

Green and Growing

Agricultural News and Issues for Somerset County



Green and Growing

Published Quarterly

Vol. 3, No. 1 Summer 2008

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Cooperating Agencies

Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Somerset County
The Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders
The Somerset County Board of Agriculture
The Somerset County Agriculture Development Board

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RUTGERS

New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station

Agriculture in Somerset County, NJ

It still counts for something, doesn't it?

Nicholas Polanin, Rutgers NJAES Agricultural Agent

(As submitted to the National Association of County Agricultural Agents)

Over the years, agriculture in Somerset County has changed from what were traditionally field crops and livestock in rural areas to an industry that has new neighbors and strives to meet the changing needs of its suburban, affluent, and highly educated population. According to the 2000 Census, Somerset was the fastest growing county in New Jersey from 1990 to 2000, with a population growth rate of 23.8 percent. The projected population for 2014 is 343,600, or a 15.5 percent increase from 2000. This has led to ever increasing pressure for land use conversions, development, infrastructure and services for between 9,000 and 28,000 acres, depending on lot size.

Sadly, agriculture in the county seems to have a low public profile, according to two formal studies of the farmland preservation program and agricultural viability in the county. When surveyed, many local economic development officials and recently relocated residents seemed either unaware or simply disinterested that production agriculture still exists in the county. Farming seems to be perceived either as a form of "open space management" or outright nuisance rather than business operations producing nursery stock, ornamental plants, food and fiber, or playing a supportive role for equine or other local agri-businesses – all of which contribute greatly to the high quality of life here in Somerset County. Ironically, municipalities hold economic development summits, and seek a "Farmer's Market" to assist with downtown redevelopment efforts, but rarely involve the agri-business person in the planning efforts. Claims of "farmer friendly" by several communities go by the wayside when local regulations, down-zoning, or assessment decisions directly reduce the business equity, market share, and in some cases, the ability for the farm to stay in business. Now, once again, the "Right to Farm" seems to be under attack, right here in the Garden State.

(continued p. 3)



Rutgers Equine Science Center Offers Podcast Series

New Brunswick, NJ - The Rutgers Equine Science Center has created a series of podcasts based on the popular print-version Fact Sheets produced by Rutgers Cooperative Extension faculty and posted on the Equine Science Center website. Podcast subjects currently include:



Equine Science Center
Better Horse Care Through
Research and Education

- The Basics of Equine Nutrition (in two parts)
- Care for the Older Horse: Diet and Health
- The Basics of Equine Behavior
- Horse Trailer Maintenance and Trailing Safety (in two parts)



The running time for the podcasts ranges from five to seven minutes. They are available for listening or downloading on the Rutgers University podcast site at <http://iTunes.rutgers.edu> and via a link on the home page of the Rutgers Equine Science Center website, www.esc.rutgers.edu.

The source material for the podcasts – Rutgers Cooperative Extension Fact Sheets – consists of original research by Extension and Equine Science Center-affiliated faculty as well as summaries of research and publications produced by other prominent scholars and experts. More than 40 Fact Sheets address topics of interest to horse and horse farm owners and individuals involved in the horse industry. On the Equine Science Center website, these are linked to frequently asked questions and a dynamic search engine, which make finding answers a very simple task.

According to Dr. Karyn Malinowski, director of the Equine Science Center, the podcast series is just one more way of sharing the knowledge and research of the Center with the public. “Our mantra is ‘better horse care through research and education,’” she notes. “The Equine Science Center offers a wide variety of ways to learn – from seminars and conferences to peer-reviewed Fact Sheets to newsletters to our highly interactive website. Audio recordings in the form of the latest podcast technology are just one more way to make learning as convenient and effective as possible,” she says. Additional podcasts are under development. Future topics will include a series on farm and barn safety, the care and feeding of the older horse, nutrition for foals and growing horses, descriptions of equine metabolic issues, causes and prevention of equine stress, manure management and pasture management. For further information, please contact Diana Orban Brown, Director of Communications, at 732-932-9419 or orban@aesop.rutgers.edu.

Women in Ag Network

Lavender Fields Farm Tour & Workshop

Milton, Delaware - June 25th, 2008
1:00 - 3:00 pm

Enjoy a tour of Lavender Fields, a 5-acre farm with over 2 acres of lavender. Following the tour, a workshop will be offered which will include a culinary experience - participants will make lavender sugar and receive some recipes for using it. As an added benefit, participants will be given a Lavender starter plant to take home. There will also be time to browse and purchase products in the farm store. The tour and workshop fee is \$3.00. This event will be limited to 25 participants.



