



Changing Times



Volume II, Issue 4

Winter 2004-2005

What a year! Perhaps the high point in our 2004 season was “The Move” into our new Ag Building. The synergy among the ag related groups is developing rapidly as we meet, greet and discuss our common concerns. Some of these issues for Farm Service Agency, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Freehold Soil Conservation District and Shade Tree Commission are reported in the agency section of this issue. Our modern office structure, filing system and staffing arrangement are very much improved. Another partner in the building is the county Vocational School Administration. This group coordinates school activities throughout the county as seen in the MAST Academy in Sandy Hook, the Communications High School in Wall Township and the Medical Arts Academy in Neptune. Their newest offering Biotechnology High School is currently being constructed in Freehold. Both human and plant biotech studies have significant ramifications for the next generation of farm

related occupations. Maybe you have a son or daughter or acquaintance who might be interested in this career path.

Agriculturally, year 2004 has had highs and lows in many production areas – especially symbolized by soybean prices that rose from \$4.00 a bushel in the spring to over \$8.00 a bushel in the summer before tumbling back under \$5.00 in the fall when a bumper crop came in nationwide. New Jersey soybean and corn production set record highs. Total soybean yields jumped from 2.99 million bushels in 2003 to 4.2 million in 2004, averaging 42 bushels an acre on 101,000 harvested acres. Over the last ten years, field corn has averaged about 100 bushels per acre statewide and this year a new record was set at 135 bushels of grain per acre.

The weather finally cooperated throughout the region with steady rains and good growing temperatures. Total rainfall reached over 55 inches for the year in

(Continued on page 4)

DOWNER — NEW JERSEY STATE SOIL

Tom Hester - Star-Ledger Staff

It’s only fitting the Garden state should have its own soil, and Downer takes that honor. It was a dirty job, but they were glad to do it.

An Assembly panel approved a bill yesterday to designate a dark grayish-brown loamy sand found mostly in the southern half of New Jersey as the official state soil.

The action for New Jersey to officially honor something called Downer Soil unanimously cleared the Assembly Agriculture and Natural resources Committee in less than four minutes. The measure now moves to the full Assembly.

Scientists said they are not pushing a distinction for dirt, which they said is what spills from a dump truck. They stressed that soil – the top layer of Mother earth, where plants grow – is serious stuff.

“On Earth, soil is the final frontier, and the soil processes occurring in the top few inches of our Earth’s living crust are the basis of all life,” David Friedman, director of the Ocean County Soil Conservation district, told the committee.

Supporters of the measure, sponsored by Assemblyman Ronald S. Dancer (R-Burlington) want Downer Soil to join other state symbols honored in New Jersey, including the honeybee as the official insect, the blueberry as the state fruit, and the square dance as the official folk dance.

Downer Soil was

(Continued on page 5)



DOWNER SOIL PROFILE

- Surface layer:** dark grayish brown loamy sand
- Subsurface layer:** grayish brown sandy loam
- Subsoil—lower:** yellowish brown sand and coarse sand

NJ FFA Association Holds 80th Annual Fall Career Development Events

By Nancy Trivette and Robin McLean - FFA

On November 18, 181 members representing 23 New Jersey FFA Chapters competed at the 80th Annual New Jersey FFA Association Fall Career Development Events (CDE) held at Cook College, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ. Four events were conducted during Fall CDEs – Dairy Foods; Fruit and Vegetable Identification; Land Judging and Turf Management. FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success. Students competing in career development events apply skills they have learned in the classroom to practical scenarios in competitive situations. Industry experts serve as coordinators for the events, ensuring that students are provided with activities that help prepare them for future careers in the agricultural field. Twenty-five agriculture teachers assisted in scoring and proctoring the events.

