Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) of Gloucester County improves the lives of Gloucester County residents through programs that are delivered by faculty and staff. As an integral part of the NJ Agricultural Experiment Station, and Rutgers the State University of New Jersey, we utilize research and science-based, non-biased, factual information for our education and outreach programs. We reach our clientele through educational seminars, field demonstrations, home-study courses, school enrichment programs, camping experiences, the annual 4-H Fair and NJ Peach Festival, telephone inquiries and helplines, newsletters, fact sheets, and web-based information. We are primarily funded by the Cooperative Research Education & Extension Service of the US Department of Agriculture, the State University of NJ, and the Gloucester County Board of Chosen Freeholders. The three program areas of RCE include Agriculture and Resource Management, 4-H Youth Development, and Family and Community Health Sciences.

Primary Goals include:
- Preservation of farmers, farmland, and the allied infrastructure of agriculture.
- Preservation and conservation of the environment and natural resources.
- Empowerment of youth to reach full potential through interaction with knowledgeable and caring adults.
- Improving knowledge and life skills of residents in the areas of horticulture, food, nutrition, and leadership.

4-H Youth Development

The 4-H Youth Development Program uses a learning-by-doing approach in providing informal educational experiences to school age boys and girls. This target audience is learning leadership, citizenship and life skills under the guidance of caring adults.

“A Day at The Farm,” an interactive educational exhibit at the Gloucester County 4-H Fair helped educate children and their parents about the important role farms play in the production of the food they eat. Each station focused on one aspect of agriculture. Children increased their awareness of the origins of food. Parents were encouraged to participate with their children for maximum educational benefit. The average child spent 23 minutes in the exhibit. In five years, over 27,000 children have experienced the exhibit at our fair and more than 800 at school and library “Farm Days”. Parents report that their children talk all year about their experiences in the exhibit and can’t wait to come back.

The Gloucester County Triangle Hog Growers 4-H Club took leadership in addressing some of the needs of farmers devastated by Hurricane Katrina. They provided farm equipment and machinery that was destroyed and needed to farm. The club formed a committee, contacted Farm Aid and successfully planned and carried out fund raising to support their goal of helping the family farms.
4-H Volunteer Leadership

Caring adult volunteers serve as partners with youth and make a difference in their lives by building a foundation of assets that will help them avoid high risk behavior so they can become responsible, successful, and caring citizens. Twenty four new volunteer leaders were recruited and trained during 2005 – 2006 bringing the 4-H club total in Gloucester County to 52. The 4-H Prep program has four clubs meeting the need for “Discovering the Treasures of 4-H” in all corners of the county. Several 4-H clubs exhibited and/or paraded at several community days throughout the year, including Monroe Township Day, the Pitman 4th of July Parade and Franklin Township Day thus helping to recruit youth and volunteers for 4-H.

The average adult volunteer donates 220 hours per year in preparing for club meetings and teaching youth. In 2006, there were 135 registered adult 4-H volunteers in Gloucester County. There were also more than 50 4-H youth volunteers, teens who shared their skills with younger 4-H members and with other youth in their communities. According to research of the Independent Sector, the value of volunteer time in New Jersey is $22.35/hour. This equates to more than $40,000 in time being donated to Gloucester County 4-H. More than 200 volunteers, 4-H members and their families attended the annual Awards Dinner and Volunteer Recognition Event where RCE staff showed their appreciation for the dedication of these volunteers.

4-H Summer Enrichment Day Camp

Two one week day camp experiences ran simultaneously at the 4-H fairgrounds. The prep camp is for children K-1 and science camp is for youth grades 2-4. 24 youth, 17 teen counselors and 3 adult volunteers participated.

On the final day of camp, the following was learned:
- 100% made new friends.
- 78% made 3 or more new friends – All campers reported making at least one new friend
- 87% feel they improved skills through group activities.
- 96% want to return next year (the other camper said “Maybe.”)
- 87% would like to be a counselor some day.

With the support of the 4-H Association, through six workshops offered countywide, 217 4-H members learned important life skills such as Record Keeping, Public Speaking and Making an Effective Poster. At the county 4-H Public Presentations event held at Williamstown Middle School, 44 4-H members presented a prepared talk in a public forum. Ten senior (grade 8 – 13) members qualified for the state contest in June. 33 4-H members created posters for the annual contest interpreting how each “Gets Moving and Healthy with Gloucester County 4-H.” More than 190 volunteers supported the 4-H program in one or more ways: club leadership, event chaperoning, grounds beautification, club exhibits and parades and fund raising to support scholarships, etc.

Agriculture & Resource Management

The Fruit Integrated Pest Management Program (IPM) continued to provide field scouting and pesticide recommendations for fruit growers. Over 1300 acres of tree fruit were enrolled in the program and scouting impacted in total over 2700 acres for 17 growers. The IPM program helped growers with commercial application of mating disruption on 260 acres. This represented 18% of the peach and apple acreage in Gloucester County. The program saves up to $80 an acre by substituting mating disruption for insecticide application. Fifty two soil test reports were analyzed and reduced phosphorous and nitrogen recommendations were made.