Lavender Fields was purchased by three friends - Mary Ann Etu, Sharon Harris, and Marie Mayor - about 6 years ago. They grow several varieties of Lavender, for which they have found many uses. Farm tours are offered, as are demonstrations, luncheons and teas. In addition, Lavender Fields Farm is highly visible at several Farmers Markets in Sussex County. Their website is <http://www.lavenderfieldsde.com/>.



For more information on the Women in Ag Network, please visit their website <http://ag.udel.edu/extension/kent/womeninag.htm>, where you can read current and past newsletters, and click on links for additional resources.

Agriculture Still Counts? (cont.)

The Right to Farm Act was passed by the State Legislature in 1983, with the purpose to promote the continuation of agriculture in the State of New Jersey while recognizing the potential conflicts among all lawful activities in the State. The Act was amended in 1998, to afford the farmer additional protection against municipal regulations and private nuisance suits. The State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) administers the State Right to Farm Program. County Agriculture Development Boards administer the program at the County level.

Increases in population numbers and diversity demand that we become more proactive in our agricultural outreach. "New audiences" moving from our urban centers, are now living in a more suburban to rural environment, and may not know how to "deal with" or appreciate farmers and agri-businesses as neighbors. Farmers, dealing with new neighbors, must also adapt to new clients or buyers, and may have to adopt new production methods, introduce new crops, or invite visitors to their farm to reaffirm a local commitment to agriculture in their communities.

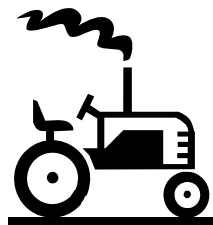
It is our intent to focus on Right to Farm issues and challenges for the 2008 publication year, and we welcome input and suggestions from our readers. The "Right to Farm" Act and additional information are available online at: <http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/> and then click on "Farmland Preservation and Right to Farm" in the lower left side of the page.

Attention Farmers!

Diana E. Vigilante, Manager of the Somerset County Division of Solid Waste Management wants to know:

Got A Spare Tire to Lose?

Somerset County residents and farmers may drop off tires on Oct. 20 - 24, 2008 from 8am - 3pm, at the South County Public Works Garage, 410 Roycefield Road, in Hillsborough, NJ. Sponsored by The Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders



For more information, please contact Somerset County Division of Solid Waste Management, P.O. Box 3000, Somerville, NJ 08876; 908-231-7681, Fax 908-707-1749, vigilant@co.somerset.nj.us.

NOFA-NJ presents 2008 Farmer "Twilight" Meetings



These meetings are a unique opportunity for on-farm education and farmer-to-farmer sharing! We invite you to join us for one or all. All meetings are 4:30 – 7:30 PM, \$15 registration / \$10 NOFA members, with drinks & snacks provided. To register: email nofainfo@nofanj.org or call (609) 737-6848. These will be held rain or shine, and are presented with support in part from Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation. For farm addresses and directions, visit www.nofanj.org. Register Today!



Small Farm Start-up

Wednesday, July 23, Gravity Hill Farm, Titusville, NJ

If you are looking to start a farm or agricultural business, this meeting is for you! Owned by David Earling and Maria Nicolo and managed by Farmer David Zaback, Gravity Hill Farm had its first full growing season in 2007. Hear about their process, including land purchase, owner-farm manager agreement, farm and business planning, crop selection, and more!

Intensive Livestock Grazing and Pasture Management

Wednesday, August 13, Lyness's Farm, Pittstown, NJ

For this combined Twilight and Pasture Walk, learn how Gerry's farm manages livestock through "Intensive Grazing" for increased production and sustainability. With plans to be certified organic and experience with EQIP, Gerry's farm is a great place to learn about pasture management, manure disposal, fencing, facilities, and more.

Organic Grain & Forage

Thursday, Sept. 4, Rutgers NJAES, Bridgeton, NJ

With data from multi-year trials of organic corn and soybeans, Rutgers Cooperative Extension is excited grow the supply of organic grain and forage. Join us for this important informational workshop featuring their findings and recommendations for equipment and techniques, as well as yield and price expectations for organic production. Includes wagon tour of the farm, followed by veggie burgers and refreshments

Sign Up Extended for Farm Bill Authorized Conservation Programs

Somerset, NJ - Tom Drewes, State Conservationist for USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service in New Jersey, today extended the application period for two conservation programs offered through the Farm Bill. Farmers can apply for 2009 assistance through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) until close of business August 15, 2008.

