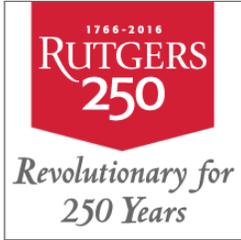


# Monmouth County Cooperative Extension



## 2015 Annual Report

### Rutgers Cooperative Extension

Rutgers Cooperative Extension is an integral component of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES) of Rutgers - the State University. This linkage provides a diverse range of research, extension and education programs that serve the people of New Jersey and their urban, suburban and rural communities. Through our Cooperative Extension offices in all 21 NJ counties, 4-H Agents, Extension Specialists, Family & Community Health Sciences Educators and Agricultural and Resource Management Agents work in serving NJ residents in every area of our state. This structure partners with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences and New Jersey county governments to provide practical education for all people. RCE faculty and staff provide a diversity of outreach programs in Agriculture and Resource Management, Sea Grant Extension, 4-H Youth Development and Family and Community Health Sciences.

### Our Vision

Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Monmouth County helps individuals, groups and organizations to address their needs, problems and concerns. We identify emerging and established issues and can then provide the leadership, organizational skills and commitment to develop appropriate solutions through the educational process. We seek to build multi-disciplinary teams to assess complex problems in a more comprehensive and knowledgeable manner.

### Our Mission

Our mission focus is on issues and needs relating to Agriculture and the Environment, Management of Natural Resources, Food Safety, Quality, Nutrition & Health, Family Stability, Economic Security and Youth Development. We aim to help the diverse population of Monmouth County adapt to a rapidly changing society and improve their lives by applying current science-based information. The staff is strongly supported by groups of trained volunteers who serve on advisory boards and who increase our educational outreach and services to Monmouth County.

## Agriculture and Resource Management

**Overview** - Department Head William Sciarappa, Horticulturist Diane Larson, Program Associate Vivian Quinn and Horticultural assistants John Neyhart, Dennis McNamara and Peter McIntyre served a diversity of clientele in 2015 through established programs, services and applied research activities. The Monmouth County clientele base includes commercial agriculture, horticulture, aquaculture, homeowners, governmental agencies and natural resource interests. Extension agents work cooperatively throughout the state and region to provide technical and educational programs in the fields of vegetable, agronomic, nursery and greenhouse production. Our external outreach programs prioritize agri-chemical education, integrated pest management, crop production, soil testing and stormwater runoff.

**Agricultural Production** – Nationally, our Garden State



ranked 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> in fruit production of cranberries, peaches and blueberries in 2012. For vegetable production, NJ ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> in bell peppers and spinach, 6<sup>th</sup> in cucumber and squash, 8<sup>th</sup> in tomatoes and snap beans and 9<sup>th</sup> in sweet corn. The total value of agricultural production in 2012 for New Jersey was a record \$1.01 billion. Similarly the overall agricultural industry in Monmouth County remains very diverse and economically strong. Sales in 2012 were estimated at \$95 million (3rd in State) on 38,961 acres of land. Statewide the county ranks 1st in equine breeding and training facilities. Roadside and community farmers markets and pasture acreage remain as state leaders; 2nd in nursery and floriculture, crop production, horse farms, Asian vegetables and pumpkins; 3rd in sweet corn, sod production and Christmas tree farms; 5th in alfalfa hay, soybean, pepper and tomato production and 6th in hay and forage.



**Outreach Partners** – Partners include USDA-NRCS, Farm Service Agency, Freehold Soil District and the Board of Agriculture; all internally within the Agricultural Building to more efficiently serve county clients. Also, Rutgers Cooperative Extension partners with the the Monmouth County Agricultural Development Board, New Jersey Department of Agriculture, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, NJ Farm Bureau, regional ag industry organizations and watershed committees.

