

Rhode Island

Winter 2008

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

WRIGHT'S DAIRY FARM IN NORTH SMITHFIELD NAMED STATE'S 2007 OUTSTANDING DAIRY FARM OF THE YEAR

The Department of Environmental Management recently announced that Wright's Dairy Farm, Inc. of North Smithfield had been named Rhode Island's 2007 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 in September at the Eastern States Exposition in West Springfield, MA.

The dairy farm has remained a family farm for over 100 years. In the early 1900s, George Wright had a dozen cows, whose milk he delivered daily to his neighbors. By the 1940s, his son Ernest grew the herd to about 30 cows, added a pasteurization plant, and expanded the home delivery route. Ernest's son, Edward, saw many regular customers turning to convenience store's low prices, and knew it was time for a change. He asked his customers to shop in their new "milk shed," a rustic building the size of a one-car garage, with the just the necessities: a cooler, counter, and wooden change box. Today, Edward's three children and their spouses, with his advice and help, run an efficient operation, employ 55 full and part time workers, see an average of 800 customers per day, and sell all of the milk that is produced by their 130 cows. Their "cow shed" has grown into a 2,400 square foot retail store, with an expanded product line including bakery items with real whipped cream.

The family notes that when the original milk shed first opened, skim milk was becoming more and more popular, so they found themselves with extra heavy cream. Edward and his wife,

Claire, chose to make giant cream puffs and cream pies in their home kitchen to sell in the store. They were a hit, and it launched the bakery.

Wright's Dairy is an institution for many Rhode Islanders. Customers who visited the dairy farm as children now bring their own children to buy milk and bakery items, and watch through the viewing window as the cows are milked.

The cows are housed in a free-stall barn with sand bedding. Their calves are custom raised in Vermont, and returned before their first calving, leaving the Wright family more time and energy to focus on the milking cows. They work closely with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) on their nutrient management plan, and testing done by the University of Connecticut helps them track soil levels for fertilizing and growing their own corn silage.

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.



DEM FARMERS' MARKETS 2007 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, the Pastore Complex farmers market closed the last Friday in September, 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, Department of Labor and Training 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 (continued next page)

Visit us at the RI Spring Flower & Garden Show
February 21 - 24
RI Convention Center

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vegetables. These farmers markets will also operate in 2008.

Also this was the fourth 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 four years, \$800,000 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 Stand, 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 also 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.

DEM's Division of Agriculture and Resource Marketing, helps farmers with marketing information, offers a free brochure that lists the locations of all farmers' markets and roadside stands, along with addresses, hours, days and months of operation, and telephone numbers. To obtain a brochure, call the Division's 24-hour request line at 222-2781, and press 1-4754; or write to the DEM Division of Agriculture and Resource Marketing, 235 Promenade Street, Providence, RI 02908. The brochure can also be found on DEM's website: www.rigrown.ri.gov and click on farmers' markets.

Fishermen's Farmers Market



Animal Health News



Avian Influenza Surveillance

The Division of Agriculture/Animal Health Section with cooperation from the USDA will be offering the service of surveillance of Avian Influenza to anyone who keeps poultry in the State. The purpose of this surveillance is to provide early discovery of Avian Influenza with special emphasis on detection of certain strains of the virus that result in the highly pathogenic form of avian influenza (HPAI). The focus of the testing will be backyard flocks. Avian Influenza is fairly common in poultry, and is usually of minimal consequence. It is usually only a major concern when HPAI strains of the virus are found or when strains of the virus that can easily mutate into the HPAI strains are found.

Animal Health Personnel will perform the testing at no cost to the flock owner. Chickens and turkeys are tested by taking swab samples of the respiratory tract. Waterfowl are sampled by taking swab samples of the vent. Up to eleven birds will be sampled from each flock. At the time of testing, Animal Health personnel will assess the property and management scheme for risk of exposure and make suggestions to mitigate risk. Animal Health Personnel will also take this opportunity to distribute informational materials to help flock owners minimize the risk of exposure and to educate the owners on good biosecurity practices for their flocks. The test results will be mailed back to the individual owners.

