Program Update - Michael Fargione

Cornell Cooperative Extension Hudson Valley Regional Fruit Program (HVRFP)
Supervising County – Ulster Programming Period: 4/26/06-6/28/06

Highlighted Activities Completed During Reporting Period:

Peach Pruning Systems Demonstration – On April 27th, 25 fruit growers learned pruning techniques for 3 peach planting systems from Fargione and from Steve Hoying of the CCE Lake Ontario Fruit Team. The field demonstration was held at the peach systems trial at Mead Orchards in Dutchess County.

Pest Management and Crop Load Adjustment Meetings – Petal Fall Field Meetings were held May 10th at Fix Bros. Orchard (Columbia Co.; 35 attendees) and Crist Bros. Orchard (Ulster Co.; 65 attendees). Season-specific recommendations on insect, disease and cropload (thinning) management were presented by Cornell staff (Jentsch, Robinson and Rosenberger). Due to the challenging season, a follow-up meeting was held May 22 at the HVL where attendees (40) heard updated recommendations from Robinson and Rosenberger.

Sprayer Technology Workshop – Ulster (Rusinek, Fargione) and Orange (Ulrich) County CCE's sponsored a spray technology workshop on June 12th at Truncali Farms in Ulster County. Over 40 growers learned techniques for improving spray deposition and reducing pesticide drift from Dr. A. Landers of Cornell NYSAES.

Highlighted Efforts Underway During Reporting Period:

Search Committees for HVL Staff Positions – I continue as a member of the Cornell HVL Entomologist and Horticulturalist search committees. The Ent. Committee's completed its task and Cornell hired Peter Jentsch as a Sr. Extension Associate in Entomology. The Horticulturalist committee reviewed 12 applications and interviewed 2 candidates before making a hiring recommendation. A job offer to one candidate is imminent.

Grower alert messages: Delivery of grower alert messages went from daily to twice-weekly during June. During the reporting period, 42 messages were distributed by email to each of 130 individuals. An unknown number of additional growers access the alerts via the recorded telephone message.

Individual grower assistance: This has been a challenging growing season resulting in frequent inquiries relating to tree fruit production and pest management. Numerous calls were addressed on a daily basis and farm visits have been completed at the request of growers in program counties.

Apple Trail: At their request, I am collaborating with growers to form a NYS-designated apple trail in New Paltz.

Ongoing research projects (locations; collaborators):

Size improvement of 'Gala' apples (W.G. Minard & Sons; Dr. Terence Robinson NYSAES Geneva).
Expansion of Northeast Weather Association into Eastern NY (Minard Farms, Fraleigh Rose Hill Farm; Dr. Juliet Carroll NYS IPM, Kevin Iungerman NENY Fruit Program).
Apple rootstock demonstration trial (Crist Bros. Orchards; Dr. Terence Robinson NYSAES Geneva).
Peach training systems demonstration trial (Mead Orchards; Steve Hoying LOFT, Dr. Terence Robinson NYSAES Geneva).
Apple high-density planting system trial (Dressel Farms; Dr. Terence Robinson NYSAES Geneva).
NC140 apple rootstock trial (Minard Farms; Dr. Terence Robinson NYSAES Geneva).
Grower evaluation of 5 new Cornell-Geneva apple cultivars (Yonder Farms, Fix Bros Orchards, Mead Orchards, W. G. Minard & Sons, Stone Ridge Orchards, Prospect Hill Orchard, Crist Bros. Orchards, Ochs Orchards; Dr. Susan Brown NYSAES Geneva).

Meetings Participated in During Reporting Period:

Outcome Statements (5/2/06; CCE Dutchess Co.).
Berry Crop Extension Meeting; Statewide Fruit Team Facilitated Discussion (6/1/06; Cornell, Ithaca).
NYFVI Grant Writing Workshop (6/6/06; CCE Albany).
Biofuels Working Group (6/8/06; Ulster Fairgrounds).
NYSDEC Deer Damage Workshop (6/27/06; SUNY New Paltz).

Supervising County Activities During Reporting Period:

Wildlife control presentation for Ulster Garden Day (4/27/06).
Ag Farmland Protection Board meetings (5/4/06, 6/8/06).
Provide donated cider for 4H Golf Tournament (5/18/06).
Ag District Inclusion tour and recommendations (with T. Rusinek of CCEUC and V. Craft of UC Planning).
Driver Safety Instruction Course (6/22/06)