

**Secretary's Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture  
September 27, 2017**

**FSMA** - On September 12th, the FDA announced that it was postponing on-farm inspections under the FSMA Produce Safety Rule for the largest farms (\$500k + in sales annually) until the Spring of 2019. These inspections were originally slated to begin in the Spring of 2018. Instead, the focus in 2018 will be on education. Correspondingly, the dates for inspections of small and very small farms have also been pushed back (Spring of 2020 and Spring of 2021, respectively). Information about the announcement can be accessed on the Department's website (<http://www.ag.state.nj.us/>) under Hot Topics.

**Canadian Blueberry Program** - New Jersey blueberry growers exported their final shipments of fresh blueberry fruit into Canada under the Canadian Blueberry Fruit Certification Program (BCP) in August. Nursery Inspection Program staff continued to audit participants' recordkeeping (including their fruit audit records and pesticide applications) and oversee the grower's compliance to meet the phytosanitary requirements of the program. During the month, New Jersey producers shipped an additional 6,336 crates of fresh blueberries into Canadian markets. Overall, 28 of the 31 approved blueberry growers shipped 517,469 crates into the Canadian fresh fruit market under the BCP throughout the 2017 growing season.

**Soil and Water Conservation Grants** – The SADC has reached an agreement with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to reimburse the federal agency for technical reviews of applications submitted to the SADC's soil and water conservation cost-share program. In the past, review work was conducted by employees who were shared by the N.J. Department of Agriculture and NRCS, but that program no longer exists. With the agreement in place and the appropriation bills signed, the SADC expects to announce this week that new funding is available for owners of preserved farms who want to apply for cost-share grants to help them implement soil and water conservation projects on preserved farms.

**FFA International Leadership Seminar** - Two current New Jersey State FFA Officers and one (1) past state officer were accepted into International Leadership Seminar for State Officers (ILSSO). ILSSO is a global experience organized by the National FFA Organization for current and past state officers. Sarah Kelly (Atlantic County), McKenna Moore (Salem County) and Zuri Richmond (Salem County) will travel to South Africa January 2-16, 2018. Participants will visit several farms, a Private Game Reserve, the US Embassy, Inyoni Crocodile Estate, Embryo Plus Centre, Robben Island, Oude Werf, Apartheid Museum, Panorama Route, Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, and much more.

**Employee Board Certification** - Dr. Angelique Leone, a staff veterinary pathologist, passed the American College of Veterinary Pathologists (ACVP) certifying examination in veterinary pathology. The ACVP certifying examination is a two-phase process that candidates must pass in order to be certified as Diplomates. Employing diplomates provides worldwide recognition of laboratory's veterinary pathology services and expertise.

**Specialty Crop Block Grants** - The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has completed its review of the fiscal year 2018 Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBG) application from the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA). The soon to be announced grant agreement under consideration is \$670,852 and the effective grant period will be from September 30, 2017 to September 29, 2020.

**Food Distribution Program** - We will begin monitoring the processed commodity usage for any school district that used less than 85% of its processed commodity entitlement during the 2016-2017 school year as per the 2016-2017 Commodity Acceptance Report. The Commodity Acceptance Report is generated by NJDA and summarizes each school district's total commodity usage.

**Nursery Inspection** - A New Jersey pepper grower continued exporting fresh pepper fruit into Texas under a quarantine-compliance program during the month. This compliance agreement safeguards against the movement of European corn borer; *Ostrinia nubilalis*, through shipments of fresh pepper shipments from infested areas of the US into Texas. The first flight of the European corn borer for this year (within the areas of quarantine-compliant pepper production) was recorded on June 19th. Nursery Inspection Program staff continued monthly audits of the participants' recordkeeping (including their moth trap monitoring and pesticide applications) and certified the grower's compliance with the necessary phytosanitary requirements. As of mid-September, 10,440 containers of peppers were shipped to Texas under this compliance agreement during 2017. These shipments were expected to continue throughout September.

**Soil Restoration Standards** - Both the Topsoil and Land Grading Standards (both of which encompass new soil restoration measures on construction sites) have been published in the September 2017 edition of the NJ Register. Developers will have until December 7th, 2017 before mandatory use of the revised standards is required. These changes require the testing and/or improvement of subsoil bulk density prior to the application of 5.0" of topsoil to help improve and ensure establishment of vegetative cover to prevent soil erosion. NJDA staff has been meeting with NJ soil conservation district staff and members of the NJ Builders Association to develop an effective protocol to ensure consistent implementation.

**Jersey Fresh Farm To School Week** - Jersey Fresh Farm to School Week is September 25-29. During this celebration, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA) will be showcasing schools that connect with New Jersey farmers to purchase local produce for school meals and to increase student consumption of healthy produce through school garden, Agriculture and Nutrition Education.

**Pathology Testing** - The Pathology Laboratory Section for the months of July and August 2017 completed a total of 305 and 308 tests and/or procedures, respectively. Tests and/or procedures involved gross necropsy examination, histopathologic (microscopic), cytologic and parasitologic preparation and evaluation. Species submitted for testing in the month of August 2017 included dog, cat, horse, alpaca, goat, sheep, chicken, pigeon, fish (koi), zoo and exotic species (rabbit, hawk, gerbil), wildlife (sparrow, wood turtle, white-tail deer, gulls, fox) and marine mammal (seal).

**Microenterprise Rules** – The SADC at its August 24 meeting approved publication of proposed new rules that would permit a farmer who owns a qualifying preserved farm to apply for a special permit to conduct a rural microenterprise on the farm within certain parameters, pursuant to the New Jersey Rural Microenterprise Act, P.L. 2015, c. 275. The rules apply only to farms preserved prior to 1/12/2006 without an exception area. The rule proposal will be published in the New Jersey Register for public comments.