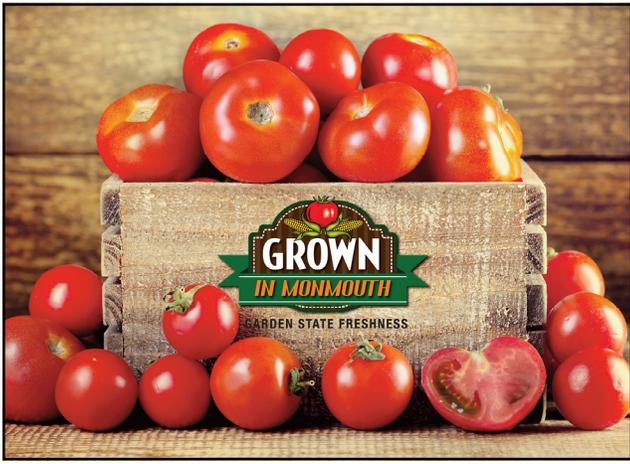
**Extension Outreach** - Agribusiness is especially important in Monmouth County to provide food, forage, feed, nursery plants and services. RCE educational programs enhance the financial viability of these operations. Topics include specialty crops, pesticide use, pest management, fertility, equine pasture, animal waste training, sustainable farming as well as landscape, greenhouse and nursery production. These outreach programs included the following:

- 16 meetings held with 1,440 farmers, educators, horticulturists, environmentalists and general public
- Communication categories totaled 2,000+ phone responses, 1500+ client emails and e-alert system
- 5 county-wide/ agricultural newsletters—Changing Times mailed to 1,200+ farm families and agencies
- A standing website [www.monmouth.njaes.rutgers.edu](http://www.monmouth.njaes.rutgers.edu)
- 66 issues of e-AG Advisor and Nursery News distributed via email to 250+ subscribers
- 71 total farmers have been documented as having farm site plans in animal waste management
- 7 commercial growers served with free service for sterilizing tomato and pepper seeds from bacterial diseases in the Monmouth County office
- Soil testing, soil health service & soil survey research

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**Grown in Monmouth** - Monmouth County launched an exciting, first-of-its-kind initiative to strengthen and to promote agriculture in the county. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently awarded the Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders a **Rural Business Development Grant** to assist the county's agricultural industry. **Freeholders Thomas A. Arnone, Director,** and **Lillian G. Burry** are leading the initiative, which will involve a series of listening sessions for growers, landowners, consumers and the general public to discuss ways to boost agriculture in Monmouth County.

The project is called **Grown in Monmouth** and includes the development of a strategic plan to bolster the agricultural industry throughout the County while at the same time focusing closely on conditions, trends and opportunities in areas of 13 county municipalities deemed "rural" by the USDA. Rural designated areas are located in: Allentown, Englishtown, Farmingdale, Howell, Manalapan, Millstone, Roosevelt, Upper Freehold, Colts Neck, Freehold Township, Holmdel, Marlboro and Wall Township. RCE of Monmouth County hosted the kickoff meeting at the Rutgers Research and Education Center in Cream Ridge.



## Equine Industry

Soil testing and animal waste projects were a key programmatic emphasis in 2015. Significant strides continue in improving environmental and soil health as well as pasture grass quality and weed management.

The equine industry is hampered as adjacent states have thrived with their recent acceptance of racinos – racetracks with gaming that NJ has not yet approved. Without competitive purse funds, training farms, breeding farms and hay and grain farms are relocating to surrounding states with more to offer. To promote awareness of this problem, the fourth annual outreach event was held at the Freehold Raceway - **The Open Space Pace and Festival of Horses.**



As an approved event by the NJ Department of Agriculture, this fair highlights the relationship between the horse and open space in NJ— especially Monmouth County - and celebrates our state animal.

A parade of horses, clubs and organizations marched through downtown Freehold past the viewing stand of Freeholders and other dignitaries. Arriving at Freehold Racetrack, 5,000+ spectators were greeted with numerous equine and agricultural displays. There was a petting zoo and numerous educational booths from the Equine Science Center, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, The Board of Agriculture, NJ Department of Agriculture, 4-H Youth Development, and Farm Bureau among others.

Standard-bred and celebrity races were held; each with a \$1000 donation given to worthy ag-equine organizations. These four years of public awareness events have contributed to the voter passage of the new funding process dedicated to Open Space Preservation.

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**New Crops** - A key focus of our Ag Resource and Extension Program is developing unique specialty crops for Garden State growers and gardeners. Year 2015 featured a bumper crop of new and exciting candidates as follows.



**Rutgers Scarlet Strawberries** feature great tasting cultivars bred especially for the northeast region as opposed to the super large and mediocre taste of the California cultivars.