Drewes said, "Since the Farm Bill was passed later than expected, we wanted to ensure that potential applicants had adequate time to review the opportunities afforded them in the new law."

Through EQIP, farmers may receive financial and technical help with structural and management conservation practices that address soil, water, air, forestry, grazing and animal waste issues on agricultural land.

The AMA Program in New Jersey targets beginning farmers, limited resource farmers, small farms, and producers who have had limited participation in other USDA financial assistance programs. AMA prioritizes management practices that reduce agricultural risk by improving soil and plant productivity.

Drewes indicated that the application period for the Wildlife Incentives Habitat Program (WHIP), which targets habitat development and management for the state's at-risk species, had been previously set for August 15.

Farmers interested in these conservation programs should contact the NRCS Service Center that serves their county. More information is available online at www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov. The Frenchtown office serves Hunterdon, Somerset & Union Counties: (908) 782-4614 extension #3: Gail Bartok, Shirley Sakos.

Dr. Larry Katz Named New Director of Rutgers NJAES Cooperative Extension

New Brunswick, NJ - Larry Katz, chair of the Department of Animal Sciences, has been named the new director of Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES) Cooperative Extension and associate director of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, effective July 1, 2008. Katz will succeed Dr. Karyn Malinowski, who has served with distinction in this leadership role for the past six years.



Katz received his bachelors and master's degrees from Cornell, and his doctorate from the University of California-Davis. He joined Rutgers in 1989 and has chaired the department of Animal Sciences since 2001, during a period of significant enrollment growth in the major and in the number of graduates who go on to veterinary school. Katz's scientific expertise is in behavioral endocrinology, reproductive biology, and the behavior of domestic animals. As such, he has served on committees at the university, state, and national level regarding agricultural animal care and wildlife damage control. Over the years, he has received numerous awards for his teaching, including being named Outstanding Teacher seven times by the Cook College Leadership Committee on Teaching and Advising Excellence.

"Larry brings his stature as a scientist, his gift as a communicator, his passion for service to society, and his considerable people skills to this new role at a time when Rutgers Cooperative Extension is experiencing growth in county support and seeing new opportunities and challenges in its state-wide role of service to all of New Jersey's residents," Robert M. Goodman, executive director of NJAES, remarked.

"I am honored to follow in Dr. Malinowski's footsteps and look forward to getting to know the excellent leadership team already in place at Rutgers NJAES Cooperative Extension," Katz said. "I am deeply committed to the land-grant mission and to educating the public about food, nutrition, health, and agriculture, and I see tremendous opportunities to use both basic and applied science to advance the well-being of New Jersey's residents." For more information on Dr. Katz' research, you are invited to visit <http://animalsciences.rutgers.edu/faculty/katz/larry-s-katz.html>.

Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES) Cooperative Extension (RCE) helps the diverse population of New Jersey adapt to a rapidly changing society and improve their lives and communities through an educational process that uses science based knowledge. Through science-based educational programs, RCE truly enhances the quality of life for residents of New Jersey and brings the wealth of knowledge of the state university to local communities. For more information on RCE, please visit <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/extension/>.

Online at www.ifplantscouldtalk.rutgers.edu



New Jersey Cattle Group Elects Directors

Bridgewater, NJ - The New Jersey Polled Hereford Association elected three directors at their annual diner meeting on April 19, 2008 at the Pasta Grill in Hackettstown, NJ. The newly elected directors, whose terms expire in 2011, are Tom Kucharski from Vienna, NJ, Fran Daly from Frenchtown, NJ, and Nelson Gerlach from Far Hills, NJ. All three men had previously been directors of the Association.

After the general membership meeting was adjourned a directors meeting was held where the officers of the association were elected by the directors. The officers, who serve a one-year term, are President Pete Staats from Bridgewater, NJ; Vice-President Joe Orr from Montague, NJ; Secretary Joanne Powell from Somerville, NJ; and Treasurer Tim Kane from Somerset, NJ.

The New Jersey Polled Hereford Association is a group of people who have an interest in cattle. They don't have to own registered Polled Herefords or even own cattle at all to join the Association and have a good time. The Association sponsors various activities throughout the year. Two of which are the two feeder calf sales, spring and fall, at Hackettstown Livestock Auction and at the beef show at Hunterdon County 4-H and Agricultural Fair in Ringoes, NJ, where we have given approximately \$1400.00 in U.S. Savings Bonds as awards to junior Hereford members.

For membership information contact any member or Pete Staats at 908-725-3049.

