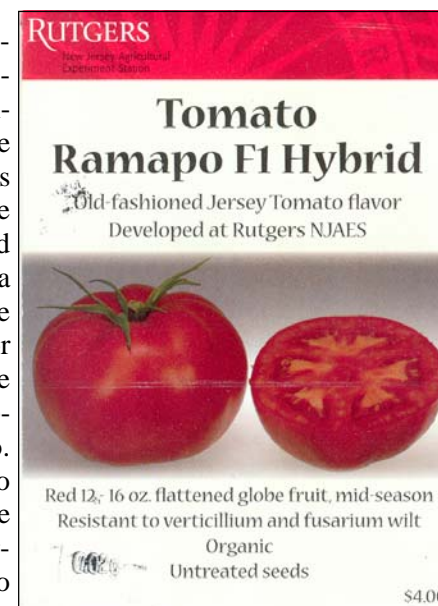




Agent's Overview

Many of our Central Jersey growers remember when the Ramapo tomato was leading the way in establishing a national reputation for taste as the legendary Jersey tomato. Few foods muster as much comparison in the American pallet as the tomato. Bland tasting tomatoes have become such a mainstream commodity that they have been referred to as "cardboard" or "plastic." On the other hand, the one held in highest regard for its exceptional taste has been the Jersey tomato. While NJ farm markets continue to provide consumers with beautiful vine ripened Jersey tomatoes, many purchasers comment "What happened to that old-fashioned tangy Jersey tomato flavor?" In order to meet this concern, the Ramapo classic has been resurrected through the efforts of NJAES.

A sellout of a new batch of hybrids originally produced by retired Rutgers plant breeder Bernie Pollack has occurred this year after several years of testing at Rutgers Research Farms. Bernie had some of the original stock seed and generously provided them back to NJAES in order to recreate the old time fresh tomato market. Thanks to Seeds of Change, Eastern Seeds, Kube-Pak Greenhouses, the RU Diagnostics Lab and the Master Gardeners of Monmouth County for helping this project get a solid start in seed distribution, transplant propagation, sales and packaging.



Transitioning from classical breeding methods to biotechnology, we now find new answers to the proverbial question "What came first the chicken or the egg?" Embryological studies with the humble chicken egg show that this yolk contains not only the genetic code for any poultry type but it also contains the genetic code for dinosaurs! It has often been speculated that birds arose from the Raptor group of dinosaurs in a major evolutionary downsizing (think Tyrannosaurus Rex vs. Plymouth Rock). The incredible evidence of feathery dinosaur fossils was just trumped by two more amazing discoveries. First the rehydrating of dinosaur bones are claimed to provide DNA collagen fragments that are fleshy and intact. Secondly, when genetic treatments turn off the current genes in today's chicken; the ancient dinosaur genes are still there! Experiments show how this genetic manipulation can have a chicken grow a dino-like tail, dino-like teeth and scales, instead of feathers. For everyday evidence, just look a bit more closely at emus and silkys in the 4-H tent at the county fair and you'll see the "eye of T.Rex still lurking as well as the three-toed feet. This new chicken-egg-dinosaur answer has potentially large ramifications in livestock breeding as well as horticultural crops. In the search for new characteristics, breeders may find useful genetic traits preserved from antiquity in today's plants. WOW! *Bill Sciarappa*

Monmouth County BOA Holds Annual Dinner

The Monmouth County Board of Agriculture Annual Dinner was held on the evening of March 8, 2008 at the Main Street Bistro in Freehold. Board President, Tom Freiberger; served as Master of Ceremonies. Ed Wengryn of Farm Bureau and Bill Griffin, President of the State Board of Agriculture; gave the keynote presentations. The dismantling of the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, Water Rights and Farm Labor

were some of the key issues brought forward. Freeholder Barbara McMorrow and longtime friend Ted Narozanick expressed their support of the agricultural community in Monmouth County. The FFA's of Allentown, Freehold Township and the Monmouth Career Center gave a wonderful joint presentation on their award winning programs and members. The dinner was capped off by the presentation of the Distinguished Service to Agriculture Award to Hal Rifkin. (Page 4)



Grower-Directed Research: A Case Study of the NJ Blueberry Industry

Jack Rabin, Associate Director—Farm Programs

“Grower Directed” means really listening. Linking farmers to Rutgers assures our research addresses farmers’ goals for profitable farming, reducing production and marketing risks, doing no harm to the Pine Barrens, and improving resources on which farmers depend. Grower-directed empowers farmers to ask great questions, decide how experiments are conducted, and how knowledge is shared. With encouragement from NJAES Director Mark Robson, blueberry growers joined Rutgers and USDA, conducting four 2007 meetings, and charting a common path for research priorities.



