



Open Space Pace inaugural event at Freehold Raceway

Retired horse racer **Sam Landy** is again leading the pack in an effort to bolster the struggling equine industry and preserve agricultural open space. Late last year, Sam assembled a notable committee of equine and ag interests to develop his concept of a key-stone event at **Freehold Raceway** - similar to the old Monmouth Hunt affair or a mini-Kentucky Derby - complete with a downtown parade, educational booths, celebrity racing, sports stars and professional racing that is simulcast nationwide. The main featured race is the **New Jersey Sire Stakes Race** with a handsome purse to the winners. All this is topped off by an outdoor evening concert by **South Side Johnny** and the Jukes, going on Saturday, September 29, 2012 at Freehold from 10:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

To stress the importance of this charitable event, Committee member and **Equine Science Center Director Karyn Malinowski** said that "According to the NJ Department of Agriculture, **New Jersey lost 40,000 acres of open space** between 1983 and 1996, primarily because of the demise of racehorse breeding farms." Underlying causes for the loss of breeding farms at that time were changes in federal tax laws and reduction in the racing purse structure due to the competition for gaming dollars resulting from the arrival of casinos.

New Jersey stands to lose a similar amount of tax-paying open space unless it develops a mechanism(s) for assuring sustainability for both thoroughbred and standardbred racing. The **New Jersey Farmland Preservation**

Program is extremely proud of the number of acres of farmland that have been preserved (equine-related and otherwise) However, it is not enough to just preserve farms (including horse farms) in the state. If industries utilizing the preserved farmland are not viable, they will seek locations elsewhere, taking with them their financial contributions and leaving in their wake joblessness and a scenic vista of preserved but unproductive land, a fiscal burden to the community that helped preserve it.

Horse racing is the economic driving engine of the entire horse industry in the state and is extremely valuable to the quality of life in the form of agricultural working landscape which benefits all residents of New

Jersey. If you can contribute or need more info, contact **Brett Taft (908) 839-6564**. More information about the Open Space Pace organization and event is available at <http://openspacepace.org/>

So please mark it down with a star to attend this important event. It will be fun for young and old alike.



Don't miss it. *Bill Sciarappa*



Left - Open Space Pace Committee meets at Freehold Raceway Renaissance Room members include industry, extension, vets, equine community, etc.

Right - Organizational leader Sam Landy and Secretary Brett Taft - center.

Please call Brett for Sponsorship opportunities 908-839-6564.



Secretary of Agriculture Celebrates 100th Anniversary of Delicious Orchards

To help celebrate the 100th anniversary of Delicious Orchards, New Jersey Secretary of Agriculture Douglas H. Fisher, State Board of Ag member Hugh McKittrick and a variety of local dignitaries visited the popular Colts Neck country food market. “We congratulate Delicious Orchards for 100 years of serving the community, supporting local farmers and providing its customers with access to Jersey Fresh produce and Jersey-made products,” said Secretary Fisher. “We rely upon businesses such as Delicious Orchards to promote the sale of local produce and provide the public with access to these products.”

Starting out in 1911 as wholesale apple growers, Delicious Orchards has evolved into a destination, not just for nearby residents, but for people from all over the region. Bill McDonald and his family are now owner/operators of Delicious Orchards which employs 250 people and have more than 2.5 million visitors each year. The very best for Delicious Orchards, according to McDonald, is selling Jersey Fresh and Jersey Seafood at every opportunity. During New Jersey’s growing season,

people will find Jersey peaches, strawberries, blueberries, corn, peppers, tomatoes, eggplant and many other varieties of produce, much of it purchased from Monmouth

County farmers. In the winter, McDonald purchases greenhouse tomatoes from a Vineland grower.

Senator Jennifer Beck and Assemblywomen Mary Pat Angelini and Caroline Casagrande presented Delicious Orchards with a Legislative Resolution. “I am pleased to join Secretary Fisher in recognizing Delicious Orchards,

which is renowned throughout Monmouth County and New Jersey,” said Assemblywoman Angelini. “Delicious Orchards, which exemplifies the rich farming tradition of our state, is vital to our economy and quality of life and should be applauded as they celebrate their 100th anniversary.” To watch a video of the event, go to

<http://co.monmouth.nj.us/PressDetail.aspx?ID=1032>

Excerpted from NJ Dept of Ag - Lynne Richmond



Bill McDonald, Freeholder Serena DeMaso, Freeholder Director John Curley, Secretary Fisher, Colts Neck Mayor Jarrett Engel, Freeholder Lillian Burry, Senator Jennifer Beck, Assemblywoman Angelini and State Board of Ag member Hugh McKittrick



L to R—Freeholders DeMaso, Arnone & Curley tour the bakery, Center—L to R, Bill McDonald, Freeholders DeMaso, Curley and Secretary Fisher listen to Hugh McKittrick; right photo - McDonald and Secretary Fisher tour the produce section of the market.