**Rutgers 250 Tomato** celebrates the university's 250th anniversary. This season's winner was selected from 3 similar cultivars in statewide field trials including the RU Cream Ridge Research farm. Seeds from the fruit at our county site were provided and processed for 2016 sales.



**Rutgers Scarlet Lettuce** seed has come to the east coast via Shamrock Seeds in a pelleted form. We have had 10+ grower—gardener test trials in Monmouth County and several others in north & south Jersey. We have had rough weather in the spring and fall planting periods with mixed results in the field, but we were impressed by the quality of the Kube-Pak transplants and the produce quality grown in other greenhouse sites.



**Rutgers Hazelnut** selections for cultivars resistant to Filbert blight have yielded excellent results at both Rutgers Research farms in Monmouth - Adelphia and Cream Ridge. **Breeder Tom Molnar** led farm tours to demonstrate how a small farm operation could harvest the nuts with this push-type machine.



**Farm Tours & Resource Management Events** - Rutgers agriculture & aquaculture agents assisted producers in developing and providing exciting demonstrations of emerging agribusiness opportunities.



The state's first on-farm brewery known as **Screamin' Hill Brewery** opened up with 5 varieties of beer using home grown ingredients as wheat, pumpkin, pepper and hops. State & county officials sampled some of this production. Secretary Fisher was quite impressed by the hops' growth and hopes more craft breweries take root on Jersey farms.



**Dr. Gary Pavlis** demonstrates crushing wine at RU Cream Ridge farm. Farm wineries have increased from 15 to over 70 in the last decade with over 25 new acres in Monmouth.



**Marine Agent Gef Flimlin** demonstrates some of the fish caught in our coastal waters and where they are processed. Gef has been instrumental in the **Bayshore area** helping clambers and fishermen remain competitive. The **Re-Clam the Bay** project has found success in increasing habitat for shellfish but the battle continues in stormwater runoff to reduce pollutants as sediment, nitrogen, phosphorus and bacteria.



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## Master Gardeners

26 Monmouth County residents successfully completed the Rutgers Master Gardener program in 2015, which entailed 60 hours of formal training, followed by at least 60 hours each of community volunteer service. Monmouth County has trained a total of **481 Master Gardeners** since its inception in 1999, retaining 219 active Master Gardeners. Master Gardeners provided **23,709 hours of volunteer service** in 2015, and responded to over **2,080 gardening inquiries** from the public on the Helpline. Of the total hours of volunteer time, 2,790 hours were spent performing consultation and diagnostic duties at Helpline events, **11,232 hours** were spent performing **Community Outreach** where the public was educated on horticulture on an informal basis, and 3,744 hours were spent formally teaching the public through the **Speakers Bureau**. These **17,766 volunteer hours**, according to the Independent Sector's value of volunteer time for New Jersey, calculates into a cost factor of **\$633,030**.

### Community Projects

- **School Program Committee** helped 15 new school gardens.
- Over **3,500 pounds of produce** grown and donated to 17 different local food pantries by the 2015 class
- Produce provided from the **'Plant-a-Row for the Hungry'** garden, and the **Junior Master Gardener** garden, both gardens on site at the Freehold Agriculture Building.
- **Bugs Birds & Beyond** - This children's festival, was a tremendous success, hosting **1000 children and adults** held along with 4-H, it featured a **'Pollinators' theme**.
- **Two \$1000 scholarships** were awarded to high school seniors planning to study a plant science field in college.
- The **Monmouth County Fair** educational display focused on Pollinators and featured plants and habitats to attract pollinators in the home landscape.



### Educational Outreach

- **Master Gardeners presented 90 lectures** to over 1480 residents of Monmouth County.
- **14 educational programs** were planned and conducted for youth, with over 1500 youth attending.
- Rutgers Master Gardeners held a garden education day at Monmouth Library, **'Come Grow with Us'**, where 140 attendees learned gardening techniques. This resulted in a citation from the Monmouth County Library Commission, 'In fitting recognition and heartfelt appreciation for the dedicated and exemplary service for the benefit of our residents'.

