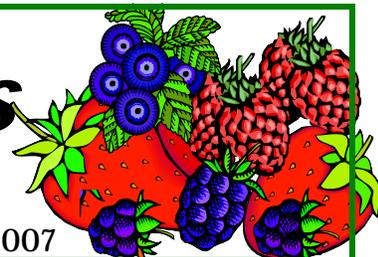




# New York Berry News

CORNELL UNIVERSITY



Volume 06, Number 12

December 19, 2007

## What's Inside

1. Currant Events
  - a. NY Berry Grower Survey –Send It In!
  - b. Give Yourself an Xmas Present--Join the NYS Berry Growers Association
  - c. Is Your Farm in Compliance with the Hazard Communication Standard?
  - d. 2008 Empire Fruit and Vegetable Expo
  - e. Becker Forum: Coping with the Uncertainties of Agricultural Labor
  - f. 2008 Empire Expo Berry Program
  - g. The Premier Annual Sustainable Agriculture Event In NYS!
  - h. Berry Program - Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention and North American Berry Convention
  - i. Raspberry And Blackberry Production Guide For The Northeast, Midwest, And Eastern Canada
2. Weed ID Workshops a Success – Marvin Pritts, Cathy Heldenreich, Laura McDermott, Chris Benedict
3. Cyclamen Mites in Strawberries – Are They a Problem in Your Fields? – Laura McDermott
4. Pricing Power – John Berry

*NABGA Annual Bramble Conference* will be in Hershey, Pennsylvania in association with the Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention and the North American Strawberry Growers Association. For more information contact: Debby Wechsler, 1138 Rock Rest Rd. Pittsboro, NC 27312, [nabga@mindspring.com](mailto:nabga@mindspring.com).

**February 2, 2008.** *Beginning Farmer workshop.* This workshop will focus on the business elements of starting your own rural enterprise. Location and more details to be posted soon! CNY Presented by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chenango, Fulton-Montgomery, Herkimer, Otsego and Schoharie Counties. For more information, contact Rebecca Hargrave, [jrh45@cornell.edu](mailto:jrh45@cornell.edu), 607-334-5841.

**February 12-14, 2008.** *Empire State Fruit and Vegetable Expo – “Growing for the Health of New York”.* Oncenter Convention Center, Syracuse, NY. Program and registration information: <http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/hort/expo/>. For general Expo information, please contact Jeff and Lindy Kubecka, New York State Vegetable Growers Association, PO Box 70, Kirkville, NY 13082, 315-687-5734, email [nysvga@twcny.rr.com](mailto:nysvga@twcny.rr.com) or visit <http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/hort/expo/>

**February 21, March 5, March 19 and April 2, 2008.** *Exploring the Small Farm Dream.* at 6:00pm at the CCE office in Newark, NY. Please call the office, 315-331-8415 if you are interested in attending. A \$75 registration fee, including workbook and supporting materials, will be charged for those accepted into the program. Applications are available at: <http://counties.cce.cornell.edu/wayne/agriculture>.

**February 7- 8, 2008.** *2008 Farmers' Direct Market Association Conference* Holiday Inn, Waterloo, NY. For more information: <http://www.nysfdma.com/>.

**February 28, 2008.** *The 2008 Hudson Valley Fruit Grower School - Berry Session.* Holiday Inn, Kingston, NY. Tree Fruit sessions will take place on February 26th & 27th. There will be a Trade Show on the evening of the 26th. Information will be made available at our web site (<http://hudsonvf.cce.cornell.edu/calendar.html#fruitschool>), or contact Steve McKay for more information.

**March 8, 2008.** *Beginning Berry Grower Seminar,* Ontario County CCE, Canandaigua, NY. Contact Russell Welsler for more information at: 585-394-3977 or [rw43@cornell.edu](mailto:rw43@cornell.edu).

**March 15, 2008.** *So, You Bought the Farm... Now What?* 8:30 am -2:30 pm. An educational workshop on land management and various agricultural enterprises for landowners who have little or no basic land management or farming experience. Richfield Springs, NY. Presented by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chenango, Fulton-Montgomery, Herkimer, Otsego and Schoharie Counties. For more information, contact Rebecca Hargrave, [jrh45@cornell.edu](mailto:jrh45@cornell.edu) 607-334-5841.

## CURRENT EVENTS

**Jan. 25-27, 2008.** *NOFA-NY's 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Organic Farming and Gardening Conference – “Organic Solutions! How Farmers, Gardeners, and Consumers Nurture Our Environment”*, Saratoga Springs, NY. For more information see news brief below.

**Jan. 29-31, 2008. (A berry triple header!)** *Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention*, Hershey Lodge and Convention Center, Hershey, PA. For more information Contact William Troxell, 717-694-3596.

*Annual meeting of the North American Strawberry Growers Association* will be held in conjunction with the Mid Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention (above), and the National American Bramble Growers meeting (below). For more information: see news brief below or contact Kevin Schooley at [kconsult@allstream.net](mailto:kconsult@allstream.net) or visit [www.nasga.org](http://www.nasga.org).

## NYS BERRY GROWER SURVEY – SEND IT IN!

The NYS Berry Grower Survey deadline has been extended due to delays encountered with bulk mailings (some surveys were received just this past week!). Your completed survey done on line or returned in the post paid envelope by **January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008** still enters you in the prize drawing:

- 1<sup>st</sup> prize: A complete set of NRAES Production Guides for Small Fruit, including strawberries, blueberries, and brambles (\$128 value)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> prize: 2008 Cornell Pest Management Guidelines for Berry Crops (\$25 value)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> prize: *Greenhouse Raspberries and High Tunnel Raspberries and Blackberries* (\$18.50 value)

Winners will be notified the week of January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2008. Survey results will be compiled and shared with you through NY Berry News, the Empire Expo and other venues in early 2008. We hope to hear from you! *If you have any questions at any time* please feel free to contact the researchers conducting the study; Rebecca Harbut (email: [rmh44@cornell.edu](mailto:rmh44@cornell.edu) phone: 607-254-2945), Cathy Heidenreich (email [mcm4@cornell.edu](mailto:mcm4@cornell.edu), phone 315-787-2367), Laura McDermott (email [lmg4@cornell.edu](mailto:lmg4@cornell.edu), phone 518-642-1007) or Dr. Marvin Pritts (email: [mpp3@cornell.edu](mailto:mpp3@cornell.edu), phone: 607-255-1778).

## GIVE YOURSELF AN XMAS PRESENT-- JOIN THE NYS BERRY GROWERS ASSOCIATION

*Paul Baker, Executive Secretary, New York State Berry Growers Association*



This will be the first opportunity I have had to introduce myself to many of you. My name is Paul Baker and for the next few years or more I will be serving as your Executive Secretary of the NYS Berry Growers Association. I come from a long history of proud members of the farming fraternity, where I was a fifth generation farmer. I operated our family farm for over 30 years in Western NY where my primary focus was on fresh fruits and vegetables. Currently I am also the Executive Director of the NYS Horticultural Society and Agricultural Affiliates. I also serve as the Chair for the North East Focus group for agricultural research at the Kearneysville, West Virginia Experimental Station. This is where the USDA conducts the fruit research that has direct impact on the Northeast specifically and the US in general. This is the federal site where the experimental studies are conducted by USDA on your berry crops.