Volunteer 4-H Teen judges at County Public Presentations competition in Monroe Township

Visiting speaker Mark Chien of Penn State Cooperative Extension demonstrates canopy management and its importance to wine quality to growers at Twilight Wine Grape meeting.
The testing and evaluation of peach varieties has resulted in the introduction of four new yellow fleshed peaches; one white fleshed nectarine, and four flat peaches with white and yellow fleshed. The varieties are being patented for the NJAES have been licensed to nurseries, and about 2500 trees were planted the spring of 2006. Additional testing and evaluation of peach and nectarine varieties has resulted in the development and planting of several new varieties including the USDA early season variety GaLa, the midseason variety Flamin Fury PF Lucky 13, and the late variety Flamin Fury PF 27A. Approximately 6000 of these trees have been planted. The continued development of peach and nectarine varieties helped peach growers sustain and garner new markets for peaches.

Major accomplishments were achieved in peach marketing. A peach buyers’ guide was written and 1200 copies published and distributed to buyers and retailers. Peach media day was coordinated and held with New Jersey Peach Promotion Council (NJPPC). Copy was written and input provided for a total revision of the NJPPC website. Three articles were written for the NJPPC newsletter. The peach educational exhibits and the peach pak competition were coordinated for the New Jersey Peach Festival. Over 16 major newspaper articles and additional radio and TV spots across NJ and Philadelphia resulted from these efforts. Wholesale peach prices increased. An increase of 14% in wholesale peach car-lot shipments occurred in our recently completed shipping season.

One twilight grape meeting, one regional wine grape program, and 14 one-on-one consultations, have assisted in the establishment of three wineries and 17 wine grape plantings.

The South Jersey Landscape Conference attracted 125 landscape businesses and employees who gained information on diversifying their businesses and managing major pest problems in the landscape. The annual greenhouse program attracted 65 business people and helped them manage abiotic disorders and pest problems in the production of bedding plants and potted annuals.

With the growing population and new homeowners, in the county, we continue to help new landowners who want to grow agricultural crops. Ten on-site consultations and 27 phone calls on right to farm issues were resolved plus participation in mediations on right to farm issue with our State and County agricultural development board.

The Environmental Stewardship program has seen Gloucester County graduates making impacts on decisions made with: Wenonah Environmental Commission and the restoration of Synnotts Pond; Washington Twp. Environmental Commission and Clean-Up Day; conducting a storm water management seminar; Initiation of a school solar installation; East Greenwich Environmental Commission and development of plans for a new park including backyard habitat demonstration and rain garden; Bayshores Nature Conservancy; conducting biological surveys, invasive control and volunteer management; and Delivering “Good to the last drop” water quality lectures to members of the Gloucester County 4-H clubs.

The RCE Vegetable IPM Program services 5 farms in Gloucester County to reduce pesticide sprays on 420 acres. Research from this program surveyed for exotic vegetable pests (Copitarsia moths, 3 species of Agiotes wireworms, and the brown marmorated stink bug) in cooperation with the NJ Department of Agriculture and USDA APHIS. Additional research was conducted to evaluate insecticide resistance in corn earworms and to monitor for carrot weevil to determine a carrot pest management strategy plan. Gloucester County now produces 250 acres of processing carrots.

A perimeter trap crop demonstration project was conducted to reduce insecticide sprays for butternut squash production. The project resulted in reducing pesticide applications by 4 sprays, saving farmers 65% in pesticide costs. The demonstration project was presented at 2 grower meetings and increased usage.

RCE participated on the statewide Wholesale Vegetable Marketing Taskforce because of the impact on the 50 million dollar vegetable industry. Plans were developed for mass marketing vegetables in southern NJ under a united label in 2007. A growing valuable crop in the county is pre-washed bagged lettuces and spinach. This has been a strong market up until the E. coli scare in September 2006. Over 23 questions were fielded from the media and concerned citizens on this topic. Factual information on the source of the infected product and proper food handling was provided to interested parties. RCE agents and specialists continue to conduct research to keep this industry viable. Major vegetable crops were research was conducted on tomatoes, squash, sweet potato, peppers, cole crops and soybeans. A survey of
Master Gardeners staff the Horticultural Competition and Display at the GC 4-h Fair and NJ Peach Festival.

Master Gardener Program

Gloucester County’s program continues to be one of the top MG programs in NJ and had the second highest enrollment number of all counties for 2006. To date 173 MG student have completed the 21 week training course with 135 volunteers actively participating after coursework was completed. This is a 78% retention rate for volunteers.

These volunteers served 3,607 inquires in 2006 through the office helpline. Community outreach programs reached 146,785 citizens through public events in Scotland Run Waterfest, Swedesboro-Woolwich Day, the Gloucester County 4-H Fair, Pitman Environmental Day, Anne Whitehall Flower Show, and the Wenonah Garden Festival. MG volunteers have given 3834 hours of service in 2006 for a dollar value of $77,423 to the county. Since the programs inception 17,533 volunteer hours have been performed by this group. Projects at the GC Shady Lane Home Olde Stone House Herb Garden, Glassboro Gardens, Clayton Butterfly garden and the GCIA Greenhouse were on the top of the list for 2006. This program continues to improve the quality of life by beautifying the environment and providing therapy for citizens.

