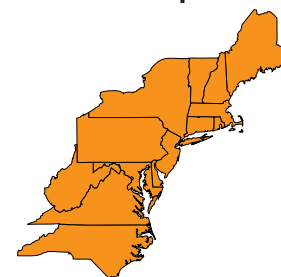


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of Three

Serving All Aspects of Commercial Horticulture

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NOFA-NY presents practical tools for small vegetable farms

by Jennifer Wagester

LIVONIA, NY — Rain clouds cleared just in time at Honeyhill Farm as 25 individuals arrived for a morning focused on small-scale vegetable farming. The participants represented all areas of the agricultural community, from farmers to college students and professors. Attendees came from as far as Buffalo, Watertown, and Utica. An RIT student was also on hand to capture the event on film.

Fred and Susan Forsburg, owners of Honeyhill Farm, welcomed the opportunity to share their farm with visitors. Fred and his wife purchased Honeyhill in 1978 and had always planned to farm the land. But while Fred worked as an engineer, he had little time for more than a large garden. In 2002, his employer's downsizing gave him the opportunity to make farming his way of life.

Honeyhill Farm produces organic pasture raised chickens, grass-fed beef, garlic, heirloom tomatoes, and a variety of other vegetables. The farm sells at farmers markets, a multi-farm Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) organization and local restaurants. They also sell and ship seed garlic throughout the United States. The farm is named for the hill on which it is located — Honeyhill.

As an engineer, Fred is always trying to find better ways to do things. The farm's main crop of garlic started as a very labor intensive crop,



Workshop participants take pictures and discuss the new garlic planting process.

Hand planting of garlic is necessary to ensure the garlic seed (a garlic clove) is placed "tip up" so that shoots easily grow up. Initially, every garlic clove was planted by bending down, placing the seed correctly into the soil, and then standing up to walk further down the row. This process is time consuming and strenuous to the body. It also takes the fun out of farming.

To make planting easier, Fred teamed up with Alfred University. The result is a 4 foot by 8 foot plywood platform suspended on a steel frame (basically a modified trailer)

that allows a team of two people to plant directly into the soil from a comfortable position. A prototype was constructed in 2010 at a cost of \$700 and immediately put into practice, which saved the farm about \$700 in labor costs. An improved version incorporates gauge wheels to support height adjustment of the platform, places the wheels outside the platform space, and includes a tool bar to attach hilling discs or other equipment.

A demonstration of the latest design platform was provided. The platform was first attached to the farm's Tuff-bilt tractor, which offers a hydrostatic transmission. Low speed is essential as it permits planting at a comfortable pace and allows the operators to accurately place the cloves. Rectangular openings in the platform align with furrows in the soil bed that are established by the mid-mount furrowers on the tractor. The planters placed garlic cloves through the openings directly into the soil by hand. Their efforts created neat rows of evenly spaced garlic within a few minutes. Fred reported that he has increased planting speed by 6 to 7 times while maintaining accurate placement and avoiding the unpleasant ergonomics of the stoop and bend or drop and crawl methods previously employed.

After the demonstration, several participants took turns planting garlic from the platform, drawing much enthusiasm and encouragement from the crowd. While sharing Honeyhill Farm's experiences was the focus, Fred welcomed ideas and advice. Participants offered suggestions for ways to improve the design and discussed additional options that would make it more versatile. Fred's plans for using the platform for other related agricultural tasks were also presented

and discussed in some length.

During the discussion, Fred shared how undiluted 10 percent (100 grain) white distilled vinegar has been an effective herbicide for broadleaf weeds in his garlic fields. Garlic is in the genus *Allium*. Their leaves have a waxy coating that protects the plant from the vinegar. Broadleaf weeds, however, are highly susceptible as the vinegar breaks down the cell membrane integrity of the plant causing plant tissue to deteriorate. Weeds treated with vinegar tend to yellow within four hours. Unfortunately,

grasses are not affected by vinegar application.

At the close of the presentation, lunch was served as participants talked and shared their own farming experiences. Topics ranged from hops production and raising meat goats to challenges with small scale farming and labor concerns. Participants from universities were quizzed on their areas of expertise.

Farmer-to-farmer education is a core feature of the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York (NOFA-NY). This year, 38 workshops were provided through NOFA-NY from June through October. A majority of them were hosted by farms, while others were held at field research or teaching facilities. Each year NOFA-NY asks its members if they would like to host a workshop on a topic of their interest. Many organic farmers welcome the opportunity to share their experiences and to gather ideas and insight from others in the agricultural community. The Practical Tools for Small Vegetable Farms workshop was funded by the USDA Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Farmer Grant program and co-sponsored by the Alfred State College Center for Organic and Sustainable Agriculture.

More information about NOFA-NY is available online at www.nofany.org. Honeyhill Farm can be found on Facebook or honeyhillorganic-farm.com.



Garlic planting at Honeyhill Farm is now faster and easier with new tools in place.

Photos by Jennifer Wagester



Attaching hilling discs (as held in Fred Forsburg's hand) or other equipment is possible with the new platform design.

Nourse Farms: Berry business at its best

by Jon M. Casey

It doesn't take a visitor to Nourse Farms, Inc. of South Deerfield, MA very long to realize why customers return year after year for their strawberry, raspberry, blackberry, asparagus, rhubarb and other Bramble plants. The care and quality that goes into the plant material that originates from this family-owned farm is obvious. Recently, I had the opportunity to spend an afternoon with Tim Nourse, owner of this Connecticut River Valley operation, to see how he and his wife Mary, their son Nate, and a staff of highly qualified, experienced and loyal employees serve customers on a national and international level. The experience was most impressive.

As one of eight USDA certified quarantine stations in the U.S., Nourse Farms offers customers the confidence in knowing that the level of sophistication and expertise this operation possesses is unsurpassed. With a farm history of berry production that extends back to 1932, the Nourse family has devoted their life to excellence when it comes to sharing their success with others in the form of the latest, hardest and most productive varieties of plant material available in the berry industry.

Tim recalled how he began farming after serving several years as a sales representative in the fertilizer and chemical industry. Nourse, who has a degree in agronomy and Ag economics, said he grew up on a dairy farm, but he found that his interest in horticulture and more specifically in berry plants, became evident during that time. While in sales, Tim served a customer with whom he developed a close business relationship. From there, Tim's farming endeavors began to take shape.

"Mary and I bought this farm in 1968," said Tim. "We formed a corporation with a strawberry grower in eastern Massachusetts who had been in the business for many years and was planning to retire



Tim and Nate Nourse are the father-son team that heads up Nourse Farms a nationally recognized berry plant propagator.

Photos by Jon M. Casey

because of poor health. We were looking to continue growing berries as a specialized crop rather than a commodity from the very beginning."

"We planted our first crop in 1969 and sold our first crop in 1970," he said. "We needed to build an economic base so we went through the first seven years of our farming together growing vegetables for the local fresh vegetable market. It was the most effective way for us to support the enterprise in a way that we could build it into the specialty markets that we were seeking. For the first six years, we sold vegetables as a cash crop and then we added the first raspberry production around 1975. By 1978, we had transitioned from vegetables into the small berry crops for which we are known today."

Nourse remembered how the 1970s and 1980s were especially productive for the "pick-your-own" style of farm marketing, and the demand for quality plants at that time

helped to accelerate their growth as a nursery stock producer. "We were very fortunate to be involved during that time because of the huge demand for quality plants."

From there, the Nourses began to exhibit at trade shows to promote their plant propagation business on a national basis. In the early years, their marketing area only extended to the surrounding New England area and they were looking to grow their base over the coming years. "As we attended shows like the ones in Hershey, PA, Michigan and Wisconsin, we were able to expand our base and to introduce ourselves to growers who needed plants. Since then, the business has continued to grow."

As time passed, Nourse had an opportunity to attend a presentation in Hershey, PA by Dr. Don Scott, a USDA researcher, who presented the idea of propagating plants from bits and pieces of plant material. "That was the title of the talk," he said. "The point he was emphasizing was that plants could be propagated from tissue culture as a way to help prevent disease issues, in the new plantings. That was especially emphasized with the strawberry plant disease issues. That was the cleanest way to do it. He told of how the Italian strawberry industry was doing that as a way to produce high quality plants, so by November of that year, we had our pilot lab in place and we began using that method. In the summer of 1980, we expanded the pilot lab to make that a part of our business. Then, in 1982, when we expanded this facility, we built our first tissue culture lab."

"We wanted to use this as one of the ways that we could

provide a specialty service to our customers. It has proven to be an important component in our mission to grow quality plants. The disease control that this gives us helps us to provide our customers with the healthiest plants possible," he said.

Today, Nourse Farms comprises more than 700 acres of land that is meticulously cared for. Tim said that they have a precise crop rotation schedule as a way to prevent disease among plants and as a way to keep the soil healthy for future crops. "We have the kind of sandy soil that is needed to dig plants under most of the conditions that we find in the spring and fall when that takes place," he said.

Tim explained how his son Nate has devoted his efforts as Sales Director since he joined the business. He said they make an extensive effort to source plant material from international sources.

"We want to be able to offer the best varieties to our customers so we want to be able to shop internationally for the

newest and most desirable varieties," he said. "When we first started in the berry business, the only varieties were those that were developed in the U.S. by USDA, Beltsville, MD or Cornell University in New York. Today we have a few from those two sources however the remainder comes from other parts of the world. For example, we offer raspberries and strawberries that have been developed in the U.K. as well as from The Netherlands, from France, from Italy, Poland and Canada. This gives growers the most up-to-date varieties. Flavor is the key."

Nourse said that they are continually testing new varieties in their laboratory, a facility completed in 2009. "We are in the process of patenting a new variety of strawberry that we have named 'Mayflower,'" said Tim. "We wanted to express this new variety with a connection between the U.K and Plymouth Rock here in Massachusetts."

Nourse Farms A4

Nourse Farms' open house celebrates start of 80th year in business

by Jon M. Casey

For a number of growers in the small-fruit and berry growing industry, 2012 will be a year of recovery. They will be recovering either from the dry conditions that are affecting parts of the nation in the south and southwest or they will be drying out from the wet conditions following the hurricanes and flooding in the central and eastern U.S. However, for Nourse Farms of Whately, MA, 2012 looks to be a year of continued growth and success as they prepare to serve their customers with a vast selection of berry plant varieties for the coming production year.

Established in 1932, this third-generation family-owned farm set its sights on the business's 80th year with an Open House and Tour on Aug. 18. For the more than 275 in attendance, the day's events gave an opportunity to see the level of technological expertise and care that goes into the plant material that is sold to berry growers across the nation, growers who are looking for the highest quality products in the industry.

Tim Nourse, who along with his wife Mary and son Nate, along with their highly respected management team, oversee the daily operations of this Connecticut River Valley operation. The business is divided into

three segments. About two-thirds of their plants are for fruit producers who grow berry plants for production at a commercial level. The remaining third goes to resellers of small fruits and to the mail-order/online customer who is looking for garden quantities for their own home use.

"We have customers all across the U.S. and in Canada," he said. "We sell to a wide range of customers. Together, the entire process makes it a success."

"Our recent open house was our first open house event in five years," he said. "We wanted to coordinate it with this year's North American Strawberry Growers summer tour which took place earlier that week."

Nourse recalled that the growers were scheduled to visit farms in southern New Hampshire and eastern Massachusetts, and by holding the open house on the following day, it gave Nourse customers on those tours, an opportunity to stop at their location to see the kind of care and quality that they put into their plant material.

"We had customers from as far away as Oregon and Manitoba, Canada," he said. "It was the perfect way to help us celebrate our 80th

Open house A4



Plant material is cultured in small tubes like those shown in the inset photo. In Nourse's Growth Room the temperature, humidity and amount of daily lighting is continually monitored for optimum plant growth.

North Country Fruit and Vegetable Seminar and Trade Show

With the resurgence of local farming and the growing interest in local foods, farmers are looking for information that will help them keep up with consumer demand. So UNH Cooperative Extension Agriculture Educators in Coos and Grafton counties, Steve Turaj and Heather Bryant, teamed up to hold the North Country Fruit and Vegetable

Seminar and Trade Show on Wednesday, Oct. 26 at the Mountain View Grand Resort and Spa in Whitefield, NH.

More than 135 producers visited booths representing 18 local and regional businesses whose products and services support farmers. They heard from New Hampshire experts on bramble production, pumpkin and squash pests,

curing and storing vegetables, UNH research on season extension, and tips on how to grow a prize winning giant pumpkin. The day's only shadow was a sobering update on the Spotted Wing Drosophila, a highly destructive invasive pest that attacks small fruit like raspberries and strawberries right before harvest time.

One farmer commented, "I will store my pumpkins far better now and tell others how to do it right!" Another said, "The talks on pests will help me protect my crops before there is a problem."

Mountain View Grand's Chris Diego, said he feels "Too many people don't know where their food comes from." This observation has helped to cement Mountain View Grand's commitment to local food and to working the state's agriculture into the experience they offer their guests. Chef Brian Aspell showed that commitment in a lunch menu that included produce and cheeses from eight area farms. Aspell said he was excited about the contacts he made and the quality of local products.



UNHCE Fruit and Vegetable Specialist Becky Sideman discusses curing and storing vegetables.



Vendors primarily from New Hampshire, but also Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine and Vermont set up trade show booths.

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Nourse Farms Continued from A3

The clinical nature of this facility keeps plant material in a healthy environment, away from other plants that are brought in to the farm or that are grown in nearby fields. Plant material is tissue cultured in the lab and eventually transplanted in Nourse's greenhouse facilities on site.

"When we built the new lab, we installed an air supply system that keeps new plants isolated from the other plants that are in the facility for disease testing," he said. "As we test the plants here, we have the same kind of facilities that USDA has in their own facilities."

"We have the technology here to test stock plants for particular diseases using sap inoculation and grafting onto susceptible indicator plants as well as immunological test method called ELISA and the new PCR technology as well," he said. Nourse said that because they have this high level of capability, they

satisfied the requirements for the Massachusetts Certification Program. That allows them to ship strawberry and raspberry plants worldwide.

Tim is quick to recognize his staff and the support team and the large number of people who help make Nourse Farms the success that it is. His son Nate is the recent Past President of the North American Strawberry Growers Association and he is currently the President of the North American Bramble Growers Association. Tim's wife Mary serves in various roles in the business. Annette Tirrell is the General Manager with Nursery Manager, Bob Mizula and Greenhouse Manager Jim Walsh overseeing the early growth of the new plant material.

For more information on Nourse Farms, visit their website at www.noursefarms.com or give them a call at 413-665-2658.

Open house Continued from A3

year in business, which takes place this coming year."

The open house also gave visitors the opportunity to see how Nourse Farms goes about disease detection, tissue culture production, greenhouse production and field production as well. "The morning was dedicated to walking tours focused on fruit production and bus tours to the nursery to see all of our production," said Tim. "That included strawberries, raspberries, blackberries and other production plant material."

Following lunch, attendees were able to learn more about fruit production during formal presentations that covered plasticulture production, pruning raspberries and blackberries, and training of raspberries and blackberries for growers who were looking to improve their skills in these specialties. "We ded-

icated our presentations to focus on how we do it here, so that we could share that information with others," he said.

Tim noted that they also had devoted specific acreage to the new swing arm trellis growing technique, which featured raspberries and blackberries on display using this new method. "The swing arm trellis gives very good results for training the fruit."

Nourse concluded that the open house was a satisfying success by saying that they were very pleased with the feedback that they had received from several of the attendees, who wrote notes of thanks and encouragement following the event. For more information about Nourse Farms, visit their website at www.noursefarms.com or give them a call at 413-665-2658.

Today's Marketing Objectives

By: Melissa Piper Nelson
Farm News Service

News and views on agricultural marketing techniques.



Marketing vs. sales - why two strategies are better than one

Isn't marketing the same as sales? Aren't sales what marketing is all about?

Those two questions surface in almost every discussion about agricultural and agribusiness entrepreneurship and business growth.

Marketing and sales represent two similar, but separate pieces, to an overall business plan. Marketing is everything you do upfront to reach the audience you feel will most likely buy your product or service. Sales are the finalizing agreement between buyer and seller that closes the deal. The strategies you develop for each of these growth segments signal how you plan for your business to grow and prosper over a defined time period. Each component, marketing or sales,

requires different strategies. That is why two distinct plans are better than combining them together.

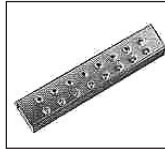
Marketing asks you to strategize about the key buying groups that want to introduce your product to and that have the means to most likely purchase it. A marketing plan helps you pare down a broad buying public to the target audiences you need to reach. You may have already defined that you are interested in reaching families who buy fresh produce, or tourists who enjoy farm outings. You have built your advertising and promotional campaigns around those interests. Marketing asks you to delve deeper and identify the sub-groups where sales will actually take place and make your business grow. It moves from the shot gun approach of trying to reach all populations

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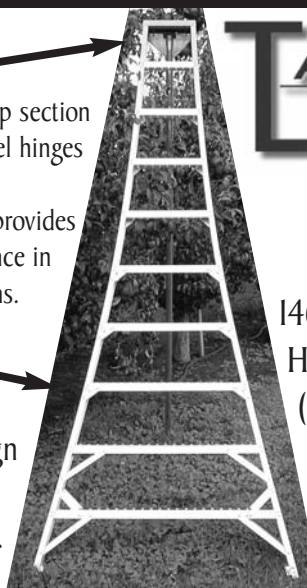


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to the specific consumers most likely to become your loyal customers.

Sales strategies take this information and research to the conclusion of the agreement or purchase. The customer is interested and now you must close the sale. It is wonderful to have a stream of customers coming to look over a product or attraction, it takes additional strategy to have them actually purchase your product, buy tickets to your event, or agree to stock their shelves with your food and value-added products.

Some business owners choose to seek outside help in developing a marketing plan. Marketing research firms and other business consulting groups can devote time to more complex marketing issues, especially in dealing with wholesale and retail contracts or franchising. Some business owners and managers feel these types of specialized services help zero in on target audiences and identify specific points of sales where growth is more likely in a shorter period of time.

Farm gate operators may decide that local research is more helpful in designing a simpler marketing plan. This is often more appropriate for new and developing businesses, although business mentoring programs and business incubator services provide marketing assistance for local entrepreneurs. Regardless of how a marketing plan is developed however, the ultimate goal is to lay the groundwork for sales.

A sale is often defined as "the act of completion of a commercial activity." Sales then are the finalizations of marketing's preparation. If you have a team of sales representatives, they have al-

ready learned the essentials of closing the deal. In the case of smaller or more specialized operations, employees should have that same instruction. Employees are often the first line of sale representation your customers experience and need to have the information and training necessary to provide good information and encourage sales.

Sales strategies outline who you expect to sell your product or service to, how often, and how many units you will sell for a given price. This sounds simple enough, but developing this overall strategy demands some time, research, and knowledge of your industry or point of sales. Developing a strategy for selling at a farmers' market is different than working with a team of wholesalers and retail outlets.

While marketing and sales go hand in hand, they represent two distinct points of planning and operation for any agricultural business or service industry. They lay the foundation for your overall business operation and success.

Farm business planning is supported by the Cooperative Extension Service, local colleges and business counseling groups. From providing templates for marketing and sales strategies, to courses on completing an overall business plan, ag operators have an abundance of resources from which to create good, solid plans. The USDA's National Ag Library at www.nal.usda.gov is one of many online sites that provide templates and resources for agricultural planning.

