



Vegetable Growers Association of New Jersey

Dec 2009
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Annual Convention

Atlantic City

Jan. 12, 13 & 14, 2010

At the

Taj Mahal



Hoe Hoe Hoe!
Merry
Christmas to
all and to all a
good night!

- Santa

GEARING UP!

Dear VGANJ Members,

It is our sincere wish to all our members for a happy and prosperous Holiday Season. And of course, just as the holidays wind down, VGANJ gears up for the Annual Convention at the Taj Mahal in Atlantic City. Since our last newsletter, the Taj has lowered its room price a second time, down to \$67 per night. This has been implemented in order to "stay competitive" which works out just fine for our members. Another change will be the ability to register for hotel rooms on-line at <https://resweb.passkey.com/go/vegetable>. You can still call 800-825-8888. Give them the meeting code AVEGE10.

Wed night's Award Banquet will be honoring Sam & Joseph Maugeri of Gloucester County

as Growers of the Year. Ticket info is in your Nov. mailing.

New for 2010 will be the Farm Photo Contest. Bring in your favorite farm photo, taken by any family member or employee. It must be at least 5X7 and will be on display during the convention. The winner will receive a stay at the Taj along with a dinner certificate. See details in the November mailing.

Included on the membership form are spaces for your email address. If you are willing to receive this newsletter, in color, via email, please provide your email address. Otherwise it will be mailed on thin paper, in Black & White, to save about \$650 per mailing. At the bottom of the form are blanks that need to be filled out to receive a free subscription to American Veg. Grower Mag., as well as a spot



www.njveggies.org

for your email address to receive their E-News.

If you paid in July, you can go to the VGA website at www.njveggies.org to check your registration. Whatever names you filled out on the membership form are the nametags that will be waiting for you at registration.

Special thanks for the support from the Blueberry Growers Assoc. and the NJ Farmers Direct Marketing Assoc. We look forward to a very successful convention and an even better 2010 season.

Denis C. Krowicki

President, VGANJ

VGANJ to Receive Grant

USDA Block Grants, managed by NJDA, have awarded VGA \$21,000. This grant requires a \$5000 match from VGANJ. The project is to develop a "Jersey Tomato Gravy" from off-grade and excess tomatoes at the peak of the season. This will be in coordination with the Rutgers Food Innovation Center. Product development is expected to begin as soon as off-grade tomatoes become available in the summer of 2010.



LEAFY GREENS MEETING HELD IN SYRACUSE

VGANJ sponsored Jamie Graiff to attend and testify on behalf of NJ farmers. Al Murray, NJDA, also attended. California is the driving force behind this organization. Cal. is to be grouped with 5 other states, including Hawaii and Alaska, each of which has little leafy green production. Their group will have 6 votes on the board. NJ is now grouped with 16 coastal states (not Georgia) which have 3 votes. Al suggested Wes Kline as a member of the committee to write the regs and has proposed a northeast group with more similar growing conditions than exist within the 16 states from Maine to Florida. Al expects NJ to be one of those votes. Leafy Green organization membership is not mandatory, but supermarkets are already saying they will boycott non-members.



VGANJ
C/O Five R Farms
183 Tansboro Road
Berlin, NJ 08009

Odds and Ends

- ♦The next VGANJ Board of Dir. meeting is Tuesday, March 9, 2010.
- ♦Kurt Alstede placed in the top 5 for the national Grower Achievement Award from American Veg. Grower Magazine.
- ♦John Formisano Sr. received the Distinguished Service to Agriculture Award at the Farm Bureau Convention.
- ♦Al Murray received the Distinguished Service Award from Burlington County.
- ♦When driving any vehicle over 10,000 pounds, the driver is required to have a medical card.
- ♦16 year old ag driver's licenses currently require a 21 year old in the vehicle. Jim Giamarese of the State Board of Ag is hoping to reverse this back to the way it was.
- ♦Pumpkins peaked at about \$350 per bin due to the short supply while late fruit sets left many pumpkins in the field after Halloween was over.
- ♦The Open Space Referendum passed but by the smallest margin ever.
- ♦Gov. elect Christie has stated that he will address over regulation in DEP.
- ♦Henry Klimkowsi is currently residing at an assisted living facility. He can be reached at Sterling House Room 107, 901 Broad St., Florence, NJ 08518 609-447-0107
- ♦Larry Hardwick of NJDA says that Traceback is being incorporated into all parts of the third party audit.
- ♦ Bill Tietjen had a farmer renew his certification for water. Because he hasn't been using it, he is getting a 30% cut in his allocation.

TRI-COUNTY COOP HIT \$1,000,000 in sales on Nov. 18 for the first time since opening in 1934. CONGRATULATIONS! New buyers and sellers welcome. Visit www.TriCountyCoop.net.

Newsletter Feedback: Direct all comments, questions or suggestions regarding this newsletter to the editor, Pegi Ballister-Howells. 609-575-5585 Pegi@comcast.net, Thank you!

NJDA GETS ANOTHER BUDGET CUT

In order for Gov. Corzine to turn a balanced budget over to incoming Gov. Christie, Corzine is asking for another \$849,000 to be removed from NJDA budget by Dec.1. Cuts are not to come from personnel or feeding programs or school programs. Only Direct Services can be targeted, but after so many cuts to date, there are few places left to cut.

Ethnic Vegetables Doing Well

Bill Sciarappa's research on ethnic leafy greens and herbs continues to gain momentum. The current project includes a focus group, a survey of consumers throughout the region from Maine to Florida, and the development of a series of posters to be presented at the AC meetings in January.

BIO-ENERGY BREAKTHROUGH

A breakthrough of a burner/boiler which burns pelletized wood or ag residues is currently installed at Arie Van Vugt's greenhouses in Allamuchy. The system runs at about half the price of traditional fuel. Paul Hlubik intends to oversee the development of regs regarding this system to make sure DEP will not be overly

Ray Samulis is now working with an organization called AgrAbility. They help injured or disabled farmers continue farming. One paralyzed farmer got a lift to help him get into the tractor by himself. They just want to help farmers continue to farm if that's what they want to do. Visit www.agrability.com for more info.