

## Program Update - Michael Fargione

Cornell Cooperative Extension Hudson Valley Regional Fruit Program (HVRFP)  
Supervising County – Ulster                      Programming Period: 3/8/04 – 5/19/04

- Delivery of **grower alert messages** continued during this reporting period provided specific and timely reminders and alerts regarding current tree fruit issues. Messages have been provided daily Monday through Friday, and additional messages have been sent out evenings and on weekends as needed (48 messages during the reporting period). The e-mail message list has increased to over 100 individuals, while the recorded telephone message continued to be used by many growers. The Code-A-Phone™ hardware, which has been in operation for over 10 years and is no longer manufactured, stopped functioning during April. A standard answering machine has been installed to replace it until a more effective solution is found. Unlike the Code-A-Phone machine that recorded the number of incoming calls, the new machine does not allow me to monitor the number of call placed to the recorded message.
- This spring, enrollees in the program were offered the opportunity to electronically receive a pdf version of the newsletter Hudson Valley Tree Fruit News. Distribution of electronic versions was offered in order to speed up delivery of the newsletter by 7-10 days. In addition, electronic delivery will help reduce printing and mailing costs. Forty-five recipients have requested electronic versions of the newsletter. The first electronic mailing will take place during the week of May 17<sup>th</sup>. At the current sign-up level, electronic distribution is expected to reduce printing and postage costs by at least \$280 per year.
- Special Permit Training workshops held on March 30<sup>th</sup>, April 1<sup>st</sup> and April 21<sup>st</sup> trained 65 farm workers in proper pesticide handling and mixing, and on the characteristics and proper use of several restricted use pesticides commonly applied to tree fruit. These collaborative workshops were conducted in English (by Fargione) or Spanish (by McKay) to enable workers to learn in their native languages. After completion of the workshops, workers received permits from NYS DEC that enable them to apply restricted use materials.
- Petal Fall Pest Management/Thinning Meetings were held at Porpiglia Farms (Ulster County) on May 11<sup>th</sup> and at Fix Brothers' Orchard (Columbia Co.) on May 12<sup>th</sup>. Over 100 growers, crop consultants and ag-chem industry representatives learned about current season crop management issues from Cornell faculty (Dr. Cheng – plant nutrition; Dr. Rosenberger pathology, Dr. Robinson – thinning; Dr. Straub – insect and mite management).
- I collaborated with Cornell staff on various research projects located in grower orchards (former Cornell Pomologist Dr. Schupp - evaluating thinning trials on Empire, Gala, Honeycrisp, Fuji, Lady Apples; Drs. Robinson and Schupp - enhancement of fruit size on Gala; Dr Cheng – impacts of nitrogen on Gala fruit size; S. Hoying – peach planting system trial). All of these trials attempt to answer important questions relating to enhancing grower profitability.