



Cooperative Extension of Hunterdon County

Rutgers Cooperative
Extension of Hunterdon
County Staff

Family and Community Health
Sciences

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Educator, County Agent II

4-H Youth Development

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4-H Program Assistant

Agriculture & Resource Management

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County Agricultural Agent III

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Tree Fruit IPM Program Associate

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Administrative Support Staff

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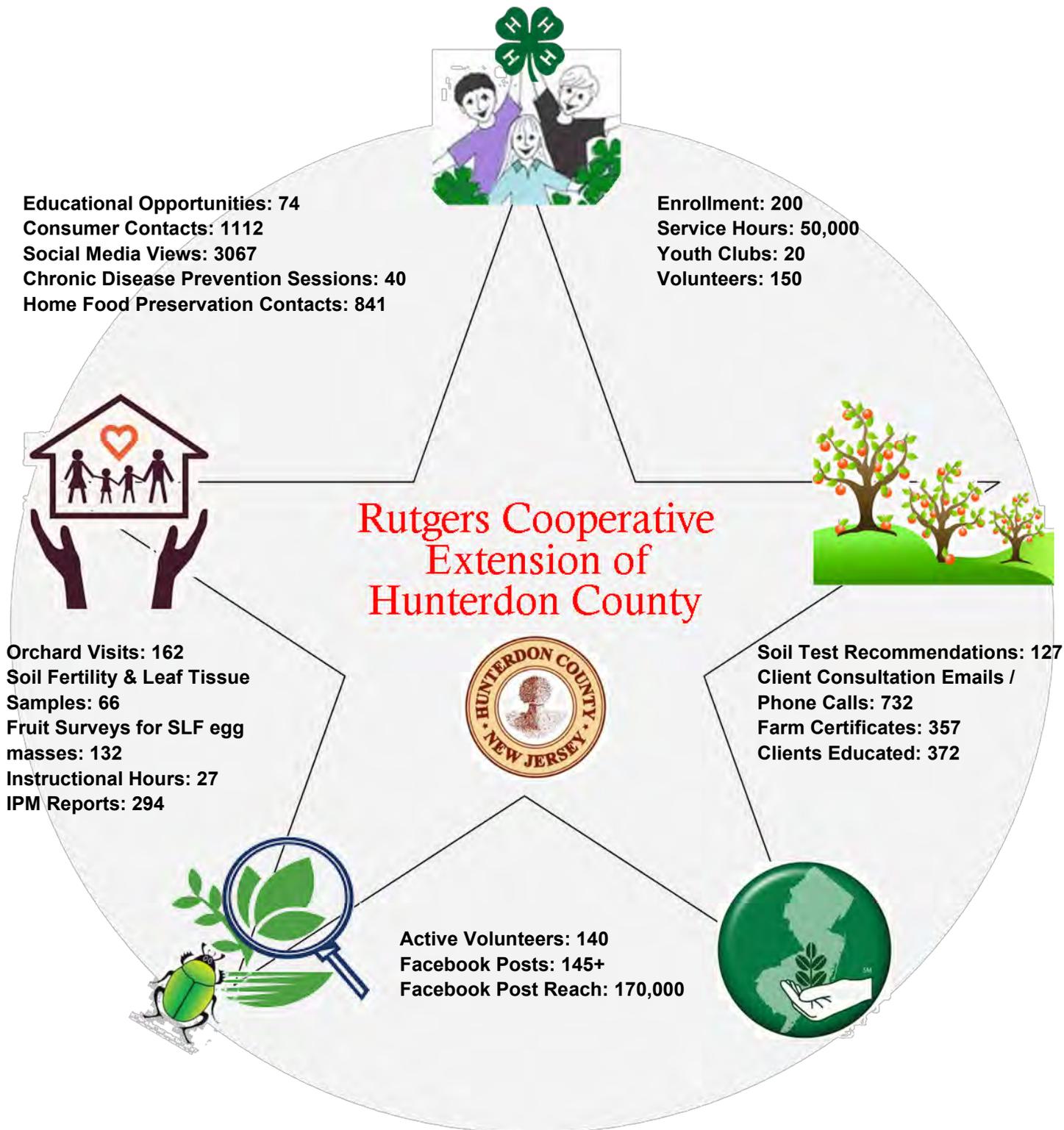
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Extending Knowledge, Changing Lives

2021 Program Impact by the Numbers



2021 Family and Community Health Sciences

Sandra Greci, MS, RDN, LDN, CDCES,

FCHS Educator, County Agent II



Staying healthy, eating right, being active, raising healthy families, and enjoying a good quality of life!
RCE's Department of Family and Community Health Sciences helps people meet these goals.