So, what's a Polled Hereford?

Pronounced "Her-ferd," this breed of beef cattle is one without horns. It is a direct relative of the Hereford breed of cattle which derive their name from their place of origin, Hereford, a county located in west England. The Polled Hereford breed is bred for its deep fore-quarters, depth and muscling, docile temperament, fast growing calves, and good quality of beef.



New Recycling Opportunities

New opportunities exist that will enable farmers to recycle nursery pots, plastic flats, trays, cell packs and film.



Following is information recently received from firms seeking nursery pots, plastic flats, trays, cell packs and film.

There is no endorsement from NJDA or Rutgers, we only seek to alert growers of this recycling opportunity. Growers should always conduct due diligence when evaluating the potential recycling market for their plastics.

1. Universal Commodity Services Inc., announces a plastic pot / plug tray / flats / film recycling program. This program is open to all large Nurseries, Farms, and Growers. Pots, plug trays, flats, nylon string and nursery/greenhouse film are recyclable. The pots and trays will be stamped with a recycling code - generally "2" for pots and "6" for trays.

Arthur Akopyan, Universal Commodity Services Inc
1421 Sheepshead Bay Rd. #264, Brooklyn, NY 11235
347-587-6158 (Tel) 347-587-3877 (Fax)
aakopyan@ucsincny.com; www.ucsincny.com

2. Antek Madison Plastics Corporation is a plastic recycling company located in Ontario Canada, Chicago Illinois USA and Atlanta Georgia USA. Antek Madison Plastics Corp actively collects plastic scrap from Automotive, Packaging, Food and Agriculture/Nursery Industries. All items must be free of dirt, stacked 8 feet high and shrink wrap to secure.

Brian Buckle, Antek Madison Plastics Corp., 100 Finchdene Square, Scarborough, Ontario M1X 1C1.
Tel (416) 321-1170 x 246 Fax (416) 321-2809
bbuckle@antekmadison.com.



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

All NJDA recycling information is available online at <http://www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/md/prog/recycling.html>. Please contact Karen Kritz, Agricultural Economic Development, Division of Marketing & Development, New Jersey Department of Agriculture, PO Box 330, Trenton, NJ 08625-0330. Phone 609-984-2506, Fax 609-341-3212 email karen.kritz@ag.state.nj.us.

NJDA Launches New Web Site

Trenton, NJ – The New Jersey Department of Agriculture recently announced the launching of www.jerseyageducation.nj.gov, a new web site geared toward students interested in careers in agriculture and those either already teaching or who would like to teach agricultural education.

“We know that there will be a great demand for new graduates in the food, agricultural and natural resources fields in the next few years,” said New Jersey Secretary of Agriculture Charles M. Kuperus. “Now is a good time for young people to consider these fields and our new Jersey Ag Education web site is a great resource for those who have an interest in these important industries as a profession.”

New Jersey Agricultural Education serves 60 certified agriculture teachers and more than 2,500 students in 44 school districts. The mission of New Jersey Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Education is to prepare people for leadership and careers in the science, business and technology of agriculture.

The website features a section on the New Jersey FFA Association, a national youth organization that uses agricultural science education to develop students’ potential and help them discover their talent. There are 37 FFA chapters with 1,950 students in the Garden State. There also is a page listing related college scholarships and nearby universities offering agricultural programs of study.

The site provides resources for students, such as deciding on a career path, selecting a supervised agricultural experience, and finding college financial aid information. There also are resources for teachers, such as developing the curriculum, becoming an FFA advisor, and taking advantage of professional development opportunities.

“Agriculture is a significant part of New Jersey’s working landscape with 9,800 farms on about 800,000 acres, but highly skilled workers are needed to sustain the agriculture industry,” said Secretary Kuperus. “Those visiting the Jersey Ag Education web site will find all the information they need to pursue a career and be a leader in this field or inspire students to enter the industry through teaching any number of occupations, including ag education.”

On-Farm Leaf Composting

Somerville, NJ - Somerset County is currently looking into mutually beneficial opportunities for leaf composting between municipalities and farmers within Somerset County. The County Agricultural Development Board (CADB) and the County Planning Department are working in conjunction with rules and regulations of the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the State Agricultural Development Committee (SADC) regarding composting on both preserved and non-preserved farms. Please note that preserved farms **must** comply with SADC regulations if leaf composting is to take place. If you have an interest in leaf composting on your farm, please contact Tara Kenyon before July 7 at 908-231-7021 or Kenyon@co.somerset.nj.us. A workshop will be held in the near future to fully discuss leaf composting, rules and regulations for preserved and non-preserved farms, and how to be linked with a municipality.