Bill Sciarappa and Vivian Quinn coordinated the Fruit and Vegetable Identification Event. Produce for the event was supplied by Delicious Orchards. The event challenges students to identify different fruits and vegetables, as well as judge classes of apples and vegetables for uniformity,

color, freedom from blemish, and trueness to variety. The Allentown FFA Chapter, with team members Alison Donaghy, Erin Donaghy, Amy Gottesman, and Megan Varanyk, placed first. All four team members are part of the choice school program. The Freehold FFA Chapter placed 3rd and Monmouth County Vocational School FFA placed 5th.

The Land Judging Event, coordinated by Chris Smith, USDA Soil Conservation Service, has students evaluate three soil pits based on soil texture, permeability, depth, slope, and recommended land treatments. Mr. Smith was assisted by Fred Schoenagel, Soil Scientist, and Anna Starovoytov and Bill Domenico, both Soil

Conservationists. The Allentown FFA Chapter placed first in Land Judging and will represent New Jersey at the 2005 Land Judging Competition in Oklahoma this May. Team members were Pam De Vito, Kristen Fuge, Jackie Pisano, and Morgan Sands. More information on land judging can be found at <http://www.landjudging.com>

Dr. Richard Hurley, Bill Dickson and Joe Clark, Rutgers University Turfgrass Program, coordinated the Turf Management Event. The event includes all aspects of the industry in producing, marketing, utilizing, and maintaining turf as well as related products, equipment and services. The Sussex Technical School FFA Chapter placed first, Monmouth County Vocational School FFA placed 2nd, and Allentown FFA placed 3rd. The top three participants - Dale Cruzan (Cumberland Regional), Chris Lee (Sussex Tech) and

Karson Sebyisma (Sussex Tech)-are eligible for scholarships in Rutgers' Turf Program.

The Belvidere FFA Chapter will represent New Jersey in the Dairy Foods Career Development Event at the 2005 National FFA Convention in Louisville, KY next October. This event was coordinated by Sharon Kinsey and Dave

Petrenka. Students take a written exam and compete in activities related to quality production, processing, distribution, promotion, marketing, and consumption of dairy foods. Allentown FFA Chapter placed 2nd in the event.

The FFA is a national organization for students enrolled in agricultural education. The FFA organization is one component of an agricultural education program, which provides students with the ability to compete in career development events and participate in leadership conferences and awards programs. Over 1,700 FFA members in New Jersey belong to 35 FFA chapters.



Future Farmers of America in Action - Top L-R—Land Judging; Nancy Trivette, state coordinator & Heather White, state FFA President; Turf Management Test; Bottom L-R—Vegetable Identification, Monmouth County contestants; Dairy Foods Evaluation

Remember When.....The Holmes Farm

Vivian Quinn & Bill Sciarappa

We thank J. David Holmes for sharing his teenage autobiography, a press article from August 1989 and for his interview

A lot has changed in Monmouth County since 1665 when the Duke of York granted a patent to settle land in what is now Upper Freehold. Part of that patent was the Holmes Farm located on Jonathan Holmes Rd. in Cream Ridge, which has been owned by the family for over 300 years. J. David and George B. Holmes are the eleventh generation in their family to own and operate the 400-acre farm.

Reverend Obadiah Holmes was one of twelve original patentees for the land grant in Monmouth County. He was born in 1606 in Manchester, England and educated at Oxford University. In 1636, Reverend Holmes emigrated to America accompanied by his wife Katherine Hyde. The Honorable Joseph Holmes, born in 1698, was the first member of the Holmes family to live in Monmouth County. He served in the Provincial Congress and devoted time and money to the cause of the colonies. Joseph and his wife, Elizabeth Ashton, lived in a farm house that still stands today on an adjoining farm. In 1926 Joseph Holmes, father of David and George, was born and lived and worked on the farm. After college graduation and some time in other careers, sons J. David and George B. Holmes decided to return to the family farm. They wanted to till the soil their father, grandfather and great-grandfather worked and see the visible results of their labor. Family was the first priority and the farm was a good environment to raise children. "It's great for teaching responsibility at an early age. I think it makes them better people," David said. He feels the farm was a good environment to raise his children. However, farm life has become difficult as the agricultural situation in the county declines, making it hard to stay enthusiastic.

