

Rhode Island

Fall / Winter 2006

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

Farm Viability Grants Available

The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management /Division of Agriculture announces the availability of Farm Viability grant funds for the purpose of enhancing the competitiveness of specialty crops in Rhode Island.

Rhode Island Agricultural organizations or residents who are interested in applying for grant program funds are invited to submit grant proposals to the Rhode Island Division of Agriculture.

The Specialty Crop Grant Program is authorized under section 101 of the Specialty Crops competitiveness Act of 2004 (7 U.S.C. 1621 note) and is implemented under 7 CFR part 1290 [Docket No. FV06-1290-1 FR]. The SCBGP assists State departments of agriculture in enhancing the competitiveness of U.S. specialty crops. Specialty crops are defined as fruits and vegetables, dried fruits, tree nuts, and nursery crops (including floriculture, however turf is excluded). Examples of enhancing the competitiveness of specialty crops include, but are not limited to: Research, promotion, marketing, nutrition, trade enhancement, food safety, food security, plant health programs, education, buy local programs, increased consumption, increased innovation, improved efficiency and reduced costs of distribution systems, environmental concerns and conservation, product development, and developing cooperatives.

For further information contact Stephen Volpe at (401) 222 - 2781 x 4501 or stephen.volpe@dem.ri.gov

Application forms and additional details are available about the Specialty Crop Grant Program at www.rigrown.ri.gov.

DEM FARMERS' MARKETS 2006 SEASON COMES TO AN END

The seven farmers' markets, sponsored by the Department of Environmental Management closed the end of October. Colt State Park in Bristol, and Goddard Park in Warwick, closed the last Friday in October. Fisherman's Memorial State



Park Narragansett closed on the last Sunday of the month and Haines Memorial Park closed the last Wednesday in October, Capitol Hill closed the last Thursday in October. This year two new farmers' markets located at the Pastore Complex in Cranston, closed the last Friday in October, and the Blackstone River State Park in Lincoln closed the last Tuesday in October. These farmers markets finished very strong with a good variety of fresh fruit and vegetables. Even after having weather issues this summer RI farmers still delivered a great crop.

This year the DEM/Division of Agriculture continued 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. These farmers market were held every Thursday 11 am to 2 pm at One Capitol Hill, and every Friday 10:00 am to 2:30 pm at the Pastore Complex in Cranston. These farmers markets were a great success for farmers and State Employees who wanted to purchase fresh fruit and vegetables. We hope to continue these two farmers markets next year.

Also, this was the third year the DEM/Division of Agriculture in partnership with the USDA Food and Nutrition Service sponsored the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program vouchers. Over the three years, \$600,000 dollars

has been distributed to Senior Citizens who are 60 years of age or older and who have incomes of less than 185% of the poverty level. These coupons could only be redeemed for fresh fruits and vegetables at Rhode Island Farmers Markets or Roadside Stands directly benefiting seniors and RI farmers.

The DEM/Division of Agriculture Farmers Market Program has become so successful that it is estimated that it adds over 500,000.00 of income to the Rhode Island economy at the seven DEM/Farmers Markets. This figure does not take into account the added sales generated at farm stands due to customer, vendor relationships that developed at these farmers markets. Any RI Farmer who would like more information about becoming a vendor at any of these farmers markets should contact Peter Susi at the DEM/Division of Agriculture at 401-222-2781 ext. 4517 or e-mail peter.susi@dem.ri.gov .

Announcing Rhody Warm

Whats grey and white and warm all over!

Wool blankets made of locally grown, natural wool!

Official roll out was December 6th 2006

For more information contact:

Chris Modisette, RC&D Coordinator, USDA-NRCS, 60 Quaker Lane Suite 45, Warwick, Rhode Island 02886
Tel: 401-822-8877, Fax: 401-828-0433, Email: chris.modisette@ri.usda.gov; or
Barbara Thompson, President, RI Sheep Cooperative, Seldom Seen Farm, 406 Evans Road, Glocester, RI 02814 (401) 949-0264-, Email: mthompson5@cox.net.