I accepted this opportunity because I am excited about an industry that offers so very much “up side.” Agri-business as it should be called (farming) is a very demanding field to select to earn one’s daily bread. Yet it is one that will never become obsolete so long as we continue to keep it competitive in our ever changing world markets. Consumers will always seek fresh food to enjoy for both nutritional and pleasure reasons. Even with all of the issues that swirl around us today such as possible labor shortages and rising production costs the US consumer will always have full shelves to select from. The important questions will be from where and at what cost in both dollars and food safety?

The table could not be set more perfectly for your industry. China continues to pump tainted food and toys into our neighborhood stores. People are becoming increasingly suspicious of their once “safe” food stocks. Consumers are realizing increasingly that food grown in close proximity to their own dwellings is perhaps the safest. Secondly the need for freshness is returning to the top of the priority lists for consumers. They want food with less preservatives and additives. Fresh food offers them the highest level of nutrition. Researchers seem to uncover new links daily that confirm what we have always known that to eat fresh is to eat healthy.

If you want to throw a monkey wrench into any party, offer up to American pallets food that only offers nutritional benefits. We as consumers enjoy both the experience and taste of our foods. Witness as consumers seeking new ways to eat healthy without sacrificing flavor have increased the consumption of raspberries by 150% in the last five years. Blueberries are even more energized.

I invite you to join the New York State Berry Growers Association. We are planning to help you capture this market synergy. In order to meet the consumer needs we will need to invest in consumer education, improved marketing and of course research that will deliver to us new techniques to grow our diverse berry crops. New varieties are of course always on the top of the wish list but equally important will be improved cultural practices that offer us improved methods to deliver insect and disease free fruit to our consumers.

The NYS Berry Growers are committed to expanding both the marketing and research agenda for this industry. By joining this association you will be giving us the numbers necessary to carry your message of needs to both Albany and Washington. Your membership is a real time ballot for improved commitment to the berry industry in New York State.

I suggest that you join the Association and give yourself a Christmas present of knowing you are personally contributing towards improving your chosen passion. This self serving present will I am certain return you the reward of increased consumer demand and in the future improved variety knowledge and growing practices. As they say it all begins with your willingness to get involved and support your industry in this exciting era of consumer thirst for your products.



## New York State Berry Growers Association

Chairperson-Craig Michaloski-(585)225-6147 Treasurer-Anthony Emmi-(315)638-7679

Executive Secretary-Paul Baker-(716)754-4414 Cell (716)807-6827

[goodberries@roadrunner.com](mailto:goodberries@roadrunner.com)

[www.nysbga.org](http://www.nysbga.org)

### MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL/APPLICATION 2008

Name \_\_\_\_\_ (Renewal \_\_\_ New \_\_\_)

Farm or Business Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

Crops: Blueberries \_\_\_ Raspberries \_\_\_ Strawberries \_\_\_ Ribes \_\_\_ Vegetables \_\_\_ Fruit \_\_\_

Per cent U-Pick \_\_\_\_\_ Retail \_\_\_\_\_ Wholesale \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Fee – 1 Year 2008 \$45 \_\_\_\_\_

Research Fund \$50 \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL ENCLOSED \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make check payable to New York State Berry Growers Association or NYSBGA and send to:**

**Paul Baker, Executive Secretary NYS Berry Growers, 665 Sara Court Lewiston, NY 14092**

*Cancelled check will serve as your receipt, unless otherwise requested*

# IS YOUR FARM IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE HAZARD COMMUNICATION STANDARD?

*James Carrabba, New York Center for Agricultural Medicine & Health - NYCAMH*



**T**he Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) is a very important component of any safety plan. The HCS is a law administered by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). This law requires that employers inform workers of any chemical hazards in the workplace and to train workers how to protect themselves from these hazards. This standard is sometimes referred to as “Worker Right to Know”. The intent of the HCS is to assure that workers know about chemical hazards in the workplace and how they can protect themselves.

To be in compliance with this standard, a business must have a written hazard communication program. The hazard communication program must address these six areas:

1. Name a person responsible for overseeing the program
2. Create an inventory of all chemicals at the worksite
3. Properly label all chemical containers
4. Obtain and keep on file a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for each chemical:
5. Train workers on how to read product labels and MSDS's
6. Train workers on how to protect themselves from the chemicals and document training

The HCS states that MSDS's must be readily available to workers. Workers are free to consult the MSDS anytime they have a question about a particular chemical. Before using a chemical, it is a good idea to check the MSDS. The MSDS will list the personal protective equipment needed and the appropriate first aid measures that need to be taken in case of an emergency.

Worker training is an important component of complying with the HCS. The employee training should include an explanation of the standard, how to read a label and MSDS, where to find the MSDS's, types of chemicals used in the workplace, how to protect themselves from these chemicals and how to use the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Employers need to document the training.

NYCAMH is now available to help your farm comply with the HCS. NYCAMH has partnered with Cornell University's Quality Milk Production Services to provide Hazard Communication training. Through this partnership, we can help you set up your HCS program, assist you with obtaining MSDS's, and provide the training for your workers. Lisa Ford, Educator at Cornell's Quality Milk can provide this training in Spanish for your Hispanic workers. These services are offered at no cost through a grant from the New York State Department of Labor Hazard Abatement Board. We are also able to deliver farm safety training on a wide variety of topics.

If you would like to schedule an on-farm safety survey or an on-farm safety training session, contact Jim Carrabba at 800-343-7527, ext 239 or by email [jcarrabba@nycamh.com](mailto:jcarrabba@nycamh.com).

*NYCAMH, a program of Bassett Healthcare, is enhancing agricultural and rural health by preventing and treating occupational injury and illness*



## **BERRY PROGRAM - MID-ATLANTIC FRUIT AND VEGETABLE CONVENTION AND NORTH AMERICAN BERRY CONVENTION**

The [Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention](#) has become the premier grower meeting in the Northeast combining three days of six or more concurrent [educational sessions](#) with a large industry [trade show](#) and numerous networking opportunities - all designed to enable fruit, vegetable and berry growers as well as direct marketers to stay on the cutting edge of their industries. About 1,800 persons from throughout the mid-Atlantic region and beyond will be gathering at the [Hershey Lodge and Convention Center](#). [Registration](#) is open to all interested commercial fruit, vegetable and berry growers, direct marketers and allied industry personnel.

The 2008 Convention will also feature the North American Berry Conference with the [North American Strawberry Growers](#) and [North American Bramble Growers](#) Associations joining in the sponsoring the meetings. Also featured will be the second annual [Mid-Atlantic Cider Contest](#)

For general information on the Convention program, contact William Troxell, Publicity Coordinator at 717-694-3596 or [pvga@pvga.org](mailto:pvga@pvga.org).