Why blueberries—Why now? Even with expanding profit and acres, growers feel they must remain on the cutting edge of yields, costs, quality, and sales due to competing regions. Growers want assurance researchers are on the edge with them. Growers support Rutgers NJAES P.E. Marucci Center, and want to make sure while their needs are met, they effectively advocate for Rutgers and the USDA’s Agricultural Research Service. Following are highlights of topics and steps we will implement together.

Changing crop fertility. Grower Bobby Galetta notes we need to “re-examine all blueberry growing; farming from the ground up.” Growers hear non-replicated observations, coffee house folklore, rumor, and product promises when what they want is research performing reliably under variable conditions. Growers like Rus Franceschini perform fertility tests; comparing products, formulations, and rates without benefit of researcher consultations. While yields rose in recent years, sometimes doubling to 8-9,000 lbs./acre, questions remain where advances will come from. In the longer term, yields should close on 15,000 lbs/acre. How do growers get to the next level?

Group Decision. A new era of fertility recommendations and timing for achieving high yields with envi-

ronmental safety are a priority and can occur by recruiting more research on performance and safety (contaminants) of fertilizers. NJAES Director Robson offered \$25,000 toward a team proposal addressing fertility and soil health.

Food safety. Microbiology safety, residues, 3rd party audits, Good Ag Practices (GAPs), and traceability concern farmers. Growers want to “own their GAPs” guidelines. Growers want Extension reaching out informally—and formally—to non-participating peers. They want blueberries associated with healthfulness, opposing GMO crop improvement, (Roundup® ready blueberry) and thus oppose the N. American Blueberry Council funding similar efforts.

Group Decision. Farm visits and communications should continue urging growers to use GAPs. Incorporating traceability from field to retailer to fork needs to be easier. Growers want pro-active extension; discussing risks when observed, raising topics at educational events, and urging all growers to address safety. Growers with crisis management and media events need training and they have been addressing this through their association.

Additional work group decisions were made in the priority areas of research support, labor, varietal development, blueberry diseases and IPM.

CALENDAR

MAY

28 - Twilight Wine Grape Mtg. Plagido’s Winery, 570 N. 1st Rd., Hammononton 609-567-4633 - J. Frecon 856-307-6450 Ext 1

JUNE

5 - Organic Vegetable & Fruit Production Race Farms, Blairstown www.nofanj.org
13 - Plastic Pesticide Container Collection Program - Helena Chemical, Woodstown, 9AM-3PM 609-984-2506
19 - Organic Berry Production, Emery’s Berry Farm, New Egypt. www.nofanj.org
25 - 5 to 8 PM - Hands-on Workshop: Future Trends in Nursery Crop Production—Using Natural Mycorrhizae. Register: 609-291-7070 njn1a1@aol.com
26 - Fruit & Wine Grape Research Twilight Mtg., Tour & Picnic, 4PM Rutgers NJAES Agricultural Research and Ext. Ctr. Bridgeton. J. Frecon 856-307-6450 Ext 1

JULY

23-27 Monmouth County Fair - Freehold

AUGUST

12 - Vegetable Growers Twilight Meeting at Rutgers Agricultural Research Extension Center, 121 Northville Road, Bridgeton, NJ

SEPTEMBER

4 - Organic Grain & Forage RAREC www.nofanj.org
7-10 - International Pepper Conference. Atlantic City, NJ - Wes Kline 856-451-2800 wkline@aesop.rutgers.edu or Andy Wyenandt 856-455-3100 Ext 4144



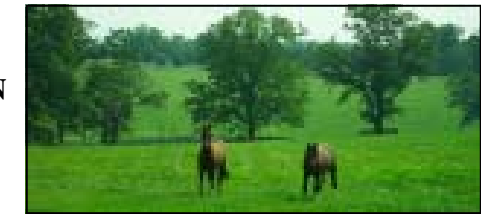
Changing Times is produced and edited by Bill Sciarappa and Vivian Quinn - sciarappa@rcrc.rutgers.edu
 Past Issues on the web www.visitmonmouth.com/07050coopext



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EQUINE FARM & LAND MANAGEMENT SEMINAR

HUNTERDON
MAY 15



SALEM
MAY 22

NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ (April 7, 2008) – Rutgers Equine Science Center and Rutgers NJAES Cooperative Extension have scheduled the popular Equine Farm and Land Management Short Course to visit north and south Jersey in May. However, this time it will consist of a seminar format covering only one full day instead of two.

