Research Continues to Be a Critical Resource for the New York Fruit Industry

Research done at Cornell, The Geneva Research Station, and Extension personnel throughout the State continues to be a critical resource for the health and growth of the New York fruit industry. Ever increasing pest pressure from new insects coming into this country from overseas, the continuing development of resistance to pesticides by many diseases, insects, and weeds means we have to continue to develop new management practices to keep orchards healthy and fruit acceptable to the consuming public. New pesticides coming onto the market must be evaluated to determine how they fit into our management programs. Many of the new materials, while safer to use and easier on the environment, are much more specific as to what they control and the timing of application is much more critical than with older materials.

In the face of ever shrinking profit margins, the fruit industry, also needs to have the continued support of the research system in evaluating different planting systems, storage management practices for both new and existing varieties, and harvesting timing. The fruit industry must continue to improve its overall efficiency, if it is going to continue to compete with other growing areas within the country and world. New York has a long history of developing and improving planting systems that enables orchards to produce higher volumes of higher quality fruit with fewer inputs. The research system plays a critical role in this development.

The development of new apple varieties has received an ever-increasing amount of attention throughout the country and world. New York has one of the oldest and most successful breeding programs; the continued support of this program will enable the state to continue to be in the forefront of new varietal developments.

Food safety issues have become much more important to the total population over the last decade. We must continue to evaluate our entire orchard, storage, and packing and marketing systems to insure that all the fruit entering the distribution system is as safe and wholesome as we can make it. Recent food safety issues that have lead to product recalls and illness have only increased the pressure on all of agriculture to insure the food safety programs are improved. There is a critical need to evaluate all phases of the growing, harvesting, storage and marketing system to determine where contamination comes from and to improve the methods of reducing and eliminating as many risks as possible.

In short continued support of research by the fruit industry and the state and federal government is critical to the health and well being of not only the fruit industry itself but also the state as a whole. The economic importance of the fruit industry to the state cannot be ignored, nor can its impact on the health and well being of people of the state.

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COVER: CY Lee’s granddaughter enjoying a juicy NY State apple. Photo courtesy of CY Lee.
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