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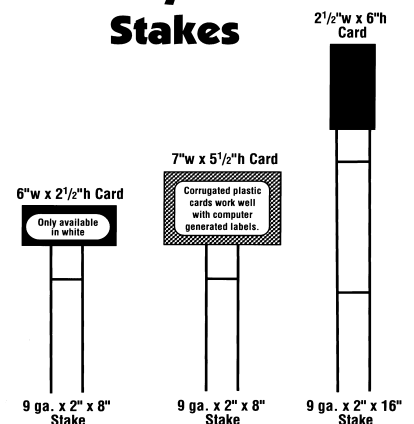
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SMART Marketing



Evaluating advertising strategies for fruits and vegetables and the implications for obesity in the United States

by Jura Liaukonyte, Bradley J. Rickard, and Harry M. Kaiser, Dyson School, Cornell University and Timothy J. Richards Morrison School of Agribusiness, Arizona State University

Obesity has become a huge problem in the United States with over a quarter of the population categorized as obese. The average American has gained 16.3 pounds during the 21 years (1988-2008) which results in an average weight gain of 0.77 pounds annually.

The U.S. obesity problem has been blamed on a host of factors such as relatively low prices per calorie for high fat and sweetened foods, insufficient exercise, substantial marketing campaigns by the fast food industry, and other environmental and economics factors. Another important factor is the trend in fruit and vegetable consumption, which has declined by 12.5 percent (fruit) and 7.6 percent (vegetables) on a per capita basis over the last 15 years.

One type of advertising that has been more common in Canada (*Go for 2&5*), Australia (*Fruit and Veggies-More Matters*), and the United Kingdom (*5 a Day*) than in the United States is "broad-based" advertising, which is designed to promote overall consumption of fruit and vegetables rather than specific commodities. The fruit and vegetable sector in the United States currently has a voluntary broad-based program that is significantly smaller than the *Go For 2&5* broad-based program used in

Australia. The U.S. industry has discussed adopting a mandatory broad-based program that would be used in addition to the current commodity-specific programs. In 2009 advocates of a mandatory program proposed to assess first handlers of all fruits and vegetables an annual per-unit tax in order to raise \$30 million for broad-based advertising. However, the majority of growers did not want to adopt the proposed program and the policy failed after a plebiscite was conducted among all first handlers in 2009.

We recently conducted

economic experiments to examine the efficacy of commodity-specific and broad-based advertising on increasing the demand for fruits and vegetables and reducing obesity. In our study, we measured the impact of broad-based advertising, commodity-specific (apple and potato, separately) advertising, and two hybrid programs that include broad-based and commodity-specific advertising across eight selected fruits and vegetables. We use experimental methods to elicit consumers' willingness to pay for various fruits and vegetables subject to ei-

ther broad-based or commodity-specific advertising. Willingness to pay estimates can be easily converted into changes in demand and we use these measures in our simulation. We simulate the potential effects of the fruit and vegetable promotion strategies on food consumption using an equilibrium displacement model developed by Okrent and Alston (2011). Our simulated changes in quantities of

retail food products are translated into changes in daily and annual calories consumed using the average daily quantity of food and energy intake in the 2005-06 National Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys.

Our results found strong support that broad-based advertising has a significantly higher effect than commodity-specific advertising on

Smart A7

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consumers' willingness to pay (WTP) for fruits and vegetables. For example, WTP increased by 18.1 percent, 22.9 percent and 32.8 percent for the three treatments involving broad-based advertising, which were all statistically significant unlike that for commodity-specific advertising (see Table 1).

These results are consistent with the findings of a very successful broad-based advertising program field experiment implemented over a three-year

(2002-2005) period in Australia, which suggests that both industry stakeholders and government health agencies should carefully consider adopting a broad-based promotional strategy.

Our research provides the first piece of empirical evidence about the broad-based advertising effects relative to commodity-specific. While our research has some limitations, it is an important starting point in a significant industry debate in the U.S. Broad-based advertising has

TABLE 1. Simulated Effects of Promotional Activities on Consumption and Weight

Food categories	Promotional Activity			
	Broad-based	Broad-Based+Apples	Broad-Based+Potatoes	Average
increase in WTP				
	18.1%	32.8%	22.9%	24.6%
<i>Simulated Percentage Change in Quantities Consumed:</i>				
Cereals and bakery	-2.07	-3.74	-2.61	-2.81
Red meats	-3.69	-6.69	-4.67	-5.02
Poultry and eggs	2.40	4.35	3.04	3.26
Fish and seafood	6.20	11.23	7.84	8.42
Dairy	2.74	4.96	3.46	3.72
Fruits and vegetables	11.48	20.80	14.52	15.60
Other foods	1.45	2.62	1.83	1.97
Nonalcoholic beverages	-1.23	-2.23	-1.55	-1.67
Food Away from Home	-2.23	-4.03	-2.82	-3.02
Alcoholic beverages	0.90	1.63	1.14	1.23
<i>Annual Impacts on Per Capita Caloric Consumption and Weight:</i>				
Consumption (kcal)	-1,328.78	-2,407.96	-1,681.17	-1,805.97
Weight (lbs)	-0.84	-0.69	-0.48	-0.52
Weight (%)	-0.47	-0.85	-0.59	-0.64

Note: Average weight of an adult individual in 2005-2006 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey was 178.5 lbs. The calculation assumes additional 3,500 kcal would add one pound to weight.

the capacity to increase demand for fruits and vegetables, and it also has the capacity to decrease caloric consumption and obesity. We find that a successful broad-based advertising campaign for fruits and vegetables, either alone or as a hybrid with commodity-specific campaigns, may reduce average annual caloric intake per person by approximately 1,800 kcal (Table 1). This calculation takes into account the direct effects of advertising on demand and prices for fruit and vegetables, as well as the indirect effects of changes in demand for all

other products as a result of the demand and price effects. Although this reduction may appear small, it is a substantial part of annual weight gain (0.77 pounds per year) that average American has experienced. Such a strategy could be used as one component of an overall program to reduce obesity and the serious health risks associated with it. Therefore, based on the results of our study, an increase in broad-based advertising may lead to benefits for producers of fruits and vegetables and consumers more generally.



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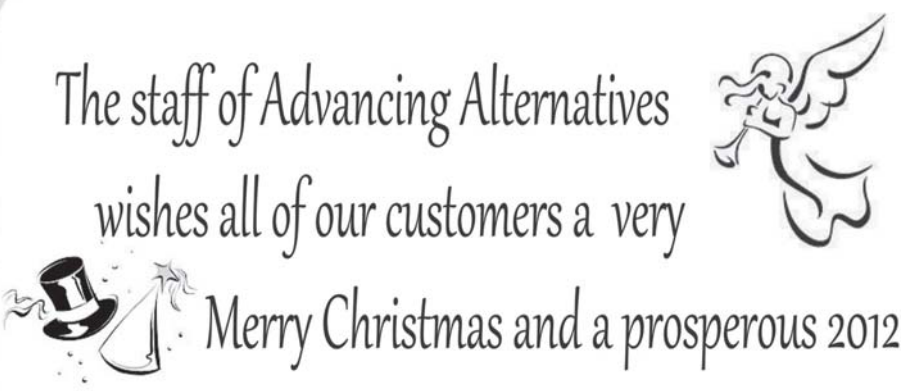
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Website provides resource for fall planting in greener fashion

Fall is prime planting season and a recently launched website offers tips for growing in a greener fashion to help protect America's great watersheds such as the Chesapeake Bay.

Greener Plants® (www.greenerplants.com), an initiative designed to help consumers and organizations learn how to steward the Bay and other waterways from their own backyards.

Greener Plants was developed by Eastern Shore Nursery of Virginia with the support of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation®. All of the nurs-

ery's 400 varieties of trees and shrubs are grown under an award-winning nutrient and water management plan that minimizes impact on the environment and Chesapeake Bay. The larger aim is to instruct and encourage environmentally responsible growing practices at home that will help clean up and preserve America's watersheds.

The www.greenerplants.com website provides a wide range of detailed educational information, including in-depth guidance for better and greener fall planting.

The site explains proper recycling, disposal, water conservation, fertilization and pesticide practices, as well as specific steps to a healthier lawn, xeriscaping, creating buffer strips and rain gardens. There is also contact information for area conservation and watershed organizations.

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation advised Eastern Shore Nursery of Virginia on the content of the Greener Plants website.

"The Chesapeake Bay Foundation applauds Eastern Shore Nursery of Virginia as a model

plant grower for managing nutrients in a manner that protects water quality in streams, rivers and the Chesapeake Bay," says William C. Baker, President of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. "Their website is a very easy and useful tool for helping people achieve better results with less impact on our waterways."

The initiative is capturing the interest and support of a range of environmental groups on the Bay and nearby watersheds. The Partnership for the Delaware Estuary, West Virginia

Rivers Coalition, Massachusetts Watershed Coalition, Mullica River Watershed Coalition, Friends of Bombay Hook, Potomac Riverkeeper, Shenandoah Riverkeeper, Lynnhaven River Now and the Elizabeth River Project are among the groups.

"From the yard, streams, rivers, bays to the ocean, better growing care at home will help generate an improved water environment for all," says Nick Covatta, co-owner of Eastern Shore Nursery of Virginia. "The website was created as a

how-to guide for consumers and groups to be better stewards at a grassroots level."

Eastern Shore Nursery of Virginia was established in 1966 in Keller, VA on the watershed of the Chesapeake Bay. The wholesale nursery grows more than 400 varieties of trees and shrubs for garden centers, re-wholesalers and landscapers from North Carolina to Illinois to Maine. The nursery is owned and operated by Covatta and his wife Robin Rinaca, along with partner Mark Hopkins.

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Garden Center Success! at New England Grows February 2012

SOUTH NATICK, MA — New England Grows, the premier conference and trade exposition for green industry professionals, announces the return of Garden Center Success on Wednesday, Feb. 1, 2012, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Introduced to rave reviews last year, this one-day intensive seminar is tailored to the specific needs of garden center professionals.

This year's Garden Center Success is focused on helping garden center professionals buck retail market predictions

and fight for their businesses in these turbulent times. Keynote speakers include business leader and best-selling author Bill Taylor, who will share the tenets of his latest book, "Practically Radical: Not-So-Crazy Ways to Transform Your Company, Shake Up Your Industry and Challenge Yourself." Taylor shook up the business world with the launch of Fast Company magazine in 1995 and hasn't stopped since — inspiring champions of change and growth who are reinventing their

companies.

Taylor will be joined by other speakers including garden center guru and marketing wizard Chad Harris, who together with his wife, Beth, has crafted The Garden Gates in Southern Louisiana into one of the nation's premier lifestyle stores. Even under the most adverse conditions — the economy, Mother Nature, and more — their business has thrived due in large part to Chad's irreverent "market like a mad man" strategy.

Speaking about last

year's Garden Center Success, that had 1,000 registrants in its inaugural run, Nancy DuBrule-Clemente of Natureworks in Northford, CT, said, "It was a totally amazing day. Thank you for getting the BEST speakers. I have already implemented many of the specific ideas they shared."

Again this year, with the help of master facilitator Jon Hockman, Garden Center Success participants will gain an understanding of real world retail trends, learn from peers who are getting it

done in their own independent garden centers, and develop an action plan to increase sales, optimize their merchandising, and keep their people in peak performance mode.

"Expect a high impact, result-driven learning experience," said Rich Clark of Clark Farms in Wakefield, RI, and New England Grows' education chairman. "If you're a key player at an independent garden center, you need to be at Garden Center Success!"

New England Grows will celebrate its 20th anniversary year in Boston from Wednesday, Feb. 1 to Friday, Feb. 3, 2012. In addition to a three-day line up of 30 business-building seminars, Grows 2012 will offer a trade exposition of more than 600 vendors showcasing solution-based products, technologies and services for the green industry.

There is no additional charge to participate in Garden Center Success, but seating is limited and advance registration is

required. New England Grows registration is \$45 per person before Jan. 16, 2011 and \$65 thereafter. If you sign up four or more people from the same company before Jan. 16, the price per person is just \$39.

Low registration fees, world-class education, and exclusive deals on the tradeshow floor make New England Grows the best place to do business this winter. To learn more and to register visit www.NewEnglandGrows.org.

Garden Center Success at New England Grows is presented in cooperation with Garden Center magazine. New England Grows is an educational partnership between the New England Nursery Association, Massachusetts Arborists Association, Massachusetts Association of Landscape Professionals, Massachusetts Nursery & Landscape Association, and a network that includes more than 30 allied green industry organizations.



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State begins tracking owner-financed farm conservation practices

RICHMOND, VA — Virginia farmers in six soil and water conservation districts are being urged to participate in a pilot program to collect information about conservation practices they've implemented.

"Farmers need to know what's going on, and they should participate," said Wilmer Stoneman, Virginia Farm Bureau Federation associate director of governmental relations. "This is a program that is valuable to them.

It's a direct response to Farm Bureau's complaints that incomplete data is being used by the Environmental Protection Agency to draw up mandatory conservation programs to improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay watershed."

Best management practices are changes farmers and other landowners make to their property to reduce or eliminate soil erosion or contamination of water. They include switching to no-till planting

methods, fencing livestock out of waterways, and using nutrient-management planning for crop production.

The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation has records only of practices installed using cost-share funds from federal and state conservation programs. Those were the records the EPA used for its Chesapeake Bay computer model in recent years.

"We know that a lot more conservation prac-

tices have been installed or are in use on Virginia farms than are on record," Stoneman said. "They have to be, since there has never been enough cost-share funding to meet the demand for financial assistance. So many farmers paid for these practices out of their own pockets, but they are not being credited in the EPA model."

In response to that complaint, the 2010 Virginia General Assembly passed a bill requiring the secretary of natural

resources to establish a data collection program for voluntarily implemented agriculture and forestry BMPs. Virginia's 47 soil and water conservation districts are the primary collection agents, and six pilot districts started that work this summer.

The pilot districts are located in and around Bristol, Roanoke, Harrisonburg, Charlottesville, the Northern Neck, Virginia Beach and Chesapeake. For more information, visit vaswcd.org.

Virginia farmers' markets rank among favorites nationwide

RICHMOND, VA — Virginia had more winning markets than any other state in American Farmland Trust's "America's Favorite Farmers' Market" contest this year.

Nine Virginia markets were ranked in the Top 20, and four made the Top 5 in their respective categories.

The online contest pulled in 90,000 votes. Markets were grouped based on number of vendors, and voters could choose their favorite markets in one of four categories. "Boutique" markets had 15 vendors or fewer; small markets had 16 to 30; medium markets had 31 to 55 vendors; and large markets had 56 or more.

Virginia's winning boutique markets were the Old Beach Farmers Market in Virginia Beach at No. 5, Stuart Farmers Market at No. 14 and King George Farmers Market at No. 16. Small market winners were the Lakeside Farmers' Market in Richmond at No. 3 and Virginia Beach Farmers Market at No.

14. Winners in the medium market category were the Falls Church Farmers Market at No. 3, Williamsburg Farmers' Market at No. 5, and Powhatan Farmers Market at No. 8. The Virginia winner in the large market category was the Charlottesville City Market at No. 14.

"It's great to see so many of Virginia's farmers' markets rank in this national contest's Top 20," said Tony Banks, a commodity marketing specialist for Virginia Farm Bureau Federation. "This success shows that consumers, farmers and vendors are very supportive of the farmers' markets in Virginia, and that there is tremendous opportunity for farmers who wish to sell directly to the consumer."

Virginia has seen a substantial growth in the number of farmers' markets in recent years. The state had 88 in 2005 and has at least 200 today.



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Awald Farms acquires Concord Nurseries

Awald Farms of North Collins, NY, has acquired Concord Nurseries Inc. also of North Collins, NY. Concord Nurseries was a well known producer of grapevines in the Nursery Trade.

Awald Farms is continuing the production of quality grapevines by propagating them in plug trays in a greenhouse and then transplanting them into raised plastic beds with drip irrigation in a soil virgin to grapevines. Awald Farms also produces many well known varieties of raspberry and blackberry plants for sale.

The farm has been family owned and operated since 1914 when under the operation of Edward P. Geiger, grandfather of the current owner, Edward Awald. Now operated by the third and fourth generations of the family, Awald Farm products are sold to farm markets, grocery stores, wineries, berry



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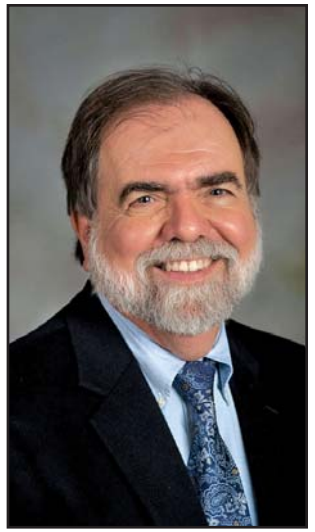
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Awald Farms also produces many well known varieties of raspberry and blackberry plants. Photos courtesy of Awald Farms

Roger Harris named head of Horticulture Department at Virginia Tech



J. Roger Harris

BLACKSBURG, VA — Virginia Tech's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences has named J. Roger Harris, of Blacksburg, VA, head of the Department of Horticulture, effective Oct. 1. Harris has held this position on an interim basis since July 2008.

"The Department of Horticulture is a vital component of the college's academic programs and its sustainability and green industry efforts, supporting Virginia communities and pioneering research in the field," said Alan Grant, dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. "The college has truly benefited from Roger's experience and leadership. We are very pleased that he will continue serving the department in this capacity and that he is committed to leading its future growth."

Virginia Tech's Department of Horticulture, www.hort.vt.edu/, offers graduate and undergraduate degrees in a range of applied plant science topics — from landscape design and sustainable urban landscaping to biotechnology, crop production, and plant breeding. The department maintains active research and outreach programs that focus on solving applied

plant science questions with state, national, and international impact.

Harris first came to Virginia Tech in 1993 as an assistant professor and has taught classes in nursery crops, plant propagation, and landscape contracting. He has focused much of his research on tree establishment and root

growth and has authored more than 60 manuscripts in scientific journals, along with numerous other publications. He has also advised more than a dozen graduate students on their research, theses, and dissertations.

Prior to joining Virginia Tech, Harris worked at nurseries in Michigan and

Virginia. He then moved to Florida where he worked as chief horticulturist for the largest landscaping company in northern Florida for 11 years.

Harris earned a bachelor's degree in industrial management from Georgia Tech and another in horticulture from Michigan State University. He also holds a master's de-

gree in environmental horticulture from the University of Florida and a doctorate in urban horticulture from Cornell University. He is a member of the American Society for Horticultural Science, the International Society of Arboriculture, and the Arboriculture Research and Education Academy.



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CCE Central NY Field Crop Team Specialists team up to save garlic crop

by Elizabeth A. Tomlin

What do a Dairy Management Specialist, a Field Crop Specialist, and a Horticulture Specialist have in common? Besides the obvious answer of agriculture- and being employed through the renowned Cornell Cooperative Extension- all three were recently involved in saving about 10 acres of garlic in Montgomery County, NY.

At 80 years of age, Stan Erkson is affectionately known as "the Garlic Guy" by the many folks that know him

throughout the Hudson, Schoharie and Mohawk Valleys.

Erkson, who had previously been a dairy farmer, began growing garlic in 1993 initially with 10 pounds, and started marketing it in 1996. He currently produces 6 or 7 tons per year.

Although Erkson admits the north-east typically has the best weather conditions for growing garlic- which requires about 8 months to grow and thrives in the winter months- drying the harvest had become a problem. "I was



Recycled barn fans can be seen behind (L-R) Fort Plain garlic producer Stan Erkson, CCE Agriculture / Horticulture Specialist Crystal Stewart, and CCE Central NY Dairy Management Specialist David Balbian, as they examine garlic dried by the new system designed by the team.

losing 1/3 of my garlic crop," Erkson said. "My worst loss was in 2009."

