

## REINERS PROMOTED TO ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AT CORNELL

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by John Zakour

GENEVA, NY: Stephen Reiners has been promoted to associate professor of horticulture at Cornell University. Reiners specializes in maintaining and enhancing the profitability and sustainability of New York State vegetable growers, with an emphasis on processing crops that include sweet corn, snap beans, cabbage, beets and peas. He has a 60 percent extension/40 percent research appointment at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station at Geneva, NY.

"Steve plays a vital role in insuring that Cornell University fulfills its Land Grant mission," said Hugh Price, chairman of the horticultural sciences department at Geneva. "His research is close to grower utilization and he is an effective communicator in keeping extension educators well informed on the latest developments in production technology. As co-chair of the Statewide Program Committee for Vegetable Crops, he has enhanced communications with all the vegetable commodity research associations."

Reiners says he was lucky to have stepped into such an established and well-regarded program. "Bob Becker was a leader in the processing vegetable industry and Jim Ballerstein had one of the best variety evaluation programs in the country. With Jim's leadership we have expanded the variety trials, doubling their size. We also started a program in soil fertility and worked on stand establishment issues on a variety of crops with Al Taylor."

Among his many accomplishments, Reiners is proud of reformatting the "Cornell Vegetable Guidelines." When he arrived in 1994, there were two separate books, one with all the



Suggested caption: Dr. Stephen Reiners has been promoted to associate professor.

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cultural information and another for pest control recommendations. "The feeling among industry and extension educators was that it would be better if it was a single book that included the entire pest control and cultural recommendations," said Reiners, who undertook the task of turning the two books into one with Curt Petzoldt and Mike Hoffmann. The book came out in 1999 and is available on the web with links to dozens of other sites.

Another accomplishment Reiners is proud of is his pumpkin research. Working with Cornell colleagues, he established a program to answer basic questions about the best way to grow the crop. Now growers can receive all the information they need, from the best varieties to grow, optimum plant spacing, fertility, pest and post-harvest recommendations. "Our growers can see new lines bred by Dick Robinson and Molly Jahn and offer their evaluations of them. I would like to think that this concentrated effort has made New York the number one producer of ornamental pumpkins in the country," Reiners said.

Reiners' biggest challenge has been keeping pace with the diverse nature of the New York State vegetable industry. New York has more than a dozen major commodities and 50 minor ones, divided among processing and fresh market crops. "Getting consensus among such a diverse group of growers is sometimes difficult," Reiners says. "On the other hand, they are supportive, innovative and great to work with. Plus, unlike all the other states around us, we are seeing an increase in acreage in vegetable crops in New York. The industry is also raising money for research, with new research funds for cabbage and peas. It's an exciting time to be here."

Reiners came to Geneva in 1994 from Rutgers University where he had been an associate professor at Cook College, Department of Extension Specialists/Department of Plant Science. He received his BS in Plant Science in 1980 and his MS in Horticulture in 1983, both from Rutgers. He received his PhD in Horticulture in 1987 from Ohio State University.

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