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GOVERNOR CORZINE PROCLAIMS AUGUST AS 'JERSEY PEACH' MONTH

Trenton, NJ (July 25, 2007) – August in New Jersey is brimming with many varieties of ripe, juicy peaches – some say the tastiest in the country, but maybe that’s because Garden State residents get them within 250 miles of their trees, thus guaranteeing freshness. Governor Jon Corzine has proclaimed August 2007 as “Jersey Peach Month,” offering his personal congratulations to “the New Jersey Peach Promotion Council and all involved in the production and marketing of this delicious fruit.”

In his proclamation, he emphasized that New Jersey ranks fourth in the nation in peach production and that the industry contributes approximately \$30-35-million to the GDP of the state. The proclamation states that:

•WHEREAS New Jersey ranks fourth in the nation for peach production, last year shipping approximately 60-70 million pounds with an estimated wholesale cash value of \$30-35-million. This year New Jersey stands to take a lead in East Coast peach production, with one of the best growing seasons on record. It costs approximately \$3,129 per acre to produce peaches in New Jersey.

•WHEREAS Some 7,000 of New Jersey’s nearly 806,000 acres of farmland are devoted to growing more than 40 different peach varieties in 150 orchards throughout the state. The largest commercial growers are concentrated in south Jersey’s Atlantic, Camden, Gloucester and Salem Counties. The northern part of the state consists of mainly small orchards, with fruit sold directly to consumers through farmers’ markets and pick-your-own.

•WHEREAS The newly introduced “Premium Peach Grade” fruit is taking top honors at industry tastings and events across the country

•WHEREAS August is the month when peaches are at their peak and celebrated in New Jersey. The New Jersey Peach Promotion Council promotes Jersey Fresh peaches to consumers, restaurants, wholesalers and retailers, with 100% of New Jersey’s peach crop is sold to the fresh market.

The New Jersey Peach Promotion Council expressed gratitude to the governor for his recognition of this important agricultural industry. “The proclamation by the governor goes a long way toward heightening public awareness of this, that is constantly threatened to become an endangered species by competition from California, Georgia, South Carolina and, of course, south of the border,” says Ed Gaventa, chair of the New Jersey Peach Promotion Council.

“So many entities are working diligently to keep this industry in New Jersey. Rutgers Cook College continually hybridizes new varieties and releases them for commercialization. Last year Cook College introduced eight new varieties of peaches, which will be ready for harvest in the next 2-3 years, aiming to

extend the state's peach season to earlier in July and later in September and give supermarkets exciting new varieties to sell, thus claiming more of their shelf space.

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“Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station experts continuously work to breed varieties that are beneficial to farmers and agricultural environmental quality. They aim for trees that are particularly well suited to New Jersey's climate and growing conditions, focusing on fruit to extend the season in this area and be less susceptible to devastating bacterial spot disease, common to stone fruits from other regions. The breeders also look to develop novel varieties, such as the new flat peaches, that will get attention on retailer shelves.”

Jersey Fresh peaches are available from mid-July through September, at community tailgate markets, farm stores, pick-your-own farms and in many grocery stores and restaurants, where “Jersey Fresh” signage identifies them. .

For further information, contact the New Jersey Peach Promotion Council, 1200 North Delsea Drive, Clayton, NJ 08312. Phone 856-307-6450 Ext 1. website www.jerseypeaches.com

For information and listings of restaurants featuring “Jersey Fresh” peaches, other produce and livestock, contact the New Jersey Restaurant Association, 800.848.6368, www.njra.org

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