High humidity and wet weather were the culprits, bringing on disease, which would quickly spread through the bulbs.

He turned to his CCE Central NY Field Crop Specialist Kevin Ganoe, who introduced Erkson to CCE Agriculture / Horticulture Specialist Crystal Stewart.

"She's the garlic expert!" agreed CCE Central NY Dairy Management Specialist David Balbian.

"He used to dry all of his garlic in a passive system," Stewart pointed out. "So the garlic only dried at a rate that the environment would allow for. Now that he has all of this air moving over it, the garlic dries faster, which reduces the amount of disease you would see on it. You could pull it out of the field and it would be beautiful, but it would deteriorate as soon as it came into the drying area."

Garlic A14

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Garlic from A13

Balbian said that he got involved in the project when Stewart consulted him about a drying system. "Stan was going to hire an engineer to design this system," Balbian said. "Crystal knew I had experience designing ventilation systems for barns, and thought I could probably help him out without him having to hire an expensive outside engineer." That is exactly what happened.

Through research on the Internet, Balbian said he was able to "find out the specs on two good sized, operational fans that were in his (Erkson's) old barn that could still be used. In the end it

was a very economical project for him that has proven to do the job with little cash outlay." Erkson said the whole project cost him under \$2,000. However, if he had purchased the barn fans, the project would likely have doubled in cost.

Dimensions of the room used in the tunnel ventilation system are 8' W x 10'H x 60'L. The fans are built in on one end of the room and follow the natural flow of the wind. All sides are closed up and the air, which is forced through, exits through louvers on the opposite end.

Balbian, who admits he had taken some Engineering courses at

Cornell, explained how he came up with his calculations. "Basically we are looking at the cross sectional area of the width and the height, and then we're looking at how fast we want to move the air. In barns, I often calculate it to 4 1/2 -5 miles an hour."

Balbian said that the amount of air that a fan will move depends on many variables. Diameter and shape of the blades, the blade speed, the motor's horsepower, the design of the covering, and louvers all contribute to the airflow,

and must be taken into consideration.

"Looking at the CFM (cubic feet per minute) ratings of these fans, and following a specific set of formulas," Balbian said, "the calculated air flow was almost 3 mph."

Balbian and Stewart agreed they weren't exactly sure of what air speed was required to produce the desired effect, however, after talking it over with Erkson, "we figured it would probably be fast enough to give reasonable air movement," Balbian stated.

Garlic A15



Looking down the drying "tunnel" designed by CCE specialists and Erkson, the recycled barn fans can be seen. Photos by Elizabeth A. Tomlin

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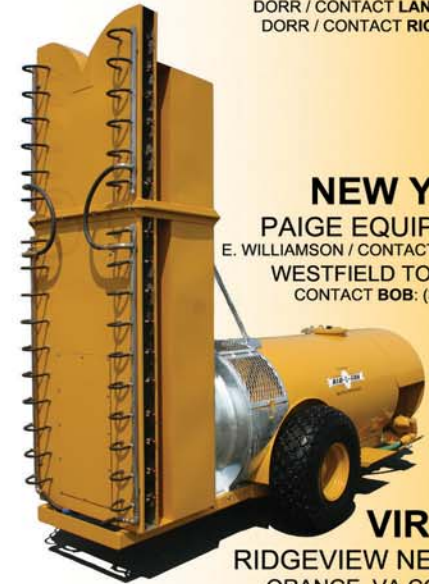
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Garlic from A14

"You need to understand the concept," Balbian said, "and understand how the formulas work, how air movement works- and how it's affected by outside influences."

"The system took about 2 weeks to install once I had the formulas and calculations," Erkson said - adding that 3 to 4 tons of garlic can be dried at one time using the drying racks.

Although Erkson said that by using the new system this year he did not lose any garlic, Balbian credited Erkson for making the drying area "very tight, which is why it's working so well."

Alpha Garlic Farm, owned and operated by Stan Erkson, markets it's garlic through use of a website and through garlic festivals.

"There's an outstanding festival in Saugerties," Erkson said. "It's the

biggest one in the USA. I sell two tons in a weekend down there!"

Erkson also grows onions and shallots. For more information on this drying system, contact Erkson at 518-993-2975. Crystal Stewart can be reached by e-mail at cls263@cornell.edu, and David Balbian can be contacted at drb23@cornell.edu.

"Sometimes you just need someone to guide you to make these concepts work," Balbian stated.



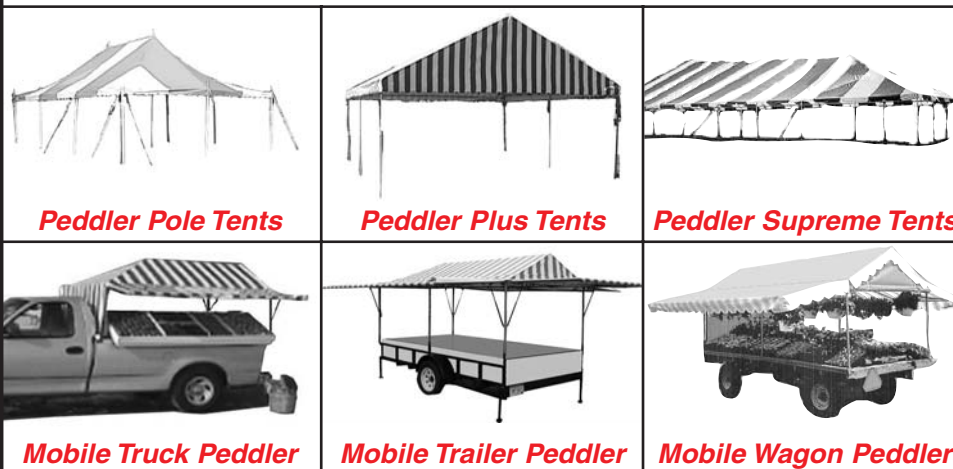
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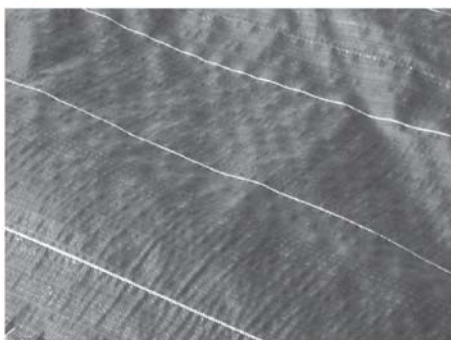
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Groundswell Center, Cooperative Extension and Alternatives Federal Credit Union join forces to support local small farm businesses

ITHACA, NY — In collaboration with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County and Alternatives Federal Credit Union's Business CENTS Program, the Groundswell Center for Local Food & Farming in Ithaca will be offering an intensive Farm Business Planning course this winter. The class will cover all major aspects of the farm business start-up process including assessing your land, infrastructure and equipment needs; legal and regulatory issues; production planning; marketing; financial feasibility, budgets and recordkeeping; and more.

The course is designed for those who:

- Have at least a year of hands-on experience in farming, OR have completed Groundswell's New Farmer Training Program, and...
- Expect to get their farm enterprise off the ground within three years, OR are in the early stages of a farm business and need help, and...
- Have a clear idea of the kind of farm enterprise they would like to

operate, and...

• Can fully commit to an intensive 14-week course with substantial outside research and homework.

The class will run for 14 weeks, meeting every other Thursday evening from 6-9 p.m. from Jan. 5 through April 12, 2012. Instructors are Monika Roth, Agriculture Program Leader and Matt LeRoux, Agriculture Marketing Specialist with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County; and Leslie Ackerman, Director of the Business CENTS Program of Alternatives Federal Credit Union, along with area farmers whose stories illustrate the benefits of business planning and financial management skills.

"This is a rigorous course for the serious farming entrepreneur," says Joanna Green, Director of the Groundswell Center for Local Food & Farming. "We are really pleased to be working with Monika, Matt and Leslie. They're skilled teachers with a lot of practical knowledge to offer."

Groundswell is com-

mitted to supporting a new generation of farmers that reflects the diversity of culture, color, and class in our community. Tuition for the class is on a sliding scale, from \$80-\$300 depending on household income. It is NOT a requirement that you own land or have the financial resources to own land. This course will examine opportunities to lease land for farming in the Tompkins County area, and to secure financing through ag and commercial lenders or local "Slow Money" investors.

Registration is limited, so please apply early. An online application form is available at www.groundswellcenter.org. Click on Programs/Business Planning. For more

information send an email to info@groundswellcenter.org or call 607-277-0180. This Business Planning Course is supported in part by the USDA's Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, NIFA Grant #2010-49400-21799.

Class schedule and topics:

- Jan. 5: Central New York ag industry overview; Business planning overview; Planning a farm business; Clarifying your vision, goals and timeline.
- Jan. 19: Assessing your resources: land, infrastructure, labor, etc; Land tenure options; Legalities and logistics of getting started; Selecting your enterprise; Re-

sources for farming.

• Feb. 2: Enterprise Planning Basics: Land evaluation, improvements and preparation; Infrastructure & equipment needs; Production plan and timeline.

• Feb. 16: Finance I: Understanding financial statements & accounting concepts; Recordkeeping basics and taxes; Savings, loans and other sources of financing.

• March 2: Finance II: Gross profit & cash flow projections; Start up budget; Operating budget.

• March 15: Marketing I: Marketing basics; Comparing market channels; Projecting sales.

• March 29: Marketing II: Drafting your marketing plan; Understanding your competition.

• April 12: Final Presentations and feedback from peers, instructors and advisors.

The Groundswell Center for Local Food & Farming is an initiative of the EcoVillage Center for Sustainability Education/Center for Transformative Action. Support for Groundswell comes from individuals and businesses who believe in the importance of strong local food systems, the Park Foundation and the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program of the National Institute for Food and Agriculture-USDA, Grant #2010-49400-21799. For more information visit www.groundswellcenter.org.



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CEFS initiative will support new incubator farms

Up to five North Carolina communities will receive support to develop incubator farms to attract new farmers, thanks to an effort by the Center for Environmental Farming Systems. Incubator farms provide aspiring farmers with a place to learn, try their hand at farming and develop the markets to make their own operations successful.

CEFS has announced the launch of a new Incubator Farm Project that will support beginning farmers. The project is an integral part of the 10% Campaign, a CEFS initiative that encourages consumers, businesses, institutions and agencies to spend 10 percent of their food dollars on locally produced foods.

Between now and Dec. 1, city and county governments and state agencies may submit proposals to be included in the initiative. Successful proposals

will kick off with a community charrette to conceptualize the local incubator farm projects.

"Access to land has been identified as one of the top challenges facing new farmers in North Carolina," said Joanna Massey Lelekacs, state coordinator of the project. "The Incubator Farm Project will work with communities to address this need by repurposing vacant public land into places that incubate new farmers."

In exchange for a rent-free place to farm, the new farmers will be asked to give back to their communities, either by donating fresh farm products or other services for those in need, said Dr. Nancy Creamer, co-director of CEFS and North Carolina State University professor of horticultural science.

North Carolina Cooperative Extension is one of several partners in the Incubator Farm Project. Cooperative Extension already has established two incubator farms — Orange County's Breeze Farm and Cabarrus County's Lomax Farm. In addition to land access, farmers receive education and support at these farms from Cooperative Extension agricultural agents.

Other partners are the National Center for Appropriate Technology, Carolina Farm Stewardship Association and Andrew Branan, an attorney who concentrates his practice on production agriculture and land transfer issues. Funding for the project is provided by the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

CEFS will partner with municipalities, counties or state agencies to help develop up to five new incubator farms over the next two years. Successful applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Strong public leadership dedicated to developing an incubator farm;
- Strong community partnerships with organizations like N.C. Cooperative Extension or community colleges;
- Incubating farmers who will contribute to an identified community need instead of leasing land;
- Access to local, affordable housing in the community for new farmers with limited resources;
- Willingness of public land owner to turn vacant land into productive land;
- Consumer interest in local foods;
- And ideally, mentor farmers in the community.

In return, CEFS will assist with development of the new incubator farms by providing training, web-based resources, education on farm transition and land access, access to state agricultural professionals and business specialists, and partnership on grants for additional support. CEFS will help each community develop their incubator farm by facilitating a charrette process that will result in a visioning report, concept plan or other materials for seeking additional funds.

Applications will be accepted through the online portal found at the project Web site: www.ncnewfarmers.org. The application deadline is 5 p.m., Dec. 1. Applicants should address questions to joanna_lelekacs@ncsu.edu, and additional information also is available at the Web site.

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Penn State receives \$2.3 million organic-agriculture research grant

UNIVERSITY PARK, PA — Researchers in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences have been awarded a \$2.3 million grant by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to investigate how certain cover crops and rotations can improve production of organic commodities.

The study's goal is to determine whether diverse cover crop mixtures — as opposed to a single-species cover cropping — can enhance ecosystem functions in a corn-soybean-wheat cash crop rotation that produces organic feed and forage, according to project leader Jason Kaye, associate professor of soil biogeochemistry.

"There has been a lot of regional interest in these mixtures, or cover crop cocktails as they are sometimes called, so we want to provide farmers with information they need to design mixtures that serve them well," he said.

"We will be planting cover crop mixtures that target nutrient supply, nutrient retention, weed suppression and management ease," Kaye said. "We'll test the idea that diverse mixtures provide these functions better than cover crops in monoculture."

The Penn State project is one of 23 in 18 states chosen for funding by USDA. The grants — from the department's National Institute of Food and Agriculture through two sources, the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative and the Organic Transitions Program — are aimed at supporting research and extension programs working to help organic producers and processors grow and market high-

quality organic agricultural products.

"As more and more farmers adopt organic agriculture practices, they need the best science available to operate profitable and successful organic farms," said Kathleen Merrigan, deputy agriculture secretary, in announcing the grants. "America's brand of organic agricultural goods is world-renowned for its high quality and abundance of selection."

"These research and extension projects will give producers the tools and resources to produce quality organic food and boost farm income, boosting the 'Grown in America' brand."

Cover crops are particularly important for managing weeds and nutrients on organic farms where synthetic fertilizers and many pesticides are not allowed, Kaye said. He explained that an innovative part of the Penn State research involves measuring cover crop impacts on a suite of ecosystem functions.

"Most studies focus on one function, but we will measure simultaneous effects on nutrient supply, nutrient retention, weed suppression, insect pest regulation, soil quality, erosion control, yield and short-term profitability," he said.

"We think it is important for agricultural research to include a number of ecosystem functions because we expect tradeoffs among them. For example, treatments that maximize nutrient supply may not be optimal for weed suppression."

Kaye and his team will test cover crop treatments at Penn State's Rus-

sell E. Larson Agricultural Research Center at Rock Springs, about nine miles southwest of the University Park campus, and with farmer collaborators. Researchers also will work with a cover crop seed company and farmer networks to maximize the research's impact on regional organic agriculture.

Since the late 1990s, U.S. organic production has seen significant growth. U.S. producers increasingly are turning to certified organic farming systems as a potential way to decrease reliance on nonrenewable resources, capture high-value markets and premium prices, and boost farm income.

Today, according to USDA, more than two-thirds of U.S. consumers buy organic products at least occasionally, and 28 percent buy organic products weekly.

But despite the growing popularity of organic foods, there is a lack of applied research and outreach to support farmer efforts to employ diverse cover crop mixtures in organic feed and forage systems, Kaye pointed out. "To fill this gap, our long-term goal is to quantify and translate the benefits and trade-offs

of using diverse cover crop mixtures in organic feed rotations," he said.

Kaye suggested that using a number of cover crops to accomplish different needs aligns with the overall approach to organic production. "The use of biodiversity to enhance farm performance is deeply rooted in organic farming philosophy, reflected in the organic rule, and consistent with contemporary ecological theory," he explained.

Other researchers involved in the project at Penn State include Mary Barbercheck, professor of entomology; Dave Mortensen, professor of weed ecology; Dawn Luthe, professor of plant stress biology; Dave Hartman, extension educator based in Columbia County; Tianna DuPont, extension educator based in Northampton County; Mena Hautau, extension educator based in Berks County; Sara Cornelisse, senior extension associate in agricultural economics and rural sociology; Charles White, extension associate in entomology; and Meagan Schipanski, post-doctoral scholar in entomology.

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Familiar blueberries and their lesser-known wild relatives are safeguarded by U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) scientists and curators at America's official blueberry genebank. The plants, collected from throughout the United States and more than two dozen foreign countries, are growing at the USDA Agricultural Research Service National Clonal Germplasm Repository in Corvallis, OR.

The blueberries are maintained as outdoor plants, potted greenhouse and screenhouse specimens, tissue culture plantlets, or as seeds, according to research leader Kim E. Hummer.

The genebank's purpose is to ensure that these plants, and the diverse genepool that they represent, will be protected for future generations to grow, enjoy, study and improve. For example, plant breeders can use plants in the collection as parents for new and even better blueberries for farm or garden.

Blueberries and several other small berries are among the fruit, nut and specialty crops housed at the Corvallis repository, which in turn is part of a nationwide, ARS-managed network of plant genebanks.

Likely the most comprehensive of

its kind in the United States, the blueberry collection nevertheless continues to expand, Hummer reports. Some acquisitions, referred to as accessions, are donations from breeders. Others are acquired through collecting expeditions, which have taken plant explorers to Russia, China, Ecuador and Uruguay, among other places, as well as throughout the United States to find new blueberry plants for the repository.

The collection includes species of wild blueberries native to the Pacific Northwest that have pigmented flesh or pulp. Some breeders are trying to breed some of these species into the familiar highbush blueberry that has a white interior, Hummer noted.

If breeders can put color on the inside of berries through cross-breeding the internal-color berry plants with highbush plants, the breeders may be

able to produce a berry that gives fuller color to processed blueberry jams, jellies, juices and dried or frozen fruit.

Other prized specimens at the genebank may someday become landscaping favorites. One example: low-growing *Vaccinium praestans* from Russia, China and Japan. Also known as redberry *Kraznika* or rock azalea, it could make an interesting, attractive ground cover that comes complete with edible fruit.



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SNA - Rebuilding the Marketplace

OAK GROVE, VA — The Southern Nursery Association (SNA) is moving beyond the small steps it has taken over the past few months to rebuild the association and has begun taking larger steps to focus on rebuilding the marketplace in the Southeast.

Founded in 1899, the SNA was a prominent industry leader for more than 100 years. After a transition of leadership in 2006, and several years of economic downturn, coupled with industry consolidation, a decline in membership and the cancellation of the annual SNA trade show, the 112-year old association found itself in a stagnant condition. In November of 2010, Danny and Karen Summers, who served the association from 1988 to

2006, contacted the current board of directors and a core group of past presidents and members to encourage them to pull together to save the association.

In February of this year, Karen Summers was appointed Interim Executive Vice President. Danny Summers was appointed Board Advisor. Since then, the group has been hard at work to set new directives for organizational change to rebuild the association and once again become an integral part of the horticulture industry in the Southeast. The future focus will be on member services to promote sales and profitability, and monitoring issues that cross state lines and impact the region. Taking advantage of the digital age, vital in-

dustry services, current news and relevant information will be delivered online through the new SNA website, www.sna.org. The website features a virtual marketplace with a robust search engine for locating people, products and services, as well as more than 10,000 pages of horticultural research. Member forums, blogs, and e-mail alerts add to the functionality of the new system.

To assure regional participation and input, several new committees have been created and will be functioning soon. These new committees will assist with efforts to provide communication,

education, information and marketing opportunities throughout the region. In addition, the annual SNA Business Meeting and SNA Research Conference have been scheduled and will be held in conjunction with the GSHE in Mobile, AL in January of 2012. A special roundtable discussion, exploring ways to stimulate the marketplace to create more business opportunities in the Southeast is planned to take place during this time. More details to follow.

