

A REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DEAN OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture
December 2013

Executive Dean **Bob Goodman** and Director of Extension **Larry Katz** presented updates at the New Jersey Farm Bureau (NJFB) annual convention on November 19. **Goodman** gave an overview of the diverse initiatives going on at the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences and the Experiment Station, both new and on-going. The former Center for Advanced Food Technology has been repurposed to be a business incubator like the Food Innovation Center (FIC) – South in Bridgeton and has been renamed FIC – North. The wine and wine grape growing industry has approached Rutgers about creating a center for their industry. At the School, an Ag and Food Systems major has been added to the curriculum, and climate change adaptation continues to be a strength that will now be focusing on the agriculture sector. **Katz** gave an overview of current initiatives at NJAES, such as engaging young farmers, Ag in the Middle and “Hort for the Health of It.” There is currently a search for a specialist in nursery and agent positions in Ocean and Atlantic counties for coastal and environmental resources. An agent in ag economic development will be sought for Warren County and a fruit agent for Gloucester County.

Also presenting at NJFB was Rutgers professor of atmospheric science and director of the Rutgers Climate Institute, **Tony Broccoli**, who discussed “How will climate change affect you?” **Broccoli** presented the climate trends and impacts for New Jersey. The annual mean temperature in the state is on a long term upward trend; a 2°F increase over the past 100 years, with most of the warming since 1980 and 2012 as the warmest on record for New Jersey and most of the nation. For rainfall, most of the upward trend in rainfall comes in the spring and fall with very heavy rain events. Sea level on the New Jersey coast has risen 1½ feet in the last 100 years, leading to an increase in flooding in low-lying areas and the threat of saltwater intrusion into groundwater and estuaries affecting water supply. The recently formed New Jersey Climate Adaptation Alliance is looking at how we can adapt to the changing climate and is looking forward to working with the ag community as primary stakeholders. Some agricultural factors that reduce CO₂ are practices that help sequester carbon in the soil, and selling via local direct markets which decrease use of fossil fuel.

Jim Murphy, specialist in turfgrass management, reports that dormancy, a period when turf is not growing, has been apparent in many non-irrigated turfs early this fall in New Jersey. These conditions persist throughout central and northern NJ. Southern NJ is not experiencing drought conditions whereas, central NJ is experiencing abnormally dry conditions and northern NJ is experiencing moderate drought. This dryness typically doesn’t last through winter but is something to watch. Landscapes should be assessed for any potential susceptibility to winter desiccation.

Jim Johnson, Cumberland County agricultural agent, has received the Award of Merit from the Eastern Region of the International Plant Propagators’ Society, which is the highest honor the Eastern Region can bestow upon a member. One member is selected each year and honored for significant contributions to the field of plant propagation or production and/or extraordinary service to the Society.

Members of the Department of Plant Biology and Pathology have been evaluating peppers from different parts of the world as part of the ethnic crop research initiative started in 2001. **Albert Ayeni**, ethnic crop specialist and instructor in the Department of Plant Biology and Pathology, **Jim Simon**, professor in the Department of Plant Biology and Pathology and director, New Use Agriculture and Natural Plant Products Program at Rutgers, and **Tom Orton**, extension specialist in horticulture at Rutgers Agricultural Research and Extension Center (RAREC) have been conducting the 2013 pepper trial and demonstration comparing selections being evaluated for different



cultural groups in New Jersey and the Mid-Atlantic. The selections target three categories of peppers: African birdeyes (*Capsicum frutescens*), Jalapeno & Serrano types (*C. annum*), and Habaneros (*C. chinense*). In each category the peppers are selected for plant size, yield, fruit size/shape, skin texture, heat level, and flavor. The goal is to develop the pepper types for various ethnic markets in New Jersey and the Mid-Atlantic to respond to ongoing demographic changes and culinary preferences. The team is also investigating the chemical attributes of the peppers from nutritional and therapeutic perspectives. In addition, in some of the recent trials they have identified a few that have significant ornamental properties.

Of Interest:

New Jersey Livestock Farmer Survey: Is My Farm Environmentally Friendly? Livestock owners need to be aware of their effect on our environment and natural resources. Regardless of the kind of livestock you have, proper management of animal and land resources are important to limit potential impact on natural resources. Take this on-line quiz by Extension Specialist in Livestock and Dairy **Mike Westendorf** to determine how eco-friendly your livestock operation is: <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/fs1047>.

Events:

Introduction to Food Safety & Third Party Audits for Beginners, December 12, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m., at Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Cumberland County, 291 Morton Ave., Millville, NJ. \$40 includes lunch. To register, contact **Wes Kline**, agricultural agent at 856-451-2800, ext. 1 or wkline@aesop.rutgers.edu.

Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) is offering a women's farm business management program focusing on greenhouse production. RCE will present **Annie's Project New Jersey for Greenhouse Growers** on Tuesday nights beginning January 14, 2014 and ending Feb. 25, 2014. Webinars will also be offered from 7-8 p.m. every Thursday evening for the duration of the program. Classes will be held from 6-9 p.m. at RCE Burlington County, 2 Academy Drive, Westampton, NJ. Contact Jennifer Matthews at 609- 465-5115 or jmatthews@aesop.rutgers.edu.

Good Agricultural Practices & Farm Food Safety Writing Workshop, January 22, 2014, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Mercer County, 930 Spruce St. Trenton, NJ. Cost: \$40. For more information contact **Meredith Melendez**, senior program coordinator in agriculture for Mercer County at 609-989-6830 or email: Melendez@aesop.rutgers.edu.

The New Jersey Agricultural Convention and Trade Show and 2014 New Jersey Vegetable Growers Association Annual Convention is February 4-6 at the Taj Mahal, Atlantic City.

Visit our Rutgers NJAES online resources:

Vegetable Crops Online Resource Center: <http://njveg.rutgers.edu>

Jersey Vegetable Crops Ag Updates: <http://jerseyvegagupdates.blogspot.com>

Fruit Ag Updates: <http://jerseyfruitagupdates.blogspot.com>

Field & Forage Crops Nutrient Management Ag Updates:
<http://fieldforagecropsnutrientmanagement.blogspot.com>

New Jersey Wine Grape Resource Center:
<http://njvines.rutgers.edu>



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