

Lt. Governor Donohue Awards \$520,000 for Agricultural Development

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by Linda McCandless

GENEVA, NY: Bacterial cultures don't often oscillate in front of New York State Lieutenant Governor Mary O. Donohue. But biotechnology was front and center during her announcement of the recipients of \$520,000 in funding from the Grow New York's Agricultural Research and Development Grant Program at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva, NY, on Thursday, Feb. 22.

Twenty agricultural projects throughout the state received funding. Commodities ranged from hay to beef, brandy to maple syrup, onions to apples, and potatoes to wine. The projects targeted economic development, feasibility analysis and project research aimed at addressing New York's agricultural development needs and opportunities.

In choosing a state-of-the-art lab at the Experiment Station in Geneva for the press conference, the Lieutenant Governor acknowledged the strong role Geneva has played in supporting New York's fruit and vegetable industry through the development of good farming, food storage and food processing practices.

"Agriculture is a vital component of the rural economy. In fact, every New Yorker benefits from a viable and profitable food and agriculture industry," said Lt. Governor Donohue. "In



Suggested Caption: Steve Hoying (podium) promised to "put the crunch back" in the New York apple, with grant monies for MCP, a revolutionary new compound that improves storage apples. Hoying was one of 20 recipients to receive funding for Research and Development Grants, in a Grow New York program. The awards were announced at a press conference at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station on Thursday, Feb. 22 by Lieutenant Governor Mary O. Donohue (left), who was accompanied by Senator Michael Nozzolio (second from left), and State Agriculture Commissioner Nathan L. Rudgers (far right). CREDIT: Hickey/NYSAES/Cornell

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order to maintain the industry's strong economic impact, we must encourage and assist the research and development of new concepts and products in the marketplace. I am extremely pleased to award these 20 grants to projects that will help strengthen New York's agricultural industry."

The Agricultural Research and Development Grant Program awards matching funds of up to \$50,000 to individual farmers and various agricultural businesses, organizations, local governments and institutions. The funded, eligible projects focused on developing and expanding markets for New York agricultural products, improving production capacity, creating new technologies or improving efficiency in agriculture. It was the first year of the program. Another \$500,000 is slated to be awarded in 2002.

Of the 20 projects, Cornell University-related projects received four grants, including \$17,913 for the development of a NYS Beef Quality Assurance Program with Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) in Cortland County; \$24,500 for an economic feasibility analysis of a producer meat processing consortium with CCE in Oneida County; \$40,000 for a New York State "onions with attitude" branding program with CCE in Oswego County; and \$21,300 for a project to maximize the potential of MCP, a post-harvest compound that helps control premature apple ripening, with Christopher Watkins on the Ithaca campus and Steve Hoying, of the Lake Ontario Fruit Team.

Promising to "put the crunch back" in the New York apple, Hoying said, "This gives us a wonderful opportunity to improve our market for the first-class apples produced in New York." MCP is a revolutionary new compound that improves apples' response to storage.

The wine and grape industry of New York garnered five of the 20 awards, including \$50,000 to the New York Wine & Grape Foundation to create an awareness and appreciation for New York agriculture campaign in New York City. The \$25,336 to a Seneca County alliance to promote production of Finger Lakes Pinot Noir also furthers the research of NYS Agricultural Experiment Station enologist Thomas Henick-Kling and viticulturist Robert Poole.

James E. Hunter, director of the Agricultural Experiment Station, said the awards reinforced future partnerships between Geneva, The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences in Ithaca, Cornell Cooperative Extension, the legislature and the private sector "to strengthen food and agricultural industries in New York State."

State Agriculture Commissioner Nathan L. Rudgers said, "New marketing and production concepts and the introduction of value-added products are just a few of the many innovative ideas presented in these Research and Development Grants that will improve the overall economic viability for agriculture in New York State."

The Research and Development Grant Program is part of Governor Pataki's Grow New York Program, which incorporates numerous programs designed to enhance the economic vitality of agriculture in New York State. The Grow New York Program was funded at \$1.3 million last year.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Here is a list of the GRANT RECIPIENTS by county, if you want to regionalize your story.

GRANT RECIPIENTS OF THE 2000 GROW NEW YORK

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM

Bishop Hay (Delaware County) \$10,500

Feasibility study of innovative hay packaging techniques that will reduce shipping costs as well as create customer recognition and demand for New York grown hay and straw products.

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County \$24,500

Economic feasibility analysis to develop a producer meat processing consortium. This project will research, develop a business plan and organize a group of producers to form a legal entity to purchase and operate a local slaughterhouse in Oneida County.

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cortland County \$17,913

Development of a New York State Beef Quality Assurance Program to ensure a safer product for public consumption.

DeBuck's Sod Farm of New York, Inc. (Orange County) \$29,530

Development of a new agricultural product, Soil-Less Sod, sod that has had the black dirt removed to enable this producer to develop a new value-added product.

Dr. Chris Watkins, Cornell University (Tompkins County) \$21,300

Maximizing the potential of MCP, a revolutionary post-harvest compound that will help control the pre-mature ripening of New York apples.

Finger Lakes Pinot Noir Alliance (Seneca County) \$25,336

Producing World-Class Pinot Noir wines in the Finger Lakes area, while examining and making recommendations on viticulture and wine making practices.

G. J. Olney, Inc. (Oneida County) \$24,272

Development of a prototype onion trimmer/peeler that enables the food processing industry to increase sales potential for fresh cut and processed vegetable businesses in New York.

H & I Agritech, Inc. (Tompkins County) \$23,000

Feasibility of employing a bicarbonate based fungicide for potatoes in an effort to enhance activity against the late blight disease.

Hunter & Hilsberg (Onondaga County) \$24,935

Exporting New York State wines to the European Union with a focus on Germany and creating an opportunity to address the export needs of the New York wine industry.

Jefferson County Job Development Corporation \$37,250

Developing the North Country Agricultural Business Park Initiative, a plan to revitalize the agriculture industry in the North Country.

Marten Country Kitchen Products, LLC (Onondaga County) \$40,000

Exploring the feasibility of using off-grade potatoes for processing.

National Grape Co-operative Association, Inc. (Chautauqua County) \$10,600

Maximizing yield and optimizing quality of Concord and Niagara juice grapes produced in New York State to ensure continued growth of market demand.

New York State Farmers' Direct Marketing Association \$20,075

Studying and developing model zoning ordinances for Farm Direct Marketing activities in New York State.

New York Wine & Grape Foundation \$50,000

Creating an awareness and appreciation for New York agriculture and agricultural products in New York City and other parts of the world.

Oswego County Cooperative Vegetable Improvement \$40,000

Branding New York State onions to help establish an identity in the marketplace for New York State grown onions.

Pedersen Farms, Inc. (Ontario County) \$7,350

Developing post-harvest handling and marketing strategies for New York grown hops due to the increased number of microbreweries and increased demand for New York hops.

Ronnybrook Farm Dairy (Columbia County) \$45,000

Development of low lactose, fruit-flavored cultured buttermilk that will enable Ronnybrook Farms to broaden its customer base as it develops new product line.

Satur Farms, LLC (Suffolk County) \$4,900

Feasibility study of Heirloom Tomato Production to better supply New York's gourmet restaurants and grocery stores.

Warwick Valley Wine Co. (Orange County) \$49,600

Development of a New York fruit brandy industry. The addition of a fruit based alcoholic product would create another outlet for New York fruit growers and another outlet for New York wineries.

WinSon Technologies (Allegany County) \$14,000

Development of a low cost reverse osmosis system for maple production that is both economic and practical for both medium and small maple producers.

TOTAL: \$520,061



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NEW YORK