You can expect to see many changes and lots of activity in the coming months with the launch

of the new website, new committee development, member surveys, regional news and information disseminated once again, and industry leaders recognized through the SNA awards program.

The Southern Nursery Association is a non-profit, professional trade association representing the horticultural industry in the southern U.S. SNA provides member services to wholesale growers, brokers, retailers, landscape contractors, landscape architects, grounds maintenance contractors, inte-

riorscapers and allied suppliers. Established in 1899, the SNA strives to provide educational, marketing and networking opportunities essential to the survival of the horticultural industry.

For further information on SNA, contact the Southern Nursery Association, Inc. at 894 Liberty Farm Road, Oak Grove, VA 22443-5200, by phone at 804-224-9352, fax to 804-224-9352, by e-mail at mail@sna.org or visit the SNA website at www.sna.org

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Schumer, Gillibrand introduce legislation to protect New York's maple syrup producers and consumers

New law elevates legal repercussions of mislabeling maple syrup from a misdemeanor to a felony. Mislabeling short-changes producers and defrauds consumers

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Senators Charles E. Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand on Oct. 20 introduced legislation that would make intentionally mislabeling food products as "maple syrup" a federal crime. Currently this form of food fraud is only a misdemeanor. The legislation would make these crimes a felony, increasing sentences that prosecutors can seek for people who defraud consumers and farmers by intentionally mislabeling

maple syrup.

"Maple farmers across New York state produce some of the highest quality syrup in the world," said Senator Schumer. "We need to crackdown on individuals trying to pass off fake syrup as the real thing, so that our farmers can compete fair and square. The only thing that should be flowing over mom's pancakes is good, pure, New York maple syrup."

"New York is the second largest producer of maple syrup in the U.S., and we shouldn't allow production to be hampered by fraudulent behavior," Senator Gillibrand said. "This bill ensures that producers of real maple

syrup can sell their product in an honest market and that consumers know what they're paying for."

The bill is being introduced in response to a recent U.S. Food and Drug Administration investigation that determined that a Rhode Island man was marketing and selling a product as maple syrup when in fact it was cane sugar. Cane sugar costs

about 2 percent as much as real maple syrup, thus defrauding consumers who believed that they were purchasing real maple syrup. The bipartisan Maple Agriculture Protection and Law Enforcement (MAPLE) Act would increase the maximum penalty for fraudulently selling maple syrup that is not, in fact, maple syrup from one year to five years in prison.

Emerald Coast Growers' Friel is new PPA president

PENSACOLA, FL — Emerald Coast Growers' Marketing Manager, John Friel, has been named president of the Perennial Plant Association (PPA).

The PPA is known as an industry-leading organization hosting National and Regional Symposia with educational seminars, networking, camaraderie and tours to public gardens, private gardens, retail nurseries and wholesale growers.

The Association's most visible program allows members to choose a Perennial Plant of the Year. Growers and gardeners alike eagerly await the announcement of the winner.

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John Friel

cations in both the northeast and southeast, Emerald Coast Growers supplies top quality starter plants to growers throughout North America. ECG starters are available by common carrier, grower truck or customer pickup in Florida or Pennsylvania. For more information, visit www.ecgrowers.com.

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Suffolk County Chapter of NYAW holds fall meeting in Riverhead

MELVILLE, NY — The Suffolk County chapter of New York Agri-Women held its fall meeting recently in Riverhead, NY. More than 20 women involved in agriculture met at Schmitt Farms on Roanoke Avenue for a tour of this vegetable farm, led by owners Debbie and Phil Schmitt.

Debbie Schmitt showed the group the farm's facilities for packaging and washing produce and explained its farm stand and wholesale delivery operations.

Phil Schmitt demonstrated some of the farm's seeding and spreading techniques and equipment. He also treated the group to a hayride tour of the farm fields, including its new composting area and gave an on-site demonstration of the farm's blade harvesting of its spring mix. The group learned about different leafy vegetable crops, from cabbage and lettuce to more unusual items such as golden beets, horseradish and sorrel, and the different commercial and ethnic markets for these products.

After a chilly morning in the fields and some tasty samples of the farm's trademark fresh horseradish, beets and salad dressings, the group traveled to Stonewall's for lunch and a discussion of current agricultural topics, such as immigration and labor policies, opportunities for new farmers, and outreach to local schools. Joe Gergela, executive director of Long Island Farm Bureau, was in attendance and discussed the new agricultural En-

terprise Park being developed at the Stony Brook incubator at Calverton that will provide labs, kitchens and other resources for agricultural producers and small-scale food processors to research and develop new products.

"Because of the diversity and significance of agriculture in Suffolk County, and the increasing level of interest among women involved in agriculture, NYAW has announced preliminary plans to hold its statewide 2012 Annual Meeting in Suffolk County," announced Vicki Gruber, a local attorney and the Long Island district leader for NYAW. The Annual Meeting is currently being planned for March 2012.

Schmitt Farm is a fourth-generation family farm that has been farming on Long Island for over 150 years. The Schmitts operate a 165-acre wholesale vegetable farm producing lettuce, spinach, cabbage, beets and herbs, and a retail farm stand, Schmitt's Farm Stand on Sound. Debbie Schmitt also runs Deb's Field Grown Flowers, which supplies cut flowers and bouquets to wholesale and Farm Stand customers.

New York Agri-Women is a state affiliate of American Agri-Women, a


national coalition of women in agriculture that provides a forum for communication and the promotion of agriculture. NYAW affords women in New York State an opportunity to network and share views and potential solutions to common concerns. Its primary purpose is to educate elected representatives,

consumers and members of the agricultural community. Information about NYAW and American Agri-Women is available at www.newyorkagriwomen.com and www.americanagriwomen.org. For information about meetings on Long Island, contact Gruber at 516-845-8088 or vgruber@vsgpc.com.




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Virginia Tech defends regional soil judging championship

BLACKSBURG, VA — Virginia Tech's Soil Judging Team won first place at the Southeast Region Collegiate Soil Judging Contest for the second year in a row. The event took place near Morgantown, WV, on Oct. 7.

Team members are all students in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences' Department of

Crop and Soil Environmental Sciences (www.cses.vt.edu/).

- They are:
- Austin Gardner, of Round Hill, VA, a senior crop and soil environmental sciences major;
 - Chris Heltzel, of Maurertown, VA, a junior crop and soil environmental sciences major;
 - Blake Krecji, of Vienna, VA, a senior environ-

- mental science major;
- Melanie Letalik, of Fairfax, VA, a senior environmental science major;
 - Kelly McMillen, of Chesapeake, VA, a senior environmental science major; and
 - Heather Taylor, of Blacksburg, VA, a senior crop and soil environmental sciences major.
- Team members McMillen and Letalik



Virginia Tech Soil Judging Team members pictured in front row from left to right are Austin Gardner, Heather Taylor, and Coach John Galbraith. Back row from left to right are Kelly McMillen, Blake Krecji, Melanie Letalik, and Chris Heltzel.

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earned the second- and third-highest individual scores, respectively, with Taylor and Gardner also placing in the top 20. John Galbraith, professor of crop and soil environmental sciences, coached the team.

In the competition, each team described the soil in four different pits, with the goal of matching their answers with those of the official judges. Many of the pits were muddy from recent rain in the area, covering the students' boots in orange and maroon mud — Virginia Tech's official colors.

"I knew it was a good omen because of the color of the mud," Galbraith said.

Most of the students prepared for the event by practicing on the weekends and taking the "Soil Description and Interpretation" course.

"Being prepared ahead of time allowed the students to be relaxed and confident during the contest," Galbraith said. "The students put themselves in position to win by voluntarily going out to practice on Fridays and Sundays. However, like true Hokie fans, we always made time to attend football games and have some fun in between (and during) the practice sessions."

The competition included 10 schools from the region, with the University of Tennessee-Knoxville earning second place and Auburn University placing third. All six students on the team will represent Virginia Tech in April 2012 at the National Championship Contest hosted by West Virginia University.

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Apples with catchy names may boost revenue for farmers

by Krisy Gashler

A rose by any other name may smell as sweet, but an apple by another name could fetch a much sweeter price for farmers.

Using experimental auctions, researchers at Cornell University's Charles H. Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management tested participants' willingness to pay for five different varieties of apples, including a new, patented variety developed at Cornell, currently named NY1. Participants didn't know about the apples' history or the Cornell connection, but they learned about each variety's attributes, such as sweetness and crispness, and they tasted slices of each.

The researchers' conclusion? Consumers were willing to pay more for NY1, and they were willing to pay still more when it had an "exciting, sensory" name, said assistant professor Bradley J. Rickard. He presented the research Nov. 8 at the New York Produce Show and Conference in New York City.

Rickard and co-authors Todd Schmit, Miguel Gómez and Hao Lu, all of the Dyson School, wanted to test the influence of branding on patented fruit varieties.

"There are a lot of brands throughout the grocery store. The one exception is fresh produce," Rickard said. "But in the case of apples, pears, tomatoes and peaches, that's the one place in the fresh produce sector where you have a choice. Not really across brands, but across these varietal names."

And what's in a name? Quite a bit, it turns out.

Apple names generally fall into three categories, Rickard said: sincere names based on a breeder or location, such as Cortland or Granny Smith; sophisticated names, which usually highlight the fruit's appearance, such as Red or Golden Delicious; and exciting names that evoke the taste or texture of the apple, such as Honeycrisp.

In the experimental auction, the researchers tested the new Cornell apple under three names: sincere "Williams," sophisticated "Burgundy Beauty" and

exciting "Flavor Haven."

In all cases, the average bid for the new apple was 12 percent higher than the average for four other apples (Empire, Fuji, Honeycrisp, and Piñata). With the Flavor Haven name, the average bid jumped to 27 percent over the other varieties.

Perhaps most interesting, Rickard said, bids on NY1 influenced bids

on the other new, patented Washington apple, Piñata, but made no difference in bids on the traditional varieties.

New York grocery shoppers already enjoy a wide selection of apples — including some of the 66 varieties developed at Cornell, such as Cortland, Empire, Macoun and Jonagold — but new, patented varieties

are starting to hit shelves. These varieties often sell for a premium, but they're also more expensive to grow, as farmers have to buy licenses to grow them.

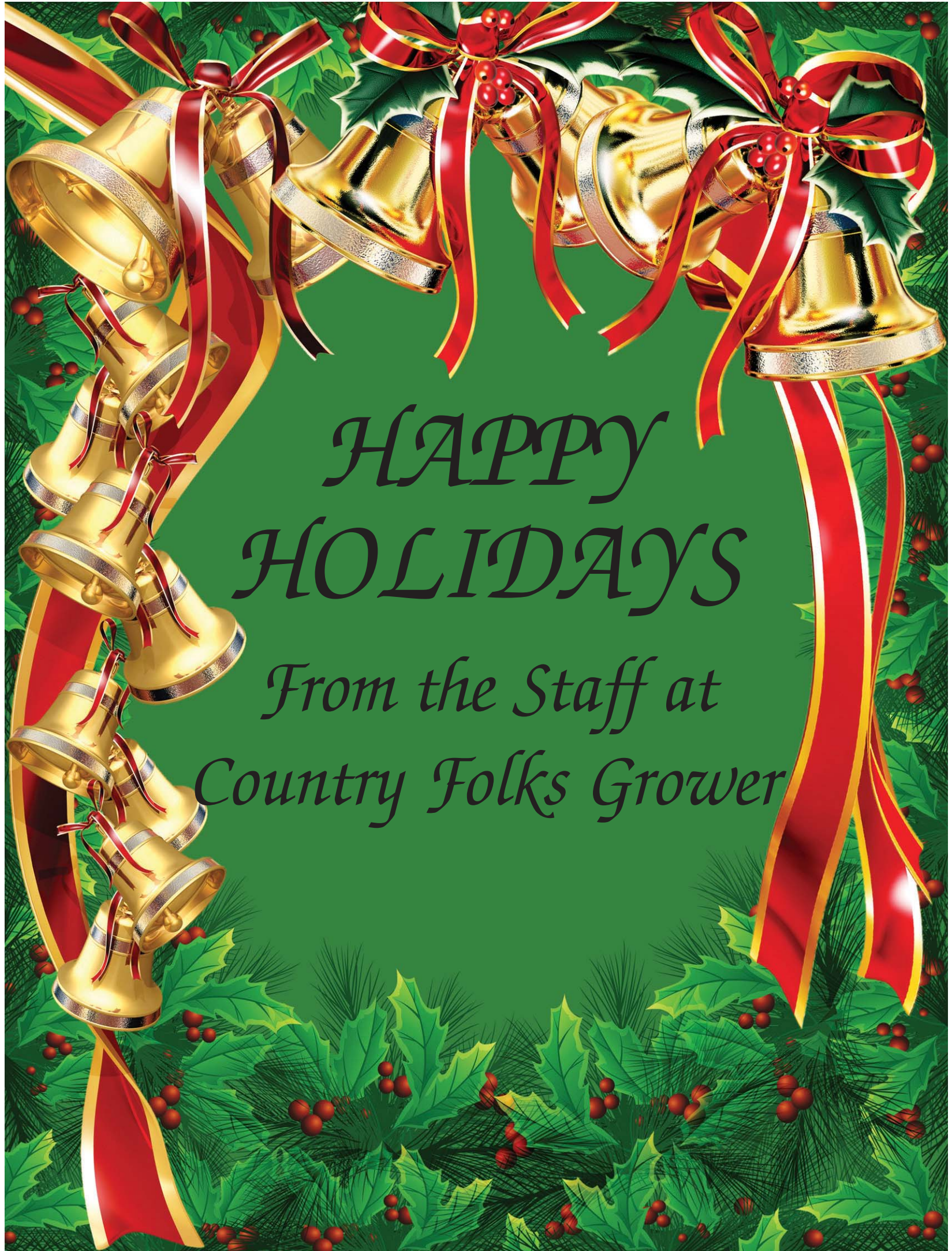
Historically, public universities developed new apple breeds and released them to the public. But in 1980, the Bayh-Dole Act gave universities the right to re-

tain the intellectual property rights for their research. In May 2010, Cornell forged a partnership with a new industry group, the New York Apple Growers LLC, to establish an exclusive licensing agreement for the new apple varieties, NY1 and NY2.

"The license will entail some fairly substantial upfront fee. It could be

\$1,500 an acre upfront," Rickard said. "Then once you sell a box of fruit, you also need to pay a royalty."

Rickard's primary research interest is determining the best price and setup for that license. In September, he was awarded a two-year, \$348,700 USDA grant to study that topic.





CHRISTMAS SECTION



Christmas Tree Checkoff Program ~ What happened?

by Stephen Wagner

Very recently the media reported that the Obama administration had called off its so-called Christmas Tree Tax. The media being the media, there are a few things wrong with that statement. In the first place, there never was a proposed tax on Christmas trees. Secondly, President Obama never had anything to do with it. The issue in question was a 15-cent assessment on Christmas trees that would be paid by the Christmas tree growers themselves to raise about two million dollars. Those monies were to be used to promote real Christmas trees instead of artificial trees. The following is a brief chronicle of how things got so confused.

About nine or 10 years ago, as Press Secretary of the Pennsylvania Agriculture Department, I can remember an agency lawyer coming into my office with a fat report, the size of a medium market telephone book, sitting down, and explaining that it was testimony from a formal meeting of Pennsylvania's Christmas Tree Growers, an association get-together. After nearly a decade, memory is vague on specific details but the main point the lawyer was trying to make is that there was too much disagreement among growers for any cohesive promotion program touting Christmas trees to move forward at the state level. But that was then and this is now. That was also only one state and now

Christmas Tree Growers nationwide are finally, of necessity, on the same page. The tone of the argument has simplified to a war of real Christmas trees versus artificial trees. What could possibly go wrong?

A recent online news report unequivocally stated that "the Obama Department of Agriculture is implementing a 'Christmas Tree Tax' [which] has provoked outrage from folks worried about a War on Christmas — and also those worried about taxes. The tax, however, wasn't the Obama administration's idea. It was the Christmas tree lobby's creation. Real Christmas trees have been steadily losing market share to artificial trees, so growers and retailers lobbied the Department of Agriculture to institute a check-off tax and use the funds to promote real trees."

Much of that last paragraph is not based on fact. Public Relations Manager for the National Christmas Tree Association, Rick Dungey, says it is not a tax, and attributes the so-called 'tax' talk to a misinformed public interest group and a lazy media. "The tax is a complete fabrication by somebody called The Heritage Foundation," he said. "It's actually a check-off program that was finally published two days ago" [Nov. 8] in the Federal Register. "Somebody who doesn't understand check-offs decided to call it the Obama Tax on Christmas Trees. The news media, without check-

ing any facts, decided to start repeating that. It's been an interesting two days."

"I'm disappointed particularly with the Heritage Foundation which broke the story," says Jim Heater, owner of the Silver Mountain Tree Farm in Sublimity, OR, "because they normally get their facts pretty straight. I think that in everybody's rush to take a shot at Obama they tacked this tax thing on him, and it is not a tax! It is a self-help grower program."

Some think that the Heritage Foundation is not the culprit but rather a fellow grower who started the rumor. But, "I don't think that any grower out there would have been foolish enough to have cut his foot off by trying to get the thing stopped in the way it was done," opines Cline Church of the nursery that bears his name in Fleetwood, NC.

Nevertheless, it is interesting because

the purpose of the Christmas tree Check-off Program was to raise money to promote their industry and apply monies to research. The industry now has to combat a public mentality that sees a Christmas tree tax where there wasn't any. The media reported that the White House rescinded the non-existent tax, but people still have it in their minds. It was hoped the program would have collected between \$2 and 2 1/2 million dollars, with that money being used to promote live Christmas trees. And a Christmas tree grower would have to cut at least 500 trees for the 15 cents to kick in.

Cheryl Nickelson of the Wisconsin Christmas Tree Association sees both sides of the story. "I think artificial trees are the threat," she says, "and yet peo-

Checkoff B4

USDA announces delay of Checkoff Program

Recently, the National Christmas Tree Association reported that the Christmas Tree Promotion, Research and Information Order was published by USDA. However, just two days later, NCTA received word that the checkoff was being delayed, with no timetable set for implementation.

The delay announcement was published in the Federal Register. According to USDA, the regulations are stayed "in order to provide all interested persons, including the Christmas tree industry and the general public, an opportunity to become more familiar with the program." In response to the delay, NCTA issued this statement.

So, what happened between last Nov. 8 and Nov. 17? Understanding that many of you are busy in the midst of the season, we wanted to take a moment to update you on the events and the industry response.

• Shortly following the publication of the checkoff, David Addington of The Heritage Foundation published a blog post calling the checkoff program a "tax on Christmas Trees by the Obama Administration."

• While incorrect, this story was picked up by numerous media outlets, without seeking comment from industry members or USDA.

• To help stop the spread of misinformation, NCTA released a statement explaining the facts. Industry leaders and NCTA staff also spoke to media nationwide and responded via social media networks. The NCTA Blog Army also went to work, commenting and correcting erroneous stories when they found them.

Since the original story broke, a number of articles have been published in defense of the industry.

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Cooperation is focus of 2012 NOFA-NY Winter Conference

NOFA-NY's 2012 Winter Conference: The Cooperative Economy, will be held at the Saratoga Hilton & City Center, Saratoga Springs, NY, from Jan. 20-22, 2012. This year will mark the 30th anniversary of the annual Organic Farming and Gardening Conference, the premier organic educational event in New York State.

