



MILLSTONE TOWNSHIP
AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
OPEN SPACE & FARMLAND

Letter from the Chair

Millstone Township continues its efforts to preserve its remaining farmland and maintain a viable agricultural industry. Farming is a significant component of the Township's economy, and farmland is an irreplaceable natural resource.

Open Space and farmland are essential to maintaining a healthy environment, controlling urban sprawl, and preserving the rural character of Millstone Township and its natural and cultural resources. A Township network of permanently preserve open spaces and farmland is needed to provide public recreation, to maintain biodiversity, to protect water quality, and to control flooding. Efforts should be made to maintain the economic viability of the agricultural industry.

Millstone Township has some of the best soils in the state for agriculture. According to NJDEP, a majority of the agricultural land, nearly 68%, within the Township consists of prime farmland soils. There is only 6% of agricultural land that is not suitable for agriculture.

Agricultural lands are found throughout Millstone Township, with farms consisting of the traditional grain, vegetable production, equine farms, livestock and nursery operations. Nursery operations comprise the largest sector of agricultural industry and is on the rise expanding to container grown material, and extending the growing season with automated greenhouses under glass, hoop houses and high tunnel grown crops. Our farms are also diversifying to mushroom operations, pick your own, community supported agriculture (csa), beekeeping, and agritourism businesses. New crops on the horizon are hazelnuts and hemp (needs to be permitted by the State).

A significant area of Millstone Township, roughly 46% continues to be farmed today. The number of farms and the amount of farmland in Millstone, however, has declined. Agricultural lands account for approximately 9,242 acres, representing a nearly 10% decline in farmland since 2002. 1,287 acres are preserved today through the Farmland Preservation Program. This program leverages our dedicated Open Space Trust Fund by providing 16% of Millstone's dollars with 24% of Monmouth County's Open Space Funds and 60% of the New Jersey's Garden State Preservation Trust funds. To maintain its rural environment and landscape, and to protect our viability of farming, the Township needs to preserve as much farmland as possible. The benefits of preserved farmland to our residents are immeasurable, the most important of which is to provide a permanent land base to grow crops and fiber that will feed and sustain our future generations.

Pat Butch (Chair of the Agricultural Advisory Council)

In the Winner's Circle With Julie Miller

Priding itself on open space, farmland and agricultural endeavors, Millstone Township has been a sought after location for equestrians to reside. Various horse enthusiasts spanning a myriad of disciplines are proud to call Millstone their home. One township resident who has recently been reenergized by newly enacted horse racing legislation in New Jersey is Julie Miller, an accomplished harness racing trainer and driver who trains out of neighboring Gaitway Farm in Manalapan. Together, Julie and her husband, professional harness racing driver Andy Miller, have grown their harness racing business into a passion and lifestyle under the Team Miller name which their racing stable operates. Their stable of champion Standardbred trotting and pacing racehorses continues to receive statewide, national and international recognition in the harness racing industry.



ChrisTullyTrot.com ©2016

I recently had the chance to chat with Julie about her enthusiasm for racing as well as her connection to Millstone.

AB: As an Iowa native, what attracted you to relocate to New Jersey and specifically Millstone Township?

JM: Growing up in Iowa, the big racing scene was always nearby Chicago. I dreamed of graduating college and racing at the big Chicago area tracks at the time, Hawthorne and Sportsman's Park. It was exciting to be there and race there and that is where I met Andy. But Illinois racing was not as promising and prospering so Andy and I said let's take the leap to New Jersey. We searched online and found Millstone Township and moved here in August 2006. Millstone was exactly what we were looking for: a beautiful town with horses, close to New York City and Philadelphia, central location to the tracks and connection to renowned veterinarians, blacksmiths and training centers. Millstone is just perfect for us.

AB: To date, your racing stable has continued on a pathway of success. Of the many horses you have had the opportunity to train, which racehorse was the "one" that was key player in that role?

