

NEW YORK FRUIT QUARTERLY

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Editorial

Strategic Planning Initiative

As part of the strategic planning initiative approved at the statewide grower meeting held in Syracuse in January, a committee was formed to address the current and future status of new varieties in New York State. The committee was charged, "to aid the development and testing of new varieties of apples and to publish a list of recommended varieties." An initial meeting was held in March in Little Falls to start organizing this committee. Several issues were discussed: the need to find varieties adapted to our production regions, the need for consumer and market feedback early in a variety's development, the proper role of strains and their selection, the ability to achieve sufficient production to provide for proper marketing, and methods for assisting the Cornell breeding program with future introductions.

It is clear that new varieties will continue to drive the marketing of apples worldwide. The group felt that the New York State apple industry needs to find ways to stay on the cutting edge of new variety identification and introduction. Producers and marketers also need an organized effort to introduce new, exciting and, hopefully, profitable varieties to the end consumer.

We envision several strategies to accomplish these goals: (1) By identifying existing grower trials and evaluating fruit from these trials not only for its horticultural characteristics but also for its potential viability in the market place, (2) by using existing grower trials to quickly identify strains that may have distinct advantages for the various fruit regions in New York, (3) by gleaned the data from existing organized testing through the Northeast Apple Variety program (NE183) in which Cornell University participates with three locations in the state, (4) by establishing a similar effort in at least three new geographically and climatically distinct apple producing regions, and (5) by publishing the results of these trials so the entire industry can make planting decisions about those varieties that make the most sense for their regions and our markets.

In the near future, the Horticultural Society Variety Committee will be sending out a survey that attempts to identify new varieties and strains that growers have under test. This effort will attempt to gather as much information as quickly and efficiently as possible. We heartily encourage every grower's participation by returning these surveys as soon as possible. Additionally, we welcome your suggestions for improvement and the identification of other needs that can be met by this program. If you would like to discuss this further, please call me at 716 765-2046.

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ABOUT THE COVERS

Front cover: Fruit samples of two new, free-
stone, Cornell-bred processing plum selec-
tions that will be named and released in
the autumn of 2001. The tree in the back-
ground close-up is NY 6, which is spread-
ing and medium in vigor.

Back cover: The health benefits of apples
are well known but just beginning to be
explored. See inside for the exciting details!
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