### 2015 Highlights

In March, the Rutgers Master Gardeners of Monmouth County held their first annual, day-long **School Garden Conference**. The day began with a slate of educational presentations that included Monarchs, Milkweed, and School Gardens, the New Jersey School Garden Contest, School Gardens and the Common Core Standards, and Vegetable Gardening. Afternoon interest sessions consisted of stations on Composting and Vermicomposting, Gardening in Small Spaces, Pea Planting, Growing Microgreens, Starting a Shared Garden, Learning Through Gardening, Cooking Vegetables, and Bee-keeping. Additionally, the MG educational gardens on site, the Rain, Native Plant, Food Pantry, Junior Master Gardener, Herb, and Memorial gardens, had informational stations. **65 teachers** attended from over **30 different schools** in New Jersey and New York.



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## Family & Community Health Sciences Of Monmouth County



FCHS... Promoting Healthy  
Families, Schools  
and Communities

**Family and Community Health Sciences (FCHS)** reaches thousands of Monmouth County residents through nutritional programs, seminars, health fairs, and other wellness outreach efforts. New initiatives are continuously being developed to meet the needs of our audiences focusing on our mission to improve their health through education. FCHS encourages individuals, families, and communities to make more informed personal choices to enhance their health through our programs designed to influence all county residents at various socio-economic levels, from limited resource families to retired citizens; as well as employees and community members.

All programs offer involvement and different learning opportunities that will lead to an improved **awareness of food and health**, support a more active lifestyle and encourages the consumption of a more plant based diet, while decreasing the consumption of foods high in saturated fat, sodium, and sugar sweetened beverages. The resources needed for our programming have been provided in various ways through supportive collaborators.



One focus area this past year was on health and wellness in the workplace as a top priority. Weekly topics provided concise, easy-to-read, evidence based information related to the following health messages:

- How eating nutritious foods can contribute to healthy lifestyle
- Strategies for changing eating, exercise habits & boost brain health
- Practical tips for adapting lifestyle & managing personal finances
- Stress & time management strategies: balancing work & family

FCHS in Monmouth County conducts many programmatic efforts that focus on the initiatives of **Workforce Wellness** and **Get Moving Get Healthy-NJ**. Our purpose is to showcase healthy lifestyles, through informative programs, interactive websites, publications and targeted marketing campaigns. These sessions show an appreciation of nutritious foods, an understanding on healthy meal options while seeking ways to increase physical activity, encouraging better home finances and showing how health and wealth are related. Participation in our many learning opportunities will lead to an improved relationship of food and health, a more active lifestyle, better stress management, and personal finance health. Participants expressed a desire to continue with these programmatic efforts, especially those that included modules on making healthier life choices overall.

We are very pleased with the outcomes of the Workforce Wellness program, having over **300 workers enrolled**. Survey results showed close to 60% of participants completed the full 12 weeks of the program. Making great efforts to add more steps each day, we saw that participants increased their monitoring of daily steps by 17%. Along with that, 37% now take the time to exercise 3-4 times each week and improve their physical condition. Over the 12 weeks, 19% have increased their physical condition rating to "good" along with an increase of 11% rating to "very good". With such great success, there was a decrease of 8% of the participants **lowering their BMI out of the "obesity" range**. It is also great to see 62% have increased their consumption of fruits and vegetables. Of the participants, 57% have decreased their sugar intake and approximately 37% have reduced both their sodium and fat intake as well. 33% have increased their energy levels and are getting a better night's sleep, while 51% are eating a healthier diet overall. The post survey data shows that 31% of the participants have increased their savings over the 12 week program, with 48% having reported to decrease their debt overall. Healthy employees prove to be a productive workforce and is vital to living longer, healthier lives! FCHS aims to promote healthier lifestyles for all audiences to increase their nutritional and overall well-being.

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## 4-H Youth Development Program



The 4-H Youth Development Program is a free, co-ed, and inclusive program that uses a learn-by-doing approach to enable youth to develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills they need to become competent, caring and contributing citizens of the world. This is accomplished by using the knowledge and resources of caring adult volunteers. The staff of the **Monmouth County 4-H**

**Program** works with a cadre of volunteers to help youth from across the county to develop the skills and attitudes they will need to become healthy, well-rounded citizens as adults. Programs fall in three mission mandates – **Science, Engineering, and Technology, Citizenship, and Healthy Living**. Through clubs and educational offerings in afterschool programs and libraries, in school programs and public outreach, staff and volunteers worked with over **1500 youth in grades K - 13 and 700 adults in 2015**.