JM: The horse that put me on the map was Lucky Jim, a trotting gelding, who was a Grand Circuit stakes horse. At age 4, Lucky Jim won 19 races in a row, including the Meadowlands premier trot race for aged trotters, the Cashman Memorial. He earned over \$1million dollars and definitely put me in the spotlight and springboarded my career.

AB: Horse racing can be a demanding business as well. What keeps you motivated?

JM: My motivation comes from my love of horses, the love of the animal. We strive to provide the best of the best care and treat our horses like elite athletes. There is no greater feeling than to take a yearling or young horse and develop them into a successful racehorse. It is almost like nurturing a child. It's an amazing feeling of accomplishment. I am very blessed, have a passion for racing and absolutely love what I do.

AB: What do you see for the future of horse racing in New Jersey?

JM: This is a really exciting time with the new legislation. Racing is a fixture in New Jersey and it is a beautiful thing to see it thriving again. There has been a revitalization to the sport. More money in racing leads to more horses which leads to more jobs in the state. I love seeing the stables full again and the horses are a nicer sight in the fields than more development. The icing on the cake is the sports betting at the tracks. The fans are coming back to the tracks and it is just great.

In the Winner's Circle With Julie Miller - Cont'd



In a recent study titled “2019 State of the New Jersey Horse Racing Industry” published by Dr. Karyn Malinowski, Ph.D., Professor and Director of The Equine Science Center, a unit of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, clear data indicates that a strong horse racing industry has far reaching effects. “This assurance results in increased willingness of horse and horse farm owners to invest in land, facilities, animals, and other agriculturally-related products”. (Source: <https://esc.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/2019-Health-of-NJ-Horse-Racing.pdf>).

With the optimism over the recent purse subsidy, Julie and Team Miller will continue to operate a viable racing stable while encouraging others to become actively involved in the industry. As a Director of the Standardbred Breeders and Owners Association of New Jersey (SBOANJ), Julie knows this is a pivotal moment in the horse racing industry in the state. Her active role in promoting and advocating for racing will translate into new fans as well as attracting youth to the sport. Recently, Julie and Andy’s son, Tyler “TJ” Miller, has increased his presence on the harness racing circuit through several wins in the amateur driver races. It certainly is a family affair and while the Millers continue to set a standard of excellence, there is still fun to be had. The family’s orange and black racing colors are a favorite for fans, who have affectionately dubbed the name Team “Orange Crush”, for the bright orange streaming across the finish line. Whether in the winner’s circle or jogging on the training track, Julie’s dedication to her business is exemplary and her commitment to success is evident. She truly is a Millstone Township resident who proudly represents the horse racing industry and its connection to a bright future for open space and farmland preservation.

A Horse is a Horse....Of Course!

As one travels the tranquil country roads of Millstone Township, it becomes very apparent that the horse is a very welcome animal in a community that prides itself for open space and farmland preservation. But beyond four legs and flowing manes and tails, these majestic creatures are quite unique. So straight from the “horse’s mouth”, here are some interesting facts about them:

- Horses run at an average of 27 miles per hour. This gait is called the gallop. The fastest speed recorded by a horse was an incredible 55 mph.
- Horses can fly?! In 1872, it was proven that horses have all 4 feet off the ground at one point while galloping. Leland Stanford made a bet that all four of a horse's feet come off the ground at one point while galloping. A man named Eadweard Muybridge proved him right by setting up a line of 24 cameras and photographing a racehorse named Sallie Gardner.
- Foals can run shortly after birth. While they start out quite wobbly and awkward on their long legs, foals learn to stand and nurse almost immediately, and some are able to run within hours of being born.
- Horses have nearly 360 degrees of vision. Horses have eyes on the side of their head to enable them to spot predators quickly and easily. They only have a couple blind spots where they can't see you at all; directly in front of them and directly behind them.
- Horses have the largest eyes of all land mammals.
- Part of a horse’s hoof is called a “FROG”. The center of a horse's hoof is called a "frog." The frog is a triangular shaped section in the middle of the hoof and the most sensitive part of the hoof. The frog acts as a shock absorber for the horse's leg and helps to pump blood back up the leg.
- Horses can move their skin independently. Horses can move their skin independent of the major muscles beneath it. You can see this mostly in the summer when horses twitch their skin to get flies off their body.

