

A REPORT FROM THE
EXECUTIVE DEAN
OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

April 2009

Spotlights



All roads led to the first-ever Rutgers Day celebration on April 25 and the university welcomed over 50,000 people to campus to learn more about the state university of New Jersey. The gorgeous weather brought throngs to the various performance stages, activity booths and varied food offerings. ([Read more](#))



RU27, an underwater glider christened the Scarlet Knight, was launched by the Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences on April 27 off of Tuckerton. The glider's trans-Atlantic journey is expected to take nine months and end in Spain. RU 27 replaces the previous trans-Atlantic glider, RU17, which was lost in the Azores at the end October last year, just short of completing its mission. See [launch video](#) of RU27 at the Star-Ledger website. To track the progress of the Scarlet Knight, check the COOL [blog](#).

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Cipriano Landscape Design, through its *Keeping It Green Foundation*, has made its second \$10,000 scholarship in as many years to fund four scholarships for students in the Department of Landscape Architecture and the Department of Plant Biology and Pathology. Scholarship recipients will be named this spring, with the scholarship taking effect in fall 2009. [\(Read more\)](#)



Rutgers EcoComplex is becoming "the place to go for clean energy firms in terms of access to environmental technology and entrepreneurial know-how", says **David Specca**, assistant director for bioenergy technologies and controlled-environment agriculture. The EcoComplex specializes in helping green-minded companies to commercialize and market their ideas, offering access to a range of research and resources to facilitate the commercialization of new technologies to solve the growing environmental and energy issues facing New Jersey and the nation. [\(Read more\)](#)



With the domesticated honey bee population facing a decline in population, thus drawing widespread attention to their critical role in food production, the work of researchers like **Rachael Winfree**, assistant professor, entomology, School of Environmental and Biological Sciences, becomes increasingly more important. She investigates the ecological value of bees and how global change affects bees. A fascinating interview with Rachael appears in the *Rutgers FOCUS*. [\(Read more\)](#)

New Faculty Appointments and Hires

Faculty appointments and start dates

Bakacs, Michele E.	County Agent III	ARMA	5/4/09
Bhattacharya, Debashish	Professor I	EENR	7/1/09
Breslin, Paul	Professor I	Nutritional Sciences	1/1/09
Carlton, Anne Marie	Assistant Professor	Environmental Sciences	7/1/10
Duffy, Sioban	Assistant Professor	EENR	9/1/09
Fuchs, Heidi	Assistant Professor	Marine & Coastal Sciences	11/1/08
Jensen, Olaf	Assistant Professor	Marine & Coastal Sciences	9/1/10
Mangiafico, Salvatore	County Agent III	ARMA	4/1/09
Rusciano, Gregory	County Agent III	ARMA	4/13/09
Zhang, Ning	Assistant Professor	Plant Biology & Pathology	1/1/09

Chair Appointments

Gottlieb, Paul

Department of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics



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Celebrating Excellence in Our Community

The 16th annual “A Celebration of Excellence” Awards Dinner to honor outstanding faculty, staff, alumni, and students at the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences and the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station was held on April 23 at the Cook Campus Center. Executive Dean Robert Goodman congratulates the 2009 Excellence Awards recipients:

Team Awards:

- “Rediscovering the Jersey Tomato—Revitalizing a Signature Crop for New Jersey”
Team members: **Bill Hlubik** (Middlesex County agricultural and resource management agent), **Michelle Infante-Casella** (Gloucester County agricultural and resource management agent), **Wes Kline** (Cumberland County agricultural and resource management agent), **Joe Musumeci** (Institute for Health, Health Care Policy and Aging Research), **Peter Nitzsche** (Morris County agricultural and resource management agent), **Tom Orton** (Plant Biology and Pathology), **Jack Rabin** (associate director NJAES), **Cindy Rovins** (Office of Communications), **Bill Sciarappa** (Monmouth County agricultural and resource management agent), **Richard Buckley** and **Sabrina Tirpak** (Plant Diagnostic Laboratory).
- “Partnership for Sustainable Economic Growth in Africa through Natural Products Development.” Team members: **Julia Coppin**, **Diane Ducceschi**, **Barbara Fitzgerald** (Plant Biology and Plant Pathology), **Kodzo Gbewonyo**, **Ramu Govindasamy** (Agricultural Economics and Marketing), **Chi-Tang Ho** (Food Science), **Kerry Hughes**, **H. Rodolfo Juliani**, **Adolfina Koroch**, **Chung Park** (Plant Biology and Plant Pathology), **Venkata Puduri** (Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics), **Bill Sciarappa** (Monmouth County agricultural and resource management agent), **Diandian Shen**, **James Simon** (Plant Biology and Plant Pathology), **Wendy Stelatella** (Food Policy Institute), **Pierre Tannous** (Plant Biology and Plant Pathology), **Beverly Tepper** (Food Science), **Magatte Wade-Marchand**, **Cara Welch**, and **Qing-Li Wu** (Plant Biology and Plant Pathology).