The RI Ag-Review is a publication of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management Division of Agriculture and is published two times per year. All correspondence should be directed to The RI Division of Agriculture 235 Promenade Street, Providence, RI 02908
Kenneth D. Ayars, Chief
Stephen M. Volpe, Deputy Chief, Editor

Pesticide News

RHODE ISLAND GROWS THE LARGEST PUMPKIN EVER GROWN

DEM ANNOUNCES THAT ARRUDA'S DAIRY FARM IN TIVERTON HAS BEEN NAMED RHODE ISLAND'S 2006 OUTSTANDING DAIRY FARM OF THE YEAR

PROVIDENCE - The Department of Environmental Management announces that Arruda's Dairy Farm in Tiverton has been named Rhode Island's 2006 Outstanding Dairy Farm of the Year by the Rhode Island Green Pastures Committee. Winning dairy farmers from each New England state were honored at an awards banquet on September 15th at the Eastern States Exposition in West Springfield, MA.

Arruda's Dairy Farm was founded by Georgianna and Joseph Arruda in Fall River in 1917, where they delivered raw milk to area homes by horse and wagon. They and their eight children worked together, taking care of the animals, doing fieldwork, bottling, and delivering. Although most went their separate ways as they grew older, three of the children John, Olivia, and Jean stayed on with their parents and helped them with the family business. As a young girl, Jean had her own chicken business, supplying eggs for the milk route. Her brother John operated the milk route, delivering by truck to homes, while Jean and Olivia pasteurized the milk and took care of the cows. When Route 24 and William Cannon Boulevard split the farm in Fall River, the Arrudas sold it and merged their operations with their second, more recent farm in Tiverton. At that time, they began pasteurizing the milk and selling it in glass bottles.

In the late '90s, Jean, and her husband Antone Moniz, Sr., bought the farm from the other heirs. They and their two sons, Antone Jr. and Joseph, continue to carry on the family tradition of running the family farm. They harvest corn, grass silage, and small grains, manage a herd of cows, and breed them for their own herd replacement. The farm supplies homogenized milk skim, low fat, 2 percent fat, and whole which is produced and pasteurized at the farm, and delivers it regionally. The milk, they note, is free of synthetic BST, meaning that there is no bovine growth hormones injected into their cows.

The Outstanding Dairy Farm of the Year award is sponsored by the New England Green Pastures Committee, made up of agricultural interests such as state and federal agricultural offices and farm organizations. Rhode Island's Green Pastures Committee is coordinated by DEM's Division of Agriculture, with members including the Rhode Island Dairy Farmers Cooperative, the RI Farm Bureau, the RI Farm Service Agency and the Agri-Mark Cooperative.

On October 24, 2006, The Division of Agriculture finalized and filed the Amendments to the Rules and Regulations Pertaining to Pesticides. These rules, which have been under review by the Division for several years, will take effect on November 13, 2006.

Some of the major revisions include, increasing the number of recertification hours both private and commercial applicators must obtain in order to maintain their certification as well as requiring commercial licensed applicators to obtain pesticide educational credit.

It also classifies as state-limited use pesticide, several herbicides, such as Acetochlor, Simazine, and Metolachlor, which will now require applicators to maintain records on the use of these products. These herbicides have been identified as having the potential of contaminating groundwater and surface water. Other noteworthy changes are establishing minimum age requirements for obtaining a pesticide license, pesticide storage and transportation regulations and additional record keeping requirements for both commercial and private applicators. In addition, the rule changes also address pesticide risk minimization for employees and groundwater/surface water protection.

The final Rule was based upon written and oral comments received from an informal workshop held on September 15, 2005 and the public hearing, which was held on June 15, 2006 at the Department of Environmental Management, 235 Promenade Street, Providence, RI.

If you would like a copy mailed to you please contact me directly. A complete copy of the **NEW** Rule & Regulations Pertaining to Pesticides will also be posted on the DEM website <http://www.dem.ri.gov/pubs/index.htm> listing the date 11/13/06.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 401-222-2781 x4510. or via my e-mail address liz.lopesduguay@dem.ri.gov

Rhode Island maybe the smallest State in the Country, but we grow some the largest agricultural produce in the world. On October 7th of this year, the Southern New England Giant Pumpkin Growers Association held their 13th annual weigh-off at Frerichs Farm in Warren, RI. This year was a difficult year for growing pumpkins. Spring started off with a very wet season and summer followed with very little rain. So, the growing season went from wet to dry. Many farmers had a poor pumpkin growing season over all. The belief was many giant pumpkins in Rhode Island were lost during the growing season or there would be giant pumpkins on the smaller size from previous years.

