

Secretary's Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture

May 23, 2018

FindJerseyFresh.Com – Next week, the new Jersey Fresh website, www.findjerseyfresh.com, will officially go live. This is a culmination of more than eight months of work. Congratulations are due to Tom Beaver and the staff of the Division of Marketing and Development. The finished product features our in-house produced recipe videos, farmer profiles and interactive mapping software to connect consumers and buyers to farms across the state among so much else. We have several promotional activities planned to highlight the site launch, including new social media contests throughout the summer and advertising for the first time on new platforms including YouTube.

Blueberry Pollination – Over 18,000 bee colonies came into New Jersey for blueberry pollination arriving the last week of April, about 10 days later than last year. During the first week of arrival, temperatures remained very cold and flowers were not yet open. Some beekeepers reported starvation damage because colonies had large numbers of brood and adults and limited amounts of stored honey. The weather warmed up toward the end of April and provided good flying conditions, which allowed the bees to begin building their colonies.

Envirothon Winner – West Windsor - Plainsboro High School North from Mercer County was the 1st place winner of the 2018 Envirothon, held May 5th at Camp Grice in Salem County. Twenty-nine teams competed in this 25th annual event which tests high school students' knowledge in six environmental subject areas including aquatics, a current environmental issue, forestry, soils, wildlife, and a team presentation. The Marine Academy of Technology & Environmental Science Team #1 (MATES) from Ocean County placed second and Marine Academy of Science and Technology Team # 1 (MAST) from Monmouth County placed third. Cedar Creek High School placed fourth and High Tech High School Team #2 from Hudson County placed fifth.

Eat Right Move More Winner – Food and Nutrition Division School Nutrition Program representatives attended the NJDA Jets Eat Right Move More Takeover at Ocean Township Intermediate School on May 4th. The winning school received \$20,000, provided by a partnership with the American Dairy Association and Dairy Council; \$10,000 of the grand prize will be used toward an infrastructure or equipment improvement directly for or related to the school meal programs and \$10,000 is to be used directly for the purchase of physical education equipment.

20th Annual Animal Emergency Working Group Symposium – The Department hosted the 20th Annual Animal Emergency Working Group (AEWG) Symposium on Saturday, April 28, with more than 40 volunteers from nine counties and two states participating in tabletop exercises designed to strengthen their skills in operating co-located County Animal Response Team (CART) shelters in an emergency. Representatives from NJDA, USDA, and Garden State Animal Resources Team (GSART) helped plan and run the Symposium. Horse Park of New Jersey – The Jersey Fresh International Three-Day Event drew a record number of entries including riders from seven other nations. Aside from many of the top riders from the United States, entries came from Australia, Canada, Great Britain, Ireland, Germany, Switzerland and Brazil. United States riders vied for a spot on the team for the World Equestrian Games to be held in September. Horses had their first inspection on May 9. Dressage took place May 10 and 11. The cross-country was on May 12 and the winner was decided on May 13 after the show jumping. The event was amazing with three of the four divisions won by Boyd Martin. He joined an elite group of four other riders in the world who have clinched three different classes at the same international event since 2009.

NJ Soil and Erosion Sediment Control Program – Engineering staff continue to assist Districts with resolution of technical and engineering needs on construction sites around the state. The late spring weather has delayed normal construction activities due to saturated and cold soil conditions which render vegetative stabilization of soils to be very difficult. Saturated soil also increases runoff beyond normal design conditions and impedes construction of impoundments, waterways and other structures used to control storm water runoff.

Mile-a-minute defoliator – Production of the Mile-a-minute defoliator, *Rhinoncomimus latipes*, is at peak levels in preparation for shipments in the summer months. More than 25,000 weevils were stockpiled during the winter. These adults are being acclimated to rearing conditions to increase the number of individuals available for release. More than 35,000 weevils have been ordered by USDA/APHIS/PPQ cooperators and private landowners.

Pathology Necropsies and Testing – The Pathology Laboratory Section for the months of March and April 2018 completed a total of 369 and 354 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 April 2018 included dog, cat, goat, horse, pig, chicken, alpaca, zoo and exotic species (parakeet, parrot and lemur) and wildlife (opossum, grey and harbor seals, common dolphin and herring gull). These testing cases generated additional diagnostic tests for other laboratory sections (e.g. bacteriology, virology and molecular). Results from these case submissions help to support practicing veterinarians (large, mixed and small animal), private food and companion animal owners, NJ State Agencies, racetrack, wildlife, zoo and nonprofit animal facilities.

Direct Delivery Department of Defense Fresh Program – A total of 31,270 cases at 723,046 pounds with a value of \$920,704 were ordered during the month of April for the DoD Fresh Program. There were 287 of the 334 DoD Fresh Program schools participating during the month of April 2018. Approximately 60 various items of fresh fruits and vegetables were delivered directly to the participating resident agencies. Food Distribution is currently evaluating the usage by each school and will move some funds away from school districts that are not using the funds to the school districts who have depleted their funds. All funds set aside for the 2017-2018 school year must be used by June 30, 2018.