For information on exhibiting at the Convention, contact Maureen Irvin, Convention Coordinator at 717-677-4184 or [shap@supernet.com](mailto:shap@supernet.com).

### **BERRY PROGRAM Tuesday Morning - January 29, 2008**

#### **Berry Tour**

This year's tour will take you through scenic and historic Lancaster and York Counties of Pennsylvania. Our first stop will be Kegel's Produce in Lancaster, which supplies fresh and fresh-cut fruits and vegetables to institutions, caterers, and restaurants in Pennsylvania and nearby states. We'll have a brief tour of their plant, including a discussion of food safety protocols in place at Kegel's, and their expectations of local producers in order to ensure a safe food supply. There will be time included for a question and answer session/discussion. Next we'll stop at Brown's Orchards and Farm Market in Loganville. Besides featuring fresh fruits and vegetables, this farm market also has a bakery, deli bar, greenhouse, coffee shop, ice cream shop, an array of processed products, and flower shop. You'll have time to explore, and we'll have a buffet lunch of sandwiches while our host Stan Brown talks to us about the history of the farm and its growth. We'll then visit Naylor's Wine Cellars, where we'll tour the winery and have an opportunity to taste some of the fruit wines this winery has developed in addition to grape varieties and blends. Finally, no visit to Hershey is complete without a visit to Hershey's Chocolate World. We've scheduled a Chocolate Tasting, where you'll have an opportunity to try an assortment of chocolate types, followed by some time to browse Chocolate World's Marketplace Shops where you can stock up on chocolate and related confections - just in time for Valentine's Day! (extra fee required - \$75 for NASGA and NABGA members, \$100 for non-members)

#### **Strawberry Workshop**

9:00 **Fundamentals of Strawberry Production** - David Handley, Univ. of Maine, Chair (extra fee required - continued in the afternoon)

12:30 **Luncheon Buffet** - Great Lobby and Confection Level Lobby (cash)

#### **Bramble Workshop**

9:00 **Fundamentals of Raspberry Production** - Marvin Pritts, Cornell Univ., Chair (extra fee required - continued in the afternoon)

### **Wednesday Morning, January 30, 2008 Joint Berry**

9:00 **Grower Showcase** - Susan Lynn, Sand Hill Berries, Penna.

9:45 **Industry Show and Tell**

10:00 **Adjourn to Strawberry and Bramble Sessions**

#### **Day-Neutral Strawberries**

10:15 **Proven Production Methods in the Midwest** - Dr. Gail Nonnecke, Iowa State Univ.

10:45 **Grower Experiences with Day-Neutral Strawberries** - John Cooper, Strawberry Tyme Farms, Ontario; David Pike, Farm to You, Maine; Dean Henry, The Berry Patch Farm, Iowa

11:30 **Harvesting Strawberries from Fall to Spring in the Mid-Atlantic** - Dr. Fumiomi Takeda, USDA-ARS

12:00 **NASGA Lunch and Annual Meeting**

### **Bramble Varieties**

10:15 **What's New and Interesting with Raspberry Varieties** - Dr. Courtney Weber, Cornell Univ.

10:45 **Blackberry Varieties** - Dr. Gina Fernandez, North Carolina State Univ.

11:15 **Grower Experiences with Bramble Varieties** (panel) - Chuck Geyer, Westmoreland Berry Farm, Virginia; Dr. Charlie O'Dell, Crows Nest Farm, Virginia; and Ervin Lineberger, Lineberger's Killdeer Farm, North Carolina.

12:00 **Luncheon Buffet** - Great Lobby and Confection Level Lobby (cash)

### **Wednesday Afternoon, January 30, 2008**

#### **Strawberries**

2:00 **Strawberry Weed Management Systems that Improve Soil Quality** - Dr. Gail Nonnecke, Iowa State Univ.

2:30 **Industry Show and Tell**

2:45 **Grower Experiences and Perspectives in Improving Soil Health** - Dean Henry, The Berry Patch, Iowa; Don Fulks, Belvedere Plantation, Virginia; Steve Groff, Cedar Meadow Farm, Penna.

3:30 **Maintaining Strawberry Nutrition in Older Plantings** - Dr. Marvin Pritts, Cornell Univ.

4:00 **Cutting Edge IPM Approaches for Strawberries** - Dr. David Handley, Univ. of Maine; Pam Fisher, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

4:45 **Adjourn**

#### **Brambles Under Cover**

1:30 **Bramble Production under Tunnels in the U.S.** - Kathy Demchak, Penn State Univ.

1:45 **Ten Acres of High Tunnel Raspberries: A Grower's Perspective** - John Cooper, Strawberry Tyme Farms, Inc., Ontario

2:30 **Industry Show and Tell**

2:45 **Raspberries Year-Round - Greenhouse and High Tunnel Experiences** - Shirley Kline, Happy Valley Berry Farm, New Jersey

3:30 **Protecting Blackberries for Winter: A No-Tunnel Alternative** - Dr. Fumiomi Takeda, USDA-ARS

4:00 **Future Directions of Protected Bramble Culture** - Panel of Speakers and Open Discussion

4:30 **Adjourn**

### **Wednesday Evening - January 31, 2007**

7:00 **Berry Film Festival**

### **Thursday Morning, January, 31, 2008**

#### **Joint Berry Session**

9:00 **Grower Showcase** - Providing Season-Long Berries for Locavores, Charlie O'Dell, Crows Nest Farms, Virginia

9:45 **Industry Show and Tell**

10:00 **Adjourn to Strawberry and Bramble Sessions**

#### **Strawberries**

10:15 **Weed Control Fundamentals and How They Fit with Plasticulture** - Dr. Douglas Doohan, Ohio State Univ.

11:00 **Successful Strategies for Weed Management: Grower Perspectives** (panel) - David Pike, Farm to You, Maine; Don Fulks, Belvedere Plantation, Virginia; Steve Polter, Polter's Berry Farm, Ohio

11:45 **Managing Runners to Improve Yields** - Dr. David Handley, Univ. of Maine

12:00 **Luncheon Buffet** - Great Lobby and Confection Level Lobby (cash)

#### **Brambles**

10:15 **Title To Be Announced** - Janice Honigsberg, Sun Belle, Inc., Illinois

11:00 **Thrips, Japanese Beetles, and Other Bramble Pests** - Dr. Douglas Pfeiffer, Virginia Tech

11:45 **Obtaining New Pesticide Options for Growers** - Dr. Van Starner, IR-4

12:00 **NABGA Lunch and Annual Meeting**

### **Thursday Afternoon, January, 31, 2008**

#### **Strawberries**

1:30 **Strawberry Variety Trends in the U.S. and Europe** - Timothy Nourse, Nourse Farms, Massachusetts

2:00 **Strawberry Variety Trial Results** - Dr. David Handley, Univ. of Maine

2:30 **\*New Insecticides for Strawberries** - Dr. Douglas Pfeiffer, Virginia Tech

3:00 **Adjourn**

#### **Blueberries**

1:30 **Blueberry Pruning - The Do's and Don'ts** - Dr. Gary Pavlis, Rutgers Univ.

