The 2008 Somerset County 4-H Fair
Come See What’s Growing On!

Bridgewater - The 2008 Somerset County 4-H Fair is scheduled for Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, August 13, 14 and 15. The fairgrounds will be open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. at North Branch Park, Milltown Road, Bridgewater, located between Routes 22 and 202.

Since 1948, thousands of visitors have enjoyed the Somerset County 4-H Fair. The Fair has grown and changed, but there are still no admission or parking fees, and no midway or carnival rides. This Fair recognizes the accomplishments of Somerset County 4-H members and volunteers, as a showcase for the wide variety of 4-H projects in action.

Be sure to visit the Somerset County Board of Agriculture tent to see a variety of antique tractors and farm equipment, to visit displays from various agricultural and conservation groups, and of course to see the horticultural displays from 4-H youth. And of course we will be continuing our nightly pie-eating contests - it's amazing how so much fun can be so messy! New this year to the Board of Agriculture tent is an indoor corn maze, highlighting the many aspects of agriculture in the county while testing your skills and sense of direction.

And finally, save time to stop by the Rutgers NJAES Master Gardener tent for children’s crafts, advice and solutions for your landscapes and gardens, or just to catch up with some of our favorite Rutgers volunteers! You’ll be glad you did!

It’s Fair Season - everything’s ripe and ready to go! We’ll be looking for you! It’s all happening at the 4-H Fair!
Bethesda, MD – Rutgers NJAES / RCE 2007 New Jersey Equine Economic Impact Study Program has been honored as one of three recipients of the 2007 Award of Excellence from the Northeast Cooperative Extension Directors. This is the highest award presented by the Directors of Extension in the northeast. It recognizes Extension outreach programming that has achieved outstanding accomplishments, results, and impacts in addressing contemporary issues.

Paul Gottlieb, Associate Professor, Department of Agricultural, Food and Resource and Diana Orban-Brown, Director of Communications, Equine Science Center, NJAES, accepted the award at the Northeast Summer Joint Session of Cooperative Extension Directors, Experiment Station Directors and Council for Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching (CARET) members on July 14, 2008. Twelve programs were nominated in the northeast region which includes states from Maine to West Virginia, including The District of Columbia.

The 2007 New Jersey Equine Economic Impact Study exemplifies the power of teamwork in leading and accomplishing a mission critical to an important New Jersey industry and answering the needs of stakeholders, while at the same time leveraging funds, demonstrating ingenuity and entrepreneurial initiative, and engaging a significant segment of the populace in a common goal. The accomplishments of this program brought enormous positive attention to Rutgers, School of Environmental and Biological Sciences and the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station.

The research study was designed to provide a comprehensive picture of the impact of the horse industry on the economy of New Jersey, on traditional agriculture, and on the preservation of working agricultural land and open space. In addition, it incorporated an Extension focus that ensures the final report and accompanying DVD continues to be circulated among policy makers and opinion leaders throughout the state.

Study results documented that the total economic impact of the equine industry was $1.1 billion annually. The industry employs nearly 13,000 and generates an estimated $160 million annually in federal, state and local taxes. There are 42,500 equine animals housed in New Jersey. The equine-related acres represent about one-fifth of the state’s 790,000 acres in agriculture.

The report can be found online in its entirety at www.esc.rutgers.edu.

New Jersey Licensed Plant Dealer Update

Trenton - The New Jersey Department of Agriculture's Nursery Inspection program supports the nursery, greenhouse, and landscape industry through the inspection and survey of nursery crops to detect plant pests. This activity, conducted by the Division of Plant Industry, enables New Jersey growers to sell nursery stock in other states and countries and assures consumers that only pest free stock will be offered for sale.

New Jersey law defines nursery stock as “all plants, shrubs, trees and vines grown for sale, as well as buds, grafts, stocks, scions and other parts of plants, shrubs, trees and vines that may be sold for propagation; but shall not include herbaceous annuals or plants, flowers, vines or cuttings grown under glass and commonly known as florists' stock.”

At least once each year, the Division of Plant Industry examines and inspects all nurseries or establishments of plant dealers in nursery stock and investigates the nursery stock sources of plant dealers within the state to determine whether the stock grown or offered for sale is free from dangerously injurious plant pests. Once the stock grown or sold by a nursery or plant dealer has been determined to be pest-free, a certificate to that effect is provided to the nurseryman or plant dealer. To become a certified plant dealer or to schedule an inspection prior to sale or resale, please visit the NJDA’s website, www.state.nj.us/agriculture/divisions/pi/prog/nursery.html.
Penn State Hosts
Ag Progress Days

Ag Progress Days, Pennsylvania's largest outdoor agricultural exposition, will return for its annual three-day run, August 19-21, 2008. Sponsored by Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences, the event is held at the Russell E. Larson Agricultural Research Center at Rock Springs, nine miles southwest of State College on Pa. Route 45. Free admission and parking are available August 19 (9-5), 20 (9-8) and 21 (9-4).

