



Agent's Overview

Our summer issue highlights some extension and farming events where our commercial growers and homeowner clients enjoy learning about the latest Ag research at Rutgers farms in Adelphia, Cream Ridge and New Brunswick sites. Program successes this season include the Ramapo resurrection into the fresh-pick local market, the expansion of Teff into summer annual hay production and the re-introduction of an equine and pasture newsletter entitled "Equine Essentials". If you're not on our Equine mailing list, please call our office.

My personal highlights include learning how to grow and test Ramapo tomato not only in farm fields but in the greenhouses of the Rutgers Eco-Complex in Burlington County. Our RCE team is investigating various soil amendments relating to taste and beneficial phyto-chemicals in the fruit. My Ag trip to Italy was eye-opening in observing and sampling the fresh farm products that this legendary land has sustainably produced for thousands of years. The extensive care of their farmland soils with cover crops, composted manures and extensive rotations explain some of their secrets to long-term success. Also, I noticed the extraordinary emphasis in varietal selection prioritizing taste

first rather than yield or transport qualities. Their numerous local markets are bursting with high quality produce and the educated consumers are accustomed to daily food purchase and preparation. The produce quality in the restaurants is similarly top-notch. After all, Italia is the home of the "Slow Food Movement" that the rest of Europe and our own northeast area are beginning to better appreciate. These culinary concepts resonate strongly here at home, especially with increased consumer awareness and demand for locally grown products along with the upcoming paradigm shift related to the costs of diesel transportation and carbon footprints.

With summer winding down, we wearily realize that this growing season was far from easy. First, there was the sticker shock of fertilizer, seed and operating costs. Then, it was a slow spring start with very cool soil temperatures. This was followed by some wet weather and then an extreme hot-dry spell in the mid-season. Finally, an extreme weather event with hail and high winds damaged sweet corn, tomato, pepper, eggplant, cucurbits and other crops in central Jersey :(

So, keep it green and growing in the Garden State. Hope you have enjoyed Labor Day.

Bill Sciarappa

Monmouth County Fair 2008

Good weather during almost four out of five days for the 34th annual Monmouth County Fair gave exhibitors, merchants and fair goers a profitable and fun experience. However, the violent storm on Sunday with lightening, hail and a lot of rain put an early end to the fun. On the bright side, the gardeners, farmers and those who need pasture for animals were glad to see the needed rain.

The Fair offers something for just about everyone, young and old, as seen in the photos. Gardeners carefully plan their vegetables, flowers and plants for a chance to win a ribbon. Many talented individuals work all year on their crafts, sewing and art work.

The Monmouth County Master Gardeners'

(Continued on page 5)



Rich Obal judges vegetables for his 30th year along with Master Gardeners Dick Biddle and Gene Nigro; A 1941 Case SC tractor; Lorrie Marquis and Tim Dey from the Farm Services Agency staffing the Board of Ag display



Evaluating NJDA's Deer Fence Distribution

Highly effective non-lethal white-tailed deer exclusion sustaining farms

Joe Paulin, Acting Specialist in Wildlife Mgt., John Grande, Director, Rutgers Snyder Research Farm & Jack Rabin, Associate Director—Farm Programs

For two decades, farmers identify intolerable, sometimes devastating, economic crop losses from white-tailed deer damage as a priority policy issue negatively impacting farming viability.

New Jersey suburban deer population densities frequently exceed our biological and our social carrying capacities. Deer are abundant near farms, but too often inaccessible to hunting due to our fractured landscape deer "refuges" and the differing values residents hold regarding wildlife. Contrary to popular belief, deer over abundance is not caused by suburban sprawl pushing deer onto farmers' fields. White-tailed deer are thriving on the edge habitats created by lawns, wooded cover between homes, grassy road medians and shoulders, school grounds, etc. Our suburbanization creates more healthy deer habitat, not less. Excessive deer over-browsing damages forest ecology, parks, and other public and private land habitats in addition to farmers' crops. Deer are a public resource, but not always accessible to management by the Division of Fish & Wildlife (landowners hold keys to wildlife management).

In response, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA), cooperating with New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES), distributes deer fence to qualifying farmers, on a limited basis, as funds are available. NJDA offers limited deer fence to qualifying farmers as an acceptable, non-lethal exclusion tactic. Fence specified by Rutgers is provided free by NJDA. Farmers purchase poles and hardware, and provide all labor, which exceeds the value of fencing. Rutgers NJAES conducts farmer fence building training at our research farms with NJDA support for fence recipients in order that the maximum performance and fence longevity for non-lethal exclusion of deer are realized.