The 2012 Winter Conference will focus on the spirit of cooperation upon which the organic movement is built. Celebrate the great tradition of cooperation that enables us to share our knowledge, innovative solutions to agricultural challenges, and support for the growing community of those who wish to farm in a more sustainable way.

The 2012 NOFA-NY Winter conference will feature keynote addresses by several distinguished guests, including John Ikerd of the University of Missouri, Kathlyn Terry of Appalachian Sustainable Development, and the 2012 NOFA-NY Farmers of the Year Paul and Maureen Knapp of Cobblestone Valley Farm. The weekend will also feature over 80 technical workshops on a variety of topics in organic agriculture. Workshop tracks will feature organic fruit, vegetable, grain, livestock, dairy, food processing, and homesteading topics, as well as agricultural policy and food justice topics. Our 2012 lineup features veteran producers including Michael Phillips, Dr. Guy Jodarski, Didi Em-

mons, Rachel and Steffen Schneider, Elizabeth Henderson, Mark and Kristin Kimball, and many others. Beginning farmers won't want to miss the Beginning Farmer Mixer on Thursday, Jan. 19 from 7-11 p.m.

NOFA-NY will also host the first ever Northeast Organic Research Symposium at this year's conference, showcasing cutting edge research in organic production from both academic and farmer researchers. The Research Symposium will be held Jan. 19-20. Package registration deals are available for the Research Symposium and the 2012 NOFA-NY Winter Conference.

To help make this event affordable for farmers, NOFA-NY will offer over 100 scholarships to beginning and ex-

perienced farmers. Scholarship applications, due Dec. 1 are available online at www.nofany.org/scholarships2012. Contact Rachel for more information at 585-271-1979, ext. 511.

For a complete schedule, online registration, scholarship applications, and more information, visit the conference website, www.nofanyconference.org. To receive an Early-Bird Discount, register by Dec. 7. To register over the phone, call Katie at 585-271-1979, ext. 512. For questions regarding programming, sponsorships, tradeshow or advertising opportunities, contact Matt Robinson at 585-271-1979, ext. 503, or e-mail conference@nofany.org.

CHRISTMAS SECTION

Checkoff from B3

ple tend to go with tradition, things that they're familiar with from their childhood. I've talked to people who look for a Scotch pine because they grew up with a Scotch pine. That's what they like. Another lady said 'we have an artificial tree because we always had an artificial tree.' But getting people to buy, and continue to buy, real trees, turns into an environmental debate. Most artificial trees are not made in the United States. They're not biodegradable; they're not recyclable." She added that if people buy artificial trees instead of one from a local tree farm, "they're sending money overseas," whereas if the tree is locally in-

spired, "it's better for everybody because they're keeping money in the community."

Jim Heater agrees with the environmental equation. "Natural trees provide oxygen during their growth and provide habitat for wildlife," he says. "Even after Christmas is over, they're using them as fish habitat in some of the estuaries where the little fish can get inside but the big ones can't. Or they're chipped for mulch. We are definitely the [eco]-friendly tree." Heater goes on to say that about 90 percent of the 'fake tree' companies are offshore. "They're taking big sections of market share, so we've got to figure out a way to let people know this is a non-re-

newable, non-recyclable product. We've done some research at the National, and found that a fake tree stays in the home for about six years. Six years in the home and six centuries in a landfill."

Among the final provisions in the final rule of

the check-off program is the fact that 'there will be a delayed referendum to take place three years after collection of the assessment begins.' And all assessments for this crop year (August 1, 2011 - July 31, 2012) are due by February 15, 2012. "I feel that is probably why

USDA set the program up on a three-year basis — to give the industry enough time to make the program work," Church speculated. "I feel there's so much confusion out there when it comes to commodity check-offs that consumers, and many of our politicians,

don't even understand how they work, or what they can accomplish."

Church sums it up very succinctly when he says "There are still a lot of trees being pulled out of attics." Oh well, maybe next year!

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Virginia producers have opportunity to showcase products in Canada

The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) offers agricultural producers an opportunity to showcase their products at SIAL Canada 2012 through partnership with the Southern United States Trade Association (SUSTA). This Montreal show, which runs May 9-12, 2012, is the leading Canadian food trade show and it always books early. VDACS encourages producers to lock in their booth space now before all spaces are gone.

In 2010, Canada was Virginia's largest export market. The state's agricultural exports to Canada have increased dramatically over the past three years. Bakery products, non-alcoholic beverages, wine, vegetables such as tomatoes and potatoes, and pork and poultry exports have experienced increases. Participants at SIAL Canada will be able to expand the list of existing exports to include frozen, ready-made and canned products; functional foods (foods that purport to have health-promoting or disease-preventing properties); fresh and dried fruits and vegetables; organic, health and children's products; food ingredients, food service products, grocery items, fine foods; sauces and condiments; confectionery, bread and pastries; and meat and poultry.

Canada's trade with the U.S.

amounts to more than \$500 billion a year. The increasingly urban population is demanding more convenience, value, nutrition and ethnic diversity in the food product selection. Proximity to Canada keeps transportation costs low, and most U.S. products enter the country duty free under the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Information for participants:

- Participants will exhibit in SUSTA's pavilion;

- Opportunity to meet key buyers, importers and representatives of major retailers;

- Participation fee: \$1,100 for a corner booth or \$1,000 for a full in-line booth, \$500 for half an in-line booth. Corner booths cannot be split;

- Registration Deadline: March 1, 2012. No refunds will be issued for cancellations after this date; and

- Interpreter services included in booth fee. Other amenities will be offered but additional fees may apply.

Producers interested in taking advantage of this opportunity to introduce their products to Canada should contact Keith Long at VDACS. Call 804-371-8990 or e-mail keith.long@vdacs.virginia.gov. For information on additional domestic and international trade events, go to the VDACS website at www.vdacs.virginia.gov/international/tradeshows.shtml.

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Become a Strong Farm Business Partner: Register for Annie's Project by Dec. 12

LEWIS, ONEIDA, OTSEGO AND SCHOHARIE COUNTY, NY — More and more women are taking key roles in agriculture in New York. To empower them to become strong business partners on the farm, Annie's Project Risk Management Education for Farm Women will be offered at Cornell Cooperative Extension offices in Lewis, Oneida, Otsego and Schoharie counties. Women from neighboring counties will be welcome at the business skills development program that will be offered 10 a.m.-2 p.m. for six consecutive Thursdays from Jan. 12 through Feb. 16, 2012.

Pre-paid registration with the \$50 course fee is required to Extension by Dec. 12. Class size is limited, so early registration is warranted for the popular training program.

"This course is valuable for women who are

new to farm businesses, wives and daughters who have inherited farms, women who have purchased or started farms on their own, and women who want to improve skills they have learned while working on a farm," says David Cox, Agriculture Program Leader with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schoharie County.

Annie's Project classes cover topics in production, marketing, and financial, legal (estate planning), and human resources risk management. Lessons range from learning agricultural software computer skills to how to buy crop insurance and rent land. Each session includes a one-hour lunch period for networking.

"Annie's Project provides essential information about how a farm works and it establishes localized support networks of women with

similar agricultural interests and challenges," says Cornell Cooperative Extension of Lewis County Farm Business Management Educator Peggy Murray.

The six-week Annie's Project is named for Northern Illinois woman Annette "Annie" Kohlhaugen Fleck who married a farmer in 1947 and learned how to be his business partner as well as his wife while raising four children, and managing a home with three generations under one roof. Annie's tireless

record keeping helped drive the farm's management choices.

In 2009, Annie's daughter Ruth Fleck Hambleton, who also married a farmer, started Annie's Project to educate and mentor other women in agriculture.

"The course work includes the opportunity to learn how to organize and manage information critical to the farm's day-to-day and long-term success," says Cornell Cooperative Extension of Otsego County Farm Business & Marketing

Development Educator Amy Chamberlain.

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County Community Educator Bonnie Collins says, "This is the second time Annie's Project will be offered in Oneida and Schoharie counties. The response last year was terrific and graduates encouraged us to make this training available to their fellow women in agriculture."

To register, contact

Cornell Cooperative Extension; in Lewis County at 315-376-5270; in Oneida County at 315-736-3394 x104, in Otsego County at 607-547-2536, and in Schoharie County at 518-234-4303 by Dec. 12.

This educational outreach is supported by funding from the Northeast Center for Risk Management Education and by Annie's National Network Initiative for Educational Success.

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Using biochar to boost soil moisture

by Ann Perry

Scientists at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) are leading the way in learning more about "biochar," the charred biomass created from wood, other plant

material and manure.

The studies by Agricultural Research Service (ARS) scientists at laboratories across the country support the USDA priorities of promoting international food secu-

ity and responding to global climate change. ARS is USDA's chief intramural scientific research agency.

Soil scientist Jeff Novak at the ARS Coastal Plains Soil, Water and

Plant Research Center in Florence, SC, is coordinating the multi-location effort. In one project, he led a laboratory study to see if different biochars could improve the sandy soils found on the Car-

olina coastal plain and Pacific Northwest silt loam soils derived from volcanic ash.

Novak's team used peanut hulls, pecan shells, poultry litter, switchgrass and hardwood waste products to produce nine different types of biochars. All the feedstocks were pyrolysed at two different temperatures to produce the biochars. Pyrolysis is a process of chemical decomposition that results from rapid heating of the raw feedstocks in the absence of oxygen. Then the biochars were mixed into one type of sandy soil and two silt loam soils at the rate of about 20 tons per acre.

After four months, the team found that biochars produced from switchgrass and hardwoods increased soil moisture storage in all three soils. They saw the greatest increase in soils amended with switchgrass biochar produced via high-temperature pyrolysis — almost 3 to 6 percent higher than a control soil sample.

Biochars produced at higher temperatures also increased soil pH levels, and biochar made from poultry litter greatly increased soil levels of available phosphorus and sodium. The scientists also calculated that the switchgrass biochar amendments could extend the window of soil water availability by 1 to 3.6 days for a soybean crop in Florence, and could increase soil water availability for crops grown in Pacific Northwest silt loam soils by 0.4 to 2.5 days.

Given their results, the team believes that agricultural producers could someday select feedstocks and pyrolysis processes to make "designer" biochars with characteristics that target specific deficiencies in soil types.

Results from this study were published in *Annals of Environmental Science* and in the *Journal of Environmental Quality*.

Read more about this work in the November/December 2011 issue of *Agricultural Research* magazine.

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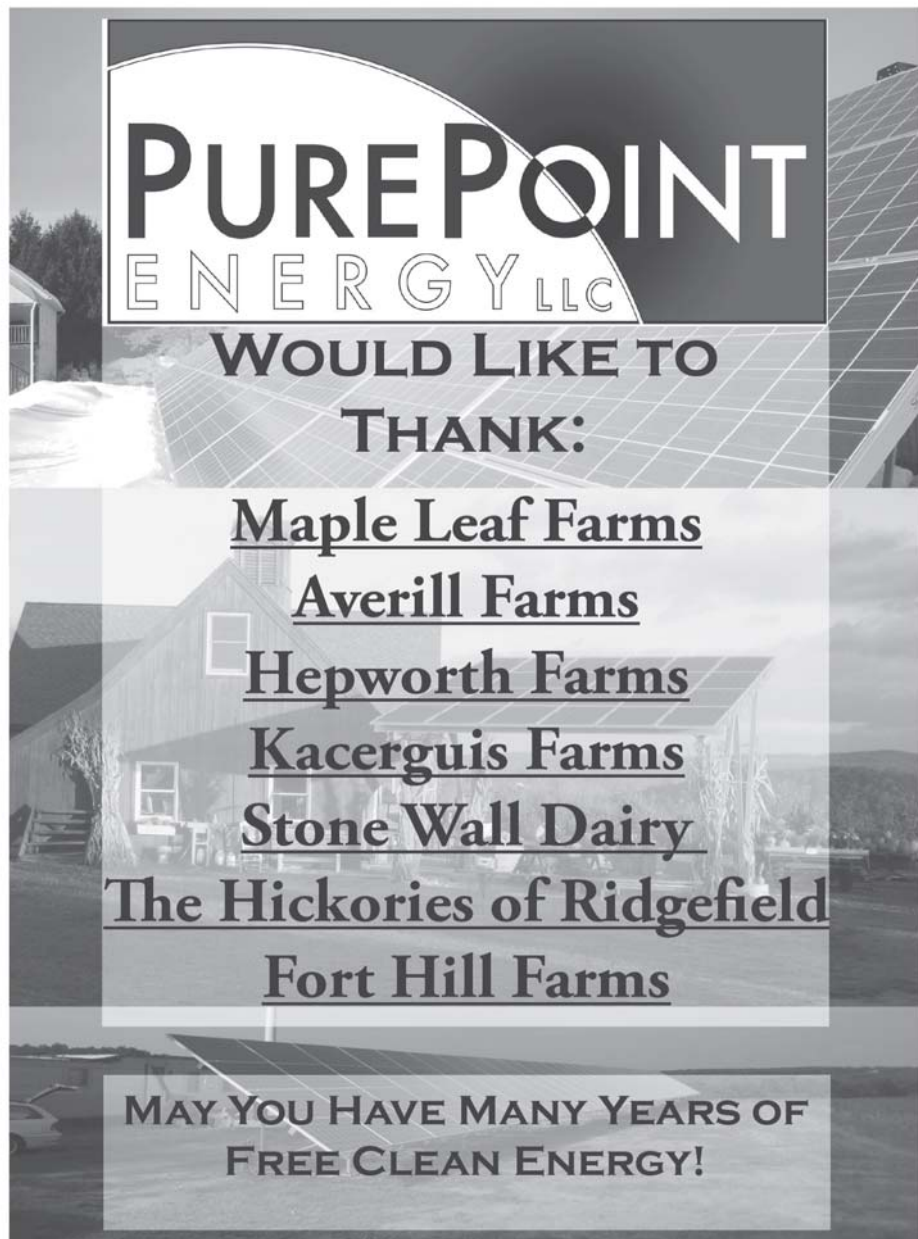
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Young and beginning farmers need capital, land, health insurance

New survey of 1,000 young and beginning farmers reveals what the next generation needs

The National Young Farmer's Coalition released a study showing that the nation's young and beginning farmers face tremendous barriers in starting a farming career. "Building a Future With Farmers: Challenges Faced by Young, American Farmers and a National Strategy to Help Them Succeed" surveyed 1,000 farmers from across the United States and found that access to capital, access to land and health insurance present the largest obstacles for beginners. Farmers rated farm apprenticeships, local partnerships and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) as the most valuable programs to help beginners.

"If Congress wants to keep America farming, then they must address the barriers that young people face in getting started," says Lindsey Lusher Shute, Director of the National Young Farmers' Coalition. "We need credit opportunities for beginning and diversified farmers, land policies that keep farms affordable for full-time growers and funding for conservation programs."

Report findings include:

- 78 percent of farmers ranked "lack of capital" as a top challenge for beginners, with another 40 percent ranking "access to credit" as the biggest challenge.
- 68 percent of farmers ranked land access as the biggest challenge faced by beginners.
- 70 percent of farmers under 30 rented land, as compared to 37 percent of farmers over 30.
- 74 percent of farmers ranked apprenticeships as among the most valuable programs for beginners.
- 55 percent of farmers ranked local partnerships as one of the most valuable programs, and 49 percent ranked Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) as a top program.

Lack of capital was found to be the biggest challenge for beginners. Although the USDA's Farm Service Agency offers loans to beginning farmers, current loan rules often disqualify even experienced farmers with good credit and small loans are hard to come by. For real estate transactions, FSA loans take too long to process — up to 30 days to qualify and up to a year to receive funds — and the \$300,000 loan limit doesn't go far in many real estate markets.

Land access was the second biggest concern. Farmers under the age of 30 were significantly more likely to rent land (70 percent) than those over 30 (37 percent). Over the last decade, farm real estate values and rents doubled making farm ownership next to impossible for many beginners.

"In Nebraska the main barrier to new and beginning farmers is access to land. Unless an aspiring farmer inherits land, it is very difficult to have access to it," says William A. Powers, farmer and Executive Director of the Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society.

The National Young Farmers' Coalition recommends action at the local, state and federal level to help beginning farmers. At the local level, communities can create market opportunities for farmers by starting Community Supported Agriculture groups and shopping at farmers markets, as well as protecting existing farmland through zoning and the purchase of development rights. States can preserve farmland and even offer tax credits for farmers that sell their land to beginners. At the federal level, Congress can include the "Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Opportunity Act" in the next Farm Bill, which supports many of the specific recommen-

dations in the report.

Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, is calling for hundreds of thousands of new farmers nationwide. Over the past century, the total number of American farmers has declined — from over 6 million in 1910 to just over 2 million today. For each farmer under 35 there are now 6 over 65 and the average age of farmers is 57. The USDA expects that one-quarter (500,000) of all farmers will retire in the next 20 years.

The 'good food' movement is inspiring many young people to farm, both from farming and non-farming backgrounds. These farmers have the potential to offset the numbers of retiring

farmers and keep family farms active, but land tenure and lack of capital are getting in the way.

"With the release of reports such as this one, the agrarian revival, this influx of young and beginning farmers, gains status — we're not just a few people spread across the country, we're a well organized, politically active group that can be documented," says Tierney Creech of the Washington State Young Farmers Coalition. "We know who our senators and representatives are, we vote, and our friends and families vote. We need USDA and government support to succeed and we're going to let the nation know that."

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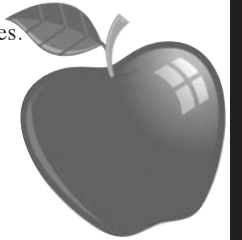
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New 'Stokes Tested' varieties available for 2012

Stokes Seeds prides itself in the number of vegetable trials it puts out each year. Each variety is "Stokes Tested" in many geographic areas in the Northeast, Midwest, and Canada or it does not go in the 2012 Stokes Seeds Commercial Growers Guide. Generally each variety is tested for multiple years in numerous locations. This strategy was especially beneficial in 2011 with the challenges of varying temper-

atures and precipitation. Whether it is green beans or seedless watermelon, you can be certain that you are getting the best new varieties on the market. Growers do ask for "Stokes Tested" varieties. Following are comments on some of our favorite new "Stokes Tested" varieties.

In green beans, **Inspiration** and **Wyatt** had exceptional years in Stokes trials. Inspiration is a classy high quality



Archimedes

5.7- inch bean with an upright plant that set well in the heat in 2011

New Varieties



Hendrix

and also holds well in the field. It has demonstrated some tolerance to season Midwest virus complex and whitefly.

Stokes B10



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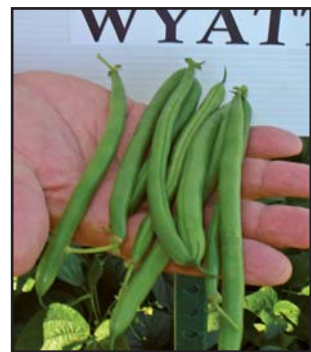
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Rupp offering more than 30 new products

As we enter our 66th year in the seed business we continue towards our mission of helping farm families feed their friends and neighbors at home and around the world. We are continually evaluating vegetable varieties as we strive to bring growers the best available products for their market opportunities.

For the 2012 season we have added over 30

Stokes from B9



Wyatt



Inspiration

Wyatt had a very consistent yield in the spring and fall of 2011, of nice dark green pods, 4-sieve in diameter and is 5.7 inches long on an upright plant. It has excellent bacterial disease and virus resistance.

Archimedes pepper was introduced last year and performed very well in both trials and production fields this year. Archimedes is a 76-day green to red blocky bell pepper. It has resistance to BLS 1,2,3 and intermediate resistance to Phytophthora.

