For Immediate Release
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RUTGERS FOOD INNOVATION CENTER
AWARDED NEARLY $500,000 USDA DISTANCE LEARNING GRANT

Bridgeton, N.J. – Rutgers University’s Food Innovation Center has received a $497,906 grant from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to establish a Training and Education Center and a food and agribusiness network. The network will originate from the center’s planned business incubator facility in Bridgeton to satellite sites in rural communities in Atlantic, Burlington, Cape May, Gloucester, Mercer and Salem counties. This is the first time that New Jersey has received a grant from the USDA’s Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) program, which has awarded funding to assist rural residents in 45 states and two US territories.

Located in the heart of New Jersey’s agricultural and food processing industry, the Food Innovation Center will be the first service-based, rural-targeted university food business incubator in the United States. The USDA grant will help the center fulfill its mission to stimulate business creation and expansion in Southern New Jersey by transferring key technologies and business development expertise to farmers, food business entrepreneurs, and small to mid-size food processors.

The Training and Education Center will be outfitted with state of the art teleconferencing and distance-learning capabilities linking the Bridgeton incubator to the main campus of Rutgers University as well as the six, fully equipped satellite sites. This will provide local residents and businesses access to college and continuing education courses that may otherwise be unavailable in these rural areas. A technical and business library will be provided and will serve as resource for extensive information and services.

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