Agricultural & Community Recovery Program

Albany, NY (September 3, 2011) Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced that he has created a $15 million Agricultural and Community Recovery Fund to help rebuild the agricultural industry in farming areas impacted by Hurricane Irene.

"I have seen first-hand the devastating damage to many New York farms as a result of Hurricane Irene and we must do all we can to help these farmers and our rural communities recover," Governor Cuomo said. "New York's agricultural industry is an important part of our state economy and the storm wreaked havoc on farms that many New Yorkers depend on for their livelihood. This fund will help New York's farming community rebuild and recover."

The money provided by the fund will be used for soil and water conservation districts to assist in rebuilding agricultural infrastructure, mitigation of stream banks, drainage and sewer rehabilitation, vineyard restoration and other projects necessary for rebuilding the agricultural industry in hard hit farming areas. Darrel Aubertine, Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture and Markets, and Matthew Driscoll, President and CEO of the Environmental Facilities Corporation, will work with the New York Farm Bureau and local governments to prioritize projects that will have the greatest impact on restoring damaged communities.

The money will be provided from the Upstate Agricultural Economic Development Capital Fund and the Department of Homes and Community Renewal's Community Development Office.

The following information sheet was also released, intended for NYS farmers:

Was your farm damaged by Hurricane Irene? Governor Cuomo has announced the Agricultural and Community Recovery Program (ACRP) to aid farmers with storm damage to agricultural infrastructure, stream banks, etc. for rebuilding the ag industry in hard hit farming areas.

Emergency conservation practices that may qualify are:

- Removal of flood debris
- Alternative water supplies
- Barnyard water management
- Manure storage/treatment and transfer systems
- Critical area protection
- Silage leachate control
- Stream bank stabilization
- Erosion control practices
- Filter areas
- Processed wash water management
- Cropland and pasture management
- Petroleum, fertilizer and pesticide storage facilities
- Conservation buffer

If you have significant damage caused by Irene, please arrange for a site visit by an SWCD representative. If the SWCD determines that you may qualify, a form will be submitted on your behalf to the NYS Soil & Water Conservation Committee in Albany. Funds will be distributed on a weekly basis until gone.

Call 692-9940, ext. 3 for a site visit. CALL ASAP—money will be gone quickly.

Note: Actual crop damage does not qualify under this program.

“Serving the research and educational needs of vegetable and small fruit growers in Albany, Columbia, Fulton, Greene, Montgomery, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, Warren, & Washington Counties”
Even though Hurricane Irene is gone, the path of devastation she left continues to increase! This week I was called into two different pumpkin fields in two different counties. The growers reported that their pumpkins were just melting in the field. As soon as I walked into the field it took about 10 seconds to diagnosis the problem: Phytophthora capsici or Phytophthora blight. I guess I have to say that I’m not surprised to see this disease, especially with our area receiving the amount of precipitation it has.

Phytophthora blight is a water loving pathogen that can affect all parts of the plant, especially the fruit. To complicate the matter, fruit can be infected but show no symptoms until you place it in a bin or out for display and they literally melt. The first symptom you will see is a dark circular, sunken, water logged spot on the fruit, particularly on the side contacting the soil. From there, a white, yeasty like growth will form. It can take very little time at all for the pathogen to breakdown a fruit, especially in the weather pattern we are currently in. As mentioned above, it is near impossible to tell if fruit are infected just by looking at them until that dark watery ring appears and we rarely see foliar symptoms. In both cases, these growers were applying weekly fungicides for Downy Mildew such as Ranman and Revus which have some activity against Phytophthora, but were still not enough.

What to do? First, If you can, get a copper application on as soon as possible. Use lots of gallonage to make sure you try and cover the fruit the best you can. Most of us are losing plant canopy quickly to Powdery and Downy mildew, so I’m not so sure how well any of the systemic materials will work on the fruit themselves, especially those that are fully ripe and have set a pretty good rind.

Second: Try and remove the fruit that appear unaffected as soon as possible from the field. The longer they stay in the field, the greater the chance of them coming into contact with Phytophthora spores and becoming infected. If you plant your pumpkins on raised beds with plastic mulch, cut the fruit and at least try to get them up on top of the bed for now to minimize soil contact.

Third: I know this is impossible for a lot of you, but if you can get them out of the field and put them somewhere where they can be laid out for a while, after a few days you should be able to pick out those that may be infected. Again, DO NOT LEAVE THEM IN THE BINS if you can help it!

Fourth: Those fruit that are infected, do not just randomly throw them in a compost pile or spread them in a field that is uninfected. Either dig a hole somewhere away from you production areas and bury them or put in a dumpster and get rid of them. If you have no where else to dispose of them, put them back in the infected field they came from.