Sugar cube cantaloupe was the preferred variety for taste and yield in 2011. It is for the farm market that is looking for a smaller high quality personal size 2 LB melon. It has high sugars (14 percent brix), deep orange flesh, tight interior, amazing taste and excellent disease tolerance.

For those growers that raise onions for storage, **Hendrix** is the new onion for you. It is a nice 106-day long day onion with a medium gold color, long storage, and a nice globe shape. This variety performed very well over a wide geographic area in 2011.

Ask your Stokes Seeds Sales Representative about the newest

products to our commercial vegetable seed catalog including beans, broccoli, corn, peppers, pumpkins, squash, tomatoes and watermelon. Several sweet corn varieties have been added including the new Performance Series™ from Seminis.

Ka-Ching, a 78 day, synergistic bi-color from Crookham is everything a grower desires in quality, ear size and yield. The plant has great



WeeeeeOne

health and architecture which translates into yield potential. It is rugged and adaptable with a large ear for its season. The uniformity of the ears in size, place-



Tirreno

ment and maturity, lends itself to machine harvesting. It also displays a nice package for the consumer in its tip



Passion II

fill, husk protection and eating quality.

Give your early corn market a boost by plant-



Xanthi, Belcanto and Oranos peppers.

ing **Cuppa Joe** to follow Espresso. Cuppa Joe, from Seneca Vegetable Research, is a 73 day synergistic bi-color that

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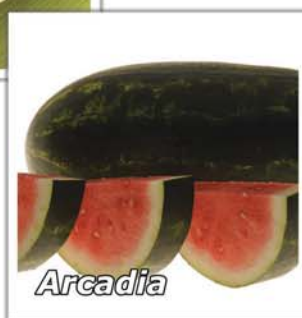
Solid Gold



Obsession II



Xanthi, Belcanto, Oranos



Arcadia



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Summit

Summit

Summit Pumpkin is fast becoming the standard of comparison for large fruited pumpkins. Fruit average 30 to 40 lbs., are dark orange and nicely ribbed. Handles



Apogee

standout for size, durability and black color. Plant is semi-bush. Maturity is 95 days. Summit has homozygous resistant to Powdery Mildew.

Apogee

Apogee Pumpkin is possibly the largest fruited Powdery Mildew resistant pumpkin on the market today. Fruit aver-



Progress



Rascal



Prudence

age 40 to 50 lbs., are dark orange with good ribbing and extra-large handles. Plants have large vines. Maturity is 105 days.

Rascal PMRR Pumpkin

Rascal PMRR Pumpkin has homozygous resistance to Powdery Mildew and heterozygous resistance to WMV and Phytophthora. Pink fruit are large, flat, deeply furrowed, thick-walled and semi-hard shelled. Fruit average 30 to 40 lbs. Maturity is 100 days.

Prudence

Prudence Pumpkin is a

smaller version of Summit. Fruit average 20 to 25 lbs, are dark orange and well ribbed with a large, thick handle. Plant is semi-bush. Maturity is 90 days. Prudence has homozygous resistant to Powdery Mildew.

Progress

Progress Pumpkin is perfect for markets desiring a smaller carving pumpkin. Fruit average 7 to 10 lbs., are very dark orange, very well ribbed and have a long twisting handle. Plant is

semi-bush. Maturity is 100 days. Progress has homozygous resistant to Powdery Mildew.

For more information visit www.pumpkinvegetableorganicseeds.com.

Harris Seeds' 2012 introductions perform from field to table

Harris Seeds has a long history of selecting varieties that excel in terms of field performance, market appearance, and eating quality. This tradition continues with 2012's vegetable introductions, which range from crowd-pleasing small pumpkins to truly mouthwatering sweet corn and melon varieties.

Little Giant F1 Pumpkin is small in size and big on kid-friendly appeal. Its rich, dark-orange color and smooth sides make it great for painting, but its light ribbing and strong, dark green handle give it the look of a miniature jack-o-lantern. This beautiful little pie pumpkin is the latest addition to Harris Seeds' extensive line of pumpkins with interme-



Little Giant F1 Pumpkin

diate resistance to Powdery Mildew.

Crunchkin F1 Pumpkin is a hard shell version of Harris Seeds' popular Munchkin mini pumpkin and is sure to be a hit for fall decoration. The flattened, deeply ribbed shape and medium-orange, lightly flecked color give Crunchkin a classic, customer-pleasing appearance. Best of all, the hard shell allows for extended storage and



Mirai 315 BC F1 Sweet Corn

Thanksgiving sales.

Mirai 315 BC F1 and **Mirai 160 Y F1** Sweet Corn are the latest in the impressive Mirai supersweet series. Mirai varieties offer truly superb eating quality, with melt-in-your-mouth tenderness and exceptional sweetness. These introductions are both 74 day varieties that produce refined, cylindrical 8-inch ears of delicious kernels on sturdy, clean plants. Strong tip fill, attractive

Harris B13

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Rascal PMRR Pumpkin

30-40 lb. Fruit.
Resistant to Powdery Mildew,
WMV, Phytophthora. NEW for 2012.



Apogee™ Pumpkin

40-50 lb. Fruit. Resistant to Powdery Mildew. Some growers report fruit weight over 60 lb. Photograph courtesy of an Outstanding Seed Company, LLC customer; grown in 2011.

Illustrations and descriptions represent kind only. Variety may differ from illustration in color, shape and/or size.

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New varieties from NE Seed

Porcelain Doll F1

Porcelain Doll is an eye-catching, exotic Pink Pumpkin perfect for all holiday decorations. Porcelain Doll's deep-orange, sweet flesh can be used for pies, soup, and gourmet culinary delights. Full vine plant habit. Good Powdery Mildew tolerance. 20-24 lbs.

Limon

Limon is a commercial green zucchini with an open bush habit and very low spine count. Unusual and eye-catching lime-green fruit with lemon-yellow "effervescent" color mixed in for the gourmet market.

Golden Girl

Golden Girl is a Hybrid, Yellow Zucchini Squash. This top yielding hybrid seed brings together an



Limon



Booty

outstanding, true golden yellow color and a strong, open bush habit. An attractive presentation of consistent quality and shape make this yellow



Red Head



Porcelain Doll F1

zucchini a winner. Tolerant to Powdery Mildew 2.



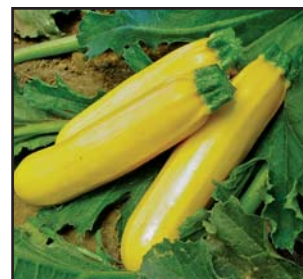
Orange Sherbet



Napoli



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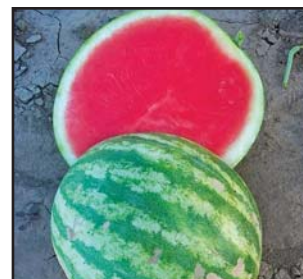
Golden Girl



Tandy

Booty

Booty is a hybrid, determinate, open field tomato



Red Rock



Summertime

characterized by strong yields. Fruit are dark red

NE B13

Nourse Farms offering several varieties for 2012



Natchez Blackberry



Mayflower Strawberry



Daroyal Strawberry



Albion Strawberry



Prime Ark®



Octavia Red Raspberry



Portola Strawberry



Monterey Strawberry

Following are several new varieties that we are offering for 2012. Feel free to visit our website, www.noursefarms.com, for our complete listing of

Rupp from B10

provides an 8 to 8 1/2 inch ear. It offers excellent eating quality for an early corn along with the cold soil vigor and a clean sturdy plant you look for in an early time slot.

Allure is a 75 day synergistic bi-color from Seneca Vegetable Research with excellent eating quality. Allure produces a very refined 8-

Rupp B13



Cuppa Joe



Obsession II



Allure



Majus



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Mountain Magic F1

75 days. Campari-type with excellent flavor, uniformity, high sugar and disease resistance. Highly crack-resistant. Long shelf life. Resistant to Verticillium Wilt 1 and 2, Fusarium Wilt 1 and 2. Resistant to late blight, plus moderate resistance to early blight. Flavor stands in comparisons with heirloom varieties.



BSS-832

Mountain Magic produces round to deep round 2 oz. fruit on somewhat compact indeterminate plants. Fruits have a long shelf life.

BSS-832 F1

is a widely adapted main season variety, suitable for vine ripe and mature green markets throughout the eastern U.S. BSS-832 produces large to extra large firm, deep oblate fruits on a vigorous determinate plant. F-2, F-2, V1

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and firm with good tomato taste. A beautiful tomato that has wonderful flavor and is perfect for East Coast production. Did very well in trials and is still under test for tolerances.

Napoli

Napoli is a hybrid, Tuscan type melon that features a high brix, bright orange flesh with a tight cavity and a vigorous vine with a terrific canopy for fruit protection. Tolerant to Powdery Mildew Race 2 and Fusarium Race 1 and 2, Watermelon Mosaic Virus.

Orange Sherbet

Orange Sherbet is a hybrid, Tuscan, eastern shipper cantaloupe that exhibits extremely high quality. Combining a high brix with a strong melon flavor, Orange Sherbet is one of the best eating melons

available. A high fiber content gives this melon variety good shipping ability. Orange Sherbet's appearance makes for an attractive display. Tolerant to Powdery Mildew Race 2 and Fusarium Race 1 and 2, Watermelon Mosaic Virus.

Amarillo

Amarillo is a hybrid, golden, indeterminate cherry/cocktail tomato that can be grown in a greenhouse or open field with excellent leaf cover. Featuring a taste that is outstanding, Amarillo's fruit changes from yellow to gold with maturity with 20-80 fruit per cluster. This is an early maturing tomato — just 75 days. Tolerant to Tobacco Mosaic Virus, Verticillium Wilt and Fusarium Wilt.

Summertime

Summertime is a hybrid, triploid wa-

termelon that is a tremendous variety for any watermelon program. Summer-time's ultra-sweet flesh is testing in the range of 4-5 on the penetrometer and many fields have had brix readings of 11-12. With excellent shipping qualities and an attractive, well-defined flesh/rind margin, Summertime is an exciting new watermelon.

Red Rock

Red Rock Seedless Watermelon features a high brix content with excellent shipping capabilities and shelf life. Small seed pips.

Red Head

Rupp from B12

by-1.75 inch ear with strong tip fill, good husk cover and great flag leaves. This is the perfect variety for growers whose consumers demand quality.

We are excited to be able to offer growers the new Performance Series™ sweet corn hybrids from Seminis. These hybrids are the only fresh market sweet corn hybrids proven to have: outstanding yield, up to 85 percent less insecticide use, dual mode of action for above-ground insects, below-ground protection, tolerance to Roundup WeatherMAX® and Roundup PowerMAX® and taste and nutrition value on par with conventional counterparts. The Performance Series hybrids include: **Obsession II**, **Passion II** and **Temptation II**.

We are pleased to be able to offer growers three new conical peppers for the 2012 season. **Belcanto** (red), **Oranos** (orange) and **Xanthi** (yellow) from Enza Zaden are high quality peppers having superior flavor when compared to bells of the same color. They produce high yields of mature colored peppers with little yield reduction compared to green. These 6-7inch peppers would be ideally marketed in multi-colored packs and will be sure to catch the eye of your customers. Your customers can dice them for use in flavorful fresh salsas, larger pieces for stir-frys, serve stuffed fresh or roasted as a new kind of wrap that can be a feature on the

Red Head is a hybrid, open field/greenhouse, saladette type Roma tomato. Red Head features a compact habit and is ideal for the fresh market. Determinate at 70 days to maturity.

Tandy

Tandy features a strikingly beautiful off-white color with a strong, medium dark green handle. Tandy is an excellent yielder with a medium vine habit. Ideal as an edible pumpkin or novelty colored pumpkin. For more information on this and many more great varieties, visit us at www.dpseeds.com. Buy online at www.neseed.com.

plate but not dominate as most bell peppers would.

We're excited to release a new jack o' lantern pumpkin. **WeeeeeOne** is a new unique miniature pumpkin, with powdery mildew resistance. The 3-by-3 inch fruit have shallow ribs and a full round shape similar to traditional jack o' lantern pumpkins. WeeeeeOne can be carved and brings a new look to fall decoration.

2011 was a launch year for **Tirreno**, a new cantaloupe from Enza Zaden. Growers had great success producing the 4-6 pound fruit. Tirreno has shown tremendous plant health in the field which provides the opportunity for excellent yield potential. Tirreno has absolutely the best eating quality of any variety that we have marketed to date. For 2012 we are offering **Majus** a big brother to Tirreno. Majus shares many of the characteristics with larger 6-8 pound fruit and coarser netting. This is a must try for your 2012 growing season.

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Harris from B11

dark green husks, and long flags make the ears look as classy as they taste. Mirai 315 BC is a bicolor with nicely-contrasted yellow and white kernels, while 160 Y adds a midseason variety to

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Summer Sweet® SSW 2001 MR F1 Sweet Corn combines exceptional supersweet flavor with advanced seed technology and powerful disease protection. SSW varieties are bred for fuller, less wrinkled seed than other supersweet varieties, which offers more energy to the seedling during germination and allows better seed flow while planting. To make growing as smooth as planting, SSW 2001 MR offers resistance to the new strains of rust (Rp1G, Rp1I) and intermediate resistance to NCLB and SCLB.

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Red Bounty F1 Tomato offers extra-large, delicious, deep red fruit, plus resistance to Tomato Spotted Wilt Virus. While previous tomato varieties offered only intermediate resistance to this devastating disease, Red Bounty offers more protection, for a harvest that lives up to the variety's name.

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FDA publishes report on listeriosis outbreak

The FDA released a document on Oct. 19 that provides an overview of factors that potentially contributed to the contamination of fresh, whole cantaloupe with the pathogen *Listeria monocytogenes*, which was implicated in a multi-state outbreak of listeriosis.

In early September 2011, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), in conjunction with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and state health departments, began to investigate a multi-state outbreak of listeriosis. Early in the investigation, cantaloupes from Jensen Farms in the southwest region of Colorado were implicated in the outbreak.

On Sept. 10, FDA, along with Colorado state officials, conducted an inspection at Jensen Farms during which FDA collected multiple samples, including whole can-

taloupes and environmental (non-product) samples from within the facility, for laboratory culturing to identify the presence of *Listeria monocytogenes*. Of the 39 environmental samples collected from within the facility, 13 were confirmed positive for *Listeria monocytogenes* with pulsed-field gel electrophoresis (PFGE) pattern combinations that were indistinguishable from three of the four outbreak strains collected from affected patients. Cantaloupe collected from the firm's cold storage during the inspection was also confirmed positive for *Listeria monocytogenes* with PFGE pattern combinations that were indistinguishable from two of the four outbreak strains.

As a result of the isolation of outbreak strains of *Listeria monocytogenes* in the environment of the packing fa-

cility and whole cantaloupes collected from cold storage, and the fact that this is the first documented listeriosis outbreak associated with fresh, whole cantaloupe in the United States, FDA initiated an environmental assessment in conjunction with Colorado state and local officials. FDA, state, and local officials conducted the environmental assessment at Jensen Farms on September 22-23, 2011. The environmental assessment was conducted to gather more information to assist FDA in identifying the factors that potentially contributed to the introduction, growth, or spread of the *Listeria monocytogenes* strains that contaminated the cantaloupe.

FDA identified the following factors as those that most likely contributed to the introduction, spread, and growth of *Listeria monocyto-*

genes in the cantaloupes:

Introduction:

- There could have been low level sporadic *Listeria monocytogenes* in the field where the cantaloupe were grown, which could have been introduced into the packing facility; and

- A truck used to haul culled cantaloupe to a cattle operation was parked adjacent to the packing facility and could have introduced contamination into the facility.

Spread:

- The packing facility's design allowed water to pool on the floor near equipment and employee walkways;

- The packing facility floor was constructed in a manner that made it difficult to clean; and

- The packing equipment was not easily cleaned and sanitized; washing and drying equipment used for cantaloupe packing was previously used for postharvest handling of

another raw agricultural commodity.

Growth:

- There was no pre-cooling step to remove field heat from the cantaloupes before cold storage. As the cantaloupes cooled there may have been condensation that promoted the growth of *Listeria monocytogenes*.

FDA's findings regarding this particular outbreak highlight the importance for firms to employ good agricultural and management practices in their packing facilities as well as in growing fields. FDA recommends that firms em-

ploy good agricultural and management practices recommended for the growing, harvesting, washing, sorting, packing, storage and transporting of fruits and vegetables sold to consumers in an unprocessed or minimally processed raw form.

FDA has issued a warning letter to Jensen Farms based on environmental and cantaloupe samples collected during the inspection. FDA's investigation at Jensen Farms is still considered an open investigation.

Nurse from B12

midseason variety. Bred by David Simpson at the EMR East Malling Research Center, U.K., Mayflower exhibits high production and firm, high quality berries. Mayflower was identified in our test plots in a very wet fruiting season, as the fruit stood up under difficult conditions. In our advanced grower trials, 80 percent of the growers responding to our survey said the variety performed well in their trial and that they would plant it again. We highly recommend Mayflower for trial plantings.

Octavia Red Raspberry (Licensed Variety) *Exclusive to Nourse Farms

This is a new late-season florican raspberry that we first offered in 2011. It is the latest fruiting summer variety available. Octavia will pick seven to 10 days later than Encore and until the early primocane varieties begin. Octavia is highly productive with good flavor and firmness. Consider Octavia for fresh market applications. We are still learning about level of winter hardiness, but recommend trialing it in areas where late season production is desired.

Natchez Blackberry (Plant Patent 20,891)

Natchez is a recent release from the University of Arkansas breeding program. This is the earliest ripening thornless variety

with very high production potentials. Very large and good tasting berries can be harvested during a three-to-five week season. Due to its semi-erect growth habit, Natchez performs best with a trellis. We highly recommend this variety.

Prime Ark® 45 Blackberry (Plant Patent Applied For)

Prime Ark® 45 is a new release from the University of Arkansas breeding program. It is a thorny primocane-bearing blackberry with an erect growing habit. Fruit size is medium-large and trials indicate that Prime-Ark® 45 is much more productive than Prime Jim. Fruit holds up well after picking and is suitable for shipping. The florican fruiting season is after Prime-Jim and Natchez and before Ouachita. Early indications are that the primocane crop ripens later than Prime-Jim. Ripening may be too late for some northern areas, but will extend the blackberry season for situations where late fruit is desired. We would recommend Prime Ark® 45 as the outstanding primocane-bearing blackberry.

Portola Strawberry (U.S. Plant Patent No. 20,552)

This is a strong day-neutral variety from California. Fruit is lighter in color than most everbearers and should be harvested before fully red. It

has good flavor with a large crop that is as early as Evie-2. Recommended for beginners, this variety will perform in warmer climates. Recommended for zones 5-7.

Daroyal Strawberry (Licensed Variety) *Exclusive to Nourse Farms

Daroyal is our second introduction from the Darbonne-Inotalis breeding program in France. Daroyal is vigorous with strong rooting capacity. Berries have an attractive conic shape, darker red color, good internal color and a glossy appearance. Our production fields show high yields during a long season. Daroyal will easily compete with Honeoye due to its excellent flavor. This berry ripens quickly, we recommend harvesting every other day.

Monterey Strawberry (U.S. Plant Patent No. 19,767)

This is a moderate day-neutral cultivar from California. It has great flavor, like Seascape, while more tolerant to high summer temperatures. This plant has good leaf disease resistance, but is susceptible to powdery mildew. Recommended for beginners and experienced growers. Recommended for zones 5-7.