FCHS offers a variety of educational programs in **nutrition, school and child wellness, chronic disease prevention, and food safety**. In 2021, FCHS offered **74** classes and webinars reaching 1,100 consumers, and more than **3000** contacts on social media.



FCHS Continued Online Program Delivery in Response to Extended Covid-19 Restrictions

FCHS refined and expanded virtual program delivery by **Zoom and WebEx webinars, Facebook videos, and social media posts**. Outreach highlights included:

Chronic Disease Prevention and Management:

NJ Empower to Prevent: the FCHS Diabetes Prevention Program-

In April of 2021, FCHS of Hunterdon and Middlesex Counties launched *NJ Empower to Prevent*. This 12-month lifestyle change program empowers people with prediabetes to make eat healthy and increase physical activity to reduce their risk of developing diabetes. To date the 15 participants have lost an average of 3.5% of starting weight, and on average do more than 200 minutes/week of physical activity (150mins/week minimum is recommended for good health). A second group is enrolling now for 2022.

Chronic Disease Prevention Webinars and Social Media Outreach:

- *Living Well with Sandra G*: 10 videos featuring healthy lifestyle behaviors (1,632 views)
- *Living Well with Diabetes*: Wellness Wednesday Webinar (101 views)
- *De-stress Your Eating*: 2 Webinars (43 views)

Virtual Diabetes Support and Mindful Eating groups (7-10 attendees monthly)

Home Food Preservation and Food Safety Outreach:

- *RU Ready to Preserve Food at Home?* A series of 10 webinars on canning, freezing, pickling, dehydrating, and other topics related to preserving food at home, presented jointly by FCHS of Somerset and Atlantic/Ocean Counties. (841 attendees and views)

Hunterdon County Farm to Fork:

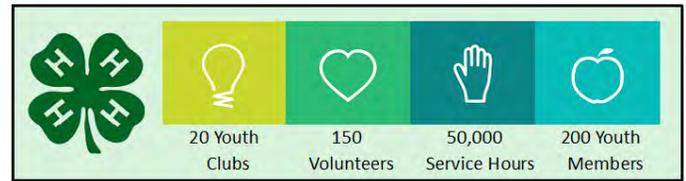
Weekly Facebook videos presented jointly by Hunterdon CountyFCHS and ANR on locally grown seasonal produce. The FCHS videos included nutrition information and cooking demonstrations. (1067 views).

Hunterdon County consumer, community, and professional groups may request FCHS programs by contacting Sandra Greci, RCE's FCHS Educator, for more information.



2021 4-H Youth Development

Sherrie Peterson, 4-H Program Assistant



“4-H is Powered by Volunteers”, this year’s theme for Volunteer Appreciation. One hundred fifty volunteers plan, organize, develop and implement club programs for youth. Programs are offered in a variety of formats including both in-person and virtual clubs, webinars, workshops, camps, and the fair. Throughout the year, volunteers serve our community with over 30,000 hours of service. Many hours are fulfilled during the evening and weekends when the youth are available to work on their projects. Aside from working with youth, volunteers share their expertise through judging events like presentations and record keeping. Volunteers spend numerous hours planning events and activities at the fair; and chaperone events during the fair and other times throughout the year. Volunteers are truly the key to a successful 4-H Program. This past year, Louisa Cole, 60 Year volunteer of the Hunterdon County 4-H was inducted into the National 4-H Hall of Fame. It is such an honor to have Louisa a part of our Hunterdon 4-H Family for sixty years. She is just one of the many volunteers who make Hunterdon 4-H what it is today.