Monmouth County Board of Ag Celebrates at Annual Dinner

The Monmouth County Board of Ag held its Annual Dinner at the Main Street Bistro in Freehold in late February. President Gary DeFelice presided over the festivities that included NJDA dignitaries, Monmouth County Freeholders Lillian Burry and John



Curley among many others. Presentations by the FFA livened the event which ended with honoring service award winner and retired County Agent Rich Obal (see page 5).

Freeholder Emeritus Ted Narozanick and Bill Walker from NJDA talk to FFA member Shawn Mechkowski



Improving Quality & Competitiveness of Jersey Tomatoes

While not our largest selling crop, the Jersey Tomato is a signature crop that helps sell other items when wholesale orders come in. Seventy-five years ago, 25-50% of shipped market tomatoes were lost before making it to market. Market pressures for improved shipability (firmness), lead to the development of a tomato that is visually appealing and free of defects but short on pleasing aroma, taste, and texture. Partnering with New Jersey growers, NJAES Specialists and Ag Agents are working toward producing the best Jersey Tomato possible.

Variety Development for Local Markets & Processing-

Prof. Tom Orton is breeding and testing improved tomato lines at the Rutgers Ag Research and Extension Center farm. Tom's insights has led him to focus on creating improved new *open-pollinated tomato genotypes* instead of F-1 hybrids for two reasons. First, tomatoes in general exhibit a bit less hybrid vigor than some other vegetable crops. Second, with our smaller acreages, we can't maintain seed company interest in producing costly F-1 hybrid varieties. Generally, a seed company needs to sell enough seed to produce about 4,000 acres per variety to support profitable hybrid seed production.

Best Performing Early Grafted Tomatoes in High

Tunnels Tomato growers routinely get far higher prices for their earliest tomatoes. However, marginal weather conditions frequently leave growers with variable fruit appearance and eating quality. Early varieties frequently compromise other horticultural attributes to provide earlier maturity.

High tunnels solve a lot of these problems and combined with grafting can offer higher disease free yields. County Agents Wes Kline and Peter Nitzsche are attacking this problem by evaluating recently introduced early varieties, grafted and ungrafted, in multiple high tunnels.

Seeds & Transplants of Rutgers Market Gardening

Varieties While not all of NJ's 3.2 million households can or want to garden, the market opportunity is large for commercial plant growers supplying gardeners. One good way to connect with gardeners passionate about tomatoes is offering signature Jersey Tomato garden varieties for transplanting. The link between professional plant growers, retail outlets, gardeners and successful Rutgers tested tomato varieties supports local vendors. For seed information see: <http://njfarmfresh.rutgers.edu/jerseytomato.html>

Grape Tomato Evaluation & Jersey Marketing Identity

The grape tomato marketing phenomenon began more than a decade ago. Grape tomatoes, and other small to medium size high quality greenhouse varieties seriously eroded the market share of field grown red round tomatoes, even as the overall sales of market tomatoes expanded at the same time. It would be easy to offer anecdotes that the natural conven-



The Jersey Jems trademark, prepared by Peter Nitzsche, offers farmers a Jersey marketing identity for better grape tomatoes

ient package grape tomatoes present to consumers and institutional markets, from salad bars to deli trays, added to the situation. Moreover, consumer dissatisfaction with the lackluster culinary quality of even local field red round tomatoes contributed to market share losses of classic Jersey Tomatoes.

But, there is more science at work. It turns out that some grape tomato varieties offer higher Brix (a measure of sugar and sweetness), higher acidity (the gum stimulating tartness we like in classic tomatoes) and higher aromatic compounds that make the best tomatoes attractive. In other words, some grape tomatoes offer more of everything that attracts us to the best tomatoes.

From County Agent Peter Nitzsche's field testing at Snyder Research and Extension Farm, culinary evaluations by Prof. Bev Pepper in Food Science, evaluation of volatile chemical constituents in cooperation with Campbell Soup Co., and support from Monsanto Vegetable Seeds, we have a much better picture of consumer attraction and grower recommendations.

