Project Title: Sustainable Fruit Production and Marketing

Project Leader: Sonia Schloemann

Project Overview

Fruit farms and vineyards provide open space and scenic vistas that add significantly to the quality of life in Massachusetts. The lands surrounding agricultural production provide buffer zones for native species of plants and animals and corridors for their movement or expansion. To remain a vital part of the Massachusetts economy, both new and established growers must learn to produce crops sustainably and to adapt production systems to market opportunities. New varieties provide fruit farmers with opportunities for enhancing production, quality, sales and consumption. UMass Extension provides farmers with access to current research information on new and alternative species and varieties, advanced horticultural management techniques, marketing and business management strategies, pest-ecology, and pest-management procedures. Research on pest ecology and management informs approaches that optimize control, reduce chemical use and increase fruit quality. The knowledge and resources provided by Extension forge successful partnerships with Massachusetts’s fruit producers that in turn foster a more secure, diverse and healthful food supply for the Commonwealth.

Activity Summary - 2014

- Advanced IPM/NE SARE Scab (9)
- Berry Notes Newsletter (12)
- Cold Hardy Wine Grape - Research and Demonstration (1)
- eXtension Apples - Community of Practice (CoP) (1)
- Fact Sheets- key insect, disease, weed id and management recommendations for fruit crops (19)
- Fruit Notes Newsletter (4)
- Grape Notes Newsletter (22)
- Healthy Fruit - Online Version (19)
- MA Farm Winery and Grower's Association - Summer Vineyard Meetings (1)
- MA Farm Winery and Grower's Association Annual Meeting (1)
- Mass Aggie Seminars (8)
- Mass Fruit Growers Annual Summer/Winter Meetings (2)
- Master Gardener Trainings (6)
- Native Pollinator Conservation (3)
- Native Pollinator Conservation Training (1)
- NE Small Fruit Pest Management Guide - Online Version (1)
Activity Summary 2014 – cont.

- Multistate Research Project on Tree Fruit Rootstock (1)
- NE Tree Fruit Management Guide - Online Version (1)
- NE Tree Fruit Management Guide - Print Version (1)
- Multi-state Evaluation of Winegrape Cultivars and Clones (2)
- New England Vegetable and Berry Growers Annual Winter Meetings (1)
- New England Vegetable and Fruit Conference - Biennial Conference (1)
- New England Wine Grape Grower’s Website (1)
- New England Pest Reporting Network (18)
- Phone and email consultations (520)
- Role of Pollinators and Plant Defenses For Infection Of Blueberry By Mummy Berry (1)
- Site visits (215)
- Soil Health Assessment Training (2)
- Spring Tree Fruit Twilight Meeting Series (6)
- UMass Cold Spring Orchard Blog - Jmcextman.blogspot.com (1)
- UMass Fruit Advisor Website (1)
- Undergraduate Internship in Fruit Production (1)
- Vegetable/Fruit IPM Facebook Page (1)
- Vegetable/Fruit IPM On-Farm Meetings (3)

Total educational contacts

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<th>Adult Contacts</th>
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<td>In Person</td>
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<td>Indirect Contacts</td>
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Narrative Summary and Impact

Through its programming, the Sustainable Fruit Production and Marketing team addressed four main issue areas in FY2014. They were

- Integrated Pest Management,
- Economically Viable Food Production,
- Environmentally Sustainable Food Production
- Safe, Local Food

In advancing these priorities, the team conducted programming in Research/Demonstration and Outreach/Education. Research and Demonstration activities included projects at the UMass Cold Spring Orchard Research and Education Center as well as at cooperating grower farms. Thirty projects were carried out at the UMass Cold Spring Orchard and another three projects were conducted at a combined 25 cooperating grower sites. Outreach/Education activities included hosting and maintaining websites, producing publications (print and online), organizing and conducting day-long and multi-day
conferences, delivering educational presentations and trainings, and one-on-one consultations with growers (by email, phone and in person).

Research and Demonstration projects resulted in the publication of 35 journal articles/proceedings, 20 newsletter articles, and those projects were the subject of numerous field day presentations and on-farm tours. Fruit Team members delivered 11 papers at major professional conferences and meetings. The fruit program had primary responsibility for 2 websites and was key contributors to 4 additional sites or blogs. The Fruit Program members were key organizers of the New England Vegetable & Fruit Conference (1,833 attendees); Members also delivered 55 presentations to an audience of over 1,500. The New England Small Fruit Pest Management Guide (circulation 800) and The New England Tree Fruit Guide (circulation 100) was organized, edited and produced by the UMass Fruit Team. Four newsletters, Fruit Notes (4 issues; circulation 175), Healthy Fruit (23 issues; circulation 100), Berry Notes (12 issues; circulation 450), and Grape Notes (16 issues; circulation 272) were produced. Finally, 715 individual consultations were made either by phone, email or in person.

Collaborating Organizations:

- Massachusetts Cultivated Blueberry Growers Association
- Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
- Massachusetts Farm Winery & Growers Association
- Massachusetts Fruit Growers' Association
- Massachusetts Hort Society
- New England Vegetable & Berry Growers Association
- Western MA Master Gardener