New Jersey News

Alfred Frank Caggiano Passes

Alfred Frank Caggiano, president of Sunny Slope Farms, passed away peacefully at home Thursday evening, November 8, 2012 with his family by his side.

Sunny Slope Farms grew to be one of the largest peach operations on the east coast. Alfred was a life member of the New Jersey State Horticultural Society and received its Outstanding Grower Award in 1995.

Alfred was born on April 17, 1929 in Elm, NJ to his parents Vincenzo and Antoinette Mangini Caggiano. After graduation, Alfred left home to farm with his older brothers in Bridgeton in the family business. In the 1950's, three of his brothers expanded operations in Gaffney, SC. Alfred, along with his eldest brother, Anthony continued the Bridgeton operation where it grew into a 1,000 acre apple, peach and nectarine orchard. The operation continues today under the guidance of his four children, son-in-law and many faithful employees.

Al Caggiano, Al Caggiano Jr., and LisaCaggiano Thomas.

Alfred married Marie Bonnie Halfpenny of Lansdowne, PA. Alfred and Bonnie would have celebrated their 53rd wedding anniversary on November 21st. His involvement with the agriculture industry included service on the NJ Peach Promotion Council, the NJ Farm Bureau and Rutgers' Cook College Association. In addition, Alfred served on the Hopewell Township Planning Board, was chairman of the Cumberland County Board of Health and an original and ardent supporter of West Cumberland Little League. He also was involved with the formation of the firearm training range for the Bridge Police Department. Alfred was a member of the Board of Directors of Farmers & Merchants National Bank for over 30 years.

Alfred was awarded Bridgeton Area Jaycees' George J. Woodruff Memorial Award, the Bridgeton Area Chamber of Commerce Business Award, and this year was recognized by the NJ Peach Promotion Council who dedicated their Annual Buyers' Guide to him.

Of all his accomplishments, Al was most proud of his family; his wife of more than 50 years, Bonnie; their four children; and seven grandchildren: his daughter, Lisa and husband Ronald Thomas and their two children; daughter Tara and husband Michael Cintron and son, Tyler; his daughter Cheryl and husband Jeffrey Singer and their three daughters, Kylie, Kendall and Kasey; his son Alfred Jr.; and his daughter Debra and husband Simon Phillips and their two daughters, Allison and Abigail.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made in Alfred's memory to Saint Teresa of Avila Church, 46 Central Avenue, Bridgeton, NJ 08302 or to SJ Healthcare- HospiceCare, PO Box 160, Bridgeton. NJ 08302. Written condolences and tributes may be expressed to the family at the funeral home website, freitagfuneralhome.com

Meredith Compton is Named 2013 New Jersey Outstanding Young Farmer

Meredith Compton, a fruit and vegetable farmer and co-owner of Peaceful Valley Orchards in Pittstown, has been named New Jersey's 2013 Outstanding Young Farmer by the State Board of Agriculture and will be honored at the February 2013 New Jersey State Agricultural Convention in Atlantic City.

Compton, 38, also is in the running for one of the top four National Outstanding Young Farmer (OYF) Awards. "Meredith Compton is a dedicated steward of the land who is helping to shape the future for agriculture in New Jersey through active involvement in America's Grow-A-Row, which provides Jersey-grown produce to those in need," said New Jersey Secretary of Agriculture Douglas H. Fisher. "The Outstanding Young Farmer Award helps to recognize young people, like Meredith, for the vital role they play in sustaining New Jersey agriculture." Compton is a first-generation farmer who chose agriculture as her career after graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in Agronomy and Environmental Science from Delaware Valley College of Science and Agriculture. She worked at both RAREC and the Rutgers Snyder Research and Extension Farm and then as the North Jersey Tree Fruit IPM program associate for 10 years, honing her agriculture skills. After three years farming on her own while she worked at Rutgers, she decided to pursue farming on full-time basis.

Compton and her husband, Jeremy Compton, operate Peaceful Valley Orchards on leased land. The 150-acre farm offers pick-your-own strawberries, apples, pumpkins and Asian Pears, as well as a Community Supported Agriculture opportunity called the Jersey Fresh Produce Club. Participating members receive a box of fruits and vegetables grown on the farm weekly from July to November.