On Thursday, May 15, 2008, the class will be held at the Snyder Research & Extension Farm, 140 Locust Grove Road in Pittstown snyderfarm.rutgers.edu On Thursday May 22, 2008 -- the site will be the Salem County Cooperative Extension Office, 51 Cheney Road, Woodstown (salem.rutgers.edu). The course will run from approximately 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. with lunch midday. Registrations will be accepted for the full day or for either the morning or the afternoon sessions.

Specially designed for owners and managers of horse farms and other livestock facilities, the morning lecture presentations will cover pasture management; the role of pasture on horse health; pasture renovation; manure management; and water quality issues. The PM session will focus on demonstrations, including weed and forage identification; manure spreader calibration; and other pasture management and equine nutrition-related topics. Speakers will include Rutgers Cooperative Extension specialists and agricultural and natural resource agents.

The registration fee is \$40 for the full day or \$25 for either the morning or afternoon half day; both registrations include lunch. For further information or to register, please go to www.esc.rutgers.edu or contact salinger@njaes.rutgers.edu

MONMOUTH COUNTY BOA - 7:30 PM- 4-15, 5-20, 6-17
 BASIC PESTICIDE TRAINING
 CORE—9 am - 1 pm 4-15, 5-13, 6-10
 Category 3B - 9 AM - 3 PM - 5-13

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

Farm Service Agency

Acres Reporting – It is that time of year again! Appointments are being taken now to report any wheat, barley, oats, rye, or other small grain acreage that has been planted. The deadline to report these acres is **May 31, 2008**. For all other crops the deadline is **July 15, 2008**. Acreage reporting is required for the Non-insured Assistance Program (NAP), Commodity Loans, Loan Deficiency Payments, and the Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment Program. Please call the office to schedule an appointment

Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) – If you are a participant in the NAP program, and you have not provided your previous year(s) production figures, the final date to report 2007 or earlier crop production is **June 30, 2008**. All production records must be summarized and may be producer certified without supplying original receipts if done prior to the deadline.

Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation Compliance - Operators should remember that in order to receive payments, compliance with Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions are required. Farmers with HEL soils need to be aware of tillage, crop residue, and rotation requirements as specified in your conservation plan. 732-462-0075 www.fsa.usda.gov

PLANT & PEST ADVISORY

2008 Season

- ✓ Stay informed of insect and disease advisories
- ✓ Get the latest information on your crop and region
- ✓ Reduce costs through IPM and more effective use of pesticides
- ✓ Learn effective cultural practices and the latest results of New Jersey crop research
- ✓ Improve storage/handling procedures. Learn new marketing techniques and opportunities
- ✓ Be informed of upcoming meetings, seminars and trainings

The Plant & Pest Advisory is a cooperative effort between New Jersey county agents, research specialists, growers, landscapers and the agricultural services industry. This publication provides you with the most timely information on your growing problems and IPM needs.

To subscribe

<http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/plantandpestadvisory/>

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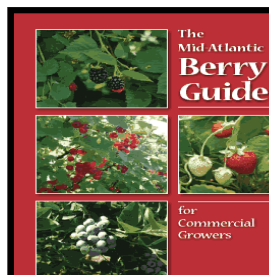


Farmer's Market

In the Grand Carousel
June - Aug. 2008

Fantastic oceanfront location right in the heart of the newly redeveloped Asbury Park Boardwalk

Please contact Ashley LaBau at alabau@mMrs.com or call 732-897-6500 to reserve a space



Mid-Atlantic Berry Guide for Commercial Growers

\$18.00

To Order Call 732-431-7260

What is IPM and why should I care?



A public press release from NJAES



Many people in New Jersey buy produce from local farm stands. You have probably heard of organic produce and you may even ask the people at the farm stands if their produce is organically grown. A question, though, that is seldom asked at farm stands is "Was this produce grown using IPM?" If you aren't familiar with IPM, then we have to first answer, what is IPM?