### Volunteers

In the past year, over **90 adults volunteered** their time with Monmouth County 4-H. Volunteers in Monmouth County averaged **220 hours** of time over the course of the year, with a **market value of \$495,000**. Their worth goes well beyond that, and is immeasurable to the staff and youth with whom they work. In addition, the program also offers internships for teens, reinforcing their workplace skills under the guidance of 4-H staff.

### Clubs

Clubs are the backbone of the Monmouth County **4-H Program**, where volunteers work year-round with members. The program's **28 clubs** cover a variety of topics, from horses, livestock, and small animals, to robotics, shooting sports, cooking, and yoga. The club environment is rich with opportunities to foster the development of mastery, belonging, generosity and independence that are the essential elements of 4-H's success.

### Partnerships

In 2015, Monmouth County 4-H Youth Development continued its partnership with the **Freehold Borough 21st Century Community Learning Center** at the Park Avenue complex. Staff from 4-H visited the afterschool programs twice a month to deliver programs on animal science, public speaking, and yoga. In addition, **Freehold 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC** was one of several sites in Monmouth County that participated in **National Youth Science Day** in October. New healthy living partnerships were formed through the **Get Moving Get Healthy Initiative** at **Catena Elementary School in Freehold** and **Yoga for Kids at Farmingdale Elementary School in Farmingdale**.

Through work with **Monmouth Loves Horses and Open Space Pace**, the 4-H program demonstrated its continued dedication to horses and equine science. Volunteers hosted two qualifying horse shows for 4-H members

## RCE Department & Staff

*William Sciarappa, Ph.D.*  
*County Extension Department Head*

### Agriculture Department

*William Sciarappa, County Agricultural & Resource Management Agent*

*Gef Flimlin - Marine Extension Agent*  
*732-349-1152*

*Diane Larson, Home Horticulturist*  
*Vivian Quinn, Program Associate*  
*Joanne Bujalski, Secretary*  
*Dorey Grimes, Secretary*

### 4-H Department

*Roberta Hunter, 4-H Agent*  
*Virginia Krzyzanowski, Program Associate*  
*Sabrina Brown, Program Associate*  
*Claudia Lammers, Secretary*

### Family & Community Health Sciences

*Rachel J. Tansey, Senior FCHS Extension Associate*  
*Sharese Porter, FCHS Senior Program Coordinator*  
*Abiezel Raices, SNAP-Ed Program Associate II*  
*Sandie Merritt, FCHS Secretary*

### Rutgers Master Gardeners

Helpline – 732-303-7614  
Monday - Friday - 9 AM – 4 PM  
E-mail questions  
[mgarden@co.monmouth.nj.us](mailto:mgarden@co.monmouth.nj.us)

**For more info visit our website:**

**[www.monmouth.njaes.rutgers.edu/](http://www.monmouth.njaes.rutgers.edu/)**

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# Monmouth County Cooperative Extension



from the Tri-county region as well as two open horse shows during the **Monmouth County Fair**. At the fair, members worked with **Monmouth Loves Horses** to highlight several local **therapeutic riding programs**. Monmouth County 4-H was once again a recognized partner of the **Open Space Pace** county fair.

Perhaps our longest standing partnership, and the most successful, is with **The Monmouth County Parks System**. We continue to grow this **40 plus year bond** with several annual 4-H events hosted at locations from Lincroft to Allentown. The Monmouth County Fair is the culminating event and provides a platform for members to showcase the projects they worked on throughout the year. With more than 60,000 visitors the fair is our premier event to educate the public about 4-H, and recruit new members and volunteers.



## Community Collaborations

In addition to these partnerships, 4-H frequently collaborates with members of the Monmouth County community, including:

- Delicious Orchards Food Market - Pumpkin Fest Event, annual funding and support Boy and Girl Scouts of Monmouth County
- F.F.A. Organization - collaboration with four county chapters
- Master Gardeners of Monmouth County - several collaborative projects including the annual Bugs, Birds, and Beyond event
- Monmouth County Board of Agriculture - scholarship and program support
- National 4-H Council and Walmart Foundation *Get Moving Get Healthy - Youth Voices, Youth Choices* grant
- National Rifle Association
- Monmouth County Library system
- Special People United to Ride (SPUR)

*Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Monmouth County 2015  
Annual Report printed courtesy of the Monmouth County  
Board of Chosen Freeholders*