

2008 PROGRAM WORK TEAM ANNUAL REPORT

Tree Fruit and Berry Program Work Team

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Activities, Accomplishments, Outcomes and Impacts:

The Tree Fruit and Berry PWT sponsored the following meetings/activities since the start of the 2007-08 fiscal year, with outcomes/impacts noted at the end of each item.

- August 27, 2007, Ithaca, NY, PWT meeting: The group focused on defining broad objectives for the reorganized PWT, exchanged information concerning crop conditions, reviewed new and on-going applied research and extension projects conducted by PWT members, and planned for future meetings. State objectives for the group during the next year included (i) in-house information exchange, team building, and organization of a summer PWT field tour; (ii) improving information flow to stakeholders via improved web presence and identification of information gaps in our existing resources; and (iii) improved information exchange and interactions with private consultants and agrichemical field advisors. Consultants and field advisors were subsequently invited to several PWT meetings and in-service educational events.
- December 4, 2007, Geneva, NY, PWT meeting with stakeholders: In the morning session, the Cornell/CCE group reviewed the 2007 apple harvest and related issues, heard short summaries from those who attended fall regional meetings, and then participated in a lively discussion about directions of the New York Farm Viability Institute. After lunch, the group was joined by the Board of Directors of the Apple Research and Development Program and by private consultants and field advisors for a discussion of research/extension priorities and options for improved communication between Cornell/CCE, the grower community, and consultants/ advisors. Some of the suggestions provided by stakeholders are being incorporated into various Cornell websites to allow improved access to information.
- March 12, 2008, Ithaca, NY, PWT meeting: The group identified additional stakeholders who should be invited to participate in future PWT meetings and discussed how contributions of stakeholders could be optimized by careful planning of meetings. We discussed options for organizing a weekly teleconference among Cornell/CCE PWT members during the busy growing season and came up with a tentative plan. (The plan was not implemented due to time constraints.) A summer tour was planned. A list of small fruit research/extension priorities and needs was developed by the group for posting on the IPM website. Needs for more information on options for organic apple production were discussed, along with options for getting existing

knowledge organized and available on websites. Ian Merwin's program will be taking the lead in putting together an organic apple production handbook.

- June 17-19, 2008: Fourteen PWT members participated in a summer field tour of fruit farms in the Champlain Valley that was organized by Kevin Iungerman. The tour started at a farm in Crown Point, visited Iungerman's cold-hardy grape planting at Cornell's Willsboro Farm, progressed through four more farms between Peru and Willsboro, NY, and concluded on the third day with a visit to the Ag-Canada Horticultural Research and Development Center in St-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Quebec, followed by an early evening stop at an organic orchard back in Peru, NY. The tour was an exceptional team-building event, and it also highlighted the progressive new apple plantings that are being developed in this part of the state (including some limited-access "club" apple varieties) as well as successful farm markets and berry farm operations.
- PWT members helped to develop a coordinated response to the widespread hail events that devastated the industry in late June. Affected growers were provided with information on assessing damage and dealing with insurance claims.
- November 5-7, 2008: About a dozen PWT members participated in the Great Lakes Fruit Workers Meeting in Holland, MI. The three-day conference included a total of about 65 participants from NY, MI, IL and Ontario. PWT participants made 12 research/extension presentations at this conference which evolved many years ago under the leadership of Terence Robinson and Cornell's Fruit PWT collaborating with similar efforts in MI and Ontario. Other PWT members participated in similar multistate fruit workshops that were held in Burlington, VT on 21-22 October and in Winchester, VA on 4-5 December. These regional events allow sharing of extension observations and results from applied research, and that sharing enables states to share resources, coordinate responses to new pest problems, and formulate strategies for the coming year.
- November 12, 2008, Ithaca, NY: The Tree Fruit and Berry PWT sponsored a full day of educational program at the CCE In-Service training with 15 presentations covering fruit economics, pest management, climate issues, postharvest technology, and new extension tools. Private consultants and crop advisors were invited to participate, and several of them did so. This program also provided an opportunity to introduce newly hired faculty, Dr. Brad Rickard and Dr. Miquel Gomez, who will be conducting research/extension program relevant to fruit crops and Mario Miranda Saso who recently joined the Lake Ontario Fruit Team. Presentations at this event provided insights into on-going research/extension programs within the Cornell community.
- December 2, 2008, Ithaca, NY: Thirty PWT members participated in this meeting where issues from the past growing season were reviewed and plans for the coming year were formulated. Active participation from five private consultants/advisors added significantly to the discussion, information exchange, and formulation of plans for the coming year. The meeting was useful for regrouping after a busy year.