

# Rhode Island

October 2002



# Ag-Review

RI Ag-Review is a publication of the RIDEM/Division of Agriculture, 235 Promenade Street, Providence, RI 02908 401-222-2781

## Chief's Corner

by: Ken Ayars, Chief,  
RI Division of Agriculture

### Drought Response

Rhode Island experienced drought in 2002, similar to the drought which occurred in 1999. Despite recent rains, the drought is still considered to be ongoing, as the state has a long way to go to make up for the rainfall deficit which has occurred over the past 8 to 12 months.

Farmers have been effected, the severity of the impact depending upon farm location and capability of existing water supply and irrigation system. Unirrigated crops were generally the most severely impacted (silage corn, hay etc), and/or crops where the irrigation system or water supply was not adequate to meet the demand. The Division of Agriculture has assisted close to 50 farmers this summer with pond projects, through the expedited wetland permitting process which is available during drought. Please contact me (ext. 4500) or Lis Peterman of my staff (ext. 7261) for information or assistance in this regard.

Governor Almond has requested that Secretary of Agriculture Veneman declare RI a disaster area due to drought, as crop losses in many instances have exceeded the 30 percent threshold. The Secretary's approval of this request will make available certain federal programs to assist with Disaster Response, namely 1) low interest farm loans, 2) cost share assistance for farm ponds/wells. Please contact the USDA/Farm Services

Agency for further information at 401-828-8232.

While the drought has caused crop losses, farmers still have experienced strong sales at farmers markets/roadside stands, and with other segments of the RI agricultural industry. Marketing RI farms and produce is important at all times, and we consider this to be one of our primary missions. We have numerous programs to accomplish this, and always appreciate your ideas and feedback (contact Steve Volpe, Deputy Chief ext. 4501).

## Marketing Update

## Crop Report

Fall has arrived in the Ocean State. Summer is now gone, but this growing season continues to deliver wonderful "Rhode Island Grown Fresher and Better-Take Some Home" vegetables and fruits to your kitchen table. The weather in the spring was considerably wet and cool. This meant many farmers decided to plant later in the season. Great news, because there is so many different vegetables and fruits still available at your Rhode Island farm, roadside stand, and farmers market. Tomatoes, corn, melons, cabbage, eggplant, peppers, apples and the list continues. Furthermore, this growing season is providing incredible tastes to all Rhode Island Grown Produce. The DEM/RI DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE encourages you to try a fresh new crop of fresh Rhode Island Grown apples One word describes it all. DELICIOUS! So please don't wait. Rush down to your Rhode Island farmer, roadside stand, and farmers market. Enjoy!

## RETAIL RHODE ISLAND GROWN PRODUCE FOR THE WEEK OF

SEPTEMBER 22, 2002

Apples	\$.99lb-\$1.49lb.
Basil	\$.69/lb.
Beans	\$1.49/lb.
Cabbage	\$.39/lb.
Corn	\$4.59 Dozen
Cucumbers	\$.59lb.
Eggplant	\$.99lb.
Melons	\$ 2.99lb.
Peppers	\$1.49lb.
Potatoes	\$2.99(10lb. Bag) \$15.00(50lb. Bag)
Pumpkins	\$.45lb.
Squash	\$.79
Swiss Chard	\$.99lb.
Tomatoes	\$1.49lb.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Senior Living Exhibition  
October 1, 2002  
Warwick Mall, Warwick, RI

Rhode Island Giant Pumpkin  
Championship  
October 12, 2002  
Rain Date: October 13, 2002  
Begins at 10:00AM  
Frerichs Farm and Greenhouse  
43 Kinnicut Avenue  
Warren, RI  
For Further Information Telephone 222-  
2781, Ext: 4518 or 245-8245 or Don  
Langevin at 508-222-9069

Rhode Island Harvest Festival  
Sponsored by: DEM/Div.  
of Agriculture  
October 17- 20, 2002  
Warwick Mall in Warwick, RI

# Pesticide Briefs

## Health Environmental and Pesticide Safety Education Training

**Private Certification:** if you produce an agricultural commodity such as vegetable, fruit, turf or nursery and apply "restricted use" pesticides to control pests.