Details are available online at www.apd.psu.edu.

NOFA-NJ presents
2008 Farmer “Twilight” Meetings

Intensive Livestock Grazing and Pasture Management
Wednesday, August 13, Lyness’s Farm, Pittstown, NJ

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 will showcase pasture management, manure disposal, fencing, and facilities.

Organic Grain & Forage
Thursday, Sept. 4, Rutgers NJAES, Bridgeton, NJ

With data from multi-year trials of organic corn and soybeans, Rutgers Cooperative Extension hosts this meeting. Join us for this important workshop featuring their findings and recommendations for equipment and techniques, yield and price point expectations for organic production.

Maple Syrup, Honey, and Forestry
Thurs., Sept. 25, Sweet Sourland Farm, Hopewell NJ

Tap into a great market by taking full advantage of your woodlot and property! The Katzenbach family has been working with 27 acres for close to 50 years, and they are excited to build the supply of local, New Jersey maple syrup, honey, and forest products. With an hour on each subject, you can learn the basics of production, processing, and marketing.

Community Supported Agriculture
Thursday, October 16, Burlington Community Agriculture Center, Moorestown, NJ

With the first Community-Supported-Agriculture program on public land, Growing Home CSA farmers will speak about the basics and benefits of this direct-marketing model. Burlington County representatives will talk about the benefits and challenges of establishing a CSA on County-owned property. If you are thinking about starting or promoting a CSA, this is the meeting for you!
In 2004, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture began a new marketing strategy to promote the sale of horticultural products under the Jersey Grown label, similar to the successful strategy employed in promoting agricultural products under the Jersey Fresh label.

New Jersey growers who are certified by the Department to sell or distribute nursery stock or plant material are permitted to apply for the use of the Jersey Grown logo in marketing their nursery stock and plant material.

All nursery stock marketed under the Jersey Grown logo must be propagated and/or grown in New Jersey for a period of at least 6 months prior to retail sale, maintained free of injurious insects and plant diseases and meet or exceed the nursery stock and plant standards set forth by the American Nursery and Landscape Association.

All approved applications will have the license granted for the period of one year beginning January 1. Licenses for the use of the Jersey Grown logo must be renewed on an annual basis. A non-refundable fee of $30 must be submitted with the application and be made payable to the New Jersey Farm Products Publicity Fund. For further information on the Jersey Grown marketing program, please call (609) 292-5536 or visit the NJ Department of Agriculture’s website, http://www.jerseygrown.nj.gov/.

NJ Nursery and Landscape Association
Plants of the Month

July - Chaste Tree

Contributed by Patrick J. Cullina, The Rutgers Gardens, New Brunswick, NJ.

A large shrub or small tree, Chaste Tree feature panicles of deep blue to lilac flowers that rise above blue-green compound palmate foliage to create a dazzling display each July. Hardy to USDA Zone 6, the plant is more likely to grow as a large shrub in New Jersey's climate, reaching potential heights and widths of 8'-10.' Dieback may occur after harsh winters, as the species-though most successful in a sunny exposure-would benefit from some protection. A versatile shrub that can serve both as a specimen and as vivid component of a mixed border, Chaste Tree's flower buds are formed on the current season's growth, ensuring blooms no matter what degree of pruning is required in late winter or early spring.

Cultivars of note are 'Blushing Spires,' which features pink blooms, 'Silver Spire,' a white-flowered form, and 'Montrose Purple,' a selection prized for its spikes of deep purple flowers. Additional species of note include Vitex negundo, a shrub that features similarly structured blossoms of lavender to pale blue ('Incisa' is a cutleaf cultivar of V. negundo), and Vitex rotundifolia, a prostrate shrub with oval leaves with pale purple flowers that shows excellent tolerance to harsh shoreline conditions. Successful specimens of each of the aforementioned plants can be seen in the shrub collection within the Rutgers Gardens at Rutgers University.

August - Seven-son Flower

Contributed by Chris Dilts, CNLP, Plant Detectives, Ramsey, NJ.