Peaceful Valley Orchards also is the founding lo-

Jeremy and Meredith Compton

cation of the non-profit organization, America's Grow-A-Row, for which Compton is a board member. For the past eight years, the Compton's have donated land on their farm, as well as seeds and starter plants that are tended by volunteers, harvested and then donated to the hungry.

"We feel that it is essential to provide those in need with fresh fruits and vegetables and to educate people about the important role that agriculture plays in our community and to our well-being," said Compton. "America's Grow-A-Row accomplishes both of those goals and we are proud to say that we have been able to be a part of the success of the program. Grow-A-Row has a lot of exciting plans for the future and we are looking forward to providing many more people in need with Jersey Fresh Produce."

Compton is Vice President of the New Jersey Horticultural Society, a Hunterdon County Board of Agriculture board member, Vice President of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station Board of Managers, and is a graduate of the New Jersey Agricultural Leadership Development Program.

New Jersey annually recognizes the outstanding achievements of a young farmer who is an upstanding leader, respected agriculturalist and is active in community or faith organizations. The Department of Agriculture is now accepting applications for the Year 2014 Outstanding Young Farmer (OYF) Award. The submission deadline for nominations is January 15, 2013. Nominees must be farm operators, deriving a minimum of two-thirds of their income from farming and must be between the ages of 21-40, not becoming 41 prior to January 1, 2014. Candidates who have a financial interest in the farm operation (a sole proprietor, partner, or a corporation) will receive higher ranking in the OYF judging process. However, nominees may also include salaried farm managers and employees who are actively involved in policy and management decisions. Submission of a financial statement is not required for state competition. A panel of five judges reviews each nominee's application based on the following criteria: progress in their agricultural career (50 percent of the total score); soil and water conservation practices (25 percent of the total score); and contribution to his/her community, state and nation (25 percent of the total score). Any individual or organization can nominate deserving young farmers' names.

Since the first award was presented, eight New Jersey farmers' names have been named National Outstanding Young Farmer. The OYF program is the oldest farmer recognition program in the United States, with the first group of national winners selected in 1955. The goals of the OYF program are to foster better urban-rural relations through the understanding of farmers' challenges, as well as the appreciation of their contributions and achievements; to bring about a greater interest in farmers/ranchers; and to help build an urban awareness of the farmers' importance and impact on America's economy. The National OYF program is sponsored by Deere & Company, supported by the U.S. Junior Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of County Agriculture Agents (NACAA), and is administered by the Outstanding Farmers of America (OFA) Fraternity.

For more information on the state's Outstanding Young Farmer program, visit: www.nj.gov/agriculture/about/sba/cover.html or call Karen Kritz, OYF Program Manager at (609) 984-2506 or email Karen.Kritz@ag.state.nj.us.

CIRCLE M FRUIT FARMS

Exceptional quality and flavor at attractive prices
Brought to you from the 4th generation family farm of Santo John Maccherone

- PLU Stickers Available Upon Request
- Low in Calories
- Nutritious and Delicious
- Exceptional Flavor

SANTO SAYS...

"Peaches from Circle M Farms just plain taste better. Their size and color are what your customers want, and their flavor is the icing on the cake.

That's because our orchards are tended with care and attention, and their fruit is left on the tree to ripen naturally until they reach their optimum sweetess. Then they are picked by hand, taste-tested by me to ensure quality, and packed gently into 25 lb. volume boxes for shipping. Single layer cartons are available upon request.

Circle M's 30 varieties of peaches and nectarines are known for their sweetness and their luscious color. They look as good as they taste.

Discriminating customers appreciate our white flesh peaches because of their lower acid levels and supremely sweet taste.

Add it all up: Peaches from Circle M Farms are fresher and sweeter, picked by hand when their time has come, and packed with care for a longer shelf life.

Yellow, white and donut peaches and yellow and white nectarines are available early July to late September."

Call us at 856 856 207-4542 or 609 381-6465. Fax your order to 856 878-0404

JERSEY FRESH
FROM THE GARDEN STATE

Available in 16 oz. and 64 oz. sizes

Made from fresh New Jersey Peaches
"Peach Cider Drink, Peach Salsa, Peach Preserves"

Santo John Maccherone
circlemfarmsllc@gmail.com
Circle M Farms
88 Sandy Ridge Road
Salem, N.J. 08079