Megan Muehlbauer – New County Agent Joins Rutgers Cooperative Extension

Dr. Megan Muehlbauer, was hired August 1, 2017 as a County Agent III, Equivalent to Assistant Professor. Her focus is on commercial tree fruit production in northern New Jersey.

She obtained her Bachelors degree in biotechnology from Rutgers University, but as the daughter of a grain farmer had an interest in learning horticultural field work. This curiosity lead her to intern at the Rutgers University Snyder Research and Extension Farm. It was in this position that she learned small plot research and demonstration work in tree fruit and vegetables under the guidance of area fruit agent, Professor Win Cowgill. Win recently retired from Rutgers Cooperative Extension after 38 years of service (see Horticultural News Summer 2016) http://www.horticulturalnews.org/96-3/wxyzCover96-3.html.

Megan Muehlbauer in the hazelnut demonstration plot at the Rutgers University Snyder Research and Extension Farm in Pittstown, NJ.

Megan Muehlbauer cutting hop bines that are ready to be harvested from the hop demonstration trial at the Rutgers University Snyder Research Farm.

Subsequent to her undergraduate studies, under the advisement of Rutgers University Professor Thomas Molnar, Megan completed her dissertation titled 'The utilization of molecular and biochemical tools to assist in the breeding of hazelnuts (*Corylus* Spp.)'. Aside from helping to spark hazelnut production in the Northeast, Dr. Muehlbauer collaborated with

Megan Muehlbauer spraying pumpkin disease control research plots for Win Cowgill, 2011 Rutgers Sndyer Farm
Photo Credit: Win Cowgill

Rutgers University Professor Jim Simon, to obtain a SARE Partnership grant to establish a chemical quality analysis service at Rutgers University for hop growers.

As a Rutgers Cooperative Extension Agent, she will provide educational programming, and research support for the tree fruit growers in Northern New Jersey, while also providing assistance to the small fruit, and wine grape industries.

Horticultural tree fruit support will include:

- Demonstration of Tree Fruit Production systems
- Involvement, research support and outreach for the NC-140 rootstock trials
- Management of bitterpit disorder in Honeycrisp apples
- Testing and promotion of new, well adapted fresh market varieties

Dr. Muehlbauer will continue to explore the potential for the production of premium quality hops and hazelnuts in New Jersey as new high value crops. Both of which could be integrated into tree fruit production systems in New Jersey. In addition, she will pursue research on hard cider apples, in an effort to provide education and support for the burgeoning hard cider industry in New Jersey.

Dr. Muelbauer can be reached at the Rutgers Hunterdon County Extension Office at 908-788-1339 or email at muehlbauer@njaes.rutgers.edu.

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