2:00 **\*Simplified Blueberry IPM for Upland and Small Acreage Blueberry Growers** - Dean Polk, Rutgers Univ.

2:30 **\*Insect Pest Management Practices for Highbush Blueberries in the Northeast US** - Ceasar Rodriguez, Rutgers Univ.

3:00 **Topic To Be Announced** - speaker to be announced

3:30 **Adjourn**



## Empire State Fruit and Vegetable Expo

Syracuse, NY – Holiday Inn Liverpool  
and the Oncenter Convention Center  
February 12, 13 & 14, 2008

*Make plans now to attend the Expo and learn about the latest technologies, issues and research that will help you grow your business now and years from now!*

**T**he 2008 Empire State Fruit and Vegetable Expo and Becker Forum will be held at the Holiday Inn Liverpool and the Oncenter Convention Center in Syracuse, New York on February 12, 13 and 14, 2008. This central location provides growers from all over New York State and the surrounding states with an easily accessible location in order to attend and learn about the latest in fruit and vegetable production agriculture. Specialists from all over the country will be at the Expo providing growers with the latest in growing and production techniques, harvesting and storage options, and plenty of up-to-date and innovative research. This information is specifically designed to help you, the grower, continually grow and improve your farm business. The large trade show will feature many businesses specifically devoted to the fruit and vegetable industry, with equipment for all sizes of growing operations. Special trade show demonstrations will be scheduled for growers and their employees throughout the two days as well.

The Expo will begin with the very popular Becker Forum on Tuesday, February 12. Last year's Forum was sold out so make your plans to attend this important meeting early! This in-depth all-day workshop focuses on current trends in the fruit and vegetable industry and will again continue to explore and educate growers on the ever-changing landscape of labor challenges for agricultural employers. It will go in-depth as the speakers address the challenges that finding, training and maintaining a labor force can bring. The forum is a great start to the Expo and does require pre-registration (See news brief following for more information).

Two full days of educational commodity sessions take place on February 13 and 14, 2008 at the Oncenter Convention Center. Session topics include the latest in research and grower experiences regarding production and marketing of a variety of fruit and vegetable crops, including potatoes, tree fruit, onions, tomatoes and peppers, cabbage, berries (program details below), cut flowers, sweet corn, beets and carrots, vine crops, and beans and peas. In addition, this year's Expo will have special sessions focusing on transitioning to organic, soils and tillage, greenhouses and high tunnels, GAPS for small-sized growing operations, and alternative energy sources. Information included in all of the educational sessions benefits growers of all sizes, from the largest commercial fruit and vegetable growing operations in New York State to smaller-sized operations. Don't miss the opportunity to attend the Expo and bring your employees to the sessions, the trade show and the related meetings.

The Empire State Fruit and Vegetable Expo is sponsored by the New York State Vegetable Growers Association, Empire State Potato Club, New York State Berry Growers Association, New York State Horticultural Society and Cornell University and Cornell Cooperative Extension. Trade show and exhibitor information is currently available and the Expo program, which includes detailed educational session information and a pre-registration form, will be available in early December. Free shuttle bus service is available from the Holiday Inn Liverpool, right off exit 37 of the New York State thruway. Make plans now and mark your calendar to attend the best Empire State Fruit and Vegetable Expo yet!

For more information, visit <http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/hort/expo/> or contact Jeff and Lindy Kubecka, New York State Vegetable Growers Association, PO Box 70, Kirkville, NY 13082 or email [nysvga@twcny.rr.com](mailto:nysvga@twcny.rr.com).

# EXPO BECKER FORUM: COPING WITH THE UNCERTAINTIES OF AGRICULTURAL LABOR

*The Empire State Fruit and Vegetable Expo's Becker Forum Will Focus on the Labor Challenges Facing the Agriculture Industry*

**A**gricultural labor has presented difficulties, challenges and questions for many growers over the last several growing seasons. The 2008 Becker Forum will address these challenges as the invited speakers explore the many concerns that hiring and retaining agricultural labor present to agricultural employers. The Becker Forum is a part of the Empire State Fruit and Vegetable Expo and will be held on Tuesday, February 12, 2008 at the Holiday Inn Liverpool. This in-depth meeting is the traditional kick-off event to the Expo and promises to be an informative and thought-provoking start to the Expo experience. Growers continue to face many different types of labor issues and these issues are simply not going to go away. The more that agricultural employers know about the political landscape, immigration enforcement, and regulations, the better prepared they will be to make necessary adjustments in their businesses and communicate the difficulties and challenges of agricultural labor to policy makers and the public. "In the current environment, an adequate supply of agricultural labor is no longer a certainty. Conference speakers will discuss today's agricultural labor issues and offer strategies for addressing them," says Thomas Maloney, Senior Extension Associate in the Cornell Department of Applied Economics and Management and Chair of the Becker Forum committee.

The Forum features many nationally-known experts on the subject of agricultural labor. Craig Regelbrugge, Senior Director of Government Relations for the American Nursery Landscape Association in Washington D.C., will be speaking on the political landscape surrounding immigration reform. Understanding the issues relating to Social Security no-match letters will be discussed by Monte Lake of Siff Cerda & Lake LLP from Washington D.C. Wally Ruehle, Esq., Director of the Legal Aid Society Immigration Program and the Upstate NY Immigration Law Project in Rochester, NY will be discussing what employers should know about immigration issues. Some of the issues that Ruehle will address include detention, deportation, drivers' licenses and more. Bob Smith, of Farm Credit Association of New York, will look at the impact of immigration enforcement and the actions that growers can take to ensure an adequate work force. In addition, information will be presented which will assist employers with managing their employees. Mary Jo Dudley of the Cornell Farmworker Program will have audiovisual resources for employers and Jorge Estrada, President of Leadership Coaching International from Graham, Washington, will offer two different presentations. Estrada will provide keys to success for farm managers with regards to cross cultural understanding and will also present information on strengthening communication skills for employers in order to encourage optimum business performance.

Registration information for the Becker Forum will be available with the Empire State Fruit and Vegetable Expo program. Participants must be pre-registered to attend the Becker Forum (January 31, 2007 deadline, \$50 registration fee). Lunch is included in the registration. Registration for the Becker Forum will begin at 8:00 a.m. and the meeting will adjourn at 4:15 p.m.

