

Rhode Island



Ag-Review

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

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Beginnings

Welcome to the inaugural issue of Rhode Island Ag-Review, we have been planning this publication

for some time and are very pleased to present the first issue to you. Our main objective in publishing the Ag-Review is to communicate more frequently with the agricultural industry in our state.

The Ag-Review publication will be focused on bringing you information relative to the events that shape the future of RI Agriculture from news at the state house to what's going on down on the farm. The Ag-Review will also feature news articles on all areas of concern to agriculture from animal health issues to regulatory news. If you would like to contribute information or an article please contact Steve Volpe at svolpe@dem.state.ri.us or at 401-222-2781 ext 4501

Chief's Corner

by: Ken Ayars, Chief,
RI Division of Agriculture

The Department of Environmental Management has begun the process of awarding 36 farm viability grants totaling \$340,000 to 33 organizations. The farm viability grants will be used to directly promote the long-term viability of agriculture in the state and for educational initiatives that support the promotion of agriculture.

The agriculture industry has always been important to Rhode Island, both in economic value and in contributing to the livability of Rhode Island communities. The grants provide a unique opportunity to promote its diverse products and to educate a new generation of Rhode Islanders to the benefits of farming and to opportunities in the industry.

The grants will be used for a wide range of purposes, such as purchasing hydroponic systems for a high school aquaculture education program, providing field trips to farms for urban school children, developing a website for farmers to promote local products and quickly access weather prediction information, and assisting dairy farmers to form a cooperative to market Rhode Island dairy products.

The applications were reviewed and scored by the farmers who serve on DEM's Agricultural Advisory Committee. DEM Director Jan Reitsma concurred with the recommendations of the committee on the award of the grants. A list of the grant recipients is available on the DEM web site at www.state.ri.us/dem

DEM's Division of Agriculture and Resources Marketing received 72 applications for the grants, funded through DEM from the US Department of Agriculture's specialty crop block grant program. Specialty crops include all commodities produced in Rhode Island.

Marketing Update

DEM/FARMERS MARKETS 2002.

The DEM/Division of Agriculture in partnership with the DEM/Division of Parks will be operating four Farmers Markets this year. The Goddard Park Farmers Market is in its sixth year. The Colt State Park Farmers Market is its third year. The Fishermen's Memorial Park Farmers Market is in its second year, and the new Haines Memorial Park Farmers Market will be opening in July.

What all these markets have in common is they are all very successful and give the Rhode Island Farmers another way to get their fresh fruits and vegetables into the hands of people who might not otherwise have access. These farmers markets truly bring the farms to the people. The farmers markets are becoming a critical element in the financial well being of Rhode Island Farmers. The added revenue to farmers generated by programs like the Health Departments WIC Farmers Market Coupons and other nutritional programs advocating for the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables has allowed Rhode Island farmers to market more locally grown fruits and vegetables than ever.

To help promote healthy eating and the consumption of more RI. Grown Fruits and Vegetables the DEM/Division of Agriculture will be sponsoring cooking demonstrations given by chefs from Johnson and Wales University at area farmers markets throughout the State. On these demonstration days we will also be offering free recipe cards and recipe books to area residents.

Also pony rides for the children will be offered. Buzzy the Bee from radio station B-101 will also make an appearance.

CALENDAR OF COOKING DEMOS AT FARMERS MARKETS

SUNDAY JULY 14, 2002 FISHERMENS
MEMORIAL PARK FARMERS MARKET
9:00 am to 1:00 pm
ROUTE 108, NARRAGANSET

FRIDAY JULY 26, 2002 COLT PARK
FARMERS MARKET 2:00 to 6:00 pm
COLT STATE PARK BRISTOL RI

SATURDAY AUGUST 3, 2002 SO. KINGSTOWN
FARMERS MARKET 9:00 am to 12:00 pm
UNIVERSITY OF RI, ROUTE 138 KINGSTON
RI. (FOLLOW SIGNS TO FLAGG ROAD)

FRIDAY AUGUST 9, 2002 GODDARD PARK
FARMERS MARKET 9:00 am to 1:00 pm
GODDARD STATE PARK EQUESTRIAN AREA
WARWICK RI.

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 21, 2002 HAINES
MEMORIAL PARK FARMERS MARKET
2:00 pm to 6:00 pm
Rte. 103 EAST PROVIDENCE RI.

