

Rhode Island

Fall / Winter 2005

Ag-Review

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

Chiefs Corner

By: Ken Ayars

Chief, RI Division of Agriculture

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 has 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

(continued on page 2 see Chiefs)

Important Happenings

The Division has sent out notices to all farms currently in our database for implementation of Chapter 23.1 as described below. If you have not received your letter and form please read the following and give us a call or email at 401-222-2781 x 4501 or at stephen.volpe@dem.ri.gov.

Pursuant to RI General Laws Section 1, Title 2, Chapter 23.1, the General Assembly has directed the Division of Agriculture to establish a mailing list of farms located in the various cities and towns of our state. This list will be used by said cities or towns to notify farmers when such cities or towns have ordinances pending before their city or town council that may impact the agricultural operations located within their boundaries. The types of ordinances listed below require notification:

1. Changes for zoning and/or permitted uses of land used for farming;
2. Changes to designate or amend the designation of land used for farming in comprehensive plans or land use ordinances;
3. Changes in the manner of taxation for real and personal property used for farming;
4. Changes to establish or amend programs for transfer of development rights affecting farming;
5. Changes to regulate water use for farming purposes;
6. Changes to control noise and hours of operation of machinery and equipment used in farming.

***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.**

Marketing Update

DEM FARMERS' MARKETS 2005 SEASON COMES TO AN END

By: Pete Susi



The end of October marked the closing of all state run farmers markets for the 2005 season. Colt State Park in Bristol and Goddard Park in Warwick closed the last Friday in October.

Fisherman's Memorial State Park in Narragansett closed on the last Sunday of the month and Haines Memorial Park closed the last Wednesday in October.

A new farmers' market located at One Capitol Hill (across from the State House) closed on the last Thursday in October. These farmers markets finished very strong with a good variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. Even after having a dry summer in RI, farmers still delivered a great crop.

This year, the DEM/Division of Agriculture created a partnership with the RI Department of Administration and the Department of Health. This partnership was created as part of the Governors Wellness initiative for State Employees. A farmers market was held every Thursday, 11 am to 2 pm, at One Capitol Hill. The market was a great success for farmers and State Employees who wanted to purchase RI Grown fresh fruit and vegetables. We hope to continue this farmers market next year and may create a new farmers market at the Pastore Complex in Cranston.

This was the second year that the DEM/Division of Agriculture in partnership with the Department of Elderly Affairs received a federal grant from USDA, to distribute fresh fruit

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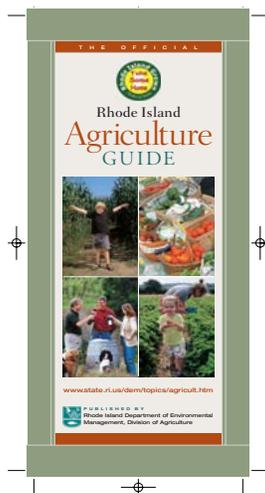
Pesticide News

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

and vegetables to RI Seniors who earn less than 185% of the federal poverty level. RI Farmers redeemed over \$180,000 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>



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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.

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schools of fresh fruits and vegetables, and thus the connection to local agriculture. A coalition of Kids First, Farm Fresh RI and the Division of Agriculture, are seeking grant funds to further farm to school efforts in RI. Local school districts (ie Cranston) are seeking or taking advantage of opportunities to purchase fresh product from local farmers. There will be meetings this winter/spring to help accomplish these goals, and we look forward to your participation.

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 Weekapaugh 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.

2005 Rhode Island Outstanding Dairy Farm

The DEM/Rhode Division of Agriculture and Resource Marketing, is pleased to announce Frank and Linda Panicera, 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 Panicera, just before the great hurricane of 1938.

continued next column

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!

Pesticide Safety & IPM Training Winter-Spring Schedule 2006

CORE SCHEDULES

Core I

Day 1 Feb 2 Thurs / URI Kingston-East Farm 8am-4pm

Day 2 Feb 16 Thurs / URI Kingston-East Farm 8am-4pm

Core II

Day 1 Mar 10 Fri / URI Kingston-East Farm 8am-4pm

Day 2 Mar 23 Thurs / URI Kingston-East Farm 8am-4pm

Core III

Day 1 Mar 30 Thurs / URI Kingston-East Farm 8am-4pm

Day 2 Apr 6 Thurs / URI Kingston-East Farm 8:00am-4pm

Core IV

Day 1 May 4 Thurs / URI Kingston-East Farm 8am-4pm

Day 2 May 18 Thurs / URI Kingston-East Farm 8am-4pm

Core V

Day 1 July 13 Thurs / URI Kingston-East Farm 8am-4pm

Day 2 July 20 Thurs / URI Kingston-East Farm 8am-4pm

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

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 (SNEPG) 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 as 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 SNEGP.

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".

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",



Scott Palmer from Greene, RI.

Mosquito Abatement Program Update

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



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