The acronym IPM stands for 'integrated pest management'. And this means...? Okay, let's break it down into parts. First, what is a pest? In talking about food crops a pest is any plant, animal, or disease pathogen – bacterium, fungus, virus and so on, that interferes with the growth, production and marketing of a crop. So in other words, weeds, many different kinds of insects and various plant diseases all interfere with the growth and production of a crop. Many of these pests damage the fruit or plant so that they are unmarketable – no one will buy them.

Pest management then, means that farmers are trying to manage pests so as to keep their crop damage to very low levels. If damage becomes excessive then farmers lose money because they won't be able to sell their produce. In the long run, this can put them out of business.

So what is integrated pest management? Integrated means that farmers are looking at many different ways to control pests. We often hear about pesticides being used on crops. Pesticides, including insecticides, fungicides and herbicides, are one of the many tools that farmers use to manage pests. Other tools or options that they may use include growing pest resistant varieties of crops, planting either earlier or later than usual to avoid pests, harvesting early, using biological control (using another organism to control the pest), hand weeding and so on. When these different options are used in an overall plan to manage pests we call it integrated pest management, or IPM.

So why should you care about IPM? One reason is that when a farmer uses IPM, there may be a reduction of pesticide use. Pesticides are fairly easy to use and usually provide quick results but they can be

expensive, and as the name implies, pesticides are designed to kill pests. Insecticides, particularly, can be toxic to non-pests, like the people applying them. Farmers don't like using pesticides any more than is necessary, which is why they are looking for other ways to manage pests.

The best way for farmers to know whether they need to make a management decision about using any management tool is by relying on field scouting. A field scout is someone, maybe the farmer or someone hired by the farmer, who routinely walks through the fields looking for pest problems. After looking at the crop a decision is made as to whether there are enough pests present to do something about them. If pests are below damaging levels then the farmer does not need to use a pesticide. And even if some pests are at damaging or threatening levels there may be other options for managing them. By reducing pesticide use, toxic materials are not released into the environment and the farmer spends less money on pesticides.

In New Jersey nearly everyone knows that open space is declining. Development pressure from new homes, shopping malls and other construction is limiting open areas. By helping to reduce production costs without sacrificing food quality we are helping to keep farmers in business and helping to keep open spaces.

Lastly, by using practical, economically sound and environmentally appropriate control options, farmers are able to reduce the introduction of pesticides into the environment; thereby reducing concerns about food safety and environmental hazards.

In short, why should you care if farmers use IPM? Because it means a stronger economy, helps farmers stay in business, reduces pesticide use, and helps preserve the environment. By using IPM, New Jersey growers will continue to produce fresh, healthy, local fruits and vegetables for you.



A field scout records her observations

Congratulations Hal Rifkin

In 1944 Hal's parents Helen and Irv bought a 65-acre farm in Manalapan. They started out in the poultry business in 1950 with a single chicken coop. In a few years this grew to 8 chicken coops with 15,000 chickens. When Hal was 7 years old, he started collecting, washing and grading eggs before and after school.

After 10 years the poultry business started to decline so the Rifkins converted their large barn into a milk plant which housed 35 cows. When Hal was 16 he started delivering milk in Manalapan and Jackson. Even though the dairy business kept the family very busy it was not enough to support the whole family. Irv began to venture into vegetable production as Hal's grandfather was already growing vegetables in South Jersey since the early 1900's. In the early days of the farm market, Hal and his parents had to find other ways to retail their products, so every weekend for 10 years they took the produce and dairy products to the English-town Auction Market.

Even though Hal's love for farming was endless, he was concerned about the future of agriculture. He attended night school at Rider College and received an Associates degree in Business Administration and later another degree in Court Reporting from the Cit-tone School. In 1976 Hal married Marsha, who has been working on the farm with him for 32 years. They have two wonderful children, Brian and Jessica, who have worked on the family farm through college. Brian is now a Web Designer and Jessica is a 3rd grade teacher in Marlboro.

His concern and love of agriculture is evident by the many organizations he has served. He served as

MC-BOA President Tom Freiberger presents 2008 Distinguished Service to Agriculture Award to Hal Rifkin



Vice-President and President of the Monmouth County Board of Agriculture, the Monmouth County Agricultural Development Board and on the Board of Directors for the Tri-County Produce Market for many years. Hal has always shown generosity in helping others by giving to the Foodbank, Churches and Fundraisers.