Jack Rabin, Association Director—Farm Programs

<http://njsustainingfarms.rutgers.edu/agritourism.html>



Richard G. Obal

Service Award Honoree

Richard G. Obal was born on September 1, 1947 in Sayreville, NJ to proud Polish immigrant parents. The family included 2 brothers and a sister. As a child, Rich enjoyed sports, stamp collecting, fossil hunting and learning at school. Early-on, he worked at the family nursery operation but especially enjoyed working in theater productions in High School, College and the general community. During grad school, he met Diana "Tish" Hannigan and they married in 1974.

Rich received a Bachelor's Degree in Biology and Physiology from C. W. Post College and a **Masters in Horticulture from Rutgers University**. His thesis entitled "Effect of Fertilization Level on the Quality of Four Inch Chrysanthemums and Poinsettias in a Peat-Lite Mix." This study set the stage for his professional employment in managing Obal Garden Center and Nursery in Princeton and Turner Brothers Nursery in West Long Branch during the early 1970's. Since 1977, you have been an outstanding County Agricultural and Resource Management Agent in Monmouth County. In 1993, you began serving as a Rutgers Cooperative Extension Department Head. During this time, Rich established many important regional education programs in nursery, greenhouse, landscape and turf management as well as began the County Master Gardener Program in 1999.

Since 1981, Rich has been a member of the Agricultural Development Board of Monmouth and served as Secretary since 1985. You have provided key assistance in the Development of the NJAES Cream Ridge Station as a State-wide Research & Demonstration Facility for Ornamental Plants. Your work with the Board of Certified Experts and the Arboriculture Committee has expanded educational programs and testing procedures for professional Arborists. Over your 34 year career with Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Rich educated thousands of homeowners, farmers, nursery owners, landscapers and residents. You trained Municipal, County, State and Federal employees as well as have been an important Advisor for our County Board of Agriculture and the Curriculum Committee of Brookdale Community College.

Rich has received numerous awards throughout the years including the **Blue Ribbon Award** from the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers, the **Distinguished Service Award** and **Achievement Award** from the National Association of County Agricultural Agents, the James T. Howard Team Award from the Monmouth County Water Resources Association and, most recently, the Outstanding Professional Conservationist Award from the NJ Association of Conservation Districts.

Rich, on behalf of the **Monmouth Board of Agriculture** we would like to present you with this plaque in recognition of your service and dedication to the Agricultural Community.

Presented 2/25/2012



The **Farm to School Network** and **Farm-Based Education Association** both provide unique opportunities for farmers to connect with local schools for the benefit of both. **The Farm to School program** connects schools with local farms with the objectives of serving healthy meals in school cafeterias, improving student nutrition, providing health and nutrition education opportunities that will last a lifetime, supporting local small farmers. **The National Farm to School Network** sprouted from this desire to support community-based food systems, strengthen family farms, and improve student health. Eight regional lead agencies and national staff provide free training and technical assistance, information services, networking, and support for policy, media and marketing activities. In less than a decade farm to school programs have grown

from just 2 recognized programs to over 2,000. These programs vary in size and scope- some include school gardens and composting, others integrate food education in the classroom, with the unifying principle of ensuring that school children have the opportunity to eat healthy foods from local farms. An overview of the Farm to School program can be found at <http://www.njfarmtoschool.org/about-us/> Webinars can be viewed at <http://www.farmtoschool.org/webinars.php>

Information on Farm-Based Education can be found at <http://www.farmbasededucation.org>

I know the value of farm-based education is immeasurable. "FBEA is the first step to seeing that these sorts of experiences continue and strengthen for generations to come." For further info, email **Pat Eisemann** pateisemann@gmail.com



NJDA & NJAES-RCE Visit Philadelphia Wholesale Produce Market

Business Development Manager Tad Thompson hosted NJDA Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Al Murray and RCE Ag Agents Rick VanVranken and Bill Sciarappa on a tour of the new Philadelphia Wholesale Produce Market (PWPM) which opened in June 2011. This market is the world's largest, fully-enclosed, fully refrigerated terminal located at 6700 Essington Avenue, Philadelphia, PA. We enjoyed an impressive tour of the enormous facility (686,000 sq. ft.) occupied by 25 independent produce distributors. PWPM merchants have annual sales of over \$1 billion dollars.