SATURDAY AUGUST 24, 2002 FOSTER
FARMERS MARKET 9:00 am to 1:00 pm
Route 6 Danny's Auction Barn
Foster RI

SATURDAY AUGUST 31, 2002 NEWPORT
FARMERS MARKET 9:00 am to 1:00 pm
Dr. Marcus Wheatland Blvd.
(Behind Salvation Café) Newport RI

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 21, 2002
AQUIDNECK GROWERS MARKET
9:00 am to 1:00 pm
909 EAST MAIN ROAD (Rte138)
MIDDLETOWN RI.

To get a complete list of area farmers markets go to our web page at www.state.ri.us/dem/topics/agricult.htm

Animal Health Issues

2002 RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR SHOW AND EXHIBIT RHODE ISLAND ORIGINATING ANIMALS

This is a clarification of the current rules and regulations pertaining to the movement of Rhode Island cattle, sheep and goats within the State of Rhode Island, to and from local fairs and shows where they will be on exhibit or handled in public.

Since Rhode Island is certified as both brucellosis and tuberculosis free at this time, all cattle, sheep and goats that reside in the state on a permanent basis can travel to instate shows and fairs without being tested for brucellosis and tuberculosis. These tests and health certificates may be required by other states and it is recommended that animals be examined and tested when possible, but is not required for intra-state movement. If animals have resided on farms out of the state where these diseases are occurring any time in the past, they may need testing before re-entry to Rhode Island or the fairs.

Health certificates: Rhode Island origin cattle do not require a health certificate. Rhode Island origin sheep and goats must have health certificate or documentation stating the flock or herd as being free of scrapie or having no known exposure to scrapie infected animals. Rhode Island origin equine must have a health certificate issued within 30 days prior to the first event of the season.

Rabies must be current for any animals eligible for vaccination. Animals must be 3 mos. of age or older to receive rabies vaccine. Rabies vaccine is not considered valid and protective until 30 days have passed. Animals who have been vaccinated for rabies in the past should receive boosters annually, or every 2 years in dogs and cats. Boostered animals are considered valid and protective immediately as long as the booster has been given prior to the vaccines revaccination date. Animals who have been boosted late, after the revaccination date, must also wait 30 days before the vaccine is valid and protective.

Animals will be inspected at the fairs and exhibits. Please provide the proof of rabies or other papers when requested. All animals attending must meet the requirements listed in the attached rules and regulations for 2002. Animals from within Rhode Island or from out of state that are found to have any signs of disease, such as those listed in the rules and regulations or others, will be removed or not allowed entry.

Please note that these rules and regulations can be changed should the state feel the need, or there is an outbreak of disease within the state or country. Please feel free to contact the Division of Agriculture with any questions at 401-222-2781



Goddard Park Farmers Market

Pesticide Briefs

DROUGHT MANAGEMENT PLAN

It's probably no news to many farmers, but the state has been in a drought situation since last July. While rainfall over the past 45 days has been near normal, precipitation levels have reached some significant lows over the last eleven months. South county river and groundwater levels have also reached some significant lows as well. The Rhode Island Water Resources Board has issued a drought watch for the state as a result of these conditions. This watch remains in effect as of this date (June 12, 2002). The chart shows precipitation levels at the URI weather station from the summer of 1998 to May of this year.

During this time the Division of Agriculture has been working with the Rhode Island Water Resources Board monitoring the drought progress and assisting with the development of the WRB "Rhode Island Drought Management Plan." As a member of the plan task force the Division has worked hard to protect the interests of Rhode Island agriculture under this plan. The plan calls for the Division to:

- 1.) monitor stream flows at USGS gauging stations, and evaluate those readings based upon groundwater and precipitation information.
- 2.) seek state and federal drought financial assistance for agriculture.
- 3.) facilitate any available effort to provide water to farmers under drought conditions.
- 4.) coordinate long term drought planning with agriculture.
- 5.) communicate current drought conditions to the agricultural community.
- 6.) develop standards and conditions for the construction or expansion of ponds or wells under drought conditions.

Due to the current situation the Division is planning to start sending bi-weekly reports on river flow levels to irrigators for use in their irrigation planning. These notifications will continue through the summer months. The Division has also arranged an expedited irrigation pond permitting process within DEM to deal with the current drought conditions.

