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Rutgers Food Innovation Center, NJ Business Incubation Network, and Choose NJ Representatives to Visit Israel
Meetings to Build NJ-Israel Innovation Cluster

Bridgeton, NJ - During the week of June 21, Lou Cooperhouse, director of the Rutgers Food Innovation Center (FIC) and President of the New Jersey Business Incubation Network (NJ BIN), and Jessica Paolini, Economic Development Manager of Choose New Jersey, Inc., are visiting Israel to meet with academic, government, business incubation, and investment organizations. The purpose of the trip is to create a NJ-Israel Food Innovation Cluster, focused on food and agribusiness collaborations, which will serve as a model for other cluster-based initiatives expected to be formed between the State of Israel and the State of New Jersey during the next few years.

They will be hosted by Olive Grove Ventures (OGV), an international business development consultancy, whose mission is to accelerate the successful entry of Israeli companies into the US market. “We believe that there is great potential to establish a mutually beneficial relationship between New Jersey and Israel to bring science based innovations to the US market,” stated Laura Herschlag, founder and CEO of Olive Grove Ventures. “Every government, industry, and academic organization we reached out to responded enthusiastically to the invitation to meet or host a gathering with representatives from New Jersey to learn about the market entry resources and platforms to help Israeli companies succeed in the US.”

The NJ-Israel Food Innovation Cluster is a joint initiative between the FIC, OGV, and Tel-Hai Academic College. Cooperhouse will be discussing research and academic collaborations with Tel-Hai and will be the keynote presenter for their “Innovations in Healthy Foods” conference, which strengthens the connection between the university and industry, and introduces the latest innovations in science and technology as relates to healthier food.

“We are extremely excited at this first step in creating a NJ-Israel Food Innovation Cluster. Business clustering and cooperation results in enhanced innovation and accelerated economic growth, due to the opportunities created by linking together academia, industry and government,” said Cooperhouse.
With the presence of Choose New Jersey, Inc., the goal is to share the message that New Jersey is the gateway to the US marketplace with unparalleled global access and the largest port network on the Eastern Seaboard, a highly educated workforce, a $105 billion food industry sector, and a central location that serves 130 million consumers within a day’s drive.

“International outreach gives us the opportunity to nurture relationships with executives, industry groups, and universities, all with the goal of fostering continued investment in the Garden State and encouraging collaboration and partnerships between New Jersey businesses and foreign entities,” says Michele Brown, President & CEO of Choose New Jersey, Inc. “Major Israeli companies already have operations in New Jersey, including Frutarom and RADWIN, and we seek to expand that roster while in-country.”

In addition, Cooperhouse and Paolini will meet with the leadership of several government and privately-funded technology innovation and commercialization organizations focused on food, agricultural, and life science technologies. They will also have the opportunity to present the collaboration and business development opportunities available through Choose New Jersey, the New Jersey Business Incubation Network, and the Rutgers Food Innovation Center at several forums throughout the country hosted by academic and economic development organizations as well as municipal, regional and statewide industry associations.

Margaret Brennan-Tonetta, associate vice president for economic development at Rutgers University, stated, “This is an exciting opportunity to develop public-private partnerships on an international level that builds on the capabilities of all partners to further economic development goals in New Jersey and abroad. This partnership will serve as a model for international cluster development in other areas as well, such as life sciences, energy and advanced manufacturing."

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**About Rutgers Food Innovation Center (FIC):**

The Rutgers Food Innovation Center (FIC) is a food business incubation and economic development accelerator program of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES) at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, and has been named as “Incubator of the Year” by the National Business Incubation Association (NBIA) and an “Agricultural Innovation Center Demonstration Program” by the USDA. It has also been recognized by the NBIA as a “Soft Landings” program focused on international business attraction and knowledge transfer, and it is the only Soft Landings program in the world that focuses on the food and agribusiness sector.
About New Jersey Business Incubation Network (NJ BIN):
The New Jersey Business Incubation Network (NJBIN) is the entrepreneurial ecosystem of New Jersey, with business incubators, accelerators, and co-working spaces throughout the State. NJ BIN works in partnership with government, academia and the private sector to foster business creation, attraction and retention that results in entrepreneurship development and economic growth. The National Business Incubation Association (NBIA) has awarded the Soft Landings designation to three incubators in New Jersey that support international business attraction, which includes the Rutgers Food Innovation Center, the Rutgers EcoComplex Clean Energy Innovation Center, and the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) Enterprise Development Center. With three Soft Landings incubators, New Jersey has the largest cluster of internationally-focused incubators in the U.S. and the second-largest cluster in the world.

About Choose New Jersey, Inc.:
Choose New Jersey, Inc. is a privately funded 501(c)(3) corporation charged with encouraging and nurturing economic growth throughout New Jersey with a focus on making the state’s most distressed cities engines for growth and opportunity. Through marketing, business attraction and lead generation activities, Choose New Jersey markets New Jersey as a premiere business location to both domestic and international businesses. Choose New Jersey is one of four elements of the Partnership for Action (PFA), which is led by Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno and also includes the New Jersey Business Action Center, the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, and the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education. For more information, visit www.choosenj.com.