times in order to survive. For the upcoming year, the brothers plan to farm 300 tillable acres of hay, straw and grain and will custom seed pastures for clients. Every year a farmer needs to make adjustments and keep abreast of what is new, such as participating in RCR&E programs (see photos). Looking back over the last ten years, some modifications have included varying the crops they plant, utilizing more acreage of no-till, selecting newer and better varieties of seeds, purchasing highly technical hay equipment, and doing frequent soil tests. Looking to the future they see more of the same types of advances, but unfortunately the amount of acres available to farm becomes less each year. Growers are no longer in control of the land base.

Farming is more than just planting and harvesting. Many hours are needed for planning, education, and bookkeeping. Also very important is participation in the various agricultural organizations. David Holmes has been on the Monmouth County Board of Agriculture since 1981, a member and former vice president of the Grain and Forage Association, and a member of the National Hay Association. He has served as liaison to the Upper Freehold Township Monmouth County Ag Development Board for three years, as alternate member of the Planning Board of Upper Freehold for five years and the ASCF Committee for 12 years. In addition he is past director of NJ Farm Bureau.

In the 28 years since David returned to the farm, his two sons have graduated from college. They are pursuing careers out of state which are unrelated to agriculture, and his wife continues to teach. He hopes to continue with his business for as long as possible and hopes that the farm will always remain in the Holmes family, most likely with many changes in the way it will be run.

Holmes explained that farmers have to change with the



David (left) and George (right and driving tractor) participate in Pasture Management Meeting held by Rutgers Cooperative Research & Extension



“USEFUL HANDS AT WORK” 4-H FARMERS MARKET—Asbury Park

Ellen Williams, 4-H

Ten youth from Asbury Park, Neptune and Jackson worked as 4-H Farmers Market workers in the summer of 2004. Some worked through the fall and gave testimonials regarding their work experience.

“This summer was different from any other of my summers because this summer was when I got my first job. This summer job was a really nice experience, and I don’t regret spending my time working instead of hanging with my friends. Besides the fact that this job gave me some money to put in my pocket, it also gave me new and challenging responsibilities as well as the ability to get over my “fear” of meeting and communicating with new people. At the beginning of the job at the middle school, I wrote down that I would like to get rid of my low self-esteem and even though it’s not completely gone, I feel much more at ease. I got along with all my co-workers and supervisors and basically all of the customers, too.”

“I think the program is good, mostly because it is an early experience for the kids in Asbury and Neptune. The best part is the communication and relationships between me and my peers/employees and the adults. This program helps keep kids off the street and away from boredom for awhile.”

“It has taught me a lot since I have been here. I have learned how to talk to customers, how to express my feelings in front of my peers and how to sell products in an orderly fashion”.

“I think this program is OK because we work hard and have lots of fun and it teaches us how to prepare for other jobs in the future. It also teaches us how to work in a team.”

“What I liked about working at this farmstand for 4-H was I got future job training skills, co-worker skills, and employee to customer interactions. I think the best



4-H Farmers Market youth meet at Food Bank of Monmouth/Ocean counties for training.

selling times are Saturday because more people are outside.”

“When they have festivals such as Clearwater and others, I find we have more customers attracted to our stand because more are in the area. I think the best seller at our stand was the corn because we sold many boxes of it everyday and we would always have to buy more. Another good seller was our peaches and tomatoes because we would always have to buy extra boxes just to keep up with the public demand and many times we would sell out.”

“I felt that this farmstand is a big help for the community because they can come out on days we sell and buy cheap, good Jersey Fresh produce while supporting their communities.”

The group was stimulated to write a letter to the Asbury Park Urban Enterprise Zone. “We have been discussing various marketing ideas for the storefront that you offered us on your visit to the Food Bank. We as a group have come to a conclusion that we would have major profit increase if we sold a variety of products; such as flowers, soils, pottery, seedlings and other farming needs. We would also like to expand our publicity methods: radio air time, announcement at local events, colored flyers, hand outs for children in the public”. Everyone is looking forward to bigger and better things next season.