Research Excellence Award - **Daniel Gimenez** (Environmental Sciences)

Sustained Research Excellence and Impact Award - **George Carman** (Food Science)

Excellence in Teaching Award - **Donna Fennell** (Environmental Sciences)

Outstanding Undergraduate Advisor Award - **James Wohlt** (Animal Sciences) Rutgers

Cooperative Extension Faculty Excellence Award - **Lisa Rothenburger** (Somerset County 4-H)

Staff Recognition Award - **Clinton Burgher** (Animal Sciences)

Alumni Awards:

George H. Cook Distinguished Alumni Awards - Douglas Blonsky '83, Brian Federici '66, and George Johannessen '41

Dennis M. Fenton Distinguished Graduate Alumni Award - **Peter Strom** (Environmental Sciences)

Science Communicator Awards:

Undergraduate: **Nathalie Sanchez** (Animal Sciences) and **Virian Serei** (Biotechnology)

Graduate: **Youn-Kyung Kim** (Food Science)



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Alpha Zeta Awards:

Barbara Munson Goff Teacher of the Year - **Mark Vodak** (Ecology, Evolution, and Natural Resources)

Senior of the Year - **Dale Cruzan**; Junior of the Year - **Nazia Khan**; Sophomore of the Year - **Giana Ramos**; Freshman of the Year - **Stacy Brody**

George H. Cook Scholars – Class of 2009

Ross Alter, Sebastian Arangundy, Jessica Baculis, Matthew Bruno, Alison Caruana, Anthony Colandreo, Amy DeMicco, Brinda Desai, Janvi Desai, Lisa Fiorenza, Tanya Gordonov, Jessica Hoffman, Caitlin Kennedy, Samantha Lee, Christina Mackesy, Allison Marquardt, Jennifer McConnell, Francis Ortega, Karnik Patel, Linda Marie Pedro, Kathryn Pilewski, Erik Sakowski, Virian Serei, Dharika Shah, Michael Strug, Anna Sweeney, Atiya Taqui, Kerrie Tiedemann, Allison Walker, Jennie Zambito, and Katherine Ziegler.

Announcing The Discovery Initiative

Diana Orban Brown, who has served as assistant director for communications and marketing at the Equine Science Center, assumes a different set of responsibilities focusing on community engagement, effective in May. The Discovery Initiative seeks to offer a wide range of opportunities for engagement by alumni, faculty, staff, and students, and will provide opportunities for stakeholders to learn about the school and experiment station. More on the Discovery Initiative will be announced in the coming months.

Faculty and Staff Activities and Accomplishments

The **Solid Waste Resource Renewal Group** at Rutgers NJAES received a 2009 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 2 Environmental Quality Award and was honored at a ceremony on April 24 in New York City. The EPA describes this award as “the highest recognition presented to the public by our office. Award recipients come from all sectors of our community, including non-profit, environmental and community groups, individual citizens, environmental education and business organizations and members of the news media.”



Following up on its two large donations of food items in March, the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences and the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station this month donated \$350 to the [Greater Brunswick Charter School](#) (GBCS). Executive Dean Robert Goodman presented the check to Rob Agree, education director of GBCS, for its lunch program. Cara Cuite, research project manager for the Food Policy Institute and a GBCS parent, also attended the event.

