



AGENT'S OVERVIEW

Vegetables, Fruit & Human Health

Significant changes in the USDA Food Pyramid stress a greater consumption and diversity of fresh fruits and vegetables. Despite this important nutritional plan, the human health of the American public is plagued with dietary related problems as obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular conditions, cancer and other illnesses.

A key factor is that our national food policy makes it much less expensive to consume nutritionally poor, processed meals rather than nutrient dense fresh produce loaded with vitamins, minerals and antioxidants – the main ingredients necessary to foster human health.



Photo Ayeni

Behind the medical front lines of our health care crisis is the underlying Farm-to-Fork network that provides essential production and consumption knowledge. This season's newsletter highlights some of the local, regional and global efforts that preventatively help improve the health of our citizens. We note the annual program of the NJ Farm Bureau

that ardently supports local Jersey Fresh farm goods in every which way; including strengthening the direct linkage to school systems and other institutions. Their excellent Annual Conference displayed grassroots

(Continued on page 3)

Farm Bureau Convention & Master Gardener Graduation



There was a surge in attendance at Farm Bureau's annual meeting last week in Princeton, described as fully engaged policy discussions. **Rich Nieuwenhuis** received a continued endorsement from the membership as he was reelected **President** of the organization for his fifth two-year term. Highlighting their views on the present status of New Jersey agriculture were **Ag Secretary Doug Fisher** and **NJAES/SEBS Executive Dean Robert Goodman**. Rutgers Specialist Dr. Brian Schilling provided an indepth analysis of NJ Agri-tourism.

The **2010 Master Gardener Graduation** and Awards Ceremony was once again held at Hominy Hill Golf Course on Thursday, November 18th. **Richard Obal** welcomed the crowd of 200, recognizing **Nina McKittrick**, representing the Monmouth County **Board of Agriculture**, **Bill Sciarappa**, and introducing speakers **Freeholder Lillian Burry** and **Bruce Gollnick**, the assistant Director for the Monmouth County Park System. **Freeholder Burry** spoke of the importance of this year's

(Continued on page 2)

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
FREEHOLD, NJ
PERMIT NO. 166

Cooperative Extension of Monmouth County
4000 Kozloski Road
PO Box 5033
Freehold, NJ 07728-5033

New Jersey Agricultural
Experiment Station
RUTGERS

class, noting their record harvest from their 'Plant a Row for the Hungry' garden of 2300 pounds. "This class of Master Gardeners embraced a very special and very timely project," Freeholder Director Lillian G. Burry said at the graduation. "They prepared the soil, planted the seeds and harvested the produce for the **Open Door** program in Freehold. Through the 'Plant a Row for the Hungry' program, this class made a real impact and difference in the lives of our families in need."



2010 Graduates - Rutgers Master Gardeners of Monmouth County

Bruce Gollnick lauded the many Master Gardeners who volunteer at all their parks, specifically Deep Cut Park in Middletown. **Diane Larson recognized the 3000 hours of volunteer service** the class logged on since their start in late February, thanking the MG's for their dedication as well as their families for allowing them the time to contribute to their volunteer commitment. She said, "This class has the character, determination, and spirit to accomplish anything they set their mind to. We are proud and honored to now call you 'Certified Master Gardeners'."

The evening closed with the Master Gardeners recognizing the support of Freeholder Burry by awarding her with the title of 'Honorary Master Gardener'. This award was much appreciated by Freehold Burry, who earlier in her speech explained that she has always wanted to become a Master Gardener but has not yet had the time to commit to the program.

Diane Larson

2010 FFA Career Development Events

The **85th Annual** Fall Career Development Event took place on November 18 at Rutgers University, Cook Campus. **236 FFA students** from 29 NJ high schools tested their skills in agriculture in a competitive setting.

Career Development Events provide students with an opportunity to apply skills learned in their agriculture, food and natural resource classes. These various events test student skills in specific occupational areas of the agricultural industry. Students compete individually in most events, and are ranked individually and also in school teams.