Giant pumpkins began unloading at 10:00AM and finished between 1:00-2:00PM. There were approximately 50 pumpkins to be weighed. Suddenly, there was a sea of orange all around the weigh-off area. The realization was approaching; Rhode Island may not only break a State record, but a world record. It is impossible to visually estimate the approximate weight of a giant pumpkin.

The weigh-off began with the smallest pumpkin and worked its way up to what was believed to be the biggest. The last pumpkin to be weighed was grown by Ron Wallace of Greene, Rhode Island. (continued bottom next page)



Ron Wallace & World Record Pumpkin
1502 lbs

First New England Farmers' Direct Marketing Conference and Trade Show planned: Successful Strategies for Growing Your Farm Business

Growers from across the Northeast will convene at the Sturbridge Host Hotel and Conference Center in scenic Sturbridge Massachusetts on Wednesday, February 28 and Thursday, March 1, 2007 for the New England Farmers' Direct Marketing Conference and Trade Show.

This unique marketing conference targets New England farmers interested in learning new marketing ideas or fine-tuning strategies for business success. Over the course of two days, there will be over 20 workshops with a wide range of marketing and business planning topics to be covered. Agritourism, farmers' markets, internet marketing, value added and testing feasibility are just some of the workshops planned. A half-day workshop especially designed for farmers' market managers is also planned for February 28.

A full trade show will provide farmers with information on the latest products and services. Specialty food producers from across the Northeast have also been invited to take part in the trade show to showcase unique local products perfect for roadside stands.

The conference is sponsored by all six New England State Departments of Agriculture and Harvest New England, in cooperation with:

- * Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA)
- * Cooperative Development Institute
- * Essex Buy Local
- * Federation of Massachusetts Farmers' Markets
- * Massachusetts NOFA
- * Massachusetts Roadside Stand Association
- * University of Maine Cooperative Extension
- * University of Massachusetts Extension
- * University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension
- * Rhode Island Center for Agricultural Promotion and Education
- * Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership (SEMAP)
- * USDA Natural Resources Conservatio

This event is your best opportunity in 2007 to learn new marketing ideas and fine-tune strategies for your business success. You should attend if you are a grower, value-added producer, planner, economic developer, government leader, farmers' market manager or just interested in agriculture!

Conference highlights include nationally renowned agrimarketing expert, Jane Eckert speaking on how to "Market with More Creativity Than Cash.

A lively and informative "Best of New England" panel will feature some of the top farm marketers from all six New England states.

"Kitchen Table Direct Marketing will provide you with practical ways to combine sales and marketing thinking with the financial information that lets you know when things are really working – or not.

Over the two days there will be over 20 workshops with a wide range of marketing and business planning topics on culinary tourism, tapping into the group tour market, risk management, selling to local schools, festivals, internet marketing, export opportunities and lots more.

Value-added workshops will let you know how the customer sees your products, what you can do to improve your brand, and how to conduct market research for a viable business.

Agricultural processors, manufacturers and producers will get the inside scoop on developing business plans and technical assistance.

Farmers market managers from across New England will gather on February 28th for a special half-day workshop to discuss New Marketing Opportunities and Building Alliances, including how tools such as the Rapid Market Assessment and Sticky Economy Evaluation Device can help you strengthen your market.

For more information go to www.harvestnewengland.org and click on conference info.

(pumpkin continued)

With sudden and literally complete silence from the crowd, his pumpkin was lifted by a front-end loader on to the scale. Never, anywhere in the world, has a pumpkin ever gone over $\frac{3}{4}$ of a ton, but on October 7th, 2006, in our State, we shattered the world and broke all records with Ron Wallace and his 1502-pound giant pumpkin. Not only that, but, Joe Jutras of Scituate, RI, broke a new world record for growing a long gourd coming in at 126.5 inches long. Imagine, the longest grown anywhere in the world. The Guinness Book Of Records will now officially record both records.

It was a wonderful sunny day for this event. People from the entire Ocean State attended this popular event. Children and parents enjoyed the corn and hay maze, and the pumpkin coach, which shuttled everyone around the farm. But everyone attending this incredible event will never forget the day when Rhode Island set two new world records in agriculture.



HAPPY HOLIDAYS

From

THE RHODE ISLAND DIVISION OF

AGRICULTURE



Rhode Island Department of Environmental
Management
Division of Agriculture
235 Promenade St.
Providence, RI 02908



Visit us at www.rigrown.ri.gov