## 2008 EMPIRE FRUIT AND VEGETABLE EXPO – BERRY SESSION

*THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2008      BALLROOM EAST      Sponsored by the NYS Berry Growers Association*

- 9:00 AM      Announcements and DEC credit sign-up  
*Molly Shaw, Tioga County CCE, and Paul Baker, NYS Berry Growers Assoc.*
- 9:05      Rotating cross arm trellis & cane training for brambles  
*Fumiomi Takeda, ARS USDA, Kearneysville, WV*
- 9:45      Strawberry Variety Review/Discussion –  
*Courtney Weber, Cornell and Nate Nourse, Nourse Farms, South Deerfield, MA*
- 10:25      Strawberry plastic culture - *Fumiomi Takeda, ARS-USD, Kearneysville, WV A*
- 11:00      LUNCH & VISIT TRADE SHOW
- 12:45 pm      NYS Berry Growers Annual Meeting
- 12:55      Announcements and DEC credit sign-up

1:00	Weed control updates for berries - <i>Chris Benedict, Cornell</i>
1:30	Low spray/organic approaches to pest management - <i>Elsa Sanchez, Penn State University</i>
2:00	Deer wildlife management - <i>Paul Curtis, Cornell</i>
2:30	Break
2:55	Announcements and DEC credit sign-up
3:00	Introduction of NYFVI programs - <i>Marvin Pritts, Cornell</i>
3:45	Presentation on Brown's Berry Patch - <i>Eric Brown, Waterport</i>
4:15	Growing currants and gooseberries in NYS - <i>Steve McKay, CCE, Columbia County</i>
5:00	ADJOURN



## THE PREMIER ANNUAL SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE EVENT IN NYS!

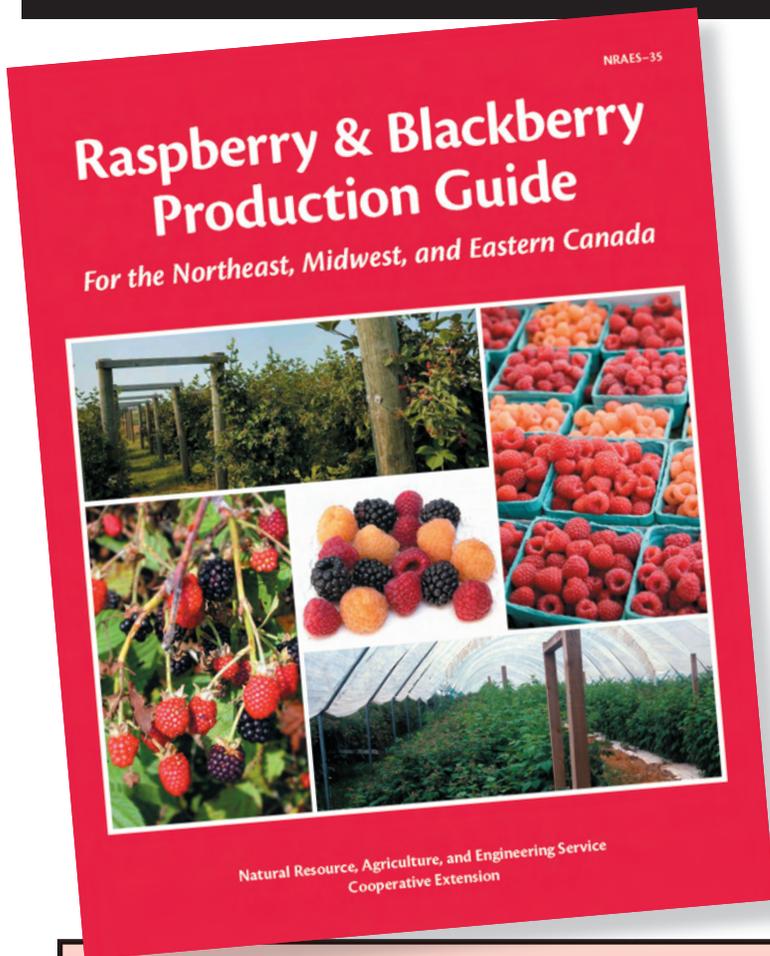
*NOFA-NY's 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Organic Farming and Gardening Conference  
Organic Solutions! How Farmers, Gardeners, and Consumers Nurture Our Environment"*

**T**he Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York will host their 26<sup>th</sup> annual winter education conference from January 25-27, 2008, at The Saratoga Hotel and Conference Center in downtown Saratoga Springs, NY. The conference will feature over 90 workshops of interest to vegetable, grain, and livestock farmers, gardeners, green businesses, conscientious eaters, consumers, teens and children!

This year's conference features an exciting keynote lineup including **Terry Wollen**, Director of Animal Well-Being and Staff Veterinarian with Heifer International, Little Rock, AR; **Brahm Ahmadi**, Co-founder and Executive Director of People's Grocery, Oakland, CA; and **Barbara and David Perkins**, owners and operators of 1,300 family CSA: Vermont Valley Community Farm, Blue Mounds, WI. Saturday's organic dairy program will feature Organic Dairy Guest Speaker, **Dr. Ann Wells**, Springpond Holistic Animal Health, Prairie Grove, AR.

Friday, January 25, offers 11 intensive full and half-day workshops to explore select topics comprehensively. Friday workshops will address topics such as: organic weed management, medicinal herbs, farming with animal power, organic gardening, permaculture, CSAs, organic dairy transition, legumes, and organic certification. Saturday and Sunday features over 70 workshops on organic grains, vegetables and fruits, organic livestock and dairy, beginning farmer topics, organic gardening, homesteads and cooking, people and policy, teen/youth interest, a full children's conference and more! Childcare is available Friday to Sunday. Do not miss this opportunity to expand your knowledge of sustainable agriculture and alternative living. This is the premier event to network among the leaders in the northeast organic community.

The full conference program and online registration are available at the NOFA-NY website, visit: [www.nofany.org](http://www.nofany.org).



## ***The Raspberry and Blackberry Production Guide***

will be the only comprehensive resource for both novice and experienced growers as well as crop advisors and educators. It provides information on all aspects of raspberry and blackberry culture as indicated in the chapter list at left.

There are descriptions of more than 70 cultivars including summer-fruiting red, black, and purple raspberries; fall-fruiting red and yellow raspberries; thornless, thorny, and fall-fruiting blackberries, and hybrid berries. Field production, high tunnel production, and greenhouse production are reviewed. Detailed information is included on planning and managing irrigation and chemigation systems. Includes more than 35 descriptions and 70 color photos of insects, mites, diseases, and physiological disorders.

This publication is intended to help raspberry and blackberry growers plan and implement production and marketing decisions. The cultivars mentioned either have performed well or show the most promise for the Northeast, Midwest, or Eastern Canada. Pest management chapters emphasize cultural controls, since chemical use is regulated on the state or province level.

The book includes:

- 14 chapters
- 156+ pages
- 134 color photos
- 36 line drawings
- 30 tables
- 18 sidebars
- sample calculations
- suggestions for further reading
- glossary.

### ***Chapter List***

1. The History and Biology of Cultivated Raspberries and Blackberries
2. Site Selection, Site Preparation and Preplant Cover and Green Manure Crops
3. Plant Selection
4. Production Methods (field, high tunnel, greenhouse)
5. Trellising and Pruning
6. Water Management
7. Soil and Nutrient Management
8. Insect and Mite Scouting and Management
9. Disease Management and Physiological Disorders
10. Weed Management
11. Spray Application Technology
12. Harvesting, Handling, and Transporting Fresh Fruit
13. Marketing Bramble Fruits
14. Budgeting



# WEED ID WORKSHOPS A SUCCESS

*Marvin Pritts, Cathy Heidenreich and Laura McDermott, and Chris Benedict, Department of Horticulture, Cornell CALS, Ithaca, NY*

**T**he NYFVI-sponsored berry extension project hosted two workshops on weed ID in November. Western NY growers attended an on-farm meeting held in Rochester, NY, hosted by Green Acres Fruit Farm owner and NY Berry Growers' Association president Craig Michaloski.



