Some thoughts/updates on a few recent activities: A milestone occurred recently when the Department of Health (HEALTH) granted approval to Don Minto, of Watson Farm Jamestown, to sell locally raised beef at a Rhode Island farmers market. This follows many months of discussion with HEALTH about approving this type of venue, and working out processes and procedures. We will continue to work towards meeting the potential local beef has in the Rhode Island marketplace. There are additional issues to face, such as local processing capability. However the demand is obvious and meetings with growers will continue to help coalesce the industry and develop the marketplace in RI. Contacts in this regard are Tom Sandham, Eastern RI Conservation District (624-7490), and Fred Launer, Division of Agriculture (222-2781 ext. 4515).

Local farmstead cheeses also have strong potential. Recent statutory changes (via a bill introduced by Sen. Breene) have legalized raw milk or farmstead cheese production in Rhode Island. The Division of Agriculture arranged a bus tour of close to 40 individuals to visit a New Hampshire farm that makes farmstead cheeses on November 18th, and will continue efforts to develop the industry. Making cheese on the farm has become a significant part of agriculture in Vermont, New Hampshire etc, and will be a component of farm viability efforts in RI. Finally, farm to school efforts are gaining momentum. Our school children should have the benefit of locally grown produce in their meals to the fullest extent possible. Rising obesity and diabetes rates etc. are causing schools to revise menus and increase the availability in

*Eligible farms as defined by RIGL Section 2-23-4, are farms that are 10 acres in size or greater and generate $10,000 dollars or more in gross annual income.

(continued on page 2 see Chiefs)
and vegetables to RI Seniors who earn less than 185% of the federal poverty level. RI Farmers redeemed over $180,0000 dollars in coupons that were exchanged by seniors for fresh fruit and vegetables at area farmers markets and roadside stands. This program, combined with the Department of Health WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program, has added over $400,000 dollars in sales for RI Farmers. Any RI Farmer who would like more information about taking part in any of these programs or would like to join one of the DEM Farmers Markets contact Pete Susi at 222-2781 ext. 4517.

New Agricultural Guide

The Division of Agriculture in partnership with the RI Division of Tourism and the RI Rural Development Council have produced a new brochure for the 2005 - 2007 seasons. This new brochure is a compilation of all the brochures the division publishes. The new brochure has been distributed throughout the state at the various tourist info centers, chambers of commerce and at the Big E. If you missed being included in this years edition please email stephen.volpe@dem.ri.gov to receive information on getting into the next one. You can view the brochure at http://www.dem.ri.gov/topics/agricult.htm

2005 Rhode Island Outstanding Dairy Farm

The DEM/Rhode Division of Agriculture and Resource Marketing, is pleased to announce Frank and Linda Panciera, proprietors of Ocean Breeze Farm in Westerly, RI, as the recipients of the 2005 Rhode Island Outstanding Dairy Farm of the Year award.

Ocean Breeze Farm was purchased in 1938 by Frank’s parents, Silvio and Margaret Panciera, just before the great hurricane of 1938. Continued next column

Pesticide News

RECENT STATE TAX LAW CHANGES NOW REQUIRE SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER TO RENEW PESTICIDE CERTIFICATION / LICENSES.

Due to recent changes in the state’s taxation laws, the Department is now required to collect your social security number or Federal Taxpayer Identification Number (FEIN) before issuing your pesticide applicator renewal licenses and certification.

These statutory changes can be found in the RI General Laws §5-75 and §31-3 which states that any person applying for any license or permit to conduct a business or occupation within Rhode Island must have filed all required state tax returns and paid all taxes due to the state of Rhode island. Alternatively, a written installment agreement to pay delinquent state taxes that is satisfactory to the Tax Administrator will be acceptable.

In order to be in compliance with this law, all private applicators, commercial applicators and licensed dealers will be required to furnish their social security number or FEIN along with their renewal application. If you fail to furnish the Department with your social security number or FEIN, you will be required to obtain a Letter of Good Standing from the Division of Taxation PRIOR to the renewal or issuance of your pesticide applicator’s certification or license.

This REQUEST will also be included with your 2006 renewal application along with the proper forms necessary to be completed and submitted by each applicator.