CLOPYRALID ADVISORY

Damage to crops reported from herbicide tainted compost

A number of recent incidents in the States of Washington and Pennsylvania have raised concerns that compost products containing traces of Clopyralid, a persistent herbicide, can cause damage to certain flowers and vegetables. In Spokane, Washington where a large number of lawns are professionally treated, composted yard clippings used in a greenhouse potting mix resulted in

damage to tomatoes and other plants. At Pee State University, clopyralid was found in composted leaves, which had been over sprayed with clopyralid during Fall applications. Straw beds and manure collected from veterinary stables in Washington also contained traces of the herbicide. The problem is considered to be so pervasive in Washington, that the Department of Agriculture has banned the use of herbicides containing clopyralid on lawns and turf. The ban, which was effective as of March 2002, is to keep clopyralid from potentially contaminating compost. However, Golf Courses were exempt from the ban as long as no grass clippings, leaves or vegetation is removed from the course and sent to a composting facility that provides the product to the general public.

Clopyralid is a picolinic acid and is the active ingredient in a number of turf products including Confront, Battleship, Ultra, Millennium Ultra, Momentum, ProScape and Strike Three Ultra, all of which are manufactured by Dow Agro Sciences. Other products include Curtail, Lontrel, Redeem, Stinger and Transline. Clopyralid is effective against weeds such as clover

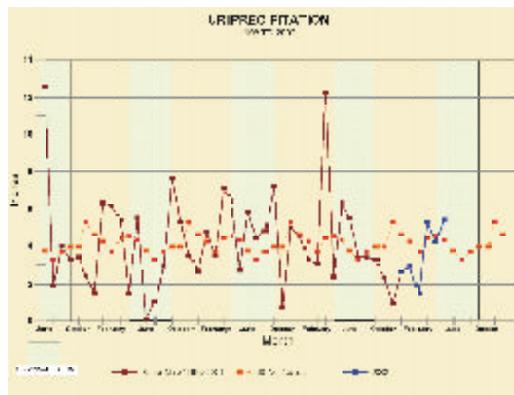
and dandelions. The labels on Dow products states that manure and foliage treated with clopyralid cannot be used as a source of compost.

The problem arises because clopyralid does not break down quickly when composted and is active at levels as parts per billion. According to a report in the October 2000 Washington State University Cooperative Extension newsletter laboratory studies have shown clopyralid to be present at levels from 4.7 parts per million (ppm) to 31.9 ppm after composting.

Though we have not had any incidents reported in Rhode Island, applicators need to make their customers aware of the potential problems regarding the use of these products. Commercial Lawn Care Applicators are required by law to provide post application requirements to their customers, including residential properties, public and non-residential properties. These precautionary statements must be provided in a written list prior to the initial application and again upon each pesticide application. In municipalities where yard waste is directed towards these centers, residents need to be informed of the potential problems associated with the use of these products by homeowners and commercial companies they contract with. Grass clippings left on the lawn will decompose and act as a natural fertilizer.

Ensuring better awareness and communication among homeowners, applicators and local recycling coordinators will go a long way towards helping address the potential problems posed by pesticides.

For more information please contact the Pesticide Section of the Division of Agriculture at 401-222-2781 x4510.



National Farm News

President George W. Bush signed the 2002 Farm Bill on Monday on May 13, bringing to a close eight months of work to draft the bill. The key provisions of this farm bill, titled the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, includes a national dairy program, increased funds for fruits, vegetable, and specialty crops, and considerable increases for environmental and open space protection programs.

Under the National Dairy Market Loss Program farmers will receive 45 percent of the difference between \$16.94 and the Boston Class I price announced by the Federal Milk Market Order. The Farm Bill limits payments to 2.4 million pounds of milk per farm, the approximate equivalent of a 135-cow farm.

Producers interested in participating will need to enter into a contract which will offer payments retroactive to December 1, 2001. Payments will likely start late summer or early fall. The program will terminate September 30, 2005.

The Congress also included language for a program call the "Farm Viability Program" which is modeled on the Farm Viability Enhancement Program created by Massachusetts Dept. of Agriculture and replicated by other states. While no funds are specifically earmarked for this program, the language does offer a starting point. The Farm Bill dramatically increases funding for the Farmland Protection Program from \$53.4 million since the 1996 Farm Bill to \$985 million over the life of this farm bill, which is six years.

