

Program Update - Michael Fargione

Cornell Cooperative Extension Hudson Valley Regional Fruit Program (HVRFP)
Supervising County – Ulster Programming Period: 7-11-08 through 9-17-08

Highlighted Activities Completed During Reporting Period:

An orchard tour was held on 8/2/08 for attendees of the International Society for Horticultural Science workshop. Steve Hoying and I hosted 50 scientists/extension professionals from North America, Western and Eastern Europe, South Africa, Japan, Australia and New Zealand prior to their meeting in Geneva, NY. As part of the HV tour, attendees visited local farms (Dressel Farms, Porpiglia Farms, Crist Bros. Orchards and Prospect Hill Orchards), viewed Cornell research and extension activities, and spoke with growers about Hudson Valley fruit production practices.

Ten grower/storage operators attended **the Harvest and Storage Workshop** held 8/19/2008 at Cornell's Hudson Valley Lab, Highland, NY. Growers learned about issues relating to this season's late insect and disease management, harvest timing and conditions, and fruit storage issues from Cornell staff M. Fargione, P. Jentsch, T. Robinson, D. Rosenberger and C. Watkins.

On August 27, 2008, I **judged commercial apple entries submitted to the Columbia Co Fair.**

Highlighted Efforts Currently Underway:

14 Grower Alert Messages were delivered to 158 commercial growers, extension and research staff in 4 NE States during the reporting period (80+ messages delivered this year). Prepared in collaboration with Cornell staff, these e-mail messages keep growers informed of pest management, horticulture and other production issues at critical times to enhance their decision making capabilities. Messages included web links to additional resources like web sites, photographs, integrated pest management data, scouting summaries and video clips produced in collaboration with Cornell staff.

Numerous **farm visits** have been conducted throughout the growing region to provide growers with hands-on training in pest scouting, insect and disease control practices and horticultural techniques.

Efforts continue on the **NY Tall Spindle Training System Project**. The project, funded by the NY Farm Viability Institute, is being conducted in collaboration with Cornell researchers T. Robinson and S. Hoying and will result in increased adoption of this cost effective system by NY growers. Adoption will be facilitated by production and distribution of a "how-to" CD distributed to apple growers throughout NY, "how-to" video clips placed on the Cornell Fruit web page, and exposure of growers to the system at cooperating grower demonstration plantings. During this reporting period, **individual tree identification tags and interpretive signage was installed at the demonstration planting at Dressel Farms**. In addition, 25 growers, crop consultants and extension personnel from NY, NJ and MA attended a **field workshop held at the demonstration planting on August 19, 2008**. At the meeting, Dr. T. Robinson described the training system, rootstocks and cultural practices that are used in the Tall Spindle system.

The **Harvest Maturity Evaluation Program** helps growers optimize the harvest timing of apple and pear cultivars to improve fruit quality and storability. Fruit samples are being collected from grower blocks in different parts of the region and the maturity of sampled fruit were evaluated. So far, 6 reports have been prepared and distributed to growers via email or recorded answering machine during the reporting period.

Activities Related to the Supervising County:

Farm Labor Housing Project – continued to assist in project as a member of project steering committee.

Ulster County Fair – attended and staffed booth on 8/1/08.