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The 2009 National Association of County Agricultural Agents (NACAA) Search for Excellence honored two New Jersey State Winners, comprising the School of environmental and Biological Sciences and NJAES team members. The winning entry under Search for Excellence in Young, Beginning, or Small Farmers/Ranchers was "Animal waste management plans for New Jersey animal producers/self certified." Team members were **Bob Mickel** (Hunterdon County agricultural and resource management agent), **Stephen Komar** (Sussex County agricultural and resource management agent), **Bill Bamka** (Burlington County agricultural and resource management agent), **Dave Lee** (Salem County agricultural and resource management agent), **Michael Westendorf** (Animal Sciences), and **Carey Williams** (Animal Sciences). The winning entry under Search for Excellence in Livestock Production was "Meat goat production school, marketing project & consumer/producer survey." Team members were **Bob Mickel** and **Stephen Komar**.

Barbara O'Neill (Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics; specialist in financial resource management) received the 2009 William E. Odom Visionary Leadership Award at the annual Jump\$tart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy dinner in Washington, D.C., on April 1. The Odom Award is the highest award given nationally for individual contributions that further personal financial education/literacy among students in kindergarten through college.

Steven Handel (Ecology, Evolution, and Natural Resources) has been chosen for a 2009 National Award of Honor for Research by the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) for published scientific research on "Ecological restoration processes to enhance urban landscape design."

Report from the Office of Academic Programs

This year's efforts to recruit top-notch graduate students for our graduate programs have been hugely successful. For the first time since we can recall, we had all of our Excellence Fellowships accepted by the April 15 deadline. In addition, the incoming Excellence Fellows for fall '09 are all top candidates from the first round of nominations. This year we were able to offer seven Excellence Fellowships. The recipients are as follows:

- **Brittany Graf** (Plant Biology) graduated magna cum laude in Biology with Departmental Honors and a second major in Women's and Gender Studies. During the past year, she has spent time in Ecuador working with the Jatun Sacha Foundation at ecological reserves and in Panama as a research assistant for the International Cooperative Biodiversity Groups.
- **Ross Alter** (Atmospheric Science) has been a member of the executive board of the student chapter of the American Meteorological Society, an anchor and producer for Weather Watchers, Rutgers' in-house cable television system, a member of the Cook College Leadership Program, and a participant in the George H. Cook honors program. In addition to an Excellence Fellowship, Alter received an American Meteorological Society Fellowship.
- **Gerald Rustic** (Environmental Sciences) studied evolution, ecology, and paleoecology and did extensive field work throughout the state of New York and southern Ontario as



an undergraduate, graduating from the University of Rochester with a 3.8 GPA. In 2007, Rustic enrolled in a master's program in the CUNY College of Staten Island. Currently, Gerry is working on benzo[a]pyrene in water and sediments while working full-time as a web developer and teaching a class in Evolution (for educators) for CUNY–CSI's Department of Biology.

- **Ryan Avenatti** (Endocrinology and Animal Biosciences) comes to us with a strong background in equine nutrition and immunology from the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign. For his master's thesis, he studied the influence of supplemental boron on skeletal health and development in weanling horses. He has extensive hands-on equine experience, growing up in a family that trained racehorses for a living. He also managed the Equine Research Unit while he was a graduate student at UIUC.
- **Matthew Kochem** (Nutritional Sciences) graduated from Cornell University in May 2008 with a B.S. in Nutritional Sciences. Since graduation, he has worked as a research assistant in the Gene Therapy Core Facility at Cornell Weill Medical College, studying gene therapy approaches to treat inherited disorders of the central nervous system. At Cornell, Kochem rowed men's varsity lightweight crew, serving as captain in his senior year, and also was an Intercollegiate Rowing Association National Champion in 2006, 2007, and 2008. While attending Rutgers, Kochem will train with U.S. Rowing in Princeton, with hopes of earning a berth on the 2012 Olympics U.S. men's lightweight crew team.
- **Matthew Colombo** (Environmental Sciences) is the recipient of the Albert Fellows Fellowship. In May 2009, he will graduate from Rutgers with a bachelor's in Chemistry (3.79 current GPA). He is interested in the cycling of contaminants and natural substances, in particular trace metals and organometallics.
- **Siyuan Zhou** (Food Science) has a lengthy resume of academic honors and awards, both here and in his native China. While earning his undergraduate degree in Food Quality and Safety, Zhou completed four high-level research programs with two papers as first author.

