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Contact: Linda McCandless, (607) 254-5137, email
llm3@cornell.edu

Courtney Weber Promoted to Associate Professor

By Joe Ogradnick

GENEVA, NY: Courtney Weber has been promoted to associate professor of horticultural sciences at Cornell University's New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva, NY. He came to the Station in the spring of 1999.

"Courtney Weber has re-energized the strawberry and raspberry breeding program at Geneva to a level of excellence," said Alan Taylor, chairman of the horticultural sciences department. "New varieties released from his program will benefit New York and other regions." Quoting from letter from a faculty member at a peer institution, Taylor also said, "Courtney has put the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station back on the map in small fruit breeding."

The primary goal of Weber's program is to develop improved berry varieties that better serve the needs of the New York industry by integrating new technologies for investigating the fundamentals of disease and insect resistance, and fruit quality with traditional breeding practices.

Weber's breeding program has five variety development categories: short-day strawberries (June-bearing), day-neutral strawberries (everbearing), florican-fruiting red raspberries, primocane-fruiting red raspberries, and new market raspberries including black and purple. New varieties in any of these categories must have superior fruit quality including excellent flavor, large size, firm texture, attractive color, and extended shelf life relative to what is currently available to growers. New varieties that possess growth and yield characteristics suitable for New York growing conditions are being developed with the expectation that they will be successful in regions with similar climate.

Through collaborative projects with food scientists and human health specialists, Weber is identifying superior varieties containing beneficial phytochemicals. By cooperating with pathologists and entomologists, he is able to develop new strategies for dealing with important pest problems in New York. Improved strawberries and raspberries that consumers recognize as delicious, nutritious, and attractive will keep New York growers competitive in the changing marketplace. Weber recently (2003) developed and released two new strawberry cultivars — L'Amour and Clancy.

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For more information: <http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/pubs/press/current/030707Strawberrv.html>

Pictures are linked to hi-res scans



Courtney Weber

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New York State Agricultural Experiment Station, 630 West North Street, Geneva, New York 14456
Telephone: 315.787.2011



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