(Continued from page 1)

Monmouth County. Pumpkin growers were hit pretty hard with late fall rains that reduced yields in low lying fields. It still surprises me when some growers have lots of pumpkins left over while others resorted to purchasing pumpkins from New York, Pennsylvania and beyond. Other vegetable growers did pretty well with steady prices for tomato, pepper, eggplant and sweet corn – mostly in the \$8 to \$12 a box range wholesale. Growers switching to ethnic vegetables again fared well with Asian-Indian eggplants getting \$25-40 a bushel and specialty peppers like habaneros and jalapenos getting \$20-45 a box at auction.

Meanwhile our land-grant university has again been hit with another major budget cut proposal – potentially another 10%. If this goes through in 2005, we’re in serious trouble because Rutgers Extension can’t recoup such cuts by raising tuition like the academic faculty on campus can. We stand to lose dozens of people and numerous programs. See your Farm Bureau and Board of Managers representatives for additional details.

Year 2005 is seriously upon us now, so savor the remaining glow of the holiday season before ambivalently heading towards our immediate future.

Wishing you a healthy and prosperous New Year.

Bill Sciarappa

Monmouth County Master Gardeners Graduate Their Sixth Class

Diane Zahorsky - Home Horticulturist RCE Monmouth County

Hominy Hill Golf Course was the setting on November 12th for the graduation of this year's Master Gardener class in Monmouth County. Since its inception in 1999, the Master Gardener program has educated 180 Monmouth County residents about many aspects of home gardening. These classes vary from Basic Botany, taught by Professor Ron Kudile from Brookdale Community College, to Vegetable Gardening, taught by Bill Sciarappa (always a favorite), to the hands-on class of Pruning Ornamental Plants, instructed by Mike Bennett, the Superintendent of Deep Cut Park in Middletown.

This year's group of volunteers donated over 13,000 hours of their time to over 90 worthy sites in Monmouth County, including projects at 24 schools and 8 nursing homes, and attendance at a 'Helpline' booth answering garden questions at 13 Fairs and Festivals. One of the newest and most impressive volunteer sites is at the gar-



Master Gardeners answer garden questions at the Monmouth County Fair 2004

dens of the Food Bank of Monmouth and Ocean Counties, where Master Gardeners, led by MG Joe Tirrell, volunteered over 400 hours growing and harvesting fresh vegetables to feed the clientele. The Master Gardeners of Monmouth County's generosity has recently exceeded volunteerism, as they have just established a \$500 scholarship for a student enrolled in the Horticulture program at Brookdale Community College.

The Master Gardener Class of 2005 is set to begin another 60 hours of training on February 15. This will be the first year most of the classes will be held in the new RCR&E facilities in Freehold. We're looking forward to more learning, volunteering, and community involvement in the new year.

(Continued from page 1)

named after the Gloucester County town where it was first designated in 1960. Its claim to the title is the fact that it is the most prevalent of the more than 150 types of soil found in the Garden State. It covers 291,319 of the state's 4.8 million acres of land, and is most prevalent in woodlands.

It is good for growing produce like Jersey tomatoes, lettuce and peppers, said Jim Sadley, director of the state Soil Conservation Committee. And Downer Soil's good drainage makes it a great surface on which to build, Sadley said.

Downer Soil, however, can be found only in southern Middlesex and the state's 10 southernmost counties, known as the state's sandy Coastal Plain. Laura Coover of NRCS reported that Downer is commonly found on Monmouth County farms in Howell and Wall Township. It was deposited in South Jersey by the Hudson river as it flowed along what is now the Route 130 corri-

dor before emptying into Delaware bay in Cumberland County 3 to 6 million years ago, said Chris Smith, a soil scientist with the U.S. Natural resources Conservation Service.

That icon-laced clayish red shale that is passing itself off as soil in Hunterdon and Somerset counties and points north eroded from the Appalachian mountains and was pushed east millions of years ago, Smith said. But that soil is still great for growing forests.