The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act doubles annual spending on the Environmental Incentives Program (EQUIP) and increases the level of funding for fruits, vegetables, and specialty crops. It continues assistance to apple growers for continued low prices. The bill offers \$40 million a year to assist farmers with value-added business.



Fishermens Memorial Park Farmers Market

Nursery Report

As this is the premier issue of the DAG newsletter, it's a good time to tell you a little about the Plant Industry Section. The Plant Industry Section is responsible for conducting the statutory programs for the inspection and control of the inter, and intra-state movement of plant materials to control the spread of plant pests and diseases. Included among these programs are; nursery and nursery stock dealer licensing and certification, post entry quarantine program, state and federal phytosanitary program, permit program to move live plant pests and noxious weeds, entry permits for genetically engineered organisms and control area permits for the White Pine Blister Rust Quarantine program. We also conduct a similar inspection and control program regarding Rhode Island's apiaries.

The Plant Industry Section administers the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Grant program, which provides financial support for pest control methods that reduce or eliminate reliance upon chemical pesticides. IPM grants are available to farmers, schools and universities, state and local governments, and private institutions. Due to budget constraints, this program has been suspended.

The Plant Industry Section also administers the Rhode Island Certified Organic Program, by which qualified producers are certified as growing organically grown produce in accordance with rules promulgated by the Division of Agriculture and Resource Marketing. This program will be modified this year as the National Organic Program from the USDA gets underway. Look for more details in the next issue.

If you have any questions about any of these programs, or the Plant Industry Section in general, please feel to contact any of the Plant Industry Staff:

Dennis Martin, Supervisor, Plant Industry Section – 222-2781 x4509

Jim Lawson, Senior Plant Pathologist – 222-2781 x4519

Dan Lawton, Supervisor of Insect Pest and Plant Disease Control – 222-2781 x4516

Logo News

Rhode Island Grown News

After 20 years of use. The RI Grown Agricultural Logo has received a facelift. That's right the Division of Agriculture recently announced that the mainstay of its Grown in RI program has been updated featuring the phrase "RI Grown Take Some Home". The logo colors have also been updated to a green, red and yellow. The program also features updated price cards, bags and other point of purchase materials. For more info contact Pete Susi at 222-2781 ext. 4517.



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Division of Agriculture Staff

The following is a directory of the division staff with telephone extension numbers and email addresses for your use.

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Need to build a Risk Management Plan for your Farm operation?

Watch for upcoming announcements for the next round of risk management seminars to be held. They are free and feature one on one service for farm management evaluation. This program is part of the Divisions Risk Management Education Program in cooperation with USDA-RMA and the Small Business Development Center at Bryant College for more info contact Steve Volpe at 401-222-2781 ext 4501 or at svolpe@dem.state.ri.us

Crop Report

Rhode Islander's are about to enjoy one of their favorite treats of the year. The famous red, ripe and wonderfully juicy strawberry grown in the Ocean State compares to none other grown anywhere in the world. Our strawberries are recognized for their incredible flavor, color, and quality. This years crop is expected to provide a high yield of fruit. Pick your own strawberries is not just a labor of love but a recreational event for hundreds of Rhode Island families enjoyment. For those who wish to buy already picked strawberries, visit your farmers market, roadside stands, and strawberry farms They will have “**Rhode Island Grown-Fresher and Better-Take Some Home**” strawberries on their shelves beginning between June 7th and June 14th. To request a Pick-Your-Own Berry brochure from the RI/DEM Division of Agriculture please call 222-2781, Extension 1- 4754 and leave your name and complete address and we will gladly mail you a brochure. Pick-Your-Own berries are expected to retail for approximately for \$1.15 per pound. For already picked strawberries, retail prices range between \$2.99-\$3.49 per quart. Keep in mind, strawberry season lasts until about the middle of July depending on the weather. All Rhode Island farmers are actively planting a variety of vegetables for this summers arrival. Corn, tomatoes, squash, and the lists keeps on going. So, be prepared and get ready to fire up your grill this summer for Rhode Island's Grown Fresher and Better vegetables and fruits.

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