Farmers receiving fence in 2005 (n=97) were surveyed. The following results highlight information obtained through surveys and on-site evaluations.

- During the crop year *before* the 2005 fencing was installed around a selected field, 6% of farmers estimated *crop damage losses per acre* at less



High-tensile woven wire deer exclusion fence installation workshop conducted at NJAES Cream Ridge Research & Extension Center.

than \$1,000, 34% of farmers between \$1,000 and \$5,000, 26% between \$5,000 and \$10,000, 15% between \$10,000 and \$20,000, and 4% greater than \$20,000. In the year *after* installation on the same fields, farmers estimated their cost per acre crop damage losses, with 60% reporting no damage loss, 25% reported less than \$1,000, and 6% estimated \$1,000 to \$5,000. No losses higher than \$5,000 per acre were reported.

- Crops were overwhelmingly high value fruits, vegetables, nursery crops, and flowers. Site visits revealed a similar pattern with 100% of growers reporting significant reductions in deer-related damage the following year and 52% of participants reporting total elimination of deer-related crop losses.
- Farmer recipients estimated cash out-of-pocket expenses they paid to install their fence. 51% added \$1,000 to \$5,000, 28% added \$5,000 to \$10,000, 6% added \$10,000 to \$20,000, and 2% added more than \$20,000.

Overall, farmers communicated satisfaction and ease applying to NJDA for fencing and fencing pick-up. They were pleased the fence distribution program was available, and would like future fence distributions to help sustain their objectives.

CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

7 - Earth Center Garden Field Day - 1PM—5 PM - Davidson's Mill Pond Pk., 42 Riva Ave., S. Brunswick

10 - Annual Field Crop Twilight Mtg. - Westhampton, NJ. Contact Bill Bamka 609-265-5050

12 & 19 - Plastic Pesticide Container Collection Program - Helena Chemical, 66 Route 206, Hammonton. Karen Kritz 609-984-2506.

20 - NJ Bred All Breed Horse Show - Horse Park of NJ, Allentown, NJ. More info call Nancy Hutcheson at 908-9960-2544.

23 - Rain Garden Conference - RCE Monmouth County 732-431-7273.

23 - Veg Growers Twilight Mtg. - Bridgeton, NJ 856-455-3100.

OCTOBER

2-5 Shore Memorial Horse Show - Horse Park of NJ. Call Bob Allen at 856-235-5623

4-8 - Community Food Security Coalition 2008 Annual Conference. "Re/Storing Our Urban & Rural Communities with Healthy Food." Cherry Hill & Phil. www.foodsecurity.org

4-8 - International Conference on Business Incubators - hosted by the Rutgers Food Innovation Center, Cherry Hill. www.foodinnovation.rutgers.edu/2008FoodBINPR.pdf

3, 10, 17 - Plastic Pesticide Container Collection Program - see above

16 - NOFA-NJ - Community-Supported Agriculture Basics—Farmers' Twilight Mtg. at Moores-town, NJ nofainfo@nofanj.org

NOVEMBER

6 & 7 - HACCP: A Basic Concept for Food Protection - Rutgers Office of Continuing Professional Education. K. Saunders, 732-932-9271 Ext 643

14 - Plastic Pesticide Container Collection Program

DECEMBER

9, 10, 11 - NJ Green Expo Turf & Landscape Conference - Trump Taj Mahal, contact Cece 973-812-6467

JANUARY 2009

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.

MONMOUTH COUNTY BOA
7:30 PM
9-16, 10-21, 11-18, 12-16

BASIC PESTICIDE TRAINING
CORE—9 am - 1 pm
10-14, 11-25, 12-9

Category 3A - 9AM - 3 PM
10-7,

Category 3B - 9 AM - 3 PM
10-21, 11-18

To register call 800-524-9942

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

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



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


4000 Kozloski Rd, PO Box 5033
Freehold, NJ 07728
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Family & Consumer Science: 732-431-7271
4-H: 732-431-7263; 7264
Fax: 732-409-4813

RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
MONMOUTH COUNTY
New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station

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Past Issues on the web www.visitmonmouth.com/07050coopext

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RUTGERS

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AGENCY UPDATES



Farm Service Agency

Buy-In Waiver for Supplemental Disaster Assistance - Producers can establish 2008 eligibility for the new disaster assistance programs by paying a fee as required by the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (the 2008 Farm Bill). The 2008 Act authorizes a waiver that allows producers to pay a fee, called a "buy-in" fee, to be eligible for the new disaster assistance programs.

