

Program Update - Michael Fargione

Cornell Cooperative Extension Hudson Valley Regional Fruit Program (HVRFP)
Supervising County – Ulster Programming Period: 1/1/07 – 3-6-07

Highlighted Activities Completed During Reporting Period:

Pruning Demonstrations – Demonstrations for growers and their farm workers were held on January 16, 2007 at Fix Bros. Orchard in Columbia Co., and at Crist Bros. in Ulster Co. Approximately 100 attendees learned the latest pruning techniques from S. Hoying, T. Robinson and myself.

Railex Tour – About 15 growers and agribusiness representatives attended the tour of the new rail distribution center in Rotterdam on January 30, 2007. This facility and its sister facility in WA facilitate movement and distribution of produce from the west coast to NY in 3-4 days at considerable energy savings. The tour helped growers be aware of possible competition with sale of local produce and opportunities to ship local produce west on the train's return trip.

2007 Empire State Fruit & Vegetable Expo – I helped with agenda planning, and then facilitated one session of the Expo tree fruit program held February 15, 2007 in Syracuse. There were 80 growers present despite blizzard conditions.

2007 Hudson Valley Fruit Grower's School – Hudson Valley Fruit Growers' School was held February 26-28, and March 2, 2007 at the Holiday Inn in Kingston. The meeting was well attended as follows: Day 1 Berries – 45 attendees; Day 2 Tree Fruit – 150 attendees; Day 3 Tree Fruit – 100 attendees; Day 4 Grapes – 60 attendees. Growers at the tree fruit sessions learned about apple production, marketing and cultivar development, pear and stone fruit cultivars adapted for our area and stone fruit pest management. One highlight of the meeting was the mini-session held on Day 3 regarding the impacts of global climate change on agriculture. A trade show held the evening of Day 2 with 31 vendors, providing growers with an opportunity to interact with agri-business representatives. In addition to meeting organization, I made presentations on NE Indicators of Climate Change, and on Best Practices for Wildlife Damage Mitigation in Vineyards.

Highlighted Efforts Underway During Reporting Period:

Farm Energy Conservation and Use of Alternative Fuel Project – Ulster and Orange CCE staff applied for and received a 1-year CCE Director's Grant to begin researching opportunities for farmers to reduce greenhouse gases by improving on-farm energy conservation practices and through the use of sustainable alternatives to fossil fuels. The outreach efforts from this work will be available to growers throughout the regional fruit program.

Research projects (locations, collaborators; activities during reporting period):

Expansion of Northeast Weather Association into Eastern NY (Minard Farms, Fraleigh Rose Hill Farm; Dr. Juliet Carroll NYS IPM, Kevin Iungerman NENY Fruit Program; The Minard station was replaced with a wireless unit and is currently being adapted to the site. Efforts are underway to identify 2 additional sites for weather stations.

Supervising County Activities during Reporting Period:

Ag Economic Development position discussion meetings
Ag Farmland Protection Board meetings
Deer Damage Mitigation presentation at New Paltz Library