Heptacodium micomioides just rolls off the tongue with ease; doesn't it? Just as fun is the various surprises it has in store throughout the year. Hepticodium, also known as Seven-son Flower, is native to China. It will reach up to about 20 feet high and half that in width, but will experience some tip die back during extreme cold or drought. Some have stated that the early spring foliage colored light green is the most exciting feature. I feel that this is just the beginning of the positives for this plant. Leaves turn to a dark green as the season progresses. The flowers are creamy white in color budding in early summer and blooming in the end of August till the end of September. The flowers are small but are tiered resulting in a seven-flowered triple inflorescences from whence the name "Seven-son Flower" originated. Seven-son Flower will bring the gardener four seasons of value making it a worthy addition to your landscape.

More information on NJNLA can be found at www.gardennj.net/.
Farm Foundation Releases Report

Understanding the complex and multiple factors influencing food prices today is important as future policy options are debated, according to a new study released by Farm Foundation on July 23, 2008. “Today’s food price levels are the result of complex interactions among multiple factors. However, one simple fact stands out: economic growth and rising human aspirations are putting greater pressure on the global resource base,” says Farm Foundation President Neilson Conklin. “The difficult challenge for public and private leaders is to identify policy choices that help the world deal with the very real problems created by today’s rising food prices without jeopardizing aspirations for the future.”

Written by Purdue University economists Wallace Tyner, Christopher Hurt and Philip Abbott, the study, “What’s Driving Food Prices?”, identifies three broad sets of forces driving food price increases: global changes in production and consumption of key commodities, the depreciation of the U.S. dollar, and growth in the production of biofuels. “We made no attempt to calculate what percentage of price changes are attributable to the many disparate causes and, in fact, think it is impossible to do so,” says Tyner, the lead author of the report. “But examining the interplay of the forces driving food prices gives a clearer picture of what has been happening.” Tyner is an energy and policy economist, most recently specializing in biofuels policies. Hurt works in analysis of commodity markets and Abbott in international trade and macro factors. The authors reviewed current reports and studies, considered the findings of that literature as they did their own analysis.

“We commissioned this report to provide a comprehensive, objective assessment of the forces driving food prices,” Conklin said. “It is the intent of Farm Foundation that the information will help all stakeholders meet the challenge to address one of the most critical public policy issues facing the world today.” Farm Foundation works as a catalyst for sound public policy by providing objective information to foster deeper understanding of the complex issues before the food system today.

The full report is online at www.farmfoundation.org.

Somerset County Students Earn Top Honors in Poster Contest

Trenton - A local Somerset County student earned top honors in a 2007-2008 national poster contest designed to raise awareness of natural resources and related issues among young people.

“For the past several years, young New Jersey artists have won the National Conservation Poster Contest, highlighting the great talent we have in the Garden State, as well as the students’ desires that we, in government, protect our natural resources for all of us to enjoy in the future,” said New Jersey Secretary of Agriculture Charles M. Kuperus.

One hundred and fifty-four posters from 35 states were entered in the 17th annual contest. Of the 15 winning posters chosen nationwide, New Jersey students produced four, three taking first place and one taking second place in their grade level categories.

Lisa Feng of Bridgewater placed first in the Grades 10-12 category (her poster is shown here). The competition was sponsored by the National Association of Conservation Districts and the NACD Auxiliary in cooperation with the Washington County Soil Conservation District in Maryland. The students’ posters illustrated the theme of “Today is the Day to be Part of Conservation’s Power!”

The 2008-2009 poster contest is already underway, and the state champion in the Grade 11 category is also from Somerset County. Wilson Pai of Montgomery is the current State Grand Champion for his “Water is Life” poster. “My poster shows the co-existence of people and animals, as both depend on water. Because water is so precious, we should conserve it and everyone must take responsibility.”

New Jersey’s 15 soil conservation districts work to conserve and manage soil and water resources in the state. For more information about local conservation poster contests or other conservation education programs, contact your local soil conservation district or the State Soil Conservation Committee (609) 292-5540.
NRCS Awards 2008 New Jersey Conservation Innovation Grants

Somerset - State Conservationist Tom Drewes announced that USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will fund four projects through the 2008 NJ Conservation Innovation Grants program. The program is intended to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies while leveraging Federal investment in environmental enhancement and protection in conjunction with agricultural production.

Laine Farms, located in Somerset County, will receive $75,000 for the development of a local warm season pelletizing facility to provide an alternate market for the warm-season grass crops in northern New Jersey. The use of the pellets to provide winter heating for agricultural structures will be further demonstrated in a partnership effort with New Jersey Audubon.

