

Program Update - Michael Fargione

Cornell Cooperative Extension Hudson Valley Regional Fruit Program (HVRFP)
Supervising County – Ulster Programming Period: 6/28/06-10/31/06

Highlighted Activities Completed During Reporting Period:

Search Committees for HVL Staff Positions – I served on the search committees for new Extension Associate positions in Entomology and in Horticultural Sciences. Candidates are now working in these positions (Entomology – Peter Jentsch; Horticulture – Steve Hoying).

Grower alert messages: Grower alert messages were delivered twice-weekly during June-August. During the reporting period, 22 messages were distributed by email to each of 130 individuals. An unknown number of additional growers accessed the alerts via the recorded telephone message.

Apple Harvest and Storage Meeting: On August 10, 23 growers, field consultants and industry representatives attended the afternoon meeting held at the Hudson Valley Lab. They heard predictions from Cornell staff (Jentsch, Rosenberger, Robinson, Watkins and Fargione) on what to expect regarding the coming harvest and storage season and what best practices were recommended for dealing with these conditions.

Apple Harvest Maturity Evaluation Program - This program helped growers optimize the timing of apple harvests to improve fruit quality and storability. Fruit samples were collected from grower blocks in different parts of the region and the maturity of sampled fruit were evaluated. Eight weekly reports were prepared this fall and distributed to growers via email or recorded answering machine. Additional short reports were distributed to give growers an earlier update on changing conditions.

Highlighted Efforts Underway During Reporting Period:

2007 Hudson Valley Fruit Grower's School – Planning is underway for the next Hudson Valley Fruit Growers' School to be held February 26-28, 2007 at the Holiday Inn in Kingston. Day 1 agenda is berries and is being planned by McKay. Day 2 & 3 will be tree fruit and is being planned by Fargione.

2007 NY Fruit & Vegetable Expo – I have been contributing to planning efforts for one of the Expo tree fruit sessions to be held February 15-17, 2007 in Syracuse.

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

Size improvement of 'Gala' apples (W.G. Minard & Sons; Dr. Terence Robinson NYSAES Geneva; I coordinated harvests with the growers and supervised collection of harvest data during one harvest).
Expansion of Northeast Weather Association into Eastern NY (Minard Farms, Fraleigh Rose Hill Farm; Dr. Juliet Carroll NYS IPM, Kevin Iungerman NENY Fruit Program; I worked on repairing the Minard station and collaborated on a plan to replace and relocate this unit to another site on the same farm).
Peach training systems demonstration trial (Mead Orchards; Steve Hoying NYSAES HVL, Dr. Terence Robinson NYSAES Geneva; I collected this season's harvest data).
Apple high-density planting system trial (Dressel Farms; Dr. Terence Robinson NYSAES Geneva; I continued to work with the grower on tree training and support system installation).
NC140 apple rootstock trial (Minard Farms; Dr. Terence Robinson NYSAES Geneva; I continued to work with the grower on tree training and support system installation).
Apple Quality Project (growers: Yonder Farms, Fix Bros., Bartollatta Bros., G. Saulpaugh & Son, Dressel Farms, Crist Bros., W. G. Minard & Sons, B. Trapanni, Porpiglia Farms; Cornell collaborators: Robinson, Hoying, Breth, Iungerman; contacted growers and set up 26 local plots; collected field data and harvest samples; analyzed fruit maturity and internal ethylene levels on a weekly basis).

Meetings Participated in During Reporting Period:

6/29/06 – Risk Management Education Opportunities; CCE Albany
7/26/06 – Statewide apple crop forecast conference call; NY Apple Association
8/15/06 – hosted crop insurance adjustor training session at HVL

Supervising County Activities during Reporting Period:

Lunch & Learn – Global Climate Change (Fargione and Rusinek – 7/27/06)
Ulster County Fair (8/6/06)
Ulster Agriculture display set-up for 'Meet Me in Marlboro' (8/7/06)
Hudson Valley Wine Festival (9/8/06)
Ag Farmland Protection Board meetings (8/17/06, 10/26/06).
Highland 4H science/environment club presentation (Fargione and Jentsch - 10/20/06)