When three teenagers ran out of gas in front of his farm market, they asked for help. Hal went over to the gas tank and gave the boys 3 gallons of gas. When they took out their wallets Hal told them to put their money away and pay in a different way – He explained that someday, someone will ask you for help and I want you to always remember this day, and help others anyway you can. One by one each boy shook his hand and said thank you and promised to repay the kindness they received that day.

Hal, we thank you for your wisdom, wit and generosity that you graciously have always shared with all. The Monmouth County Board of Agriculture is proud to present you with this plaque in recognition of your outstanding service and dedication to the agricultural community. *By Rich Obal*



Remember When white potatoes, red tomatoes and yellow sweet corn dominated the farmscape and eggplants, grapes and equine were just an emerging twinkle in an ag entrepreneur's eyes. NJAES Director Mark Robson recently held a seminar on campus inviting retired extension agents and specialists Warner Thurlow, Bill Roberts, Charlie Holmes and Morris Fabian (L to R) to reminisce about NJ ag and discuss the changes of their days at Rutgers. This All-Star team attracted a full house at the Alexander Library with lots of familiar faces in the audience such as Professor Emeritus Dick Ilnicki, Doc Dey, Doc Meirs and many others who have contributed to successful farming through extension and grower collaboration.

IT'S DREAMLAND—Farm is Preserved

HOWELL - The 147-acre Tullo Farm, a horse training center, has become the 20th township farm to be granted preserved farmland status. It is now the largest preserved farm in the 65-square-mile community.

A longtime dream of the late Dominick Tullo Sr., the 35-year-old farm has the capacity to house up to 150 horses that are readying for competition and remains a family-operated business. The family, which started the farm

on a small plot on Vienna Road in Howell, went on to construct a six-horse walker, a horizontal Ferris wheel-like apparatus used to trot horses in a small circular area, and a 20-foot-deep therapeutic pool. "We developed the whole farm by ourselves," said Richard Tullo, Dominick's son. "We built the track with a bulldozer that my father bought. We (Tullo and his two brothers, Alex and Dominick Jr.) spent a lot of time in the summers and on weekends helping my father. It was a lot of fun." Now Dominick Tullo's dream will continue. "We want to keep it the way my father wanted," Tullo said.

The farm was preserved under the municipal Planning Incentive Grant, a program that splits the cost of acquiring the deed restriction between the state, county and municipality. In this case, the state covered 60 percent of the \$2.3 million bill, the county 24 percent and the municipality the remaining 16 percent. The township's share, just under \$374,000 will come from a 2-cent municipal tax used specifically for the acquisition of open space, farmland preservation and recreation, said chief financial officer Jeffrey Filiatreault.

"Aside from the environment benefits, it helps keep the land pristine," said John Costigan, chairman of township's Preservation Task Force, the volunteer group charged with managing farmland preservation. "It keeps down the building, which is important because the more



Farm manager Randy Giglio works with "Nuke I am" in the exercise pool at Tullo Farm in Howell.

building you do, the more impervious surface and Howell is historically a wet area. We need the land to help purify the water."

"Help in facilitating the deed restriction came from Monmouth Conservation Foundation of Middletown," Costigan said. "The foundation helped to facilitate the process," he said. "It is often difficult for towns to concentrate on individual land deals," said Adele Keller, the foundation's executive director. "Howell did take the

lead but we helped them to keep things moving." Keller, whose foundation has provided the outreach program for the past six years, said now is the time that towns need to be vigilant about preserving land. "We are in a serious crisis," Keller said. "The November referendum gave life to the The Garden State Preservation Trust Fund (which funds the PIG program) for another year but beyond that it is anyone's guess."

Keller said fiscal pressures could mean a longer waiting line for money to fund the trust. "Voters approved a \$200 million dedication for the trust fund, with \$73 million to be used for farmland preservation," said State Agriculture Development Committee spokeswoman Hope Gruzlovic.

Tullo Farm also has the distinction of being one of the last farms approved under the municipal planning incentive grant's old rules. "We are starting over fresh," Gruzlovic said. "We recently adopted new rules, established a new county planning incentive grant program as an alternative to the traditional program." Under the new program, counties will have the ability to develop comprehensive plans outlining objectives that will enable the SADC to fund a group of projects as opposed to individual applications. To date, close to 700 acres of farmland has been preserved in Howell.

Michelle Gladden—Asbury Park Press Jan 17, 2008



BY THE NUMBERS	
Preserved farms in Howell	20
Total Howell Acres	678
Preserved farms in Monmouth Cty.	139
TOTAL COUNTY ACRES	11,097