Fifth: Minimize the amount of traffic in and out of the infected production area. The disease is not only spread by water, but can also be spread through the moving of soil from one field to another by equipment and

Lastly: Once you have harvested the field and it dries up enough, plow down and incorporate the residue as soon as possible to reduce the number of overwintering spores the pathogen can produce. -CDB
Berry Update: Autumn Berry Nutrient Demands

At this point many of you will be looking at the results of your foliar samples and determining what is needed for your berries this fall. No nitrogen should be added to any berry crops at this time unless specifically noted in your foliar test results. Your foliar nutrient results will most likely address other macro and micro nutrient needs besides nitrogen. The only exception to this is for strawberries. June-bearing strawberries should have had 70# of N/acre (in the form of calcium nitrate, or ammonium nitrate) applied at renovation, and now they need 30# of N/acre with adjustments to the rate based on the results of your soil test. As our fields are so wet right now, you should consider application until early October as still being a positive step. After that, nitrogen will cause too much growth and work against good winter hardiness. The earlier you can get that N on the better.

Day-Neutral strawberries will need continued feeding through trickle irrigation right through the middle of October. You should be applying 60-150# of N during the production cycle, and from my experience the higher side of that recommendation really seems to pay off in yield. These plants are just hitting their stride right now in terms of production, so don't get distracted from feeding them.

If you have not done a foliar analysis, but do have a recent soil test, go back and look at the soil levels for Boron and Magnesium. Those 2 elements are frequently deficient in NYS soils. Magnesium is especially important in blueberry plantings, so if you have a deficient situation, the typical amount to apply is 50-200lb/acre of magnesium sulfate (20% Mg). If you are doing this without foliar sample results, err on the conservative side and add just 50lb/acre.

If your soil sample shows low Boron, and you haven't added any for the year, you can add this at a rate not to exceed more than 2 lbs of actual boron in any one year. This will mean no more than 10 lb/acre of Solubor this year. Solubor and Magnesium should be applied ASAP.-LGM

Online courses available for beginning farmers

The growing season is still in full swing, but here at the Northeast Beginning Farmer Project, we're already thinking about "education season". Six of our 7 online courses - including 4 new topics - are still open for registration, ready to help you continue your farming education. As always, our courses are taught by experienced Cooperative Extension educators, farmers, and other specialists. Courses are usually 6 weeks long, cost $175, and include both real-time meetings (online webinars) and on-your-own time reading and activities. We do not offer any academic credit, but those who successfully complete a course will receive a certificate and are also eligible for Farm Service Agency (FSA) borrower training credit, which can improve your eligibility to receive a low-interest FSA loan.

We've got several courses that will help you build the "invisible infrastructure" of your farm business:

- If you're ready to write a farm business plan, sign up for the BF 202: Planning to Stay in Business course, which will help you document the feasibility of your business and prepare to seek funding from banks and other lenders. Financial records are the foundation of tracking your farm's progress toward profitability. Need some guidance in setting up your recordkeeping systems? Then BF 104: Financial Records is for you.

On the production side, we offer:

- BF 120: Veggie Farming - back by popular demand, this jam-packed course has now been divided into two parts (with BF 121 being offered in January). BF 120 covers the planning, budgeting, site selection, and planting, while BF 121 will pick up where BF 120 leaves off and take you through considerations in season-long care, harvest, and marketing.

- Raising poultry is a popular enterprise for many small farmers, so this Fall we're introducing a new course, BF 130: Poultry Production, to cover the basic requirements of producing and profiting from chickens, ducks, and turkeys.

- Before you sink a lot of money into equipment, consider taking BF 105: Machinery and Equipment, another new course designed to help you weigh your options and make smart decisions about what's best for your farm scale and situation.

- BF 110: Soil Health returns again this Fall to introduce growers at all levels of experience to practical on-farm applications of soil health concepts. This course will again incorporate an optional in-person field day at an amazing farm in Northern NY that will demonstrate improvement of soil health on a working farm.

To learn more about each course, please visit http://nebeginningfarmers.org/online-courses. From this site you can visit our Annual Course Calendar, learn more about our Instructors, see answers to Frequently Asked Questions, read details for each course, and even visit a sample online course.