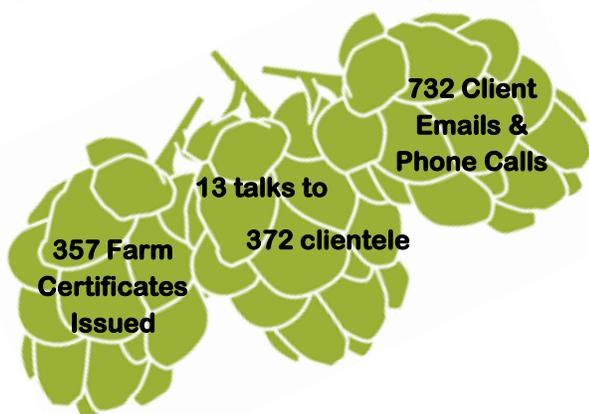
The **Hunterdon County 4-H program** has an enrollment of 200 youth grades K through 13. Youth can be involved in a variety of projects including beef, sheep, goat, horse, dairy, rabbit, poultry, dog and seeing-eye. Our Family and Community Health Science clubs offer skills in food, nutrition, sewing, photography, horticulture, art and crafts. Non traditional 4-H clubs include shooting sports and robotics. Through 4-H club work, youth learn leadership as they take on roles within their club such as club officer or chair of a committee. Building on club work, 4-H’ers learn communication skills through the 4-H Presentation Contest. Every 4-H member is required to present a topic on a club level. Many of our youth partake in the County Presentation Contest and those that qualify are given the opportunity to compete on a state level. Participants also develop skills in citizenship, self-discipline, responsibility and service. All of these skills are taught early in life so youth can learn to face challenges, prepare for college and learn to be successful.

The **Hunterdon County 4-H & Agricultural Fair** has a huge impact on our youth, families, and clubs and community. The fair is one of the biggest events hosted in Hunterdon County. Fair goers come to see the animals, agriculture, rides and food. It draws a huge crowd and brings our 4-H families, farmers and community together. The Hunterdon County 4-H has been involved in the fair for nearly 100 years. The County fair is the most highlighted event within 4-H. The fair is a culmination and showcase of a year’s worth of planning, preparing and creating 4-H projects. It may not be the fair itself that is so important to 4-H, but it is what a child gains from the experience that makes it an important part of the 4-H program. When a child raises an animal, they earn responsibility and care for, work with and learn about that animal every day. The fair gives them the opportunity to show the animal. It is this that motivates youth to work hard all year, and share what they learned with the entire community.

“I pledge...my hands to larger service...” 4-H youth are very familiar with this saying, as it is part of the 4-H Pledge that is recited at the beginning of all of our 4-H club meetings and events. 4-H members are encouraged to develop and practice skills to become helpful in their club, community, country and world. Volunteers encourage youth to do Community service projects so that youth can give back to community while learning to work in a group. Since the start of Covid-19; clubs took the initiative to work on service projects to aid during the National Crisis while helping others deal with stress caused from Covid-19. From the simplest service project to most time consuming, every project was a meaningful contribution that helped touch the lives of people in our community. As a group the **Hunterdon County 4-H members spent 20,000 service hours making a difference in someone’s life.**

2021 Agriculture and Natural Resources

Megan Muehlbauer, PhD, County Agent III



Megan's 2021 accomplishments included:

- Launched the New Jersey Weekly Apple Maturity Review website. Which provides weekly reports on apple maturity progression to growers throughout the apple harvest season. Since launched in July of 2021 it has had 754 views and 29 subscribers.
- Developing 8 new videos for the continuation of the Hunterdon County Farm to Fork series. These videos have reached 2,040 clientele.
- National Finalist at the National Association of County Agricultural Agents Search for Excellence in Consumer or Commercial Horticulture for project titled "Transitioning Pesticide Credit Bearing Continuing Education Meetings to Online Formats During the COVID19 Pandemic."
- Launched a series of webinars for tree fruit growers titled 'Ask the Expert Tree Fruit Edition'. The webinars drew a total of 150 attendees.
- Co-authored and published a peer reviewed Extension Bulletin titled 'Choosing Plants for a Hazelnut Orchard in New Jersey'.
- In 2021 Megan was awarded a total of \$55,365 toward all facets of her field research program in Hunterdon County. These include beach plum propagation, hard cider apple variety selection, apple rootstock selection and apple maturity analysis.