RUTGERS

New Jersey Agricultural
Experiment Station

The Snyder Research and Extension Farm and The Melda C. Snyder Teaching Garden

present the 18th Annual

Great Tomato Tasting



August 27, 2008

3:00 pm – Dusk

Join us in this unique opportunity to taste over 90 tomato varieties (including heirlooms and hybrids), stroll through our teaching garden, and take a wagon tour highlighting today’s NJAES agricultural and horticulture research.

Rutgers Cooperative Extension faculty, staff, and Master Gardeners will be on hand to answer your gardening questions. Door prize drawings throughout the event!



Registration – \$5.00 per person, free for children under 10

Please RSVP (908) 713-8980
www.snyderfarm.rutgers.edu/

Cooperating Agencies: Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and County Boards of Chosen Freeholders. Rutgers Cooperative Extension, a unit of the Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, is an equal opportunity program provider and employer.

The Somerset County Board of Agriculture proudly announces the 2008



Taste of Somerset Agriculture Picnic

Saturday, July 26, 2008

6:00 pm – 10:00 pm
Rainbow Run Farms, Hillsborough, NJ

This picnic is held annually in celebration of the life of Thomas Everett and to support the Board’s scholarship fund named in his memory.

Come on out to Brad Benson’s place and enjoy locally grown beef, pork, and poultry products along with the very best produce the county has to offer, all while catching up with old friends and making new ones! Brad will have his Texas Longhorn Cattle on hand and will be doing Cutting Horse demonstrations. Bring your camera!

Country Music provided by “Due South”, the great band from last year’s picnic

*Make plans now to join us by returning the registration form below!
Grab your lawn chairs or blankets, and bring your appetite!!*

Location and Directions: Rainbow Run Farms is at 86 Rainbow Hill Rd, Hillsborough. From Amwell Rd (Rt514) in Clover Hill, turn next to the Clover Hill Reformed Church onto Rainbow Hill Rd. The farm is about ¼ mile on the left.

(please print and return the form below with payment)

Name: _____

Tickets: _____ x \$20 (adults) = \$ _____ Total Enclosed

_____ x \$10 (children under 12) = \$ _____

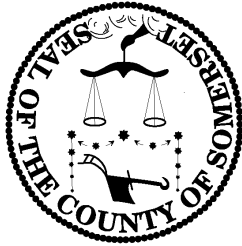
Cannot attend-would like to support scholarship
Contribution enclosed \$ _____

Limited number of tickets available – don’t delay!
Please make your check payable and mail by July 18 to:
Somerset County Board of Agriculture
310 Milltown Road, Bridgewater, NJ 08807



The 2008 Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders

Peter S. Palmer, Director, Bernardsville
Rick Fontana, Deputy Director, Bridgewater
Robert Zaborowski, Franklin
Jack M. Ciattarelli, Hillsborough
Patricia L. Walsh, Green Brook



The 2008 Somerset County Board of Agriculture

Joanne Powell, President, Somerville
Richard Norz, Vice President, Hillsborough
Edward Pierce, Recording Secretary,
Neshanic Station
Paul M. Smith, II, Treasurer, Hillsborough
Ryck Suydam, Second Vice President,
NJ Farm Bureau, Franklin
Kenneth Osterman, County Director,
NJ Farm Bureau, Neshanic Station
William Randolph, County Director (alt.),
NJ Farm Bureau, Belle Mead



Promoting all forms of sustainable agriculture; assisting, enhancing and furthering agriculture as it relates to the economics, environment, aesthetics, and the high quality of life here in Somerset County.

The 2008 Somerset County Agriculture Development Board

Mark W. Kirby, Chairperson
W. Peter Staats, Vice Chairperson
Steve Selody, Secretary/Treasurer

Voting Members
Gail W. McKane
Richard A. Norz
John A. Johnson
Catherine Sorge

Peter S. Palmer, Freeholder Liaison



Celebrating 25 Years of Preserving farmland and enhancing the industry of agriculture in Somerset County

Ex-officio Members
Jules Lobai, County Planning Board
Nicholas Polanin, Rutgers Cooperative Extension
Dr. Ernest Thurlow, Soil Conservation District

Planning Board Staff
Anthony McCracken, Assistant Director
Tara Kenyon, Senior Planner
Catherine Bunting, Administrative Assistant



Watch for the Next Issue of

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polanin@njaes.rutgers.edu