The **Fruit and Vegetable** competition attracted 106 participants and was arranged by **Monmouth County Ag Program Assistant Vivian Quinn and 4-H Program Assistant Sabrina Brown**. Produce was once again donated by **Delicious Orchards**. **Ron Gasaway and Bill McDonald** are very generous and eager to be a part of this event. We sincerely thank them for their continued support to FFA. The chart highlights Monmouth County, Ocean County Vocational High School and Northern Burlington Regional High School.

Visit FFA on Facebook
<http://www.facebook.com/NJFFA>



Director Nancy Trivette, Coordinator Erin Noble, officers and the FFA Team show some vegetable identification and judging test examples.

School	Fruit-Veg	Dairy	Turf	Combined Land/Homesite
Allentown HS	1st	1st		1st
Freehold Regional HS	2nd			2nd
Monmouth County Voc Tech	5th		1st	
N. Burlington Reg. HS				4th
Ocean County Voc Tech		3rd	4th	

CALENDAR

JANUARY

11, 12, 13 VGANJ Annual Mtg., Atlantic City, NJ - Rocco DiGerolamo 856-797-1686: www.njveggies.org
25-26 NJ Plants Trade Show - NJ Convention Ctr, Edison. 800-332-3976 www.plantsshow.com
25-26 - Women in Agriculture, Dover, DE. Laurie Wolinski 302-831-2538 lgw@udel.edu
29-30 NOFA-NJ 21st Annual Winter Conference—Princeton University, Joanna Dillon 908-371-1111

FEBRUARY

1-3 Mid-Atlantic Fruit & Vegetable Convention—Hershey, PA. www.mafvc.org
4 - Central Jersey Vegetable Growers Meeting - RCE Monmouth County. 732-431-7260 - Terry/Madge

MARCH

8 March tentative - Central Jersey Turf & Ornamental Institute Freehold.

On-line workshop video
Animal Waste Management Program
<http://www.visitmonmouth.com/page.aspx?id=3772>

MONMOUTH COUNTY BOA
 7:30 PM - 1-18, 2-15, 3-15, 4-19

BASIC PESTICIDE TRAINING
 2010 - CORE—9 am - 1 pm
 1-18, 2-01, 2-15, 3-08, 3-29, 4-19, 5-17, 6-14

Category 3A - 9 AM - 3 PM
 1-19 & 6-7

Category 3B 9 AM - 3 PM
 2-08, 4-12

To register call 800-524-9942

Held at
Rutgers Cooperative Extension
Ag Building
4000 Kozloski Rd. Freehold, NJ

Changing Times is produced and edited by
 Bill Sciarappa and Vivian Quinn - sciarappa@njaes.rutgers.edu
 Past Issues on the web
www.visitmonmouth.com/07050coopext

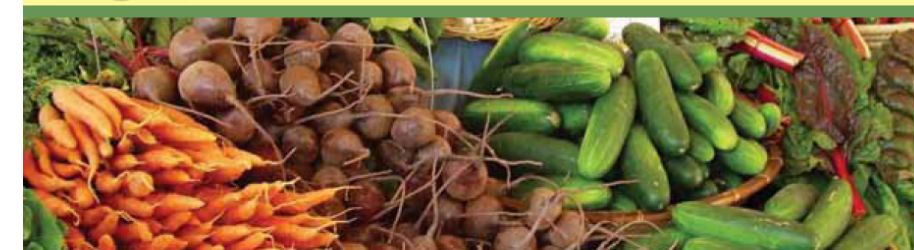
2010 ATLANTIC COAST AGRICULTURAL CONVENTION AND TRADE SHOW

JANUARY 11, 12 & 13, 2011

Sponsored by
Vegetable Growers Association of New Jersey
 in cooperation with the
New Jersey Blueberry Council

Trump Taj Mahal • 1000 Boardwalk at Virginia Avenue • Atlantic City, NJ

Brought to you by:



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

Questions about crop insurance?
 Call our toll-free info line
 800-308-2449 or
<http://saalem.rutgers.edu/cropinsurance>

RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
MONMOUTH COUNTY
New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station

4000 Kozloski Rd, PO Box 5033
 Freehold, NJ 07728
 Agriculture: 732-431-7260
 Family & Consumer Science: 732-431-7271
 4-H: 732-431-7263/7264
 Fax: 732-409-4813

Rutgers Cooperative Extension—Agriculture, Family and Community Health Sciences, 4-H Youth Development, Resource Management, and Marine Studies—welcomes this opportunity to send you the enclosed materials for your information and use. Educational programs and information are provided to all people without regard to sex, race, national origin, or handicap

Richard G. Obal
 County Agricultural Agent

Bill Sciarappa
 County Agricultural Agent

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.