**Commercial License:** if you work for hire applying "general use" pesticides to control pests.

**Commercial Certification:** if you work for hire and apply "restricted use" pesticides to control pests.

**Pesticide Dealer:** if you sell "restricted use" pesticides.

**Training Requirements:** All applicators listed above are required to attend the core training which consists of 2 days with an exam in the afternoon of the second day. Individuals that would like to become commercially certified are required to attend category training in their specialty area.

**Preregistration is required by mail. Call Margaret Siligato if you need a confirmation.**

## Recertification Reminder:

Every 5 years you need to recertify by attending an *Approved Course*. Our category classes offer credit in your category area. Use the registration form and indicate you are recertifying. Private applicators can attend day 2 of core sessions for recertification credit.

**For More Information: Margaret Siligato at URI (401) 874-5997 or Robin Chapman at DEM (401) 222-2781 x4513**

## AGRICULTURAL LAND VALUES:

The January 1, 2002 New England farm real estate value, including land and buildings, averaged \$3,125 per acre, up eight percent from the previous year. Every state in the region showed an average value per acre increase from 2000 to 2001. Connecticut and Rhode Island farm real estate averaged \$7,300 per acre; the second highest valued acreage in the 48 states, trailing only New Jersey, which averaged \$8,000 per acre. New England's cropland values rose seven percent above a year earlier to \$5,120 per acre. Pasture land averaged \$4,330 per acre in a regional comparison which included Delaware.

# Animal Health Issues

## EQUINE ARBOVIRUS REPORTING PROTOCOL

Rhode Island equine now face endemic infections of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) and West Nile Virus (WNV). These encephalitic viruses, as well as Rabies, represent a human health risk and are reportable in Rhode Island. In order to facilitate investigation and reporting of these diseases, all clinical cases and mortalities must be reported immediately to the State Veterinarian.

Symptoms of equine encephalitis vary and can be suppressed by treatment. Sudden, progressive onset of encephalitis symptoms, with or without fever, should be evaluated immediately by a veterinarian. Common signs of encephalitis are depression, apprehension, poor appetite, muscle twitching, head shaking, incoordination, stumbling, wandering, head pressing, hind limb weakness, seizures, recumbancy and death. Rabies and other diseases will also present with these signs. Clinical animals should be isolated until diagnosed and housed in a safe area should the animals collapse or fall. The attending veterinarian can initiate treatment and diagnostics. All clinical cases and mortalities must be reported immediately. Blood, Cerebrospinal fluid or brain tissue should be submitted for testing.

Vaccination is available from a licensed veterinarian. The manufacturer recommends 2 initial vaccines administered 3-6 weeks apart. Immunity is not expected until approximately 2-3 weeks after the second booster. Annual boosters are required. Studies suggest that immunity lasts 8-10 months. Many practitioners are recommending boosters in the early fall or every 6-8 months in highly endemic areas. The vaccine is considered safe and effective.

Farms and stables should practice the following mosquito abatement measures: keeping animals in at dawn, dusk and night, frequent application of repellents, screening in barns, appropriate ventilation, covering farm equipment, emptying or frequent changing of water

## Fall Training Schedule 2002

**Core II, Day 1 Wed. Oct 16, URI Kingston,  
East Farm 8:00 am - 4 pm**

**Day 2 Thurs. Oct 31, URI Kingston, East Farm  
8:00 am - 4 pm**

**Core III Day1 Wed. Nov. 20 URI Kingston East  
Farm 8:00 am - 4 pm**

**Day 2 Thurs. Dec. 5 URI Kingston, East Farm  
8:00 am - 4 pm**

**Category 7A Household Thurs Nov 7, URI Kingston  
East Farm 8:00 am - 4 pm**

**Category 7D Vertebrate Thurs Nov 7, URI Kingston  
East Farm 8:00 am - 4 pm**

**Category 7B Termite Thur Dec 12, URI Kingston  
East Farm 8:00 am - 4 pm**

troughs and buckets, removal of tires, scrap and waste, application of larvacide to ponds and elimination of stagnant pools. Preventing standing water can minimize the breeding of mosquito and occurrence of larvae. Workers and families should wear protective clothing and apply repellents when outside and exposed to biting mosquitoes.