Eastern New York growers attended a Polycom workshop linking growers from the Capital district, the Hudson Valley, Long Island and northernmost Franklin and Clinton counties. The growers from these disparate regions were interested to hear about weed problems that were shared and some that were unique to each area.

Speakers included Marvin Pritts, Cathy Heidenreich, Laura McDermott and Chris Benedict from the Department of Horticulture at Cornell, Debbie Breth from the Lake Ontario Fruit Team (LOFT) and Juliet Carroll, New York State IPM program, Geneva. Below is a summary of the presentations given at the workshops for those of you who were unable to attend.

## *Know Thy Enemy*

The first step in any battle is to know thy enemy, in this case, the weeds. For the most part, weeds are undesirable in berry fields as they compete for water, nutrients and light, harbor pests, and are unattractive. Knowing how to identify them and then understanding their life cycles and vulnerabilities are important steps towards control. For example, if a grower uses a grass herbicide to control a problem weed, but the weed is not a true grass, then the application will have been useless. Proper weed identification allows a grower to identify the best cultural strategies for control, and to select effective herbicides and application timings.

## *Annual, Biennial, or Perennial?*

Distinguishing between annuals, biennials, and perennials is the most compelling reason to learn weed identification as management strategies and herbicide effectiveness differ significantly between these categories. Annuals reproduce by seeds, so techniques that kill the top of the plant, prevent seed production, or inhibit seedling establishment, are effective. Biennials are not well adapted to sites that are disturbed annually in fall, winter, and early spring. Mowing increases the chances of biennial survival. Biennials are most sensitive to herbicides as young rosettes (late summer, fall, and spring). In contrast, perennials reproduce vegetatively, so additional strategies must be employed that are directed at killing roots. A pre-emergent herbicide that inhibits seed germination and establishment will have little impact on a stand of perennial thistles.

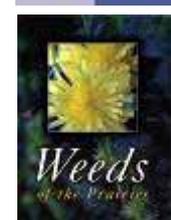
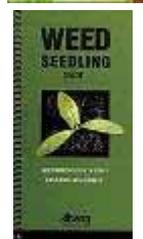
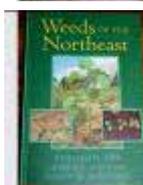
## *Grass or Broadleaf?*

A second distinction is between grasses and non-grasses. Many herbicides are effective against only one of these categories of plants (e.g. Poast and Select against grasses; 2,4-D and Stinger against broadleaves). Sometimes these distinctions can be hard to make. For example, a sedge looks very much like a grass, but post-emergent grass herbicides will not work against sedges. In addition, certain herbicides are only effective against certain families of plants (e.g. Stinger against composites and legumes), so knowing the weed and its family will help with herbicide selection.

The first part of the workshop introduced growers to the basics of weed identification, such as the characteristics of plants that are used as the basis for separating species. (Did you know that the point of attachment of the grass blade to the stem is the most distinguishable characteristic across grass species?) Growers were shown several different resources that can be used to help identify weeds. Problem weeds brought by growers from their operations were identified. A list of weed identification resources follows.

### *Weed Identification Resources*

1. **Ontario Weeds**, Publication 505, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, by Professor Jack Alex, University of Guelph, 1992. 304 pages. \$15.00 + GST. Orders can be placed by calling 1-888-466-2372 (Outside Ontario call 519-826-3700) and proceed on Ministry Telephone menu to Publications. You may fax your order to 519-826-3633. Mail orders should be addressed to Publication Order Desk, OMAF, 1 Stone Road West, Guelph, Ontario N1G 4Y2 o. Please allow approximately 14 working days for delivery.
  2. **Identification Guide to the Weeds of Quebec**, Publication VT 007, by Claude Bouchard and Romain Neron, 1999, ISBN 2-89457-174-7, 264 pages. To order: Distribution de livres UNIVERS, 845, rue Marie-Victorin, Saint-Nicholas, Quebec, G7A 3S8, (418) 831-7474 or 1-800-859-7474; fax (418) 831-4021 [d.univers@videotron.ca](mailto:d.univers@videotron.ca), \$16 + S&H. French version also available.
  3. **Weeds of Canada and the Northern United States**, by France Royer and Richard Dickenson, University of Alberta Press and Lone Pine Publishing, 141 Athabasca Hall, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6G 2E8, paperback, 434 pages, 750 color photographs and 150 line drawings, 1999 \$29.95
  4. **Weeds of the Northeast**, by Richard H. Uva, Joseph C. Neal, and Joseph M. DiTomaso, Published by Comstock Publishing Associates/ Cornell University Press, Sage House, 512 East State Street, Ithaca, New York, 14850, 1997, paperback, ISBN 0-8014-8334-4, 397 pages, includes 299 weeds.
  5. **Steel in the Field: A Farmer's Guide to Weed Management Tools**, edited by Greg Bowman, 1997. Discusses history of herbicide use and concurrent decline in knowledge about weed management tools. Describes techniques of using a variety of cultivation tools while minimizing erosion and soil compaction. Presents case studies of weed management systems used by farmers throughout U.S., including small and large farmers growing agronomic, horticultural and dryland crops.
  6. Includes detailed drawings and explanations of many tools, including hoes, cultivators, flammers and guidance systems. 128 pp. US\$18. Sustainable Agriculture Publications, Hills Bldg., University of Vermont, Burlington, VT 05405-0082; phone (802) 656-0471; email nesare@zoo.uvm.edu. Website: [metalab.unc.edu/farming-connection/weeds/resource/steelrev.htm](http://metalab.unc.edu/farming-connection/weeds/resource/steelrev.htm)
  7. **Weed Seedling Guide**, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, 1996 62 page booklet, spiral bound field guide with photos and descriptions of 50 seedling broadleaf and grassy weeds. [http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex41?opendocument](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex41?opendocument)
  8. **Common Weed Seedlings of the United States and Canada**, produced by the Weed Society of America. Their web site is at <http://www.wssa.net>.
  9. **1,000 Weeds of North America – An Identification Guide**, produced by the Weed Society of America. A software CD for use in identifying weeds. Available from their web site at <http://www.wssa.net>. Approximate cost \$50.
- Common Weed Seedlings of the North Central States**, NCRE Publication 607, by Andrew J. Chomas, James J. Kells and J. Boyd Carey, Dept. of Crop & Soil Science, Michigan State University, Bulletin Office, 10-B Ag. Hall, East Lansing Michigan, 48824-1039, (517) 355-0240, Email: [marekh@msue.msu.edu](mailto:marekh@msue.msu.edu), paperback, 21 pages, 1998, \$2.00 US or see website at [www.weeds.iastate.edu/weednews/ncseed.htm](http://www.weeds.iastate.edu/weednews/ncseed.htm)
10. **The Biology of Canadian Weeds**, Publications 1693 & 1765, Edited and compiled by Gerald A. Mulligan, Communications Branch, Agriculture and Agrifood Canada, Ottawa K1A 0C7, 1979 & 1984, paperback, 380 & 415 pages
  11. **Weeds of the Prairies**, Agdex 640-6 (previously Weeds of Alberta), Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Publications Office, 7000-113 St., Edmonton, Alberta T6H 5T6, (780) 427-0391 or Fax (780) 422-8835, paperback, 209 pages, 375 photographs <http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/navigation/publications/pricedpublications/index.html>
  12. **Peterson Field Guide to Wildflowers** by Roger Tory Peterson and Margaret McKenney. Available from most bookstores. This is a good pictorial guide to identification and includes some species not commonly found in agriculture but similarly may not include all agricultural weeds.