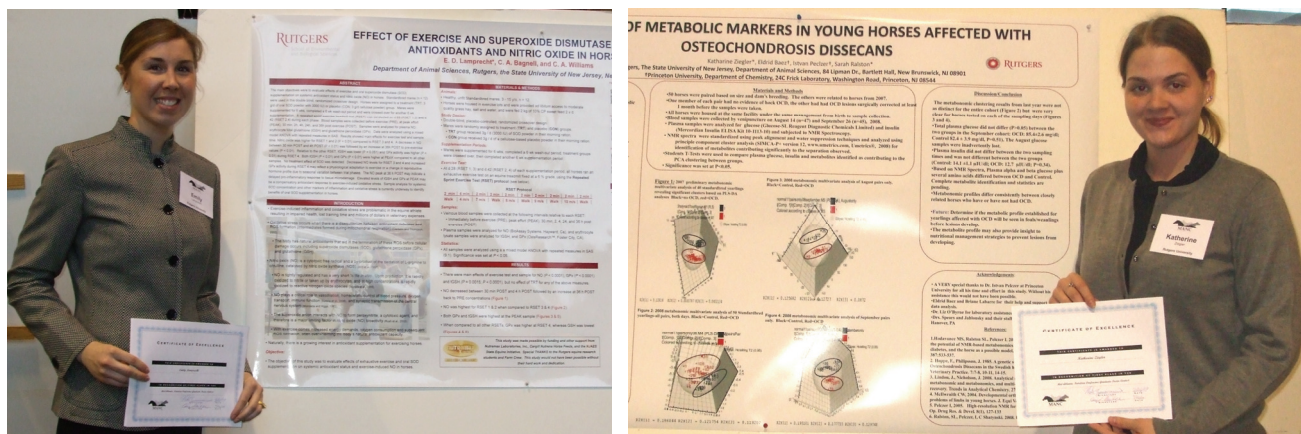
Student Activities and Accomplishments

Amisha Patel, who graduated last year with a B. S. degree in Biological Sciences from Rutgers (Cook College), was honored with the 2009 Paul A. Stellhorn New Jersey History Award. Named for Stellhorn, a distinguished historian and public servant for the New Jersey Historical Commission, the award acknowledges an outstanding undergraduate paper on an aspect of New Jersey's history. Patel received the award for her paper, "The science of George Washington honed in New Jersey," which was nominated by **Douglas Eveleigh** (Biochemistry and Microbiology). The award was announced during the annual New Jersey History Issues Convention in Trenton on March 20. Patel is currently employed by Osteotech, Inc., of Eatontown, as an analytical chemistry lab technician. She wrote the award-winning paper while an undergraduate student in 2008.



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Emily Lamprecht and **Katharine Zeigler** (Animal Sciences) pictured below, won the graduate and undergraduate first place awards, respectively, for presentations of their research posters at the Mid-Atlantic Nutrition Conference in Timonium, Maryland March 26-27. Emily's poster was titled "Effect of exercise and superoxide dismutase on systemic antioxidants and nitric oxide in horses." Katharine's poster was titled "Detection of metabolic markers in young horses affected with osteochondrosis dissecans."



In recognition of outstanding academic achievement, the following students were awarded the American Society of Animal Science Scholastic Achievement Award. Their names will be published in the July 2009 issue of the *Journal of Animal Science*. **Seniors:** Kaitrin Branning, Nicole Holleuffer, Kelsey Long, Michael Strug, Allison Walker. **Juniors:** Alexandra Ciuffitelli, Michael Fontano, Jennifer Lach, Arthur Obenrader, Erin Treloar. **Sophomores:** Lauren Barron, Amanda Bobbyack, Laura Chen, John Falco, Melissa Reese, and Kristene Welch.