Courses often fill very quickly, so don't miss your chance to sign up today!
So far our scouting efforts throughout the Capital District indicate that growers do NOT need to spray for Brown Marmorated Stink Bug (BMSB), but as winter approaches we may see a sharp increase in feeding on fall crops by adult BMSB’s working on energy reserves to overwinter. In 2010, growers in NJ, VA, and MD suffered extensive late season damage just prior to the apple harvest. Estimated losses in apple last year reached an estimated $37 million dollars in the mid-Atlantic region. Keep scouting your fields, and if you think you are seeing BMSB feeding in your crops, try to capture a few insects and call Crystal, Laura or Chuck, or send samples directly to Peter Jentsch at the Hudson Valley Laboratory, Department of Entomology, PO Box 727, Highland, NY 12528 along with a submission form found here: http://hudsonvf.cce.cornell.edu/bmsb1.html. Or, if you have a smartphone, you can send a clear image to pjj5@cornell.edu and he can identify your insect and send you an email response. –CLS, adapted from Brown Marmorated Stinkbug Update: Harvest Alert by Peter Jentsch.

BMSB look-alikes: when looking for BMSB, be aware of some of the look-alikes that exist in our area. The characteristic that distinguishes them from BMSB is listed under the name of each insect.
We found black rot last week in butternut squash, and we expect to see more of it as the harvest comes in. What makes this disease interesting is that it has two stages. The first stage we commonly refer to as Gummy Stem blight (Didymella bryoniae) and infects the cucurbit foliage. It looks like many other diseases and environmental stresses, so can be easily overlooked. The other stage is the one that we more commonly know as Black Rot (Phoma cucurbitacearum) and is the one that is easily recognizable as the “rust” we see on butternut. You can find it in the field at harvest or fruit can appear clean, but when put into storage can develop symptoms. On pumpkins it will appear as a sunken area that bleaches in color and turns black.

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Once black rot gets to this stage, it is impossible to control. Control needs to start back when purchasing seed and selecting which fields to plant your cucurbits crops in. The disease is both soil and seed borne so a minimum 2 year rotation out of cucurbit crops is recommended and purchasing only high quality seed will help. Additionally, reducing the amount of feeding injury (both foliar and on the fruit) by insects such as cucumber beetles, aphids and squash bugs and controlling other diseases such as Powdery Mildew will help the plant be less susceptible to Gummy stem blight/Black rot infection. Fungicides applied when the plants begins to set fruit can also reduce disease infection. Even though we do not recommend the stroblurin fungicides (Quadris, Pristine etc.) for Powdery mildew control anymore, they are still effective in controlling Gummy stem blight and Black rot but as stated previously, need to be applied starting when the fruit begin to develop.

It is also extremely important to handle the fruit as carefully as possible and do not store fruit that has black rot symptoms with fruit that does not. Any kind of wound, especially where stems puncture fruit when harvesting, is a perfect site for infection to get started. This goes for winter squash, pumpkins, gourds etc. Any kind of rough handling opens the fruit for not only black rot, but other diseases such as bacterial soft rots etc. This also includes when moving bins from the field to storage—the more the fruit is jostled in the bins, the more bruising can happen and the more black rot infection can occur, especially on some of the farm roads that I’ve been on! –CDB, edited by CLS
Upcoming Meetings and Notices

September 23rd, 10am – Noon. Wind, Solar and More Tour at Highland Hills Farm. 227 Green Road North. Charleston, NY (Montgomery County) 12072. Jan and Ron Bever operate their house, barn and sugar shack entirely off the grid. They use two Southwest Windpower microturbines that generate 400 watts each and six 120 watt solar panels, along with 12 Trojan T-105 batteries to store the power. Jan and Ron installed all the systems themselves with the help of their neighbors. They are planning to harvest 100 gallons of syrup next season from their 15 acre sustainably managed sugar bush. Jan promises you don’t need a lot of money to get started in renewable energy. If you are looking for a do-it-yourself, affordable approach to renewable energy, come meet Jan and Ron! More info on the farm at https://sites.google.com/site/highlandhillsfarm/ To register, contact Violet Stone at 607-255-9227 or vws7@cornell.edu

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The majority of our traps are either washed away or are still inaccessible. We will continue to assess our trap network to decide whether to continue over the next week.

FarmNet Provides Counseling Resources for Farmers

If you are feeling overwhelmed by your financial situation in light of the current losses, or you are feeling overwhelmed by your emotions (or both) FarmNet can connect you with people who will listen and provide guidance. All consulting is completely confidential, and is free. Please call the number on the right if you need help.

FSA Offices of the Capital District——call ASAP to Make Your Claims
- **Albany County**: 765-2326
- **Columbia County**: 828-4385
- **Fulton County**: 853-4031
- **Greene County**: 828-4385
- **Montgomery County**: 853-4031
- **Rensselaer County**: 271-1889
- **Saratoga County**: 885-6300
- **Schenectady County**: 295-8600
- **Schuyler County**: 295-8600
- **Warren County**: 692-9940
- **Washington County**: 692-9940

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