Walking along the ¼ mile stretch, Secretary Al greeted distributors and workers whom he has known for some time as well as made some new friends. We were struck by the cleanliness, clarity and quickness. Forklifts were whizzing by along

designated routes, floors were spotless and the open skylight allowed natural lighting throughout. As we viewed the produce, the freshness of the fruits and vegetables displayed beautifully and horticultural details shone through. There was a high quality in packing, varietal selection and food diversity. Tad explained that their marketing group was now focusing on **ethnic specialty crops and locally grown produce** as a rapidly rising market segment. We had discussed these strong market demographics earlier at our poster session in the NJVGA Trade Show for the Atlantic Coast Conference at AC. They now are inviting area distributors and growers to selected industry events with a reception area and spacious Board Room. For more details, the contact information is phone 215-336-3003 or website www.PWPM.net/



Above - Secretary Al Murray promotes NJ Fresh, tour group of VanVranken, Thompson, Murray and Sciarappa; year-round supply of veggies,

Below - artful cooler door, Procacci produce display; Rutgers Vegetable Recommendations - \$15



**Commercial Vegetable
Production Recommendations**

New Jersey **2012**

Available at our office \$15
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AGENCY UPDATES



Co-Director Ray Samulis of the MidAtlantic AgrAbility project along with Delaware & Maryland offers you to visit a new website you might find interesting and of use for some of your farmers. It can be accessed at **www.mid-atlanticagrability.com** While the grant is written for southern NJ, he is trying to see if we can branch out to the north. RCE Extension Agent Ray can also work with any personal referrals you might have of farmers in your area. Raymond Samulis, 609-265-5050 samulis@aesop.rutgers.edu



In January, the USDA released an updated Plant Hardiness Map, the first time the map has been officially updated since 1990. The map indicates the average annual minimum temperature, and is based on data from 1976 to 2005. Since the 1990 map, some areas in New Jersey increased by half a zone, indicating a 5-degree Fahrenheit increase in average minimum temperature. The new map is designed to be internet-friendly, with a “find your zone by ZIP code” function, and the ability to interact with Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The map can be visited at

<http://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/PHZMWeb/>

PLEASE FILL OUT SECTIONS BELOW:

1 I'd like to receive the newsletter starting early Spring 2012:
 by mail by e-mail (same day)

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 Landscape, Nursery & Turf (16 issues) . \$32 \$20
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 Cranberry (10 issues) \$20 \$13
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PLANT & PEST ADVISORY
 Seasonal management newsletter for

New Jersey's vegetable, fruit, cranberry

RUTGERS
 New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station
 and turf and ornamentals industries

Calendar

June 2012

13 - Build-A-Rain Barrel Workshop & Stormwater Pollution Seminar - 6 to 8 PM Wall Municipal Bldg. Registration www.water.rutgers.edu/Stormwater_Management/rainbarrels.html

July 2012

10-15 Ocean County Fair - Tamara 732-349-1227

18-21 Burlington County Farm Fair - Rosemary 609-784-8369.

25-29 Monmouth County Fair, Freehold, NJ (see above) 732-431-7260.

31 - RU Turf Field Day - Adelphia <http://www.njturfgrass.org/>

August 2012

1 - RU Turf Field Day - New Brunswick <http://www.njturfgrass.org/>

2 - Monmouth County BOA Picnic Cream Ridge 6:00 PM. Contact Gary DeFelice - DeFelice83@aol.com

September 2012

18 - BOA Reorganization Mtg. 7:30

29 - Open Space Pace - Freehold Raceway 10:30a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

PESTICIDE CONTROL PROGRAM WEBSITE www.pcpnj.org

MONMOUTH COUNTY BOA
9-18, 10-16, 11-20, 12-18

BASIC PESTICIDE TRAINING CORE 9 am - 1 pm
6-12

Category 3A - 9 AM - 3 PM
To register call 800-524-9942

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

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sciarappa@njaes.rutgers.edu

Past Issues on the web <http://www.visitmonmouth.com/page.aspx?Id=3078>

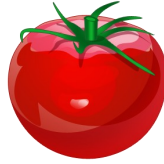


Monmouth County Fair

July 25—29, 2012



<http://www.monmouthcountyparks.com/page.aspx?Id=2492>



The Annual Great Tomato Tasting

August 29, 2012 3 pm to Dusk
Kids under 10 Free!

Rutgers Snyder Research & Extension Farm
140 Locust Grove Road
Pittstown, NJ 08867
Contact: (908) 730-9419

Support Rutgers Against Hunger!
Bring a non-perishable food item.



<http://snyderfarm.rutgers.edu/tomatoes.html>



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New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station
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Bill Sciarappa, County Agricultural Agent
Extension Department Head

Photos: Vivian Quinn - RCE Monmouth County; Nyna McKittrick BOA; Bill Sciarappa; John Neyhart

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