

**For Immediate Release**  
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**RUTGERS FOOD INNOVATION CENTER ANNOUNCES CREATION OF BUSINESS  
ASSOCIATION MENTORING PROGRAM**

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**Bridgeton, N.J.** – The Rutgers Food Innovation Center is pleased to announce the creation of a new Business Association Mentoring Program, to support the development of existing and new cooperatives as well as associations related to food, agriculture, and other targeted industries throughout New Jersey. This new program, the first of its kind in New Jersey, will result in the enhancement of economies in rural areas, and is the result of a \$300,000 grant from United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development. The Business Association Mentoring program will be integrated into and supported by the Rutgers Food Innovation Center, an economic development outreach center based in Bridgeton, NJ, whose mission is to stimulate and support sustainable economic growth and prosperity to the food and agricultural industries in the New Jersey region. The Center provides critically needed business development and technology expertise to its clients, which includes assistance with strategic planning, business structure and organizational development, market research, product and process development, workforce development and training, and the establishment of new marketing and distribution systems.

The Food Innovation Center is also pleased to announce the addition of Michael Ryan to its team, who will lead the Business Association Mentoring Program on a part-time basis. Mr. Ryan has over thirty years of experience with association management and leadership in the consumer goods industry. He currently also holds the position of Executive Director for the Eastern Frosted Foods Association, the oldest and largest frozen food association in the United States. He also serves as Executive Director for the Eastern Perishable Products Association, which comprises membership from a wide array of food categories, including dairy, deli, seafood, bakery, meat and food service. Earlier in his career, Mr. Ryan spent eighteen years at Kings Super Markets of New Jersey as the Director of Grocery, Non Foods, Dairy and Frozen Foods. After leaving Kings, he started a perishable foods distribution business, designed as a way for smaller niche food companies to gain distribution into retail stores. He has also served in various management or consulting capacities with companies such as Organic Valley Cooperative, Horizon Organic Dairy, General Mills, Deep Foods and Celentano Brothers.

The Rutgers Business Association Mentoring Program would like to assist you with identifying business growth opportunities for your organization. Please complete this form and register with us today, and we will contact you for an appointment. Fax this form to **856-459-3043** or [register online](#).

**Contact Person** \_\_\_\_\_  
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