Albion Strawberry (U.S. Plant Patent No. 16,228)

Albion produces very large fruit that is mostly conical, very firm and red

in color. Its flavor is very good for a day-neutral. To get the high yields it is capable of producing, this variety will need a stronger watering and nutrient program than any other everbearer. Wider plant spacing will deliver the largest berries. It is resistant to verticillium wilt, phytophthora crown rot and has some resistance to anthracnose crown rot. Recommended for zones 5-7.



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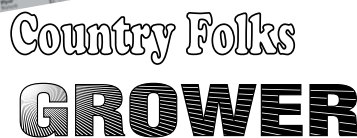
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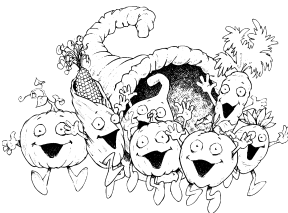
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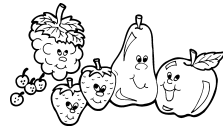
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E-mail announcements of your regional event(s) to: jkarkwren@leepub.com
We must receive your information, plus a contact phone number, prior to the deadline that's noted under the Announcements heading on the 1st page of these Grower Classifieds.

* * *

DEC 1

Direct to Consumer Farm Marketing & Agri-Tourism Seminar
Berks Co. Ag Center, 1238 County Welfare Rd., Leesport PA. 8:30 am - 4:30 pm. Contact John Berry, 610-391-9840. On Internet at extension.psu.edu.

DEC 12

Professional Pest Managers School
Holiday Inn - Harrisburg/Hershey, 604 Station Rd, Grantville, PA. 7:45 am - 3 pm. The sessions are designed to update you with the latest information concerning your role and responsibility in relation to integrated pest management and pesticide regulations as you are earning core and category credits. Registration fee of \$75 covers instructional materials, lunch, breaks and speaker expenses. Registrations received after Mon., Nov. 28, 2011, will be \$95/person. On Internet at <http://extension.psu.edu/dauphin>

DEC 13-15

New England Vegetable & Fruit Conference & Trade Show
Center of New Hampshire Radisson Hotel, Manchester, NH. On Internet at www.newenglandvfc.org

DEC 20

Penn State Extension Workshop on Crop Load Management
Adams County Agricultural & Natural Resources Center, Gettysburg, PA. 8:30 am - 3:30 pm. Includes presentations on the carbon balance model and use of a new tool - the Equilifruit Disk - for assessing optimum apple crop load. During the afternoon, participants will move to Kuhn Orchards, Cash-town, PA for a discussion of "Pruning to Manage Crop Load." The afternoon pruning demonstration is free and will be conducted in Spanish and English. Final date to register is Dec. 14. Call 877-489-1398. On Internet at www.cvent.com/d/9cqjgg.

JAN 8-9

2012 National Green Centre
Overland Park Convention Center, 6000 College Blvd, Overland Park, KS. Call 888-233-1876 or info@nationalgreencentre.org.

JAN 11-13

MANTS® 2012 (The Mid-Atlantic Nursery Trade Show)
Baltimore, MD. Call 800-431-0066 or e-mail info@mants.com. On Internet at www.mants.com

JAN 14

NOFA 25th Annual Winter Conference
Worcester State University, 486 Chandler St., Worcester, MA. Contact Cathleen O'Keefe, e-mail wc@nofamass.org. On Internet at www.nofamass.org/conferences/winter/index.php.

JAN 22

16th Annual P.L.A.N.T. Seminar - Perennials & Design - A Perfect Combination
Greater Columbus Convention Center. \$75 per person. Call 614-771-8431. On Internet at www.perennialplant.org.

JAN 24-25

Second Annual NJ Plants Trade Show
New Jersey Convention Center, Edison, NJ. On Internet at www.njplantshow.com.

JAN 25-28

ANLA Management Clinic
Galt House Hotel & Suites, Louisville, KY. Contact ANLA, 202-789-2900 or e-mail meetings@anla.org. On Internet at www.anla.org.

JAN 27-28

Mid-States Horticultural Expo
Kentucky international Convention Center, Louisville, KY. For advertising contact Betsie A. Taylor, 502-695-0106 or mail.knla@gmail.com. For booth information contact Louree Walker, 931-473-3951 or louree@TNLA.com.

JAN 31-FEB 2

Mid-Atlantic Fruit & Vegetable Convention
Hershey Lodge, Hershey, PA. Contact Bill Troxell, 717-694-3596 or pvga@pvga.org. On Internet at www.mafvc.org.

USDA supports diverse food access through Farmers Market Promotion Program grants

Nearly 150 farm-to-consumer marketing projects received funding Oct. 13 under the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP), marking a \$9.2 million investment to support direct marketing and to increase consumer access to healthy food, much of it in food deserts and other low-income areas. This

year's awards — 149 in total, distributed across 42 states and the District of Columbia — showed a rise in urban projects and increased diversity in the types of projects funded.

"Earlier this year, we reported that more than 1,000 new farmers markets have been recorded across the United States, totaling 7,175 markets," said Deputy Secretary

Kathleen Merrigan. "Through programs like FMPP, we believe that USDA's contributions to direct farm-to-consumer marketing are providing alternative economic opportunities for our nation's agricultural producers."

Traditionally, FMPP has funded projects in both rural and urban areas. However, this year saw a shift toward a

more even distribution, with urban projects growing to nearly half of the portfolio. "In addition to funding many worthy start-up farmers markets, I was particularly pleased to note a rise in the number of innovative projects like those that create or expand community-supported agriculture programs (CSAs), agritourism, and

mobile markets," Merrigan added.

Increasing fresh food access in food deserts — low-income areas identified as having limited access to affordable and nutritious food — and other low-income communities was a priority for this year's awards. As a result, over 40 percent of projects funded by FMPP this year serve

one or more food deserts and another 20 percent will be implemented in communities with a poverty rate of 20 percent or higher.

Additionally, improvements in transportation and delivery methods, purchase of refrigeration equipment and improvements to packaging and storage that facilitate food access comprise nearly a third of the projects funded. Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) projects continue to exceed the congressionally mandated 10 percent, accounting for approximately 24 percent of total funding which gives participants in federal nutrition assistance programs even greater access to nutritious food.

Among the more innovative projects this year are:

- Renaissance Project of New Orleans, which will operate food banks and mobile produce markets at social service agencies and public housing facilities in New Orleans, LA.

- Round Valley Indian Health Inc., which will develop a program to provide locally raised products to schools in Covelo, CA, through a CSA.

- EcoStation: NY, Inc., which will purchase, operate and staff a solar- and biodiesel-powered refrigerated mobile market in low-income areas of Kings County, NY.

- Lulus Local Food of Richmond, VA, which will establish four virtual online farmers markets and also provide farmers the opportunity to participate in a related gleaning program.

- Oregon Cheese Guild, which will work with Oregon cheese makers to create an "Oregon Cheese Trail" through a comprehensive agritourism and media outreach initiative.

Since its inception in 2006, the Farmers Market Promotion Program has awarded more than \$23 million across the country to support direct producer-to-consumer marketing and local food projects. FMPP is administered by the Agricultural Marketing Service. Projects are expected to be completed within 24 months of initiation. The full list of awards granted for fiscal year 2011 is available at www.ams.usda.gov/AM Sv1.0/FMPP.



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For Registration Information go to <https://nysvga.org/expo/register/>
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Safe storage of oxyacetylene cylinders

by James Carrabba, Agricultural Safety Specialist, New York Center for Agricultural Medicine & Health

Oxyacetylene cutting and welding equipment is commonly used in many agricultural operations. It is important for anyone who uses this

equipment to be able to use it properly and safely. It is also very important that the compressed gas cylinders are stored safely.

This article will discuss some basic safety guidelines that need to be followed for properly

storing oxyacetylene cylinders. Acetylene is the most common gas used for welding and cutting metals, and is very flammable. The oxygen won't burn or explode but assists other gasses burn at greater rates when mixed to-

gether. Acetylene and oxygen are stored separately in compressed gas cylinders. Due to the pressures inside, a compressed gas cylinder can be shot through the air

like a rocket if its valve becomes damaged or broken. Gas cylinders need to be protected from physical damage, heat, and tampering.

Here are some basic guidelines for proper storage of compressed gas cylinders:

Storage areas should be designed to adequately accommodate the various gas cylinders that will be used at the farm. It should be well-drained and well-ventilated and preferably be of fire proof construction. Like

gasses should be stored together with each other. Cylinders should not be stored in subsurface locations. The storage area should be free of corrosive chemicals or fumes.

The storage area should be prominently posted with the hazard class or names of the gasses that are stored there. No smoking signs should be posted at the storage area.

The storage area should not exceed 125° F.

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Storage c2

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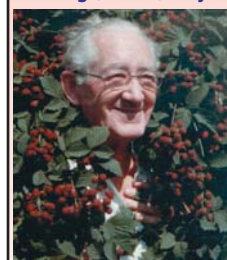
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empty and full cylinders. Empty cylinders can be marked with MT or EMPTY written on them.

When not in service, acetylene and oxygen cylinders must be stored separately from each other. They must be separated by a distance of at least 20 feet or be separated by a non-flammable wall that is at least 5 feet high.

Cylinders should be stored in an upright position and chained to prevent them from falling.

Single acetylene and oxygen cylinders that are being used are considered "in service." They can be stored on a cart or at a fixed work station adjacent to each other without a fire-proof partition. Cylinders that are in service must be secured to prevent falling.

Containers must be protected from any objects that could contact the

surface of the cylinder and cause an abrasion or cut into the cylinder. Cylinders cannot be stored near elevators, walkways, unprotected platform edges, or any locations where they could be struck by heavy moving or falling objects.

Keep cylinders away from flammable and combustible materials.

Cylinder valves must be closed when not in use and prior to moving.

Cylinders can be stored outside, but the bottom of the cylinder must be protected from the ground to prevent corrosion. With outside storage it is preferable to store the cylinders on asphalt or concrete areas that are graded to drain water away. In the summer, full cylinders should be screened against the di-

Storage c3

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Tractor and field operations energy efficiency checklist

Field operations are one of the largest uses of energy on most farms, so it is helpful to examine reducing or eliminating operations for reductions in energy use. Conservation tillage systems conserve fuel by cutting down on the number of passes across fields. No-till or reduced-till systems allow farmers to prepare the seedbed, apply fertilizer, and plant the crop in one operation.

No-till drills or air seeders use approximately 0.7 gallons per acre. A common conventional tillage system for crop production includes a chisel plow operation using 0.6 gallon per acre, a field cultivator using 0.3 gallons per acre, and a drill using 0.5 gallons per acre for a total of 1.4 gallons per acre. In this example conservation tillage requires half the fuel of the conventional tillage system.

ing oil and filter, lubricating bearings, and having regular engine tune-ups. The tractor maintenance programs provided by implement dealers are an excellent way to have equipment (especially tractors and combines) checked and maintenance operations completed by professionals.

- Aim to maintain wheel slippage generally between 10% and 15% for two-wheel drive tractors and 8% to 10% for four-wheel drive tractors. Wheel slippage outside this range means the tractor is not weighted properly. If wheel slippage is greater than the recommended amount when a heavy load is pulled, more weight should be added in the form of cast iron wheel weights or fluid in the tires. Either form of weight is as effective as the other. If wheel slippage is less than the recommended amount, the tractor is carrying too much weight. This will cause the tires to sink in deeper than necessary and increases power requirements to move the tractor across the field, resulting in lower efficiency.

- Avoid using small implements with large tractors. For most efficient operation, the implement should be operated using the best matched tractor. If a larger tractor is used with small implements, use the principle of gearing up and throttling down to maintain proper ground speed will reduce fuel consumption. Be careful to not overload the engine when using this method.

Tractor c4

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Questions to ask:

- Are you using radial tires and are they properly inflated?
- Is your tractor properly matched to the implement you are using?
- Are you reducing the engine RPM speed when a larger tractor is used with a smaller implement?
- Is your tractor wheel slippage excessive?
- Is a change or reduction in tillage practices possible?
- Is fuel storage shaded?
- Have your engine fuel filters and air cleaner been replaced or serviced as recommended by the manufacturer?
- Have your engine fuel injectors been cleaned and serviced properly?
- Are you using a timer on your tractor's engine heater?

Tractor operation

- Proper maintenance as recommended by the manufacturer should be performed regularly on all field equipment. This includes replacing fuel filters, chang-

Storage from C2

rect rays of the sun and the outside storage area should not exceed 125° F. In the winter, the cylin-

ders should be protected from accumulations of ice and snow.

When the cylinders are not in service, or during transportation, the regulator must be removed and the protective cap screwed into place over the valve to protect it.

When moving cylinders, it is best to transport them on a cart. They can be moved short distances by rolling them on their bottom edge. Cylinders should never be dragged over the floor.

If you would like more information on this top-

ic, please contact us. NY-CAMH is available to provide safety training at New York farms on any agricultural safety topic and we can also conduct confidential conduct farm safety surveys. These services are offered at no cost by a grant from the New York State Department of Labor Hazard Abatement Board. For more information, please contact Jim Carrabba, Agricultural Safety Specialist at 800-343-7527 extension 239, or e-mail jcarrabba@nycamh.com. NY-CAMH, a program of Bassett Healthcare Network, is enhancing agricultural and rural health by preventing and treating occupational injury and illness.

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The paper chain pot transplanting system is a unique, ingenious, and highly efficient means to transplant vegetables, flowers and herbs. It is unlike any transplanter used in the U.S. or Europe. It has no motor and is pulled by hand. It allows a single person to transplant as many as 264 plants in less than a minute. This is accomplished while standing upright thus eliminating countless hours spent kneeling, crawling, or stooping.

The system relies on planting into paper pots that are in a chain. Because the pots are in a chain, they feed themselves through the transplanter. A new flat of paper pots comes compressed and is opened using a set of metal opening rods and a frame. The most common paper pot flats have

264 cells. Seeding a paper pot flat can be done by hand but seeders are available that seed an entire flat at a time.

Once the seedlings are ready to be transplanted and soil prepared, the transplanter is pulled into a bed to begin creating a furrow. A tray of seedlings is placed on the transplanter platform and one end of the paper pot chain is pulled down into the furrow. A narrow metal stake is inserted through the first cell into the soil to secure the start of the paper chain. Then the transplanter is pulled down the bed and all the seedlings go into the ground, one after the other. Small metal flanges at the rear of the transplanter push soil over the paper pots and packing wheels tamp the soil.

The paper pot system

is ideally suited to closely spaced crops, especially onions, leeks, scallions, and shallots. This is because in-row spacing is determined by the length of the paper chain connecting each cell. Currently, paper chain pots are available that result in 2 inch, 4 inch and 6 inch in-row spacing. The system also works very well for spinach, various Asian greens, and many types of cut flowers. Other crops that can be grown include chard, kohlrabi, basil, cilantro, beets, corn, peas, beans, and lettuce. By skipping cells, it is also possible to plant crops like broccoli and kale.

The paper chain pot system was invented in Japan and is currently being imported to North America by Small Farm Works (www.smallfarmworks.com). A video of the transplanter in ac-

tion can be viewed at our web site. A video demonstrating how to open, fill, and seed the paper pot flats is also available.

The paper chain pot transplanting system is an economical option for vegetable growers because it can substantially reduce labor costs. It also enables hoophouse growers to expand the number of plantings in a season (due to transplanting normally direct seeded crops). Another benefit is achieving higher density stands of crops that germinate better in controlled conditions (in a greenhouse of germination chamber) rather than field conditions.

For more information, contact John Hendrickson at smallfarmworks@tds.net or 920-927-7362 or N1749 Yerges Road, Reeseville, WI 53579.



As the transplanter is pulled down the bed, the seedlings go into the ground, one after the other.

Tractor from C3

- Constantly variable transmissions (CVT) or infinitely variable transmissions (IVT) are new technologies that help improve fuel efficiency by using electronic control of transmission and engine speed for most efficient operation. The operator sets the operation speed, and the controller determines engine speed and transmission setting based on load. These systems automatically perform shift up/throttle down

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This article is an excerpt from Tractor and Field Operations Energy

Efficiency Checklist by John Nowatzki, North Dakota State University and Carl Pedersen, North Dakota State University. To view the entire article, visit www.extension.org/pages/31200/tractor-and-field-operations-energy-efficiency-checklist-and-tips

Source: www.extension.org

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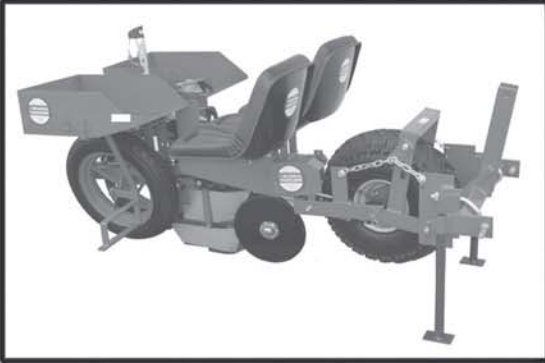
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Tomato pathogen's tricks of the trade unraveled

BLACKSBURG, VA — For decades, scientists and farmers have attempted to understand how a bacterial pathogen continues to damage tomatoes despite numerous agricultural attempts to control its spread.

Pseudomonas syringae pv. *tomato* is the causative agent of bacterial speck disease of tomato (*Solanum lycopersicum*), a disease that occurs worldwide and causes severe reduction in fruit yield and quality, particularly during cold and wet springs.

In the spring of 2010, for example, an outbreak in Florida and California devastated the harvest in those areas.

"There is not much that can be done from a farming standpoint," said Boris Vinatzer, associate professor of plant pathology, physiology and weed science in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, www.cals.vt.edu/, at Virginia Tech, and an affiliated faculty member with the Fralin Life Science Institute. "First, farmers try to use seed that is free of the pathogen to prevent disease

outbreaks. Then, there are some disease-resistant tomato cultivars, but the pathogen has overcome this resistance by losing the gene that allowed these resistant plants to recognize it and defend themselves. For the rest, there are pesticides but the pathogen has become resistant against them."

So how exactly has the pathogen evolved to consistently evade eradication efforts? This is where science steps in, and a copy of the bacterial pathogen's game plan is crucial.

Thanks to the collaborative work of Vinatzer, Virginia Bioinformatics Institute, www.vbi.vt.edu/, computer scientist Joao Setubal, statistician Scotland Leman, and their students, the genome of several *Pseudomonas syringae* pv. *tomato* isolates have been sequenced in order to track the bacterial pathogen's ability to overcome plant defenses and to develop methods to prevent further spread.

Their findings were recently published in the August 2011 issue of



Thanks to the collaborative work of Virginia Tech's Boris Vinatzer, above, and other researchers the genome of several bacterial pathogen isolates have been sequenced in order to track their ability to overcome tomato plant defenses and to develop methods to prevent further spread.

PLoS Pathogens, a peer reviewed open-access journal published by the Public Library of Science.

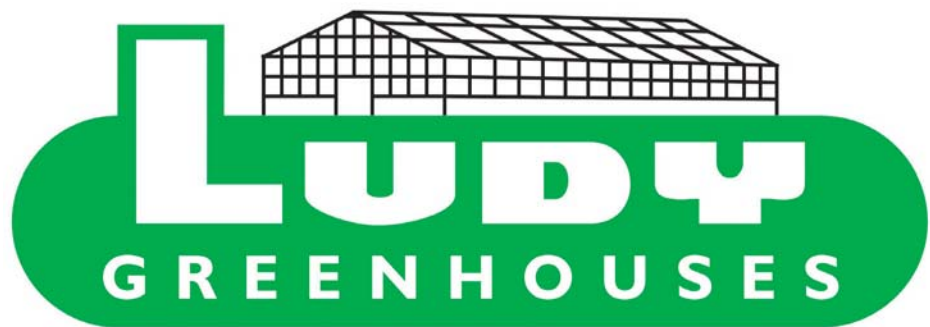
The research team has studied the pathogen for nearly five years. In 2007, with resources from the Virginia Bioinformatics Institute and the Fralin Life Science Institute, Vinatzer sequenced the genome of *Pseudomonas syringae* pv. *tomato* using a Roche GS-FLX™ sequencer at the Virginia Bioinformatics Institute.