On April 3, the Endocrinology and Animal Biosciences and Nutritional Sciences Graduate Student Organizations hosted the Nutrition, Endocrinology, and Animal Biosciences Conference at the Cook Campus Center. This conference showcased original research conducted by undergraduate and graduate students who gave oral and poster presentations. Pictured are **Christine Duncan**, **Kristy Longpre** (Animal Sciences), and **Deeptha Sukumar** (Nutritional Sciences) who received pre-dissertation awards from the Graduate School-New Brunswick.



Ari Novy (graduate student, Biology Sciences); and teaching assistant (Landscape Architecture) has been named an Ecological Society of America (ESA) Policy Award winner. In April, he joined more than 30 agricultural and biological scientists on Capitol Hill in April as part of ESA's efforts to advocate for increased and sustained federal funding to NSF's Biological Sciences Directorate and the USDA's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative. These two agencies account for a significant proportion of federal funding in biological and agricultural science research in the United States.

Grants and Gifts

A complete list of grants received can be found [here](#).

Tony Broccoli (Environmental Sciences) received a grant of \$309,000 from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Climate Change Data and Detection Program to conduct research "Towards an improved understanding of simulated and observed changes in extreme precipitation," from June 1, 2009 through May 31, 2012.

Deborah Cole (Atlantic County 4-H agent; **Ginny Powell**, (4-H chair), and **Alayne Torretta**, (Warren County 4-H agent) received \$100,000 through the USDA Children, Youth, and Families At-Risk Grant (first of five years). Collaborators included **Sharon Kinsey** (Camden County 4-H agent), **Janice McDonnell** (4-H SET agent), and **Phil Myers** (Essex County 4-H agent). The focus of the project is Jersey Roots, Global Reach: 4-H Climate Science/Climate Change Educational Program.

Conferences, Seminars, and Other Events

Horses 2009, a two-day educational conference, was held on March 28 and 29 by the Rutgers Equine Science Center (ESC) at the Busch Campus Center. Executive Dean **Robert Goodman**, Center Director **Karyn Malinowski**, and Center Communications Director **Diana Orban Brown** welcomed close to 800 delegates, who were addressed on such topics as responsible horse ownership, veterinary concerns, equine behavior, nutrition, farm and barn management, vaccines and immunology. Collaborating in organizing this event were **Carey Williams** (extension specialist in equine management), **Nancy Herbert** (ESC), **Anastasia Miklojcik** (ESC), **Roberta Salinger** (ESC), and students **Emily Lamprecht**, **Nettie Liburt**, and **Taymin Pena** (Animal Sciences). Williams, along with **Sarah Ralston** and **Kenneth McKeever** (Animal Sciences), were among the presenters. The event was supported by two dozen partners and sponsors, including Platinum Partners like the New Jersey Farm Bureau, Fort Dodge Animal Health, Purina Mills, Rick's Saddle Shop and Rutgers Cooperative Extension.

Joel Flagler (Bergen County agricultural and resource management agent) helped to plan the educational component and secure NJDEP accreditation for a Geese Management Workshop, with the director of parks in Bergen County. The workshop was held in March at Bergen Community College in Paramus and was attended by 125 individuals, including mayors and municipal/county officials from Bergen's 72 municipalities. Speakers included **Chris Obropta**





(extension specialist in water quality), who spoke on geese and water quality issues. Other speakers came from United Water, USDA Wildlife Management Department, Geese Peace (a private concern that works on control of non-migratory Canada geese), and a Teterboro Airport administrator who spoke on the emerging threat geese pose to passenger airlines.

Anthony Broccoli (Environmental Sciences) gave an invited presentation titled "What can we learn from the meridional overturning circulation during the last glacial maximum?" during the Centre for Global Change Science Distinguished Lecturer Series at the University of Toronto in March.

Alan Robock (Environmental Sciences) presented a number of Sigma Xi Distinguished Lectures on Global Warming at South Dakota State University, University of South Dakota, University of North Carolina, and Appalachian State University.

Mark Miller (Environmental Sciences) made the invited presentation "RADAGAST Reprise: new results from West Africa", at the Atmospheric Radiation Measurement (ARM) Science Team Meeting, Louisville, KY on April 2.