The buy-in fee is due no later than **Sept. 16, 2008**, 90 days after the date of enactment, as required by the 2008 Act. Payment of the applicable fees will allow the producer to be eligible for financial assistance under the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE), Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), and other disaster assistance programs. The buy-in fee for 2008 eligibility is \$100 per crop, but not more than \$300 per producer per administrative county, or \$900 total per producer for all counties less any previously paid fees for CAT and/or NAP. Producers can contact their local

administrative FSA County Office to get more information or pay applicable fees.

Sign up underway for the 2008 DCP - Producers have until **September 30, 2008** to sign up for the 2008 Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment Program (DCP). Producers can fill out their 2008 DCP contract at any USDA Service Center or Farm Service Agency County Office. Sign-up can also be completed online by going to <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/edcp> and clicking on "Access eDCP Service."

For 2008, eligible producers may request to receive an advance payment of 22 percent of the direct payment for each commodity associated with the farm. FSA will issue advance direct payments as soon as practical after enrollment. Final direct payments will be issued after Oct. 1, 2008.

New Jersey Department of Agriculture - Nancy E. Halpern, DVM, State Veterinarian

On Wednesday August 13, 2008, the Florida State Veterinarian notified the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services (APHIS) that a horse in Manatee County, FL, was positive for Babesia equi, or equine piroplasmiasis. This horse was clinically ill, and the initial samples were taken by an accredited veterinarian. The investigation included testing contact horses on the premises, with a total of 22 contact horses tested. Initial tests found four additional horses on the original premises positive for Babesia equi. One note of concern is that infection may have been spread from the index horse to other horses on the premises of origin through common needle sharing among the horses.

Equine piroplasmiasis is a tick-borne protozoal infection of horses. Piroplasmiasis may be difficult to diagnose, as it can cause variable and nonspecific clinical signs. The symptoms of this disease range from acute fever, inappetence, and malaise, to anemia and jaundice, sudden death, or chronic weight loss and poor exercise tolerance. The disease may be fatal in up to 20% of previously unexposed animals.

Any veterinarian testing horses for EP must notify the State Veterinarian at 609-292-3965. The following samples should be sent to the Division of Animal Health Laboratory for a charge of \$26.00:

2008 FARM BILL SIDE-BY-SIDE

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, which governs Federal farm programs for 2008-12, was enacted into law in July 2008. ERS' side-by-side comparison of this new Farm Act with previous legislation is now available at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/FarmBill/2008/> Summarized but substantive, this comparison is a time-saving reference on farm bill provisions. In addition to key provisions and details by Title, the side-by-side includes links to related ERS publications and to analyses of previous farm acts. New features include a user's guide, an A-Z list of major provisions, and a search function.



The Forage and Grain Producers had a twilight barbecue meeting at the Rutgers Research and Extension Station at Adelphia. Agent Bill Bamka organized the gathering focused on hay production and pasture grass species by touring the experimental plots of Dr. Bill Meyer and Agent Bill Sciarappa.



Special guest Dean Bob Goodman (white hat) discusses his experiences with Teff Grass Production with grower Bob Frieberger



Professor Bill Meyer discussed test results of pasture grass varieties—old and new and their resiliency to horse hoof traffic

At the **Adelphia Landscape Field Day** on July 30th, researcher Stacey Bonos displayed new ornamental grasses and some potential new energy crops for the next generation of our own bio-based power with such possibilities as perennial switchgrass.



L to R—Drs. Stacy Bonos and Bill Meyer, equipment demonstration, Bill Meyer welcomes the crowd

Cream Ridge Fruit Research Station hosted the Nursery Tour on August 28th organized by Agent Rich Obal for the seventh consecutive year. Progressive University research helps support the "Green Industry." NJAES Director Dean Mark Robson welcomed the group of over 70. Speakers included Drs. Jason Grabosky, Specialist Urban Forestry; Gladis Zinati, Specialist, Nursery Management; Chris Obropta, Specialist, Water Resources; Steve Hart, Specialist, Weed Management; Cristi Palmer, IR-4 Project. Also on hand were Dr. George Hamilton, Specialist Pest Management, Rich Buckley of the Diagnostic Lab, Dr. Ann Gould, Dr. Jim Lashomb, Specialist Entomology, and Tommy Freiberger, Research Farm Supervisor, BOA President.