In 2008, Vinatzer received a \$1 million, five-year Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) Award from the National Science Foundation to contin-

ue investigation of the pathogen. Shortly thereafter, he brought Setubal, a former Virginia Tech faculty member who recently went to work for the University of Sao Paulo in Brazil, and Leman, assistant professor of statistics at Virginia Tech, onto the project to handle the bioinformatics and statistical aspects of the research, respectively.

First, the scientists needed to map changes in the bacterial pathogen over large spans of time. They compared DNA sequences of bacteria isolated in multiple years, dating back to 1960

Tomato c7



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Empire State Fruit and Vegetable Expo

The 2012 Empire State Fruit and Vegetable Expo and Direct Marketing Conference, will be held Jan. 24-26, 2012 at the On Center in Syracuse, NY. More than 1,500 growers, researchers and industry professionals

flocked to the 2011 Expo featuring educational seminars and a large trade show.

Beans, Greenhouse and Tunnels, Pesticide Safety, and Sweet Corn.

2012 sessions will include: Flower Production, Flower Marketing, Labor, Potatoes, Tree Fruit, Tomatoes and Peppers, Cultural Controls, Direct Marketing, Pesticide Safety, Vine Crops, Leafy Greens, Cover Crops, Soil Health, Reduce Tillage, Berry Crops, Cabbage and other Cole Crops, Food Safety, Onions, Garlic, Peas and Snap

The 2012 Becker Forum will focus on: Farming in a Non-Farmer World: Building Trust, Engaging Communities and Finding Common Ground.

Joining the Expo this year will be NYS Flower Industries Inc.

"We are excited. We definitely will have to start thinking about changing

Expo c8

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Tomato from C5

and stored since then in international culture collections. Setubal, along with Nalvo Almeida, an associate professor at the Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul, provided automated genome annotation and helped Vinatzer

with identification and analysis of mutations that distinguished the sequenced genomes.

"One of the questions we asked was, 'did the bacteria isolated in 2000 directly evolve from the bacteria isolated in 1975, or did they evolve

independently from an ancestor that lived further back in time, maybe 100 to 200 years ago?" said Vinatzer.

To answer this question, Leman, Vinatzer, and Rongman Cai of Lixian, China, a graduate student in Virginia Tech's Department of Plant Pathology, Physiology, and Weed Science, used statistical methods to correlate the differences in the DNA sequences between the isolated bacteria with the years in which they were isolated to determine if the bacteria progressively became more different from the first bacteria isolated in 1960.

The research team found that the pathogen likely evolved on a relatively recent time scale and continues to adapt to the tomato by minimizing its recognition by the tomato immune system. This suggests that new pathogen variants with increased virulence are spreading around the globe unobserved, presenting a potential threat to biosecurity. Ultimately, it calls for more precise methods of pathogen identification to replace outdated taxonomic descriptions that were established at a time when it was impossible to classify bacteria precisely because the necessary molecular techniques had not been developed yet.

This particular pathogen is important to study because "it has been used as a model pathogen by many labs around the world and is economically significant because it reduced tomato quality and yield," said Vinatzer.

Currently, Vinatzer is extending the research project to investigate where the pathogen originally evolved, how it is spreading around the globe, and what can be done to interfere with its spread, including how the tomato might be engineered to be more resistant to the pathogen.

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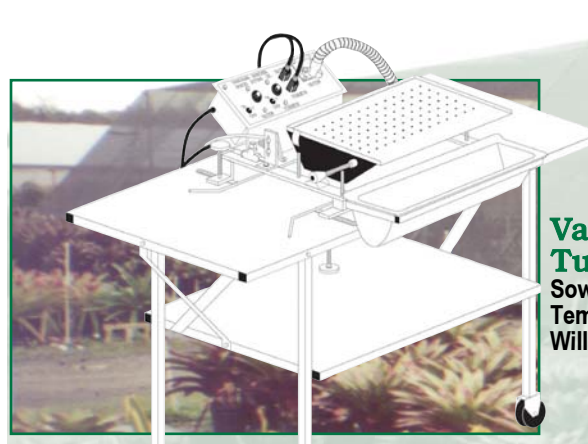
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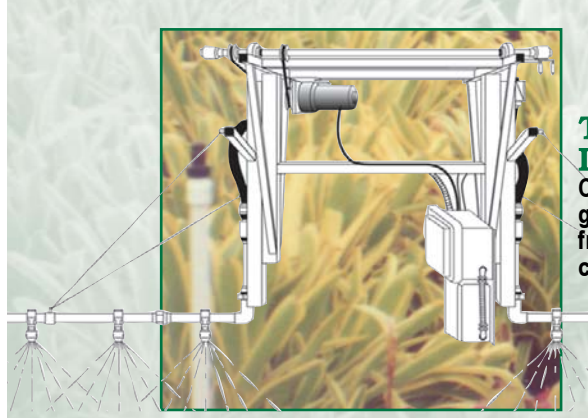
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our name. With the addition of Flower Industry sessions, and the Direct Marketing sessions bringing in a speaker on livestock direct marketing, plus our labor sessions which will also be important to dairymen, the name Empire State Fruit and Vegetable Expo 2012 just doesn't cover it all," laughs Marvin.

On Jan. 25, 2012 as part of the Fruit and Vegetable Expo, New York State Flower Industries will offer an afternoon of greenhouse topics. The session will cover a wide range of topics with exciting speakers. The sessions will include: Cultural Tips for Growing Proven Winners by Jessica Boldt from Pleasant View Gardens; Vegetable Varieties for Bedding Plant Sales by Bill Russell from Harris Seed; Save Time for Greenhouse Sanitation by Betsy Lamb from the NYS IPM program; New Plant Varieties and Opportunities for 2012 by Don Brown from Griffin; and an Update on Peat Moss Availability and Alternatives in Transplant Production with Neil Mattson from Cornell. Join us for the session and visit the huge agricultural trade show.

Labor Sessions move to the Expo

"The past several years, we've covered labor issues at the Becker Forum. In 2012, we are bringing the labor discussion to the main Expo site at the On Center. This will give those interested in labor a chance to attend DEC and CCA eligible sessions as well as a chance to visit our amazing trade show," adds Marvin.

This year's Expo will feature select sessions presented in Spanish.

Trickle Irrigation Workshop Sessions

Wondering if you are getting the most bang for your buck from your irrigation system?

To find out, join other successful growers and learn about Trickle or Drip Irrigation systems. During this session on Wednesday, Jan. 25, vegetable, fruit and flower growers from across the state will learn how to design a trickle system from expert Rob Rider of OA Newton Irrigation Sys-

tems in Bridgeville, DE.

Dr. Steve Reiners of the NYSAES at Cornell University will discuss how to know when to water and how to determine when crops have had enough. Bring your pencils because you will be asked to do a little math in this hands-on session.

Penn State Extension Specialist Steve Bogash will talk about adding nutrients or "fertigation" of vegetable crops and several growers from across the state will discuss how they use this low input, water saving mode of irrigation to their advantage on their own farms.

Berry Growers Gather

Join berry growers from across the state on Thursday, Jan. 26. This day long program features national expert Dr. Barclay Poling from North Carolina State speaking on Strawberry Plasticulture systems. Growing strawberries on black plastic mulch is commonplace for growers outside of the Northeast, and is rapidly becoming more important for New York state growers as they raise more day neutral berries and also try to control weed pests with fewer herbicides. Cornell University entomologist Dr. Greg Loeb will also share information about controlling insects in the longer

season day-neutral strawberry systems. Growers from across the state will share their experiences with plasticulture systems as well.

Bird control is one of the primary problems for berry growers nationwide. National experts Dr. Alan Eaton from the University of New Hampshire and Martin Lowney from the USDA Wildlife Service will share bird management strategies and make you aware of the legalities of bird control programs. Growers will share information about using netting effectively in berry plantings.

Cornell University researchers Dr. Kerik Cox,

Dr. Greg Loeb and Dr. Marvin Pritts will start the final session of the day with a discussion of some newer chemicals that have been introduced for use on berries in New York state. This discussion will also touch on some of the materials that may be used on Brown Marmorated Stink Bug and Spotted Winged Drosophila, two new invasive pests that were found this year in the New York.

The day will close with some new research information on High

Tunnel production of raspberries and blackberries. Dr. Marvin Pritts, Dr. Courtney Weber and Dr. Greg Loeb, all from Cornell, will talk about the potential of bramble crops in high tunnel production.

A special feature of the Berry Day at the Expo is a Grower Roundtable. The topic for the informal discussion is "Tools that make berry growing easier." Growers are invited to bring photos, small equipment or any

Expo c9

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ideas to share with the group. John Shenk of Eco-Weeder fame will be present to talk about his equipment with the group.

Another addition this year is a small poster session that will be held in the East Ballroom where the main sessions are held. Cornell researchers will have a few posters that discuss their latest research on view for berry growers.

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This year, the best hotel deal in town will be at the Genesee Grande, located just blocks from the On Center Expo site and Syracuse University. A special Expo rate of \$85 per night is bound to book the hotel early, so be sure to make your reservations now. Visit <https://www.reservations-page.com/C00264/H01405/be.ash>

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The Expo website has a new look and so much more.

The website for the 2012 Expo, www.nysvga.org, will be hosted under the NYS Vegetable Growers for the first time. But that's not the only change. The Web site will be able to process registrations and take credit card payments from attendees.

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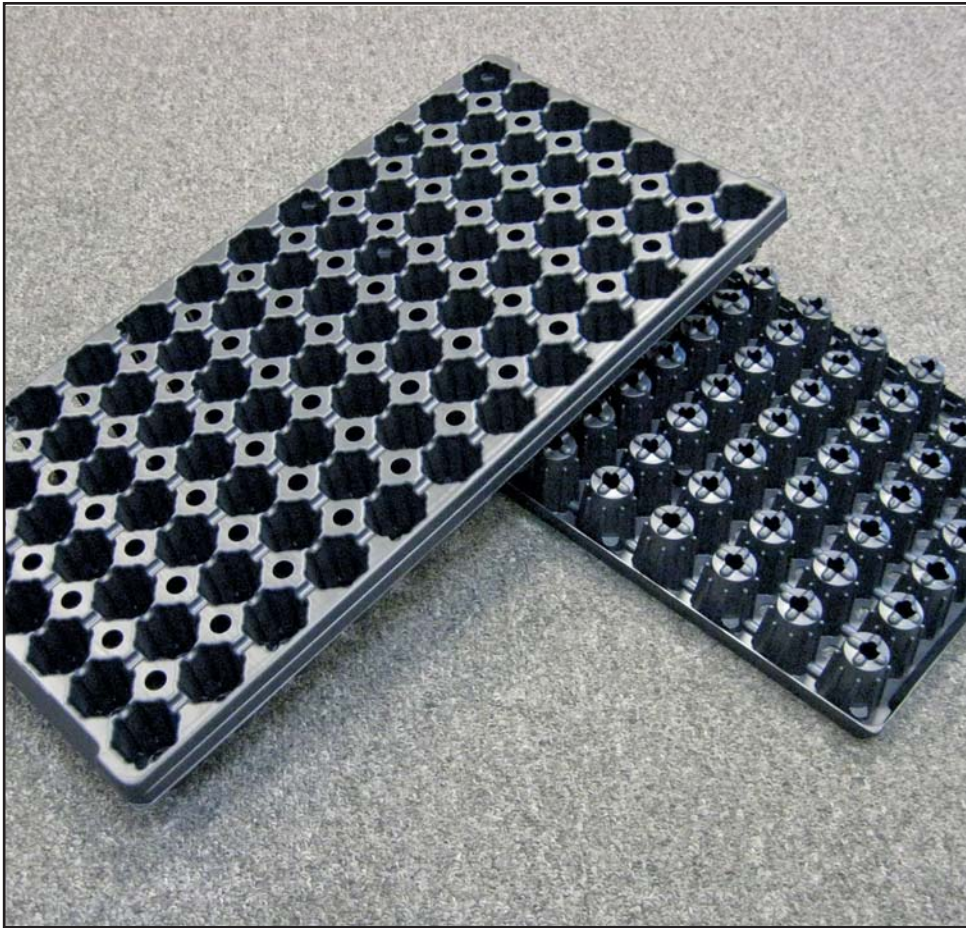
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Garlic growers warned to beware of imported nematode

New York State Agriculture Commissioner Darrel J. Aubertine recently alerted New York's garlic growers that Stem and Bulb Nematode (*Ditylenchus dipsaci*), a serious pest of garlic and other crops, has been found in the state on imported seed garlic. First spotted by Cornell Cooperative Extension vegetable specialist Christy Hoepfing in Orleans County in June 2010, the microscopic stem and bulb (bloat) nematode (*Ditylenchus dipsaci*) has now been identified in garlic seed and soil samples from 17 New York counties.

The commissioner provided advice to growers on options to help protect their crop, which is scheduled to be planted this month. The presence of Stem and Bulb Nematode, also known as the Bloat Nematode, in seed shipments destined for New York state has been confirmed by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Agricultural Specialists. Once estab-

lished, Stem and Bulb Nematode will cause a significant decline in production and, at times, death of the plants.

"Garlic is an important crop in New York. It is a valuable crop that has seen production increase," said Aubertine. "But, this pest presents a real threat to our garlic crop. Growers need to understand the threat and take precautions."

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) continues to work with CBP to identify and address pathways by which this nematode may enter the United States. Given the potential economic impact of this pest, APHIS has initiated a review to determine appropriate ways to prevent further spread within the U.S.

The Stem and Bulb Nematode is a microscopic worm that can cause yellowing and death to garlic plants. Some host crops can experience swelling and distortion of plant parts



Cornell nematologist George S. Abawi, left, with extension associate Robert Hadad checking garlic in the field.

and rotting of stem and human health, it can affect international trade of certain commodities. While the nematode poses no risk to

It is also nearly impossible to eliminate because it can survive on a range of other hosts, as well as the soil itself. Other host crops include onions, potatoes, alfalfa, strawberries and ornamental plants.

To help prevent Stem and Bulb Nematode from entering the country and impacting our local crop, growers should always require a valid phytosanitary certificate when they purchase foreign seed. If growers have concerns about a shipment of seed, they should contact their lo-

cal Cornell Cooperative Extension agent to have the seed tested. Garlic growers can also reach out to Cooperative Extension for testing to receive confirmation that a crop is nematode free.

The Department has also provided a \$69,122 grant to the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva for testing and analysis of garlic seed. The grant will also assist with de-

Garlic c13

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termining the extent of this pest's presence in New York.

Garlic Seed Foundation Director David Stern says the help will be invaluable to fighting "a real problem that starts slow but grows exponentially, and the next year can decimate your crop."

Some growers have suffered up to 80 percent crop loss, costing them several thousand dollars, as garlic can retail for more than \$10 a pound. The parasite also affects onions, leeks, chives, celery, some varieties of peas and lettuce and other plants; more than 120 plants can serve as a host.

"Ten percent of all New York vegetable farms report growing garlic. Its

high value per acre makes garlic a financially important aspect of our vegetable industry," said extension specialist Crystal Stewart.

Bloat nematode-infected plants are stunted, with yellow, limp leaves and suffer premature defoliation. Bulbs gradually discolor to dark brown, and become soft, lightweight and cracked.

Young nematodes feed on leaves, stems and bulbs, and adults move into the soil once plant tissues become too degraded. They can then spread to new sites through planting material, on contaminated equipment and by irrigation and surface water runoff.

Cornell nematologist George S. Abawi, Ph.D. '70, said farmers can lim-

it the pest's distribution and damage through crop rotation, debris removal, hot water washing of field equipment and moist soils, as the nematode likes dry conditions.

"Garlic growers must take a holistic approach to production, from site selection and pest control to proper harvesting and storage, and must not transport infected seed or planting material," Abawi said.

Hoepting warned that even "perfect-looking" bulbs can have low levels of nematode that eventually cause problems during production, so it is important to use clean seed. Abawi said clean soil is equally important, so both

should be tested.

"Growers do not help themselves by planting clean seed in infested ground," he added.

For more information about how to submit soil and seed samples for testing, contact Abawi at gsa1@cornell.edu. Cornell Cooperative Extension held three meetings last year where growers expressed their concerns regarding the possible presence of Stem and Bulb Nematode. The Garlic Seed Foundation has also been hearing from growers. According to David Stern, Director of the Foundation, "We are hearing from an in-

Garlic C14

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Maryland receives federal crop disaster designation for 15 counties

ANNAPOLIS, MD — Gov. Martin O'Malley received approval from U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Thomas Vilsack for Maryland's request for a disaster designation for widespread crop losses due to extreme weather conditions this year, which included excessive heat, drought, and damage resulting from Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee.

"Because farmers throughout most of Maryland experienced significant crop losses, we requested a disaster designation and thank Secretary Vilsack for granting it," said O'Malley. "It is our hope that the designation will provide relief to the farmers who need it and help them prepare for the next growing season."

"From April through October, Mary-

land farmers experienced widespread crop losses due to a variety of extreme weather conditions ranging from excessive heat, drought and flooding," said Buddy Hance, secretary of the Maryland Department of Agriculture. "Farmers in the disaster designation areas experienced market value losses exceeding 30 percent."

This designation makes farm operators in the 15 primary counties — Calvert, Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Frederick, Howard, Kent, Montgomery, Queen Anne's, St. Mary's, Somerset, Talbot, Washington, Wicomico and Worcester — as well as the counties of Allegany, Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Charles, Harford, Prince George's, and the independent city of Baltimore — eligible to be considered

for assistance from the USDA Farm Service Agency, provided eligibility requirements are met. Farmers must have purchased crop insurance on eligible crops to qualify for USDA disaster assistance programs.

This assistance includes USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) emergency loans and the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program. Farmers in eligible counties have eight

months from the date of a secretarial disaster declaration to apply for emergency loan assistance. FSA will consider each emergency loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of production losses, security available and repayment ability. SURE Program applications for 2011 crop losses will be accepted in 2012, when the 2011 farm revenue data required by statute becomes available.



Garlic from C13

creasing number of growers regarding problems with their garlic crop due to this Nematode. The attention to this issue by NYSDAM, Cooperative Extension, CBP, APHIS and Dr. George Abawi, with his work at Cornell, is greatly appreciated! We look forward to working with them to address what is becoming a very

serious problem for garlic growers."

In follow up, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) initiated Operation Stem Bloat Nematode, where they sampled all imported shipments of garlic for seed and found 40-50 percent of the shipments were infested with the nematode. "We were surprised at the volume of ship-

ments found to be infested with this nematode, given how clean and disease-free the garlic cloves appeared", said Ann Marie Paul, CBP Assistant Director of Field Operations, Buffalo, NY.

These findings initiat-

ed a temporary change in national protocol on seed garlic entering the country from Canada by requiring all shipments to be sampled and tested for the presence of this nematode.

According to the 2007

U.S. Census of Agriculture, New York has 330 garlic farms that dedicate 306 acres to garlic production. Garlic production is up considerably since 1992 when the state only reported 11 acres grown. The

vast majority of the garlic grown in New York state is marketed fresh and is valued at \$24.5 million. New York State is fourth in the nation in terms of acreage devoted to garlic production.

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