Program Update - Michael Fargione

Cornell Cooperative Extension Hudson Valley Regional Fruit Program (HVRFP)
Supervising County – Ulster Programming Period: 3/4/06 – 4/25/06

Highlighted Activities Completed During Reporting Period:

Apple Pest Control In-Depth Workshop for Hudson Valley Growers – Thirty-six individuals participated in this day-long workshop held at the NYSAES Hudson Valley Lab, Highland on March 15. Pest management information presented by Rosenberger and Jentsch (NYSAES HVL) was tailored to current apple insect and disease control options and local conditions. The goal was to help growers understand and build effective season-long pest management programs. A resource notebook was compiled and distributed to participants and to other growers who could not attend but were interested in the updated information.

Wine and Must Lab Techniques Workshop – I attended and helped facilitate this two-day workshop on lab techniques for the production of fruit wines which was held March 17 & 18 at the HVL, Highland The workshop was taught by Dragana Dimitrejevic of Cornell NYSAES Geneva Station and local winery owners/staff. Ten individuals completed the training.

Special Permit Training Sessions were held on March 28 (HVL, Highland), March 29 (CCE, Hudson) and April 19 (HVL, Highland). Debbie Breth (LOFT) and I collaborated to prepare the materials while Steve McKay and I conducted the training in English or Spanish. The 3 sessions helped 23 farm operators and 83 workers comply with DEC requirements for on-site supervision of workers handling and making applications of restricted use pesticides. DEC Regions 3 & 4 staff monitored the training and issued the permits.

Highlighted Efforts Underway During Reporting Period:

Search Committees for HVL Staff Positions – I continue as an active member of the search committees for the vacant Entomologist and Horticulturalist positions at the HVL, Highland. The Entomologist committee has completed interviews with 3 final candidates and has made its hiring recommendations. The Horticulturalist committee is reviewing the background information on 12 candidates and will recommend interviews for a subset of these individuals.

Grower alert messages: Delivery of daily (Monday-Friday) grower alert messages resumed on March 20. To date, 31 messages have been prepared in consultation with Cornell staff during this reporting period. This e-mail message is now sent to 130 individuals, while the recorded telephone message is used by other growers.

Individual grower assistance: The spring season brings an increase in grower inquiries relating to tree fruit production and pest management. Numerous calls are addressed on a daily basis.

Climate Change and Agriculture Workshop: I attended this professional development workshop held in Windsor CT on April 4, 2006. Information from this meeting has already been presented to FARMNET staff (see below) and will be incorporated into other presentations and newsletters in coming months.

Ongoing research projects (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).

New research projects started this spring (collaborators):
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 (8 growers over Columbia, Dutchess, Orange and Ulster Counties, Dr. Susan Brown NYSAES Geneva).

Supervising County Activities During Reporting Period:

4/10/06 – PDR planning session with CCE and Ulster County Planning Department, Kingston, NY.
4/10/06 – Presentation on Climate Change and Agriculture to FARMNET counselors at CCE Kingston.