L to R—Dean Robson, Joe Gofredda, Jim Lashomb, Mark Cantarella, Rich Obal, Ann Gould, Rich Buckley, Chris Obropta & Rich Mohr

Rutgers Gardens Open House—July 2008

Color My World

The 44th Annual Open House Festival and Wine Tasting at Rutgers Gardens was a tremendous success with 1,500 visitors, lush gardens and perfect weather. The theme this year was “Color My World,” and indeed the displays exhibited self-expression through the use of color. The day featured tours, wine tasting and sales, garden seminars, a garden marketplace, plant sales, Jersey Fresh produce, food, music and children’s activities. Monmouth County Ag Agent Rich Obal staffed the “Ask the Expert” table along with Barbara Bromley. Educational events included garden tours, root invigoration, ponds 101 and composting.



The Ramapo tomato culture site and compost demonstration site, constructed Spring 2008 by RCE Monmouth County Ag staff and SEBS students, drew over 100 participants eager to learn about the legendary Ramapo tomato and composting. Director Bruce Crawford hopes to increase attendance to 2,000 plus and it seems like he is well on his way.

Plan a trip and enjoy the 50 acres of plants, trees, shrubs and of course the bamboo forest. For a Jersey Fresh experience, check out the Farmer’s Market Fridays from 2 – 6 PM thru Oct. 24. Log on to the Rutgers Gardens website www.rutgersgardens.rutgers.edu for more information on classes, plants and events.

Hightstown Produce Auction Brian Hulme

Secretary Kuperus was on hand for a special night at the Hightstown Produce Auction in early August. Prior to the start of the auction, he spoke on the importance of this auction, and others like it to the Agricultural Community. The Secretary brought with him representatives from the “Jersey Fresh” marketing program and other produce buyers attended as well. These buyers included “Whole Foods”, local restaurants and Food Banks, essential links in the food chain to the consumer.



Secretary Kuperus at the Tri-County Co-Op

As important as produce auctions are to many growers throughout the state, building up the Hightstown Auction is perhaps even more essential. Farmers in Monmouth County find themselves in a unique position. While it has been difficult to remain profitable in these times, those who have weathered the storms and remain productive have an edge that they

themselves may not realize. Simple Supply and Demand teaches us that in a highly densely populated and affluent county such as Monmouth, they should be able to negotiate a premium price for their local produce. The missing link in this chain unfortunately has been distribution. NJ Farmers need an economical and expedient means of getting their product on the shelves, and a Mon-

mouth County Produce Auction such as the one in Hightstown can serve that purpose.

Mirroring this idea is Auction Manager Pegi Ballister-Howells. According to Ms. Ballister-Howells, the Hightstown Produce Auction is a “Diamond in the rough right at the heart of the Garden State and we’re going to make it shine!” After attending the auction in its entirety; it has become apparent that they will succeed. While not large in size the auction offers a platform for a diverse range of products, not only fruits and vegetables, but outdoor ornamentals and cut flowers. Doug Kaufmann of Kaufmann Farms was there offering the “Ramapo” Tomato which was snatched up by a lucky buyer as soon as it went on the block, as did most offerings brought by the growers. The man-

(Continued on page 5)



Above—Master Composter/ Master Gardener John Bauer demonstrates vermicomposting. Below, pony rides were a favorite for young children.



Above—4-H Rabbit exhibit drew a lot of attention, as did the snake man. Center—Diane Zahorsky earned a blue ribbon for her blooming Clerodendron.

(Continued from page 1)

theme was plants that attract beneficial insects to the garden. The Park System collaborated and many excellent displays drew visitors to learn about beneficials. The Master Gardeners staffed their helpline table and received numerous garden questions. The most popular were tomato problems and, of course, deer issues. A display

board featured the Plant-A-Row garden which to date has donated 450 pounds of produce to Open Door in Freehold. Many people intended to donate their excess produce to this food bank as a result of the display. There were also many inquires about the Master Gardener program and the Jr. MG program. Contact Diane Zahorsky 732-431-7262 for more information.

Also impressive were the 4-H exhibits and the children and volunteers involved. Hopefully some visitors to the fair learned about 4-H and will get their children involved. Call 732-431-7263 for more information on 4-H clubs.

Even if they only came for cotton candy and the rides, most visitors leave with a memory of a fun day and look forward to next year minus the hail.

Vivian Quinn

(Continued from page 4)

agers of the auction run an efficient and effective auction, which makes it easy for growers to arrive and sell the fruits of their labor quickly. The staff is friendly and accommodating, making it conducive to not only a business event but a social one as well, where farmers can discuss issues both personal and pro-



fessional as well as mingle with buyers and brokers, creating vital contacts for the future.

The market is located at 619 Route 33 West in Hightstown and operates Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays through Halloween beginning at 7 p.m. At 5 p.m. the auction offers sales to the general public. For more info, use contact number 609-448-0193.