AGENCY UPDATES

New Jersey Farm Bureau



The Voice of New Jersey Agriculture

Home
About Us
News
Benefits
Issues & Policies
Links
Produce Directory

Latest News
Hot Topics
News Media Round-Up

NJFB and NJAES co-hosted 'A Report on Biomass Energy for Farmers' at the Rutgers EcoComplex on November 18th.

[Click here for links to all of the seminar presentations.](#)

VIEW BIOENERGY VIDEOS

GO TO WWW.NJFB.ORG
New Jersey Farm Bureau
92nd Annual Meeting

November 15-16, 2010


[Click here for the Top 10 Issues](#)
 (As voted on by the delegates to the 2010 annual meeting)

["Without Profitable Farms, Would There Be Thanksgiving?"](#) from the Cape May County Herald (11-23-10)

["White Township farmer Richard Nieuwenhuis unanimously re-elected New Jersey Farm Bureau president"](#) from the Warren Reporter (11-19-10)

["Burlico farmer gets state recognition"](#) from the Courier Post (11-18-10)

For Registration of Central Jersey Vegetable Meeting in Freehold Feb. 4, visit www.visitmonmouth.com/07050coopext
 Click on Agriculture



New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station

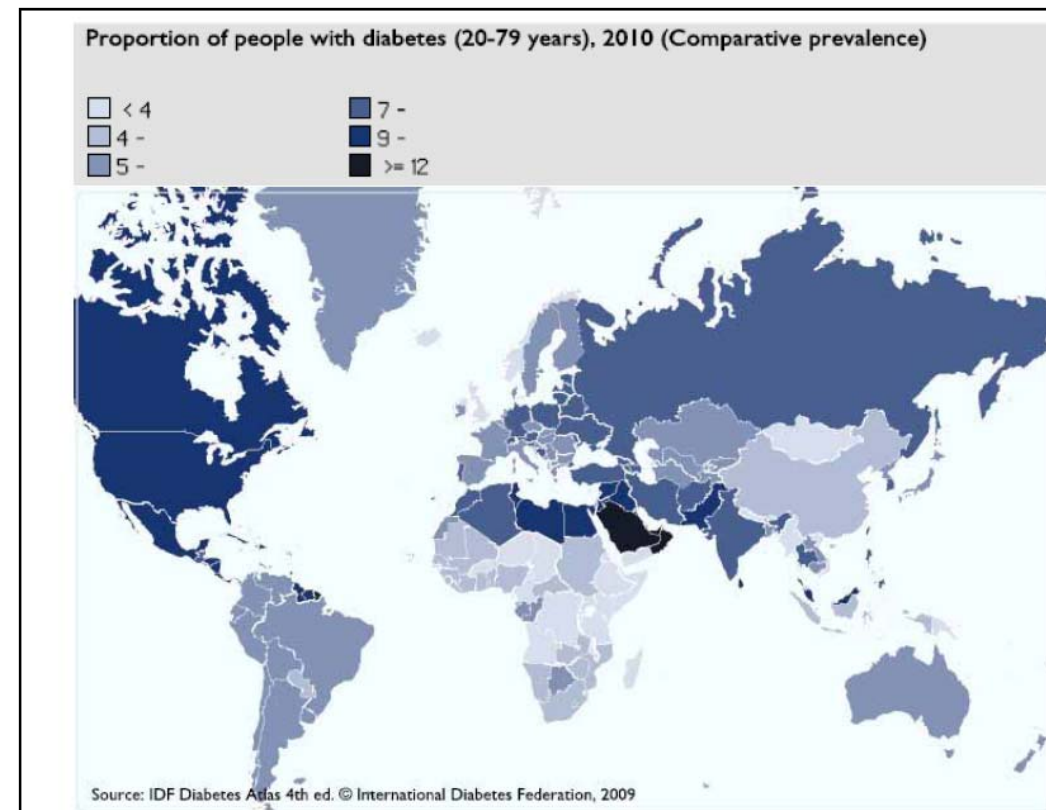
Cooperative Extension of Monmouth County