Hazelnut Research Orchard

A ceremony was held on September 24, 2019 at the Rutgers Fruit and Ornamental Research Extension Center in Cream Ridge, to announce the partnership between the County's Grown in Monmouth program and Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station to develop a hazelnut farmer demonstration research orchard.



The County is excited to work with Rutgers to develop the first commercial hazelnut farmer demonstration orchard, east of Oregon, that is resistant to Eastern Filbert Blight (EFB). EFB is a fungus that attacks and kills hazelnut trees. Because of EFB, commercial

hazelnut orchards on the east coast have ceased to exist.

“Monmouth County and Rutgers have a unique opportunity to not only to cultivate this new crop on the east coast, but also revitalize the Rutgers Cream Ridge Research Extension Center,” said Freeholder Lillian G. Burry, liaison to Board of Agriculture and Rutgers Cooperative Extension. “In addition to County growers, the Future Farmers of America, County 4-H members and Master Gardeners will be able to utilize the orchard and facility for hands-on, learning experiences.”

Spotlight Deer Survey & Results

- Spotlight survey took place March 6, 8, & 10th for the entire Township
- Total deer spotted was 1,014
- NJDEP estimates Millstone to have an average of 107 deer per square mile
- Average will rise after fawn season
- Threshold capacity for optimal forest health should be 15-20 deer per square mile
- An unhealthy forest would lower the amount to be 10-15 deer per square mile



Nursery Innovation



Halka Nurseries is the one of the countries' premier grower of specimen trees. They recently created, “*Our Growing on Program*”, that provides a superior plant that meets the demands of unique projects. These trees are not container grown or dug and held in a yard. This system allows the trees to be field grown under close supervision: watered, fertilized, and ready whatever time of year you need them. The Air-pot containers allow trees to self root prune. Once the roots hit the air in the holes of the container, they die off, therefore, no girdling roots. This system makes for a much healthier and more vigorous growing plant. These plants can be shipped any time of year, including summer and fall. Halka Nurseries pride themselves on the ability to provide convenience to their clients, along with a better plant.



RUTGERS
New Jersey Agricultural
Experiment Station



DID YOU KNOW?

*New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station
provides
The Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) Program
that services our Residents*

DID YOU KNOW that the Rutgers Cooperative Extension offers;

The Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) Program (732-432-7260 x7261)

RCE has recently hired Bill Erickson, Monmouth County Agriculture & Natural Resource Agent, who is available to assist all clientele engaged in agriculture. This department participates in multiple programs including the soil testing program.

Monmouth County Master Gardeners (732-303-7613 or mgarden@co.monmouth.nj.us)

Helpline answers questions you may have about your garden or plants.

Monmouth County 4-H (For information call Robin at 609-290-8229)

Offers youth learning experiences in a variety of programs from K - grade 13 (one year out of High school). Millstone has a Club that meets at the Baird Homestead.

Monmouth County Family & Community Health Sciences (njea.rutgers.edu/fchs - link to county offices)

Outreach in food, nutrition, and healthy lifestyles.

Monmouth County Junior Master Gardener (732-431-7260)

Growing Good Kids - A gardening program for children ages 9-11
Meets Saturday mornings, April - June

DID YOU KNOW that Monmouth County & NJ State offer;

Monmouth County "Grown In Monmouth" Program (Growninmonmouth.com)

Maintains an online website that identifies new markets to connect growers and consumers. You can find; local farm markets, pick your own operations, restaurants that serve Monmouth Grown products, and agritourism events among other agricultural opportunities.

Monmouth County Health Department

Mosquito Control & Tick Identification (732-542-3630)

This Commission conducts property inspections for standing water and control of larvae I in a habitat as needed. Free tick identification services are also provided.