Family & Community Health Sciences

Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)

EFNEP combats America’s obesity epidemic by attacking nutritional literacy among low-income populations. Through the program, individuals and families learn to improve their diets and increase physical activity. Now in its fourth year, Gloucester County EFNEP reached 163 families and 1500 children this year. EFNEP’s evaluation and reporting system showed that among this year’s program graduates:

- 86% improved nutrition practices such as making healthy food choices and reading labels;
- 74% improved food resource practices such as meal planning and budgeting;
- 32% now offer 5 fruits and vegetables to their families each day;
- 49% of participants run out of food less often than before they participated in EFNEP.

Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program (FSNEP)

The inaugural year of the Gloucester/Salem County FSNEP project was a building year. FSNEP outreach is designed to be a collaborative effort between RCE and a variety of county agencies and organizations. Key linkages were established in 2006 that will enable FCHS to offer food and nutrition education programming at no cost to a number of Gloucester County agencies, including students in two Paulsboro elementary schools and the Paulsboro After Three project managed through the Boys and Girls Club. With the support of grant funds, FCHS was able to hire a new program associate to administer the project.
StoryTime Foods

FCHS wrapped up pilot testing of their newest project, StoryTime Foods, and started field testing the curriculum this autumn via an educational collaboration with TriCounty Head Start. StoryTime Foods is a preschool nutrition education curriculum that pairs children’s literature with nutrition and food education, with emphasis on locally grown commodities. More than 230 children learned to taste and try new fruits and vegetables in a fun, hands-on fashion. HeadStart teachers and families got involved in the project with school-based and take-home activities.

Seeds to Success: The Youth Farmstand Project

The Seeds to Success youth farmstand project impacts the Gloucester County community in ways that exceed its job preparedness focus. In 2006, project staff taught 420 youth topics in nutrition and financial basics in four schools. The farmstands build food security and create access to nutritious, affordable produce to the communities of Glassboro, Woodbury and Paulsboro a reality…all while supporting local agriculture. This year:

- RCE collaborated with 70+ community groups, agencies, municipalities and school districts to make this project a success.
- 14% of farmstand sales were attributed to consumers who redeem WIC and Senior Citizen Farmer Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) free produce vouchers.
- The agribusiness community benefited by the farmstands purchasing more than 19,400 pounds of locally grown produce.
- Youth demonstrated improved skills and competencies in such areas as money management, food and nutrition knowledge and skills, customer service, safe food handling techniques and a significant number of workplace skills.

New Jersey Living Well

FCHS offered a variety of workshops and presentations throughout the year, reaching 450 consumers with information on herbal supplements, making healthier fast food choices, women’s health and child nutrition. Visions newsletter was delivered three times annually to 2,500 consumers. Visions provides Gloucester County residents with research-based health and wellness information on a variety of topics, including nutrition, asthma education, food safety, exercise and more.

From Our Farms™

From Our Farms is an educational program that promotes improved nutrition and consumption of locally grown foods (which will, in turn, support the economic viability of local farms) through a series of family-based programs and learning boxes. In 2006, From Our Farms taught 946 families how to eat more nutritiously by increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables, which is linked to decreases in incidence of heart disease, diabetes, obesity and some cancers. Surveys report that families who participate in From Our Farms programs demonstrate the following behavior changes:

- 75% report that their child tried a new fruit or vegetable
- 34% prepared locally grown foods with their children
- 75% learned how fruits/vegetables grow
- 83% learned which fruits/vegetables grow in NJ
- 99% purchased “Jersey Fresh” produce
- 97% visited a farm stand or farm market

Organizations and Government that Provide Funding and Support to RCE of Gloucester County

**Primary**

Gloucester County Board of Chosen Freeholders
Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Services of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES) at Rutgers University

**Secondary and Grant Funding**

Agricultural Agent Association of NJ
Delaware Valley Chapter of the Society for Nutrition Education
Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program EFNEP
Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program
Gloucester County Board of Agriculture
Jersey Fresh Program of NJ Department of Agriculture
Jersey Fruit Marketing Cooperative
NE SARE Sustainable Communities Grant Program
New Jersey State Horticultural Society
New Jersey Peach Festival Association
New Jersey Peach Promotion Council
New Jersey Peach Council, Inc.
PA Peach & Nectarine Research Advisory Bd. of the PA Department of Agriculture
Rutgers Cooperative Extension Fruit IPM Program
USDA CYFAR New Communities Project
Vegetable Growers Association of NJ Grant
Valero Fund for Children
Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Gloucester County has an increasingly active web site for programs, activities, agricultural regulations, calendar of events and other extension issues and events. We continue to reach more people with our web site on a more timely basis. Visit us at http://gloucester.rce.rutgers.edu

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