RIDEM Division of Agriculture will provide arboviral reporting forms and instructions for blood sample submissions. Veterinarians will be required to collect blood from suspect animals and complete a submission form, detailing the history, vaccination status and clinical signs. Staff from Animal Health, and if necessary, Mosquito Abatement, will pick up samples upon request and submit them to the University of Connecticut Veterinary Diagnostic Lab for IgM Capture Elisa testing. Results are generally available within 24 to 72 hours. There is no cost to the veterinarian or owner. Copies of the submission form will be given to the State Veterinarian for review. Division of Agriculture staff will track each case and will only initiate farm visits if deemed necessary by the State Veterinarian. Animals that die or are suspected of having EEE, Rabies or other reportable disease, will be investigated immediately by field staff, which will collect the appropriate laboratory specimens. Clinical WNV suspects will warrant notification of the property owner and veterinarian of appropriate measures for mosquito control and personal protection. WNV mortalities will require field staff to collect cerebrospinal fluid and brain specimens for submission to Rhode Island Department of Health for viral isolation or PCR testing. The State Veterinarian will report all probable and confirmed cases immediately to the Division of Agriculture, Rhode Island Department of Health and Mosquito Abatement.

Veterinarians and horse owners will be instructed to proceed with diagnosis and treatment of the animal(s). Owners will be instructed to not wait for the state's results in order to make decisions concerning the animal's care or well being. Horse owners should work with their private veterinarian independent of the state's testing. If animals are

euthanized, then the State Veterinarian will request collection of CSF and brain tissue for further diagnostics.

The State requires that all encephalitis cases be reported. Veterinarians are assisting the State in its surveillance of arboviral diseases. The information is confidential and will only be reported to state and national officials as part of the valuable epidemiological data used by public health offices. Any reporting to the public will be general and not specify the location or farm from which the animal came. The State Veterinarian will report the results privately with the owners and veterinarians as soon as all testing has been completed and the results evaluated.

This protocol and accompanying public awareness information may be reproduced and provided to farmers, animal owners and veterinarians. Additional literature and information can be obtained through the contacts listed below. Please refer to the websites provided for general information. Establishing this protocol as a long term method for reporting and surveillance will provide a standardized procedure that the equine industry will become familiar with and comply with, allowing the state staff to focus their resources on selected cases while continuing to monitor for Rabies, EEE and other diseases. The cooperation of all equine owners and veterinarians is appreciated.

#### **PLEASE REPORT ALL CASES OF EQUINE ENCEPHALITIS TO:**

**Monday to Friday 8:30am – 4:00pm  
(except holidays)**

Rhode Island State Veterinarians Office  
Department of Environmental Management  
Division of Agriculture, Animal Health  
Section  
Room 370  
235 Promenade Street  
Providence, RI 02908  
401-222-2781  
401-222-6047 (fax)

**After Hours (>4pm) Holidays and Weekends—Emergencies and Mortalities Only** – Clinical cases and stable animals should be reported during regular hours. Contact Rhode Island DEM Enforcement (401) 222-2284 or Local Animal Control Officers.

#### **Submission of blood samples:**

- 1) Collect 2 large (10cc) red top serum tubes for blood samples, allow clotting, then centrifuging if possible.
- 2) Label both tubes clearly with animal identification, date collected and owners name.
- 3) Complete Arboviral Encephalitis Submission Forms, including both the farm and animal owners contact information, a complete vaccination history and clinical impressions.
- 4) Place both the tubes and the forms in a laboratory transport container or bag and refrigerate.
- 5) Call the State Veterinarians office and provide the address, and phone number of the veterinary clinic or farm where the samples can be picked up.