2021 Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program

Atanas Atanasov, PhD, Tree Fruit IPM Program Associate



In 2021 Atanas's work helped commercial tree fruit growers to:

- ⇒ Protect trees and fruits from devastating insects and diseases
- ⇒ Increase yield and improve quality of fruits
- ⇒ Provide healthy and environmentally friendly production
- ⇒ Exclude or strongly reduce carbamate and organophosphate insecticides from the program

Grower Feedback: *"I am a new grower participating in Rutgers IPM program and followed all recommendations strictly. I significantly cut insecticides used comparing to previous years."*



The IPM Program also Supports a Healthy Environment:

Practices focus on implementing insecticide free methods for control of the most economically important insects in tree fruit orchards (codling moth, oriental fruit moth, peach borers, and dog wood borer). No extra sprays or waste chemicals are used to prevent diseases. Outreach is provided on a schedule of weekly visits to growers' farms, to monitor and discuss pest problems and guide growers on the best control practices.



2021 Home Horticulture

Rebecca Magron, Horticultural Consultant



Master Gardeners of Hunterdon County enhancing outreach services, benefitting our community

The Home Horticulture office at Rutgers Cooperative Extension began the Master Gardener program to extend its reach into the community with its first graduating class 26 years ago. Now a thriving volunteer outreach service, the Master Gardener program maintains over 140 trained and active volunteers who readily strengthen outreach, improve residents' lives and strive to deepen our reach to vulnerable populations and populations with special needs. Since its inception 29 years ago, over 300,000 volunteer hours have contributed over \$7,000,000 of service in our communities.

RCE home horticulture with Master Gardener engagement is a vital part of our program at Anderson House. Our clients greatly benefit from learning to produce real food for their table, grounding skills, community connections and immediate success with positive people. It provides clients with a lifelong skill..." - Helen McIntosh, Clinical Director, Anderson House



"For six years the Master Gardeners of Hunterdon County have been committed in their endeavor to support and nurture the Special Needs learners at Hunterdon Central. ...

The level of commitment the Master Gardeners have shown to our school community has been remarkable. The Gardeners are nurturing, amenable and committed to students growth and development; their contributions have been immeasurable."

*-Suzanne Vrancken, Teacher
Hunterdon Central High School,
Hunterdon County Teacher of
the Year*

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought about unprecedented times and difficult challenges to overcome. Throughout 2021, focus had been on keeping county residents as well as Master Gardener volunteers connected and engaged. The virtual world brought a unique opportunity to re-tool how we connect with each other and our audiences. The Rutgers Master Gardeners of Hunterdon County created a Citizen Scientists group to engage Rutgers Master Gardeners in evaluating horticultural conditions in their surroundings, whether at home or a public park, and communicate findings with the residents of Hunterdon County. Choosing Facebook as a social media platform to connect with residents, the Rutgers Master Gardeners noticed, examined, researched, and wrote over 145 relevant and timely posts reaching over 170,000 users during 2021 and over 450,000 since creating the site in May 2020. During 2021, over 6,500 individuals reacted to and shared information from the posts.



Photos Courtesy Barbara J. Berger and Jean Agostinelli





Sherrie Peterson
4-H



Rebecca Magron
Home Horticulture



Sandra Greci
FCHS



Megan Muehlbauer, PhD
Agriculture



Atanas Atanassov, PhD
IPM



Kimberley Crommelin & Anna Pinkerton
Support Staff

About Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE)

Rutgers Cooperative Extension is part of the Federal Land Grant University system serving as the educational outreach arm of the United States Department of Agriculture. We provide research-based information and programming developed at New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, part of Rutgers, the State University. RCE strives to better the lives of the residents of Hunterdon County through a cooperative agreement between Rutgers, the State University and the Hunterdon County Boards of County Commissioners.

Our Goals

For more than **90** years, RCE of Hunterdon County has worked in the local community to ensure healthy lifestyles for residents of all ages; provide productive futures for youth, adults and communities; enhance and protect environmental resources; ensure economic growth and agricultural sustainability; and improve food safety and nutrition.



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