

## 2009 Annual Report Summary for New Jersey

The NJ Rutgers Cooperative Extension State PDP effort continues addressing the unique sustainability needs of high-value land Urban Fringe Farming and broader communities of farmers, food system participants, and community residents. The NJ SARE coordinator participated in a major initiative with Extension, NRCS, State Farmland Preservation professionals and board members, and soil scientists to improve farmland preservation policies that often contain impediments to successful and sustainable farming enterprises. 103 ag service providers received information about soil health, the transition to organic farming and other sustainable farming practices at educational events that included field days at the Sustainable, Organic, and Alternative Research (SOAR) Project site. In response to needs expressed by extension educators, other professionals, NGOs, and NOFA-NJ stakeholders, the NJ PD program helped develop and support a New and Beginning Farmer Equipment training program that was attended by 6 Extension educators and 19 enthusiastic new farmers. All of the farmers indicated they would change their management practices as a result of the training, 17 (91%) thought they were better able to select proper equipment, 15 (81%) obtained new farming ideas, 12 (62%) planned to purchase or fabricate equipment like the type demonstrated, 10 (43%) planned to calibrate equipment and 12 (67%) planned to attend future Extension programs to increase their profitability.

In the area of outreach and education, 15 issues of *What's In Season* were produced and distributed between October 2008 and 2009. Readership has expanded from 440 to over 500 external readers, and internal readership has grown to 250. This communication informs ag and food professionals, and broader communities, about locally produced foods from NJ farms. Increased distribution resulted in Rutgers being contacted to expand contracting opportunities for food from local farms to institutions including Yale University Dining Services; Harrah's Casinos; Princeton University Dining Services; and J. Ambrogi Food Distribution, Inc., a local \$60 million food distribution company. Other contacts from our What's in Season readers led to Rutgers distributing 10 copies of the 2007 SARE-funded Farm to School in the Northeast Guide to boards interested in implementing Farm to School initiatives. Seven issues of *Sustaining Farming on the Urban Fringe*, which serves a training and communication tool, enabled Rutgers to offer all of its Extension Ag professionals and others a method to communicate information about sustainable practices, results, SARE programs and State sustainability programs to farmers, agency professionals, State agricultural leaders and policy makers. This publication led to increased advisory requests (five vs. two the previous period) for SARE Partnership or Farmer Grants.