### *Weed Management Strategies*

The second part of the workshop dealt with strategies for managing weeds. The three basic strategies are 1) eliminate weeds from a site before planting, 2) prevent weeds from being introduced into the planting, and 3) eliminate weeds when they appear. Speakers emphasized the importance of #1 and #2 because implementing #3 is labor-intensive and expensive.

Using Roundup and cover crops (such as buckwheat, sudangrass and rye) a year or two before planting is a common strategy to eliminate perennial weeds, as is growing a crop such as corn or soybeans or grain the year before planting. Many herbicides are available to control weeds in soybeans and gains, and will help clean up the field before berries. Make sure that there is no herbicide carry-over that could affect berry plant establishment.

Preventing weeds from coming into a planting is also important. Important sources of weed seeds are 1) field borders that are not mowed regularly, 2) contaminated straw used for mulching, and 3) weed seeds from deep in the soil that are brought to the surface through tillage. Ideal cultivation implements should disturb only the top inch or so of soil, rather than bring seeds to the surface. Brush hoes, Reigi weeders and finger weeders are examples of shallow cultivators.

Eliminating weeds from the field once they appear requires a significant amount of time. In fact, studies have shown that up to 70% of non-harvest labor is typically spent on weed management in strawberry fields. There are no herbicides that will eliminate all weeds and leave berry plants intact this is why it is so important to do as much as you can to eliminate weeds before planting. Selective herbicides exist, but these can still leave large categories of weeds unaffected. A combination of cultivation, mulching, hand-weeding and herbicides is required to effectively keep weeds under control. Studies have shown that weeds early in the season of the planting year are much more damaging than weeds at the end of the season. Focusing weed control at the beginning of the season is a better investment of time than waiting until near the end of the season to begin control measures. Similarly, if weed control is excellent during the establishment year, then weeds in subsequent years will have much less of an impact on the crop.



Growers then talked about specific weed problems that they were having. Most of these weeds were perennial broadleaf weeds, similar to the perennial broadleaf berry plants growing among them. Available herbicides are not sufficiently selective to kill the weeds without damaging the crop. We discussed when to apply herbicides to have the greatest impact on the problem weed. For example, applying 2,4-D and Stinger in early September to deep-rooted perennials is more effective than applications in early spring because the herbicide is translocated into the roots at that time of the year, rather than to the shoot tips.

### *Tracking Your Success*

The workshop ended with a presentation of TracBerry record-keeping software by Dr. Juliet Carroll, the Fruit Coordinator with New York State IPM. TracBerry makes record

keeping easier for all aspects of pest control. It keeps track of the latest farm chemical information based on the most recent Cornell Guidelines. It will print the necessary EPA WPS central posting forms. TracBerry allows the farmer to customize the program to track only the chemicals and the rates that they apply. With this data, the farmer can calculate the cost of the pesticide application. This information will allow farmers to make informed decisions about the type and frequency of weed control for each crop. While it isn't possible to respond to NYS DEC pesticide reporting requirements directly from the TracBerry Software, links are being added to make the process easier. In addition to TracBerry, NYS IPM also has record keeping software for apple, grape and stone fruit. TracBerry is available for \$20 and technical support is provided by Dr. Carroll.

## CYCLAMEN MITES IN STRAWBERRIES – ARE THEY A PROBLEM IN YOUR FIELDS?

Laura McDermott, Laura McDermott, Berry Extension Support Specialist, Eastern NY, Cornell University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Department of Horticulture, based at Washington County CCE, Hudson Falls, NY

Most growers have no problem identifying spider mites in the berry crops they grow. Red spider mites and Two-spotted spider mites are commonly seen pests of strawberries and raspberries. Mites survive on many hosts including all kinds of fruit, vegetable and flower crops, but also feed happily on many weed species. These pests seem to have favorite cultivars that they prefer and tend to appear in damaging numbers when the weather turns hot and dry.



Because growers have become savvy about identifying and almost predicting when and where they are going to have spider mite infestations, control of these pests is not difficult. The fact that these animals are relatively easy to see and the evidence of their presence (i.e. fine, silken webbing and stippled leaves) is also easy to identify makes spider mites an easy pest to work with.

Cyclamen mites are a different matter altogether. The cyclamen mite, *Steneotarsonemus pallidus*, is well known to greenhouse growers, but it also causes major damage in strawberry plantings by feeding on the young leaves in the crown of the plant just as they begin unfolding. (See Figure 1) These leaves may appear smaller and stunted or slightly distorted as they emerge. They will develop an off-color, brownish, rough look to the leaves. As the mite population climbs the crinkling and stunting of the leaves will result in the plant appearing as a compact, flattened mass because the leaf stem is also stunted. The broad mite, *Polyphagotarsonemus latus* (Banks), is often associated with cyclamen mite, but despite their similar appearance and habit, there is no reference to the broad mite being a pest of strawberries.

When the leaf gets too crowded with mites, they will move to the blossoms causing them to either die or distort. Strawberry fruit that has been fed on by cyclamen mite will have seeds that stand out on the flesh of the berry. This is a characteristic symptom of cyclamen mite feeding. It has been reported that as few as 45 mites per leaf can result in 33% loss in plant productivity.

Unlike spider mites, the cyclamen mite is difficult to see. The adult mite is half the size of a spider mite, about 0.25mm long, which makes it extremely difficult to view without the help of a good hand lens. They are pinkish orange in color and have a shiny surface which does help a bit when looking for them. All stages of the immature mites are translucent white and very difficult to see. The eggs are also translucent, but are often laid close together along the midveins of folded leaves, thus making them appear as a mass. Eggs can also be found under the calyx of newly emerged flower buds

Adult females survive the winter in the mulch around the crown of the plant. As soon as the plant begins growing, the females begin laying their eggs along the midvein of the opening leaf. They continue to move to the next emerging leaf as the spring season progresses. Each female lays nearly 90 eggs and, interestingly, 80% of these eggs develop into potential egg-laying females! It takes 2 weeks for a cyclamen mite to mature from egg to a reproductive adult, so you see where this is going... lots and lots of mites in a very short time.