Central Jersey Vegetable Meeting
 Friday, Feb. 4, 2011
 "Ag Building" Freehold



Sessions - 2010 Atlantic Coast Agricultural Convention & Trade Show

Farm Safety..... Greenhouse Floriculture..... Bio-Energy Forum..... Peppers..... General Session - Key Note Speaker... Brown Marmorated Stink Bug..... Season Extension Veg & Fruit.....	Agritourism..... Small Fruit..... Blueberries..... New Technology..... Field Crops..... Tomatoes & Grafting Workshop..... Agribusiness Session..... Preparing for USDA Audit Workshop...
--	---



(Continued from page 1)

democracy in action. Also on the front page, we feature the new graduating class of **Rutgers Master Gardeners** in Monmouth County. This class has been groomed to spread the "good word" and learn to grow your own healthy foods. These gardeners are great cooks as well! Our own elected officials are clearly on board with this growing issue.

Page 2 reports on the NJ FFA **Career Development Event** held at **RU-SEBS Cook Campus** where our next generation of ag leaders displayed their knowledge and interest related to food supply. Our center pages 4 and 5 stress the importance and processes in preserving our production farms and farmers – the main elements of sustainable, secure, safe and local food system. Prudent policies in farmland regulations and an insightful economic analysis show the way to agri-business success for now and in the future within our urban, peri-urban and rural interface.

Another highlight from the international stage was a visit by the **Director General of the World Vegetable Center – Dr. Dyno Keatinge**. Dyno met with university administration and faculty and had an extended meeting with our specialty vegetable research group (see front page photo). This meeting confirmed that we had some mutual production goals aimed to-

wards improving crop diversity, human health, nutrition sustainability and economic development. We learned that many distant parts of the planet are now being similarly plagued by this American pattern of poorly balanced consumption centering on nutritionally empty carbohydrates and other processed food stuffs (high fructose corn syrup, salts, preservatives, etc.). **Diabetes** incidence in Africa, China and Saudi Arabia – three different ethnic groups - is rising rapidly to unprecedented levels, even as high as the USA. (Map above).

Finally, we have the upcoming Atlantic Coast Ag Conference co-sponsored by the **NJ Vegetable Growers** and **RCE in Atlantic City** starting January 11. Please check out the diverse selection of exciting topics on page 6 and plan to spend a couple of days at the Taj. Please register early. The conference needs your continued support as well as the general public needs the best your farm, agency or institution can offer. All of these combined efforts hearken to healthier lifestyles.



*Have a Happy & Healthy
 Holiday Season.*

Bill Sciarappa

Keeping Them on the Farm

The Suydam family has been farming in Franklin Township continuously since 1713 and on their current farm since 1840 (see photo). Ryck Suydam, who has managed Suydam Farms since 1985, wanted to keep it that way. But several years ago, the winds of change were not blowing favorably. Over time, condominiums, replacing farmland, had bumped up against two sides of the 300-acre Somerset County farm; a third side was bordered by busy Route 27.

Then, in 2003, town leaders began discussing the possibility of using a practice known as downzoning to cut back on the kind of high-density, service-intensive cluster housing that bordered Suydam Farms. Shouldn't that have eased Ryck Suydam's mind? On the contrary.

Downzoning makes undeveloped land (such as farmland) less attractive to developers, who profit more when they can build more homes on smaller lots than they do when (under downzoning) they have to build fewer homes on larger lots. The reduced appeal to developers can cut the market value of the land. "If the town had followed through, it would have effectively taken away most of my equity," Suydam says. Given this risk, it might not have been worth holding onto the farm.