Audit tools for use in energy-intensive horticultural and floriculture operations will be developed and tested by Rutgers University. Dr. Thomas Manning at the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station will lead this project with a goal of discovering appropriate energy conservation measures that reduce total energy use, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and improve agricultural efficiency. The project will receive $61,193.

A local source of black-oil sunflowers for a “Jersey Grown” bird seed mix will be developed by Mark Kirby of Derwood Farms in partnership with New Jersey Audubon. Derwood Farms will receive $52,934 for this project that will also include the use of an innovative bio-char product to enhance the soil condition in the sunflower fields in an effort to improve water quality and carbon sequestration.

Up to five staff members from local Soil Conservation Districts and/or Resource Conservation and Development Councils will be recruited and trained to perform on-farm energy audits in New Jersey by EnSave, a corporation headquartered in Vermont. As part of the $18,090 grant agreement, four audits will be conducted and energy saving strategies will be implemented on the audited farms.

New Jersey received a total of nine applications for the 2008 competition. A panel of experts from different conservation and environmental agencies reviewed the applications and recommended six for funding. Drewes made the final selections based on these reviews and the availability of program funds. “This is the first year we had more fundable projects than money available to support them. We hope this trend continues under the 2008 Farm Bill, as it gives us the best opportunity to get new innovative ideas on the land that will eventually benefit all NJ farmers by offering alternative environmental solutions for some of our natural resource problems,” Drewes said.

The 2008 Farm Bill passed by Congress in May continues the Conservation Innovation Grants program, a popular component of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, through the year 2012. This is the fourth year that NJ NRCS has funded Conservation Innovation Grants in the state. For more on the work NRCS is doing in New Jersey, visit www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov.

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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.
Wolgast Tree Farm Earns River-Friendly Certification

Somerset – At Wolgast Tree Farm, Dr. Len Wolgast and Cathy Blumig are excellent stewards of the rivers and wildlife. Their conscientious efforts recently earned the farm on Bennets Lane in Franklin Township the River-Friendly Farm Certification. As public recognition, the couple received a plaque and a sign at the Franklin Township Council meeting. The designation was made by North Jersey Resource Conservation & Development Council (RC&D) located in Clinton which sponsors the voluntary program. Its goal is to improve water quality and recognize farmers who are being good stewards of the land by protecting the water resources of the Raritan River Basin.

Wolgast and Blumig grow Christmas trees and keep bees on their 17-acre farm. In addition, they actively encourage an abundance of wildlife on the property. Pleased to receive the award, Wolgast said, “I encourage every farmer to participate in the River-Friendly Farm Program. I’ve been growing Christmas Trees for 31 years and they had some great tips for my operation.”

River-Friendly Farm Certification is given to those who manage their farms to protect and enhance the water resources which provide drinking water to millions of people. River-Friendly farms, including Wolgast Tree Farm, do all of the following: reduce soil erosion so sediment does not enter waterways; reduce fertilizer to minimum amounts needed to prevent leaching into water; provide essential vegetative habitat along water bodies to help protect aquatic organisms; and apply pesticides and other control methods as appropriate. Free technical assistance is provided through the River-Friendly Farm certification process for producers to implement best management practices that protect water quality and enhance efficiencies on-farm.

Wolgast’s and Blumig’s practices are motivated by the principles of “sustainable agriculture.” The main theme is that land should support a variety of plant and animal life besides the crop that is being raised. With that goal in mind, the benefits multiply starting with profits from the crop to increased biodiversity to healthy functioning ecosystems to improved water quality. The philosophy guiding the management of the farm stems from Dr. Wolgast’s tenure as professor of wildlife ecology and management in the Department of Ecology, Evolution and Natural Resources at Rutgers University, School of Environmental and Biological Sciences. Now retired, Wolgast continues to employ the principles of his classroom teachings to the outdoors.

The River-Friendly Farm program recognizes producers throughout the Raritan Basin which includes parts of Morris, Hunterdon, Somerset, Middlesex, Union, Mercer, and Monmouth counties. North Jersey RC&D is seeking applicants and is available to speak with any interested group or individual about the program. Please contact Abigail Jones at 908-735-0733 x102 or ajones@northjerseyrcd.org. Farmer applications and further information can be found online at www.njriverfriendlyfarm.org.

The North Jersey RC&D serves and is sponsored by the Freeholders and Soil Conservation Districts of Hunterdon, Morris, Somerset, Sussex, Warren and Union Counties. Through partnerships with municipal, state and federal agencies, as well as many private entities, the Council develops and manages programs and projects that promote the improvement and wise use of the region’s human and natural resources.
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

Green and Growing
polanin@njaes.rutgers.edu