Madeline Flahive DiNardo, Greg Rusciano, Mary Cummings and **Amy Boyajian** (Environmental Sciences) presented a number of talks on Rain Gardens throughout the state.

Sharon Blase (Family and Community Health Sciences) was inducted into the Cumberland County Women's Hall of Fame on April 22 at the organization's First Annual Induction Ceremony at the Centerton Country Club. Blase was recognized for her extensive contributions to family and consumer science professional organizations at the state and national level and her varied community outreach to the residents of Cumberland County and New Jersey.

Nurgul Fitzgerald (Family and Consumer Science) gave two 1-hour presentations "Rutgers Cooperative Extension: Professionals and communities working together to improve health" at the New Jersey Conference on the Prevention of Childhood Obesity, which was held in Monroe on March 31. The conference was sponsored by NJ Pediatric Council on Research & Education, American Academy of Pediatrics–NJ, Central NJ Maternal & Child Health Consortium, and several other organizations.

Andrew Pleasant (Human Ecology) gave the keynote presentation, "Advancing health literacy: an opportunity to transform health and health care." He also presented a workshop, by invitation, "Health literacy coalitions: What, why, how?" at the Wisconsin Literacy, Inc., Third Biannual Health Literacy Summit from March 31–April 1.

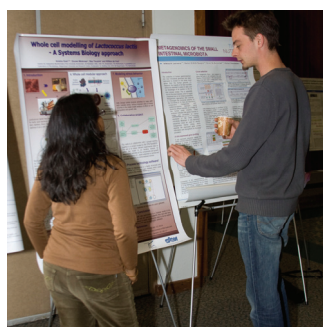
Allan Shearer (Landscape Architecture) gave an invited talk, "The atmosphere of utopia: climate change, the built environment, and the imagination", at the Donald D. Harrington Fellows Symposium held in Amarillo, Texas.

Harriet S. Worobey (Nutritional Sciences) gave an invited presentation titled "Healthy eating—food pyramid guidelines with activities" at the Catholic Charities, Piscataway, on April 8.



International Projects

Joanna Burger (Ecology, Evolution, and Natural Resources) participated in a week-long series of workshops on Environmental Health and Ecological Risk Assessment at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand. The workshops, organized by **Mark Robson** (Dean of Agricultural and Urban Programs), included Burger giving lectures on general principles and specific problems in ecological risk as well as formal and informal meetings with graduate students. The workshops were sponsored by the International Training and Research in Environmental and Occupational Health program of the National Institute of Health's Fogarty Foundation International Center. The trip also included field work to assess the potential for collaborative research on pesticide and other chemical exposure (including from fish consumption).



Lily Young (Environmental Sciences) and Executive Dean **Robert Goodman** welcomed approximately 20 students from Wageningen University in the Netherlands for the joint Rutgers–Wageningen Microbiology Graduate Student Symposium on April 20 at the Cook Campus Center. The day-long program included presentations, a luncheon, poster session and a Dean's reception in the evening. The Wageningen students are visiting various colleges and universities in the United States for microbiology symposia.

Mark Your Calendars!

Energy Symposium

WHEN: May 6, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

WHERE: Fiber Optic Materials Research Building, 101 Bevier Road, Busch Campus

WHAT: Annual symposium by the Rutgers Energy Institute to provide faculty, students, staff, government officials, and community members with the opportunity to learn about the new methods, processes, and initiatives being developed by energy thinkers at Rutgers, in New Jersey, and across the country.

MORE INFO: Contact Yana Zeltser at yana@marine.rutgers.edu, 732-932-6555 ext. 244

Cook College Graduation Convocation

WHEN: May 22, 10 a.m.

WHERE: Passion Puddle, G.H. Cook Campus, New Brunswick (Rain location: [Louis Brown Athletic Center](#), Livingston Campus, Piscataway, 10:30 a.m.)

WHAT: Graduating ceremony for the Class of 2009

MORE INFO: Call 732-932-3000, ext. 512

This report is produced by the Office of Communications. For information or to provide comments, please contact Paula Walcott-Quintin at quintin@aesop.rutgers.edu or 732-932-7000, ext. 4204.



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