If you have any questions regarding the changes in the tax laws, please contact the Rhode Island Division of Taxation, Collections Division at (401) 222-6281. If you have any questions regarding your pesticide renewal application with respect to the tax law changes, please contact either Robin Mooney or Liz Lopes-Duguay at 222-2781.

USDA / NRCS

Are You Practicing Good Stewardship on your Land? If so, You may be Entitled to a Yearly Payment from USDA NRCS!

You have been taking care of your natural resources on your land for years...now you have the chance to be financially rewarded for your conservation efforts. You may qualify for funding in 2006 if:

1. Your farm is in the Pawtuxet, Woonasquatucket and Moshassuck River Watersheds.
2. You follow nutrient, grazing, and/or pest management plans that promote soil and water quality and you have been getting your soil tested.
3. You keep records to manage your operation.

The USDA/NRCS Conservation Security Program (CSP) rewards farmers for practicing good stewardship on their land. Learn more about CSP; come to the CSP workshop at the USDA Conference Room, 60 Quaker Lane, Warwick, on Wednesday, December 7, at 4 PM. For more information, contact Michael Merrill, 822.8841 or Michael Kenyon, 822.8821 or log on to www.ri.nrcs.usda.gov.

Ocean Breeze continued

Today Ocean Breeze Farm consists of 40 milking Registered Holsteins and 40 head of young heifers. The Panicera’s grow 60 acres for silage and 40 acres of hay for haylage. The home farm itself with 60 acres was preserved in 1997 by the Weekapaug Foundation for Conservation.

Ocean Breeze Farm continues to move forward in family tradition. The Rhode Island Division of Agriculture is proud to recognize Ocean Breeze as one of Rhode Island’s premier dairy farms and the “2005 Rhode Island Outstanding Dairy Farm” of the year.
**Plant Industry News**

**CAPS Program News**

The Rhode Island Division of Agriculture is in its fourth year as a participant in the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) Program. With funding and assistance from the USDA and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), the RI CAPS Program has successfully established an organized line of defense against exotic insect and plant pests and pathogens.

The CAPS Program is designed to protect our nation’s agriculture, economy and natural environment against non-indigenous pests and diseases that are introduced accidentally or otherwise into our environment. Funding is provided to each cooperating state department of agriculture for the purpose of data management, yearly committee meetings, and CAPS activity coordination and communication.

Target pests that have the potential to threaten Rhode Island’s biodiversity are selected from a national list. The 2005 survey season conducted early detection trapping and visual surveys in warehouses, orchards, tree farms, parks and even private residences. Results from all surveys are transmitted to a national database maintained by Purdue University for the purpose of monitoring the existence and movement of these exotic pest species.

The surveying and trapping of pests is only part of the responsibilities assumed by the RICAPS team. Public outreach and education concerning the program mission and pest threats is of equal importance. Informational Pest Alerts are distributed at all inspection sites explaining each pest and its potential threat to the environment, along with pertinent contact information. Participants in the survey are encouraged to contact the State Survey Coordinator with questions or possible symptoms of pest infestation.

The RICAPS Team would like to express its appreciation for the participation of the University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island’s green industries and private citizens during the 2005 survey season. Without such cooperation, a competent survey could not be realized. We are looking forward to another successful season in 2006!

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**Pesticide Safety & IPM Training**

**Winter-Spring Schedule 2006**

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<tr>
<th>CORE SCHEDULES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Core I</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Day 1 Feb 2 Thurs / URI Kingston-East Farm 8am-4pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day 2 Feb 16 Thurs / URI Kingston-East Farm 8am-4pm</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Core II</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Day 1 Mar 10 Fri / URI Kingston-East Farm 8am-4pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day 2 Mar 23 Thurs / URI Kingston-East Farm 8am-4pm</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Core III</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Day 1 Mar 30 Thurs / URI Kingston-East Farm 8am-4pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day 2 Apr 6 Thurs / URI Kingston-East Farm 8:00am - 4pm</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Core IV</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Day 1 May 4 Thurs / URI Kingston-East Farm 8am-4pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day 2 May 18 Thurs / URI Kingston-East Farm 8am-4pm</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Core V</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Day 1 July 13 Thurs / URI Kingston-East Farm 8am-4pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day 2 July 20 Thurs / URI Kingston-East Farm 8am-4pm</td>
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**COMMERCIAL CATEGORY & IPM TRAINING SESSIONS:**

These sessions fulfill the requirements for “RUP” certification and also qualifies for Integrated Pest Management Training.