Freidman said, "School children will be taught about New Jersey's official soil as part of their lessons about the state's agriculture and geography. The Earth's carpet is the soul of food consumed by livestock and mankind. It furnishes the raw materials to build our homes and used in our factories. It can be simply said that soils are at the root of everything. From the long list of bountiful resources found in New Jersey, none is perhaps so utterly essential to our future as soil."

For more information on this soil, see <http://www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/soils>

Agency Updates

NJDA—New Jersey Agriculture Secretary Charles M. Kuperus today announced a new web page on the state Department of Agriculture’s main website, www.state.nj.us/agriculture, with a number of grants, financial assistance opportunities and special services available for farmers. “The new web page serves as a clearinghouse for free or minimal cost assistance programs to anyone involved in agriculture in the state,” said Secretary Kuperus. “Many times, farmers don’t realize that these programs or services are available and now, they are only a mouse-click away.” Located on the Internet at <http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/financialassistance.htm>, the Web page offers information and links for the following: soil and water conservation grants; value-added producer grants; marketing improvement grants; First Pioneer Farm Credit Grants (AgEnhancement); Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) grants; energy and farm bill programs; technical assistance to dairy producers; deer fence cost sharing; and support programs for new and established farmers. This site brings together – for the first time – the many funding opportunities, technical assistance and other services provided to farmers in the state by New Jersey, United States Department of Agriculture and other federal agencies.

FSA—Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) – Farm Service Agency says beginning with 2005, producers who have no crop changed from their 2004 NAP contract have the option of continuous coverage provided that the applicable service fee is paid by the application closing date. The fee will only need to be sent in, eliminating a trip to the office. The service fee remains the same at \$100 per crop, up to \$300 per county with no limit on the number of crops covered, and a maximum of \$900 per multi-county producer. The deadline to cover 2005 crop-year asparagus, beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, greens, herbs, horseradish, kohlrabi, leeks, lettuce, parsnips, peas, potatoes, radishes, rhubarb, and turnips is December 31, 2004. Remember that NAP coverage is a requirement for anyone who received a disaster payment under the 2001/2002 CDP Program. Please stop in as soon as possible if you have these crops to enroll.

FARM BUREAU reports that the Cook College community is

bracing itself for tough state budget cuts as the final selection of a new Executive Dean ensues. It appears that there will be a 3 1/2% “give-back” (reduction in current budget ending June 30), a proposed 10% cut for next year’s Experiment Station budget and no incoming funds for the “salary account” which forces a reduction in other accounts to pay for unionized salary increases. Board of Managers president Ken Osterman has started a process for county boards of ag and others to have an organized campaign to staunch serious losses in funding. At risk are the lay-offs of numerous program associates and research assistants whose work directly benefits farm practices all over the state. For further information call Farm Bureau (609) 393-7163. Website www.njfb.org.

NRCS—Natural Resources Conservation Service Cost-Share Programs—Apply Now! NRCS has two voluntary cost-share programs that are approaching their 2005 ranking cutoff dates. All applications received as of these dates will be ranked for the 2005 program; those received afterwards will be held for 2006.

Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) is a program which provides incentives for agricultural producers to address natural resources concerns such as water conservation, water quality, soil erosion, and transition and diversification issues. This USDA program is targeted toward limited resource and beginning farmers, and is available only to agricultural producers who qualify for farmland assessment. Cutoff date is January 21, 2005. The **Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)** offers landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance grassland and pastureland. Priority grasslands targeted include grasslands threatened by both agricultural and non-agricultural development, grasslands that provide habitat to threatened and endangered plant and animal species, and grasslands currently used for grazing operations. Enrollment options include: 10 to 30 year annual rental agreements, 30-year or permanent easements, or restoration only agreements. Cutoff date is February 4, 2005.