Warm humid weather favors the cyclamen mite. It has been reported that northern regions see two peaks in the reproduction rates. The largest peak is in June followed by a decline during July and August with a smaller peak occurring in late September.

From the description of the cyclamen mite habits, you can see why this pest is so difficult to control by using pesticides. The mature mite and the eggs are well protected down in the crown of the plant. The rate of reproduction is high and, to the untrained eye, it might be easy to mistake symptoms associated with infestation on other, early season, problems. Once the strawberry canopy is fully developed it is very difficult to achieve appropriate coverage until renovation. Even then, it's best to use a high volume of water to insure good contact with the mites. 300-500gal/A is recommended by the University of California IPM program.

Infested nursery plants are likely the major source of this pest in annual plantings so be sure to use un-infested nursery stock. Treat infested transplants in hot water at 100°F for 30 minutes before planting. Avoid second-year plantings in problem areas. To slow the spread of infestations, rogue infested plants as soon as symptoms appear. You should protect new and old plantings by separating them in the field. Also, be aware that cyclamen mites are wingless, so they are adept hitchhikers. Mites can easily be carried from one field to another on tools, clothing or machinery, bees, birds, etc.

Two naturally occurring predatory mites, *Typhlodromus bellinus* and *T. reticulatus* may provide some protection, but they are unreliable because their populations do not build up fast enough. Early season releases of *Amblyseius californicus*, have been used with some degree of efficacy in controlling cyclamen mite. *Amblyseius cucumeris* releases have not proven to be effective. Other predators that may assist in controlling large populations are six spotted thrips, minute pirate bugs and western predatory mites (*Galenromus occidentalis*). These all feed on cyclamen mites, but may not be able to aggressively control a population.

When monitoring for these pests, be on the lookout for new damage. If you do find problems it's wise to then monitor the entire field. Monitor newly unfolding leaves and treat the infested area when densities of one cyclamen mite in 10 leaves are found (University of California IPM threshold). If you are using a pesticide, remember that a high rate of water per acre (300-500 gal) is necessary to soak the unfolded leaves and immature flower buds located in the crowns. The chemicals that may provide the best control are Agir-Mek 0.15 EC, Kelthane 50WP and Danitol E.C.

A control tactic that should not be forgotten is rouging out infested plants as early in the season as possible. When combined with religious, early season scouting, this may provide growers with the most cost-effective control of all.

There have been a few strawberry growers in New York State battling cyclamen mites for a number of years. Late this fall, cyclamen mites were a point of conversation with several growers that I visited. These growers were curious about scouting techniques, because they were experiencing symptoms similar to those caused by cyclamen mites. I do know that in my work with greenhouse growers, I saw more cyclamen mite infestations during the past two seasons than I had the entire 15 years prior. I encourage you to monitor early season growth in field plantings and take extra care with transplants prior to placing in the field this spring.

Information for this article was gathered from <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/r734400211.html> and the *Compendium of Strawberry Diseases*, APS Press. Please refer to them for additional information.

## KNOW YOUR CUSTOMERS

*John Berry, Agricultural Marketing Educator Penn State Cooperative Extension - Lehigh County, Allentown, PA*

**D**o you know who your customers are today; who they will be ten years from now? Successful marketers do. Consumers are constantly changing, from their ages and attitudes, to their incomes and ethnic mix. In order to successfully meet consumers' wants and needs, you must anticipate and respond to them before a demand for a product or service even exists.

### Keep In Touch

An advantage of direct marketing is contact with your customers. People seek the personal attention that is available from most farm retailers. The benefit to the grower is first hand knowledge of customer wants. Make the most of this direct customer contact. Ask your customers to record their name and address in a notebook that is kept near the check out. Once a notebook is started, you now have a mailing list. You can readily identify where your customer base comes from. This helps maximize promotional efforts.

Customers will develop a personal connection to your market if they are kept informed through the use of a mailing list; either a post card or email. Is there a huge crop of melons coming ripe? Why not send an announcement to your regular customers? Offer a discount on quantity purchases. This type of effort is well received. It helps you move product and it establishes loyalty in your customers.

### Keep Ahead

One way to prepare for tomorrow is to study changes in consumer demographics. What do households look like? What do consumers like to do with their free time? Which consumers have the highest disposable income? What would they be willing to spend it on? How are these factors expected to change in the future?

Planning for the future is usually a guess. To increase confidence in this guess, try to base it on as much fact as possible. The amount of information already gathered and analyzed is staggering. The local library, township authorities, the department of transportation, and your Extension office can be possible sources of trend information.

### Did You Know?

Here are general statistics from the Census Bureau. Remember, these are for the entire population. Try to answer some of these questions with the data that is specific to your customers. By the year 2010, households without children under 18 will outnumber those with kids by 9 million. The projections for the types of households we can expect are as follows: Couples without children, 32%; Women living alone, 17%; Men living alone, 14%.

Household income is highest for those aged 45 to 54. This age group also has the highest discretionary income, estimated at \$19,200 in 2004. While many marketers target the 'younger' generation, they may be missing the group which has the most money to spend.

Moms are getting older. The number of births to women under age 30 declined 15% between 1980 and 2004, from 2,887,000 to 2,096,000. During that same period, births to women aged 30 and older increased 88%, from 714,000 to 1,342,000.

The average person spends less than 50 minutes a day preparing meals. Those with a microwave oven spend 45 minutes, while those without a microwave spend 59 minutes. Clean up time averaged 7.7 minutes each day. How do you fit your product into microwave preparation and easy clean up?

The popularity of home gardening (flowers and vegetables) is expected to increase nearly 20% over the next 15 years. Baby boomers are the most likely to pick up this hobby as they age -- the number of gardeners aged 45 to 54 will increase 45% by 2010, while those aged 55 to 64 will increase 66%. At the same time, the number of gardeners aged 25 to 34 will drop 17%.

I like doing what I know how to do. I find adapting to change is seldom comfortable. The efficiency of adapting can be increased by considering the possible developments of the future before they arrive.

*(Reprinted with permission from: The Penn State Vegetable & Small Fruit Gazette, Volume 11, No. 12, December 2007.)*

---

Questions or Comments about the New York Berry News?

Ms. Cathy Heidenreich  
New York Berry News, Interim Editor  
Department of Plant Pathology  
New York State Agricultural Experiment Station  
690 W. North Street  
Geneva, NY 14456  
OR *Email:* [mcm4@cornell.edu](mailto:mcm4@cornell.edu)

**Editor's Note:** We are happy to have you reprint from the NYBN. Please cite the source when reprinting. In addition, we request you send a courtesy [E-mail](#) indicating NYBN volume, issue, and title, and reference citation for the reprint. Thank you.

Check out the NYSAES Tree Fruit and Berry Pathology web site at:

[www.nysaes.cornell.edu/pp/extension/tfabp](http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/pp/extension/tfabp)