In the event of discovery of HPAI or low pathogenic avian influenza of the type H5 or H7 (the strains that can mutate into HPAI) the flock will be de-populated as a means of controlling the spread of this disease. HPAI infection if left to spread would have a disastrous effect on the health of poultry and wild birds and on the poultry industry due to likely trade restrictions with other countries. Additionally, certain strains of HPAI have the ability to infect people. The threat of this happening makes the detection of HPAI a public health concern as well. Detection and control of the disease is of extreme importance to protect the public health, animal health, and the poultry industry. So please take advantage of this program and spread the word to others

Plant Industry News

CAPS Program News

The Rhode Island Division of Agriculture continues to participate in the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) Program. As you may recall the CAPS program is designed to assist in the protection of the state's agricultural, economic and natural environment by surveying against non-indigenous pests and diseases that maybe introduced into our environment resulting in economic damage to agricultural crops and natural habitat. There has been a change in the State Survey Coordinator (SSC), responsible for providing oversight and technical guidance within the Program. Liz Lopes-Duguay (formerly of the Division's Pesticide Section) will now assume the duties of the SSC that includes surveying for target pests that may have the potential to threaten the state's biodiversity, which includes the agricultural industry, commercial establishments, landscapes and the natural environment. During the upcoming year she will continue the work that the previous SSC has managed which covers identifying and surveying for such exotic pests that can cause significant damage to agricultural crops, commercial and natural landscapes and their by products. In 2008, survey work will continue in identifying wood beetle infestations, such as the Wood boring Bark beetle and wood wasps that infests most tree species, Chrysanthemum White Rust, a fungus which can cause damage to crops grown within the commercial nursery industry. The Program will also investigate any calls regarding potential new insect threats to the state.

In the next few months, she will be contacting nurseries, farms and other establishments to inquire if individuals will be willing to participate in any of these surveys. Your interest with cooperating with the survey will be greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, regarding the survey Liz be reached at 401-222-2781 x4510 or 949-1770. Her E-mail address is: liz.lopesduguay@dem.ri.gov.

Mosquito Abatement Program Update

The DEM Div. Of Agriculture has recently acquired a new rubber-tracked, low ground pressure utility vehicle. The ASV Scout will be fitted with a hydraulic dump bed to assist with moving soil excavated at saltmarsh water management projects. Projects are designed to restore degraded saltmarshes and/or reduce mosquito production.



The \$30,000 machine was jointly financed by government and private funds. Government funding was provided by the CDC/RI Dept. of Health/DEM West Nile Virus program, and by the CRMC-administered Habitat Restoration program. The RI chapter of the national non-profit Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership provided additional funds.

FARMLAND PROTECTION NEWS

The RI Agricultural Lands Preservation Commission (ALPC) was a partner in the protection of several hundred acres of farmland in 2007. Just this past November and December the development rights were purchased to Treaty Rock Farm in Little Compton, and the Dutra and Neale Farms in Jamestown. Other farms protected in 2007 include the LeBreux Farm in Tiverton and Salisbury Farm, Johnston. The development rights to Sakonnet Vineyards were purchased in early 2008 and several other farms remain in negotiation. The state through the ALPC is fortunate to be a partner in these efforts, which are made possible by the commitments to the same by many local, federal and non-profits agencies and organizations, such as USDA, local land trusts, cities and towns, and The Nature Conservancy etc.

Wanted small farm in RI area:

Must relocate a small, pesticide free/chemical free, fresh herb business for 2008 season.

Minimum requirements: 5 acre minimum for farm status, for small scale specialty vegetable and herb farming, transition to organic. Required, a small house, tiny garage and or barn, space for a greenhouse. Development rights may have already been sold, deed restrictions to protect the land acceptable.

Contact Ellen Stone,
dyerwoman@riconnect.com

Rhode Islander Breaks the Giant Pumpkin World Record

Joe Jutra grew it in Rhode Island. It broke all records. It is the new shattering world record giant pumpkin. It was weighed at the Topsfield Fair. It was a week before Rhode Island had its annual weigh off giant pumpkin championship. Joe knew he had grown a giant pumpkin champion. Two questions remained, would his pumpkin keep on growing or at least survive with out any destruction another week, and would he have a new world record. Not to take any chances, Joe brought his pumpkin to the Topsfield Fair and won a world record at 1689 pounds.

