Program Update - Michael Fargione

Cornell Cooperative Extension Hudson Valley Regional Fruit Program (HVRFP)
Supervising County – Ulster Programming Period: 3/1/05 – 4/25/05

Highlighted Activities Completed During Reporting Period:

Orchard Pruning Demonstrations: Pruning demonstrations were held at Yonder Farms (Valatia, Columbia Co. – 20 attendees) and Crist Bros. Orchards (Milton, Ulster Co.- 70 attendees) on March 9, 2005. Dr. Terence Robinson provided training for growers and their pruning crews in English and Spanish.

Apple Pest Control In-Depth Workshop for Hudson Valley Growers: This was a full-day workshop with 54 attendees held at the Hudson Valley Lab on March 10, 2005. Lab staff (Dave Rosenberger, Richard Straub, Peter Jentsch) presented information on current Hudson Valley apple insect and disease issues and options for effective, season-long control programs. A reference manual was compiled and distributed to attendees. Attendee feedback was very positive with some growers calling it the best fruit-related extension program they had ever attended.

Packing Facility Tour: Dr. Chris Watkins (Post-harvest Specialist, Cornell, Ithaca) and I toured packing facilities in the region on March 23 to assist growers with current season apple storage issues.

Special Permit Training Sessions: Training sessions were held on March 30 (Hudson), March 31 (Highland) and April 20 (Hudson) to help growers comply with DEC requirements for on-site supervision of workers making applications of restricted use pesticides. Steve McKay and I are collaborating to provide training in English or Spanish for 70 workers.

Newsletters: Commercial fruit growers and research/extension staff received one issue of the Hudson Valley Tree Fruit News during this reporting period via electronic (97 recipients) or hard-copy (224 recipients) format.

Roo-Guard Deer Damage Mitigation Project: Dr. Paul Curtis (Cornell, Ithaca) and I completed and submitted a final report on the Roo-Guard Deer Damage Mitigation Project to NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets. I am preparing a companion article for submission to the NYS Fruit Quarterly.

Class 10 of LEAD NY: As a program planning team member, I helped organize and facilitate the LEAD NY training session held March 17-19 in Catskill, Green County. Topics covered included evaluation of the Texas/Mexico study trip, local leadership assignment reports, a written communication skills workshop, NY forest products industry tour and speakers, commencement preparations, and program evaluation.

I completed my 2-year LEAD NY commitment on April 22-23 with commencement activities held at Cornell in Ithaca. This session included a program evaluation meeting with the LEAD NY Board of Directors, and a presentation on “servant leadership”.

Highlighted Activities Underway During Reporting Period:

Grower alert messages: Delivery of daily (Monday-Friday) grower alert messages resumed on March 21st. To date, 28 messages have been delivered during this reporting period. This e-mail message is currently sent to 115 individuals, while the recorded telephone message continues to be used by other growers.

Individual grower assistance: The spring season brings an increase in grower inquiries relating to tree fruit production and pest management. Numerous calls are received on a daily basis.

Ongoing research projects:
Size improvement of ‘Gala’ apples – Dr. Terence Robinson.
Expansion of Northeast Weather Association into Eastern NY – Dr. Juliet Carroll and Kevin Iungerman.

Supervising County Activities During Reporting Period:

4/1/05 - Windshield tour of Ulster Agricultural District 1 with NYSDAM Representative Ron Mead.

2005 Annual Agricultural District Inclusion Program – collaborative effort with Teresa Rusinek (CCEUC), Virginia Craft (Ulster Planning Department) and the Ulster Agricultural Farmland Protection Board.