Changing Times is produced and edited by Bill Sciarappa and Vivian Quinn - sciarappa@aesop.rutgers.edu

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Richard G. Obal, County Agricultural Agent
Extension Dept. Head



Bill Sciarappa, County Agricultural Agent

Calendar



JANUARY 2005

Jan. 5-7 - Mants - Mid Atlantic Nursery Trade Show - Baltimore Convention Center, Baltimore, MD. 800-431-0066 web-site at www.mants.com

Jan. 10 (Phil.), 11 (NYC), 13 (Boston) - Northeast Buyers Mission - 518-457-2713 or www.foodexportusa.org

Jan. 11, 12, 13 - Vegetable Growers Association NJ—Borgatta, Atlantic City, NJ—Phil Traino 856-985-4382 or www.njveggies.org

Jan. 18 - IPM: Principles & Practices— Course #AL0401CA-0105DAY Cook College OCPE-RCR&E. Pesticide Recertification Credits offered: 3 units in 3A AND 5 UNITS IN 3b, 6b, 8c, pp2 AND 2 UNITS IN Core. Call 732-932-9271.

Jan. 18-26 – Landscape IPM: An Intelligent Approach. Course #AL0401CA05

Jan. 19-20 - NJNLA New Jersey Trade Show - Garden State Exhibit Center, Somerset, NJ; NJNLA at 800-314-4836

January 25-26 - State Ag Convention—Trump Plaza, AC, NJ

January 29 - NOFA-NJ Organic Farming Conference, Cook College 732-932-9271.

FEBRUARY 2005

Feb 1-3 - Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Conference—Hershey, PA. Contact Bill Troxell at 717-694-3596.

Feb. 4 - Central Jersey Vegetable Meeting, Freehold Gardens, Recertification credits - Terry/Madge 732-431-7260.

Feb. 14-16—2005 Cornell-Michigan State University Produce Marketing Conference - Syracuse, NY - www.nysaes.cornell.edu/hort/04expo

Feb. 17 - NJ Flower, Garden and Outdoor Living www.macevents.com

Feb. 22 /Trenton/ -23 /Freehold/ - Central Jersey Turf & Ornamental Meeting. Call Terry/Madge 732-431-7260.

MARCH 2005

March 16 - Stakeholders Meeting - RCE Monmouth County - 6 PM - Ag Building, 4000 Kozloski Rd

Monmouth County Board of Ag Meetings

7:30 PM - Jan. 18, Feb. 15, March 15, April 19

Basic Pesticide Training 9 AM - 1 PM

Jan. 11, Jan. 15, March 8, March 29, April 19

Category/ Training Jan. 27, Feb. 17

To register call 800-524-9942

Held at

**Rutgers Cooperative Extension,
4000 Kozloski Rd., Freehold, NJ 07728
732-431-7260**

**Rutgers Extension On-line Learning Center
for Pesticide Use and Storage**

DEP credits on line

www.ifplantscouldtalk.rutgers.edu/pesticide_education

Fri-



Agenda—Central Jersey Vegetable Growers Meeting

day, February 4, 2005

Freehold Gardens 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM



Time	Speaker	Title
9:00	Bill Sciarappa	Introduction
9:05	Ray Samulis	Farm Safety
9:30	Rich VanVranken	Marketing Specialty Vegetables
9:55	Jerry Ghidui	Vegetable Insect Management
10:20	Joe Mahar	Pepper Maggot and Insect IPM
10:40	Michelle Infante-Casella	Yellow Squash Varieties
11:00	Ray Samulis	Sweet Corn Varieties
11:20	Brad Majek	Vegetable Herbicide Updates
	LUNCH	
12:00	Marty Bullock, Pres. BOA; Ted Narozanick—Freeholder; Rich Nieuwenhuis - FarmBureau	
1:15	Rich Obal	Moderator
1:20	Agency Updates	DEP, FSA, NRCS, NJDA, Industry
1:50	Andy Wyenandt	Pumpkin Diseases
2:15	Pete Nitzsche	Heirloom Tomatoes
3:10	Bill Hlubik	Pesticide Credits on the Web
3:45	Pesticide Credits & Adjourn	



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