The following week on October 6, 2007, Rhode Island held it's annual Championship at Frerichs Farm in Warren, RI. It was the largest crowd ever before at a weigh off in the Ocean State. The day was extremely warm and humid, especially for October. But that did stop entries coming in from Rhode Island and from other parts of New England. At the end, it was Ron Wallace of Greene, RI, who won the 2007 Southern New England Giant Pumpkin Growers Championship In Rhode Island. His behemoth came in at 1423 pounds.

The Rhode Island Division of Agriculture congratulates all growers who participated in this year's event. Good luck to all growers.

Lets break another world record next year. If that does happen, Rhode Island would shatter a new world record three years in a row. We look forward to an incredible 2008 growing season.

Coming Events

Rhode Island Agriculture Day It may be winter, but Rhode Island Agriculture Day is only about four months away.

As in past years, Rhode Island Ag Day will be held at the Rhode Island State House. This year, the Rhode Island Division of Agriculture is aiming to hold this annual event one day during in the first two weeks in May. We will keep everyone updated.

Ron Wallace of Greene, with Rhode Island champion pumpkin



Pesticide Safety & IPM Training Winter-Spring Schedule 2008

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.

IPM/ Integrated Pest Management Training : provides information on controlling pest using IPM techniques.

Training Requirements: In order to receive the above licenses/certifications, all applicants are required to attend the core training which consists of two 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. Core Sessions are all identical training sessions. Attendance on both days is required before the examination can be taken. It is recommended that you attend one session in full, but substitutions can be arranged.

Preregistration is required by mail - Use attached registration form - Call Margaret Siligato if you need confirmation.

CORE SCHEDULES

Core I	Day 1	Jan 31	Thurs / URI Kingston-East Farm	8am-4pm
	Day 2	Feb 8	Friday / URI Kingston-East Farm	8am-4pm
Core II	Day 1	Feb 28	Thurs / URI Kingston-East Farm	8am-4pm
	Day 2	Mar 13	Thurs / URI Kingston-East Farm	8am-4pm
Core III	Day 1	Mar 27	Thurs / URI Kingston-East Farm	8am-4pm
	Day 2	April 10	Thurs / URI Kingston-East Farm	8am-4pm
Core IV	Day 1	May 15	Thurs / URI Kingston-East Farm	8am-4pm
	Day 2	May 29	Thurs / URI Kingston-East Farm	8am-4pm
Core V	Day 1	July 10	Thurs / URI Kingston-East Farm	8am-4pm
	Day 2	July 24	Thurs / URI Kingston-East Farm	8am-4pm

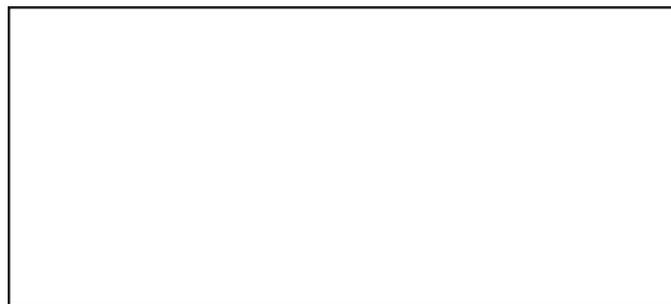
COMMERCIAL CATEGORY & IPM TRAINING SESSIONS: These session fulfill the requirements for “RUP” certification and also qualifies for Integrated Pest Management Training.

Category 2 Forestry	Tues Feb 12 / URI Kingston- East Farm	8am-4pm
Category 3A Shade Tree	Tues Feb 12 / URI Kingston- East Farm	8am-4pm
Category 3B Turf & Ornamentals	Thurs Feb 12 / URI Kingston- East Farm	8am-4pm
Category 6 Right of Way	Tues March 4 / URI Kingston-East Farm	8am-4pm
Category 7A Household	Thurs Apr 24 / URI Kingston-East Farm	8am-4pm
Category 7D Vertebrate	Thurs Apr 24/ URI Kingston-East Farm	8am-4pm
Category 7B Termite	Thurs May 8 / URI Kingston-East Farm	8am-4pm
Category 7E Mosquito	Thurs May22/ URI Kingston-East Farm	8am-4pm
Category 8 Public Health	Thurs May 22/ URI Kingston-East Farm	8am-4pm

Information: Margaret Siligato at URI 874-5997 or Robin Mooney at DEM 222-2781 x 4513



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