Then Suydam and his father, Abe, had an idea. In 2001, Franklin Township had been awarded a state Municipal Planning Incentive Grant—or PIG grant, as it is affectionately known—to finance local preservation projects. For farmers, this is a good deal, since not only do they receive a price for their farmland at something approaching current market rates, but they retain ownership of it. And while this preserved farmland is worth less on the open market than before its development rights were sealed off, it can still be sold to another farmer or even, say, a nursery and garden center. In short, preservation could help the Suydams solve their dilemma.

"We knew that, if we were ever going to preserve any part of our land, this was the time to do it," Suydam says. The family took steps to preserve the portion of their property that fronted Route 27. On March 25, 2008, the parties met to sign the final papers. The total cost of preserving 130 acres of the historic Suydam farm—for technical reasons, the family was only reimbursed for 108 acres—was \$12,354,218. Of that, Franklin Township kicked in a little more than half, using part of the PIG grant. The remaining cost was split between the county (\$2 million) and the state (\$4,072,28). Said Suydam at the signing: "We are pleased to be farmers in Franklin and extremely glad that our farm will remain part of New Jersey agriculture forever."

Farming is rooted deep in New Jersey's history—so deep, in fact, that the **earliest agriculture was carried out by the Leni-Lenape tribe**. Once the Leni-Lenape gardens gave way to larger, more formal European farms, agriculture remained a central part of the New Jersey economy through most of the nineteenth century. Despite industrialization, by

"We are pleased to be farmers in Franklin and extremely glad that our farm will remain part of New Jersey agriculture forever."

Ryck Suydam

1900 there were still 34,000 farms operating in the state, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture and other sources. As late as 1950, upwards of 24,000 New Jersey farms grew a variety of fruit, vegetables, and other products.

But following World War II, the state's agricultural land base came under assault, prompted in part by the GI Bill, which helped returning soldiers pursue their American dream of home ownership. "In the 1950s and '60s, you saw a remark-

able expansion into the rural parts of New Jersey, which were historically agricultural," says **Brian Schilling**, assistant extension specialist in the Department of Agricultural, Food, & Resource Economics at Rutgers University.

This expansion, he says, had multiple effects. For one thing, thousands of acres of farmland were gobbled up by developers. The land grab was not simply the result of commercial and residential construction, but of the roads, utilities, and other infrastructure it required. By the late 1960s, the number of farms in the state had dipped to 8,500, a nearly 64 percent drop in fewer than two decades. With farmland becoming scarcer, the law of supply and demand took over. Land values rose dramatically, especially in the central and northern part of the state. For many farmers, Schilling says, the dynamic was a classic good news/bad news scenario. On the one hand, farmers saw their most tangible asset, their land, rapidly shoot up in price, to a level far higher than it would have been had its assessment remained strictly pegged to agriculture. On the other hand, higher land values meant higher taxes. For many farmers, the burden of higher taxes, combined with eye-popping per-acre prices, was hard to ignore. Many sold out to developers.

In 1964, on the strength of a public referendum, lawmakers threw a partial lifeline to those who wanted to continue farming. The Farmland Assessment Act permitted farmlands to be taxed at their agricultural use value rather than their market value. The 1964 assessment act slowed the rate at which farmland was disappearing, experts say. But as a series of state commissions in the 1970s and early 1980s concluded, slowing the loss of farmland wasn't necessarily sufficient to ensure a stable and viable agricultural industry. Something more, experts felt, needed to be done.

Enter the New Jersey Farmland Preservation Program (NJFPP). Begun in 1983 as the result of two groundbreaking pieces of legislation, NJFPP is a state-administered, locally coordinated, voluntary program. To be eligible, a farm must be located within an Agricultural Development Area as designated by specially-appointed county boards. Within NJFPP, there are sub-programs. In some, the state acts with a local government partner, as in the Suydam Farm case; in others, it links up with a nonprofit partner, like the New Jersey Conservation Foundation. In still other cases, it works alone.