#### **Additional Information – please refer to these websites**

Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management Website: <http://www.state.ri.us/dem/>  
Rhode Island Department of Health Website: <http://www.health.state.ri.us/>  
Rhode Island Veterinary Medical Association Website: <http://www.rivma.org/>  
United States Department of Agriculture Website: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/oa/wnv/>

## *Plant Industry*

The Plant Industry Section administers the Rhode Island Certified Organic Program, by which qualified producers are certified as growing organic produce. Beginning in 1990, crops were certified by standards developed by the Rhode Island Organic Certification Committee. This year, the National Organic Standards have been adopted and the program is in the process of being accredited by the USDA. As of October 22, 2002, any raw or processed farm products sold as organic must be produced according to the National

standards. Any farm with gross income from organic products over \$5,000.00 must be certified by an accredited certifier. Exempt farms are required to comply with the production and record keeping requirements of the standards.

To become certified, a producer or handler must submit an application, organic plan, soil test results, and field history reports to the Division of Agriculture. These documents are then reviewed by the certification committee, which is comprised of three Division personnel and two organic farmers. When the application documents are complete, an inspector from the Division visits the farm to verify that the farmer is following the plan. After the committee approves the inspection reports, the farm can be certified.

Organic farmers are limited to using non-synthetic fertilizers and pest control materials on their farms. Manure must be composted according to requirements detailed in the standards or applied 90 or 120 days before harvest, depending on the type of crop being grown. The National Organic Standards Board must approve any synthetic materials used, and also has a list of non-synthetic materials it has determined are not appropriate for use on organic farms.

Certification is currently available for crops and processed products. There are plans to expand the program to include wild crops and livestock. Copies of the National Organic Standards can be viewed online at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/nop2000/nop2/finalrulepages/finalrulemap.htm>. Printed copies and the Rhode Island regulations for certification are available from the Division. For more information on the program, please contact Dan Lawton at 222-2781 x 4516.

## Classifieds

### JOHN DEERE TRACTOR, ALMOST NEW

2000, Model 790, 30HP Diesel, 4wd, Front End Loader, Rear PTO, Industrial Tires, Heavy Duty Battery, Dual Rear Lights, Custom Seat Cover, Engine Coolant Heater, and Two New Rear Implements: Land Pride 60" Three Spindle Mower, Land Pride 50" Rotary Tiller. All in Immaculate Condition. Asking \$17,500. Contact Mark Weston at 401-539-8711 or 401-474-4565.

### CONTINENTAL CARGO UTILITY TRAILER 2002

5' wide x 12' long, interior height 6', 15" radial tires w/ white painted rims  
EXTERIOR: Gold (Aluminum Skin), Durable Steel Frame, 3 Screened, sliding windows, 3 lower scoop/vent/closeable vents and 1 center roof closeable vent for heat removal, 2 exterior doors 1 rear, 1 side both have semi-type locks, Diamond plate stone guard on the front of the trailer, Marker and brake lights  
INTERIOR: 3 / 8" Plywood interior walls (painted white), 3 / 4" Plywood floor covered with vinyl floor tiles, 2 12 volt power outlets one in rear and triple in front, 2 interior ceiling mounted lights with a wall switch, Used 4 times originally  
Purchased June 2002, BRAND NEW CONDITION  
Price \$3595.00 401-567-7997

International Harvester Manure Spreader  
Seventy-five bushel. Wheel Driven. In good condition. \$500.00.  
Telephone 401-539-2300

*If you have a farm item for sale, trade, etc and would like to have it included in our next edition, please call Ron Newman at 222-2781 x 4518 or email him at [rnewman@dem.state.ri.us](mailto:rnewman@dem.state.ri.us)*



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*Visit us at [www.state.ri.us/dem](http://www.state.ri.us/dem)*