**Category 2 Forestry**
- Tues Feb 14 / URI Kingston-East Farm 8am-4pm
- Category 3A Shade Tree Tues Feb 14 / URI Kingston-East Farm 8am-4pm
- Category 3B Turf & Orn Tues Feb 14 / URI Kingston-East Farm 8am-4pm
- Category 6 Right of Way Tues March 21 / URI Kingston-East Farm 8am-4pm
- Category 7A Household Tues Apr 11 / URI Kingston-East Farm 8am-4pm
- Category 7D Vertebrate Tues Apr 11 / URI Kingston-East Farm 8am-4pm
- Category 7B Termite Tues May 2 / URI Kingston-East Farm 8am-4pm
- Category 7E Mosquito Thurs May 11/ URI Kingston-East Farm 8am-4pm
- Category 8 Public Health Thurs May 11/ URI Kingston-East Farm 8am-4pm

Dates are tentative to confirm call Margaret Siligato at 874-5997 or Robin Mooney at 222-2781 x 4513

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**It’s The Great Pumpkin Charlie Brown**

by: Ron Newman

Who ever suspected a television special produced in 1966, “It’s the Great Pumpkin Charlie Brown”, would ever have any relevancy to the State of Rhode Island. Approximately 39 years later it happened! On October 10 2005, the Southern New England Giant Pumpkin Growers Association (SNEGP) of Rhode Island held their annual giant pumpkin weigh-off at Frerich’s Farm in Warren, RI. Everyone’s eyes were focused on each and every pumpkin has they were unloaded from trucks, vans, and trailers. Would a new State record be broken? Only time would tell until the days weigh-off began and ended!

This was Rhode Island’s 12th annual weigh-off. It all began with John Castellucci from Smithfield, RI. In 1993, Mr. Castellucci called the Rhode Island Division Of Agriculture asking what was the largest pumpkin grown in the State. Little did we know, John was about to establish a State record at 532.5 pounds.

Move ahead 12 years later. It is 2005, and right here in the Littlest State in the Union, not only was a State record established, but Rhode Island almost made a new world record. Scott Palmer from Greene, RI grew a record breaking giant pumpkin coming in at 1443 pounds. According to the Southern New England Giant Pumpkin Growers Association, this is the second largest officially recorded giant pumpkin grown in the “world”. In fact if you average the top ten heaviest pumpkins at the weigh-off, it would average out at 1174 pounds. Therefore the Great Pumpkin Commonwealth, which sanctions the weigh-offs all over the world, will consider, Frerichs Farm in Warren to be the number one weigh-off site in the world for 2006 according to the SNEGPG.

The world record for growing a giant pumpkin is 1469 pounds, and Rhode Island has the potential for making a new world record next year. In our wonderful State, and with a terrific organization like the Southern New England Giant Pumpkin Growers Association, located right here in Rhode Island, together it is only a matter of time before the number one “giant pumpkin” is grown right here, in the “Littlest State in the Union”.

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**Scott Palmer from Greene, RI.**
The DEM Division of Agriculture has recently acquired a new compact excavator for saltmarsh mosquito control projects. The acquisition was part of a settlement between the EPA and a firm concerning a pesticide registration issue. To achieve the low ground pressure necessary to operate on soft saltmarshes, 30” wide nylon polymer track plates were bolted to the unit’s 12” wide steel tracks. These special plates were financed by the DEM Office of Compliance and Inspection, as the unit will be available to assist with oil spill cleanup efforts on sensitive saltmarshes.

The 8,000 lb. excavator now has a ground pressure of 2.2 psi - much lower than conventional excavators which cause damage to the marsh and are more prone to getting stuck. Saltmarsh water management for mosquito control entails clearing old ditches, filling unnecessary ditches, and creating reservoirs for fish that are voracious predators of mosquito larvae. The machine is equipped with a 40” wide tilting bucket for grading sloped sides of fish reservoirs. Saltmarsh water management projects offer long-term mosquito control, and reduction in pesticide usage.

Happy Holidays from the RI Division of Agriculture