(Continued on page 5)

Sustaining Farming on the Urban Fringe



Excess Farm Indebtedness is Not a Sustainable Practice

Jack Rabin, Associate Director for Farm Services, Rutgers NJAES

When farms fail, causes usually include financial resources-indebtedness - as well as natural resources farms depend on, like soil. Farm financial resources and natural resources are intimately linked. Both contribute and are required to sustain healthy farms. Excess debt and resource degradation are both implicated in farming failures. Since high indebtedness is the leading cause of failures in our country's historical experiences with agricultural sustainability, let's explore some issues related to debt.

First recognize farming costs and prices are biased

Market prices of urban fringe farming resources are distorted. On one hand, we know farms provide local food, open space, beauty, ground water recharge, freedom from sprawl, and wildlife habitat. But, these public benefits are never included in the prices we pay when purchasing farm products, or selling farmland. Likewise, policies often ignore and distort *economic externalities*, hidden long-term costs of farming resource degradation (e.g. sprawl, large lot development, soil erosion, over-grazing or ground water depletion). We don't factor these either into market prices we pay for farm products in this manner, **all farming resource failures are economic**, or rather bad economics. In managing resources for the long-term, a farmer I recently spoke with remarked, "**Farmers should not depreciate their soil biological capital, or financial capital.**"

(Continued from page 4)

To date, **the NJFPP has preserved close to 188,000 acres of state farmland**; approximately 545,520 acres remain unprotected. In Hunterdon, Burlington, and Salem counties alone, some 79,000 acres have been permanently reserved for agricultural use; even in Somerset County, where development and other pressures have reduced the number of farms to less than 100, development rights have been restricted to agricultural use on roughly 7,600 acres.

"**Our goal is to achieve somewhere in the neighborhood of 500,000 to 600,000 acres of permanently protected farmland,**" says **Susan Craft**, who since 2005 has been the executive director of the **State Agricultural Development Committee (SADC)**, the eleven-member board that administers the program.

That goal is sure to be expensive. Already, the preservation program has cost close to **\$1.4 billion**. Most of this hefty tab has been picked up by the state, which to date has spent \$900 million to fund the program. The other roughly \$490 million has come from municipalities, counties, and nonprofits. Among states with similar programs, **New Jersey ranks first**

What lesson does sustainable farming history teach us about debt?

A detailed analysis reveals leverage risk changes dramatically with modest changes in debt. **Over the long-term, farms with debt exceeding 60-65% of capital-leverage of 1.8:1 or above are less viable.**

How many risks can a farm withstand at one time?

A well-managed and financed farm is able to withstand adversity from one, maybe two, risks at once. When two or more risks bear on a farm, only the lowest indebted remain viable. **It is unstable stewardship to saddle farms, buffeted by volatile short-term, 'time certain,' financial liabilities.**

Don't farm-away your urban fringe land equity

Urban fringe farmers experienced decades of rising land values. Some increased their borrowing. Those who did not also raise their sales per acre, marketing efficiency, and repayment ability became known as **'equity farmers.'** Their farmland assets, appreciating faster than the farm was losing money, masked underlying problems...for a while. These farms' become threatened when future land use policy changes like down-zoning or regulatory takings reduce their equity value. Indebted urban fringe farms, caught on high value farmland with changing land use policies, hopefully must earn sufficient net farm income. Their exit strategy of selling the farmland for alternative uses is removed without public compensation. Intergenerational transfer of farms is also weakened by excess debt.

in money spent, followed by Pennsylvania and Maryland, according to data from the American Farmland Trust, a research and advocacy group. New Jersey ranks fourth among states in number of acres preserved, largely because of its historically high land values.

Despite this, many observers in and outside New Jersey's agricultural industry think the money overall has been well spent. Certainly, the public seems to like the program. During the last gubernatorial election, when the recession, high property taxes, and a burgeoning state deficit put New Jersey voters in a cranky mood, the state's \$400 million Open Space Bond issue, which included \$146 million for the SADC, passed with a 53 percent majority.

"That spoke volumes," says Craft, who believes the public is "very passionate" about wanting to preserve the harvest, beauty, and educational benefits of the agricultural landscape.

NJ Monthly—Wayne Guglielmo