

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF
Labor & Workforce Development
NEWS RELEASE

Media Contact

Amanda Pisano

609-984-2841

MediaCalls@dol.nj.gov



For Immediate Release

Acting Labor Commissioner Discusses Garden State Food and Beverage Industry at FoodBizNJ Conference

SOMERSET, N.J., November 2, 2016 – Acting Commissioner Aaron R. Fichtner, Ph.D., of the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development today joined elected officials, business owners and other key stakeholders from the food and beverage industry at the FoodBizNJ Conference and Expo in Somerset.

The event, hosted by NJBIZ, featured a trade show exhibition hall as well as information sessions including panel discussions and workshops relevant to food and beverage producers. Acting Commissioner Fichtner participated in the “Made in New Jersey: Growing the Food and Beverage Industry in the Garden State” panel alongside Senator Tom Kean and Sam Schatz, Director of Corporate Development at AeroFarms. The panel was moderated by Lou Cooperhouse, Director of the Rutgers Food Innovation Center.

Acting Commissioner Fichtner discussed the importance of the food and beverage industry in New Jersey, employing 429,300 people in 2015, up nearly 11 percent from 387,000 in 2005. Employment in the food and beverage industry accounts for close to 13 percent of all private sector employment in the state.

Since 2010, the department has invested nearly \$10 million to help more than 120 food manufacturing and food service companies train more than 35,000 employees in skills ranging from customer service to lean process improvement. Skills Partnership customized training grants provide employers with up to 50 percent cost reimbursement assistance to train new or existing employees to meet the current and future skill requirements for available high-skilled, high-wage jobs in New Jersey. More information about how to apply for Skills Partnership Grants is available [here](#).

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Acting Labor Commissioner Aaron R. Fichtner, Ph.D., (far left) participated in a panel on growing the food industry in New Jersey, along with Sam Schatz, Director of Corporate Development at AeroFarms and Senator Tom Kean. Rutgers Food Innovation Center Director Lou Cooperhouse (far right) moderated the panel.