



State of New Jersey

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

MINUTES OF MEETING

February 23, 2022

(Wednesday)

Public meeting notice was certified by communication on February 18, 2022.

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq. adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by giving written notice of the time, date, location and to the extent known the agenda of this meeting. At least 48-hours in advance this notice has been posted on the third floor, Riverview Plaza, Trenton, New Jersey; mailed to the Newark Star Ledger; the Camden Courier Post; the Philadelphia Inquirer and filed with the Office of the Secretary of State.

President DeFrango called the virtual meeting to order at 1:35 pm. Board members in attendance included President David DeFrango, Vice President Dr. Ernest Beier, Paul Hlubik, Debbie Norz, Warren Hollinger, Holly Sytsema and Lisa Specca.

Also in attendance were Secretary Douglas Fisher; Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Joe Atchison, Dr. Manoel Tamassia, Director, Division of Animal Health; Rose Chamberlain, Director, Division of Food & Nutrition; Joe Zoltowski, Director, Division of Plant Industry; Nancy Wood, Division of Marketing & Development; Susan Payne, Executive Director, SADC; Mary Tovar, Robert Vivian, Jeff Wolfe and Jeff Beach, Office of the Secretary. Also in attendance were Ashley Kerr, NJ Farm Bureau; Dr. Brian Schilling, Rutgers University; Sarah Fenwick and Robert Andrzejczak, Farm Service Agency, Julie Hawkins, NRCS, Bruce Eklund, State Statistician; and Linda Walker, NJ Department of Agriculture.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

ON the MOTION of Holly Sytsema, seconded by Barney Hollinger, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the January 26, 2022 regular meeting with a minor change by Dr. Beier.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Secretary Fisher congratulated the Board on a great State Agricultural Convention and commented on how smooth the Resolution process was. He reported that the SOE legislation was scheduled for the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee. He explained that there had been some comments regarding the issue of pesticide licenses not being reflected in a timely manner. He reported that Joe Zoltowski had reached out to DEP and was working to get this issue resolved. He noted that the

information was sent by email and posted on the Department's website. In addition, there were questions regarding the organic certification program, as certification for 2022 will be done by private reviewers. Finally, he noted that the status of the land lease issue has been communicated and DEP will be sending out new leases with very specific instructions. This important information will also be posted on the Department website.

Assistant Secretary Joe Atchison reported that the Department will send to those in the organic program more detailed information within the next few days to provide more clarity. He also thanked everyone at the Department level and the State Board members for a very successful convention. He noted that the Resolution Process that is handled by Bill Cutts and Jeff Beach is a tremendous undertaking and they did an outstanding job, again. He has been invited to visit the Southeast Produce Council Show, which is a tremendous, hard-to-get-into show. He reported that he and Christine Fries would be attending the Canadian Produce Marketing Trade Show in Montreal in April. He noted that 90 percent of our exports go to Canada and it is important to have representation at this show. The application for the Jersey Raised Program that was introduced at the Convention will be launched on March 1. He noted that feedback at the Convention for this program was very positive. Finally, he reported that they are working with the Ad Agency on different creative concepts for the new definition of local.

Rose Chamberlain, Director, Division of Food & Nutrition, announced that she will be attending the FFA Advocacy Day along with Janet Celi, our Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Coordinator, scheduled for the following day. The Summer Food Service Program is getting ready for the upcoming summer program, reaching out to sponsors and holding trainings. The division has received many inquiries about the USDA waivers that are currently in place for all to receive free school meals; at this time, we have not had any new guidance from USDA.

Susan Payne, Executive Director, SADC, commented on the most recent Annual Report for the SADC and new bumper sticker to note that next year the Farmland Preservation Program will be celebrating 40 years. She noted that, at the last meeting, Board member Kurt Alstede asked about the status of the Farmland Preservation database. She reported that they have some new staff that will be working on that within the next 6-8 weeks.

Joe Zoltowski, Director, Division of Plant Industry, announced that at this time there are 13 applications for the Hemp Program. The Hemp Manager has resigned, and they are working on a backfill as soon as possible. He mentioned a scoping session on Gypsy Moth to outline the proposed suppression program of the Department and NJDEP for the Spring 2022. He noted that during the winter months both NJDA and USDA SLF crews are working to prepare sites for future treatments and destroying egg masses by scraping or the use of golden oil. Over the winter, over 30,000 egg masses have been scraped and destroyed; they assessed 473 properties and surveyed 147 grids. He noted that next week USDA has scheduled a SLF virtual meeting for discussion.

Dr. Manoel Tamassia, Director, Division of Animal Health, reported that there have been several recent cases of avian influenza. In North and South Carolina and several other states there are noted outbreaks, as close as Delaware just today. He urged all to be attentive and to contact the Department if there are any questions. The division will be sending out people to test in areas that may have AI.

He noted that all this information is available on the Department website; they are working with all the poultry producers in the state to be sure they are using extra caution.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Lisa Specca reported that the Camden County board did not meet; Ocean County met to reorganize, they have not met for several months. The Atlantic County board did meet via Zoom and is planning a Legislators' event; they have several new legislators in that area. Atlantic County is trying to recruit new Board members and is offering an incentive of paying half of the Farm Bureau membership to new members or to members that refer a new member. Atlantic County has seen extensive deer damage on public lands and would be sending a letter to DEP on the issue. They are also concerned about Senator Booker's Pesticide Legislation. She has heard positive feedback about the Convention. She reported that Peter Furey and Ryck Suydam presented information to the Atlantic County board on behalf of Farm Bureau on their new software program that allows members to easily contact their legislative representatives. Lisa reported that she had sent a message to her legislators and the Governor to try out the new system and was very pleased with the ease of which it was done.

Paul Hlubik thanked the Department and Jeff Beach for the very fast turn around time for finalizing the resolutions and getting them distributed and posted. He reported that due to a serious fall, he will be out of commission for some time and that he has a long road ahead of him.

Holly Sytsema commented that she had attended the Dairy Process meeting as well as the Markets Management Update. She noted that the Sussex County board would be meeting the following week. She has received positive feedback about the new Jersey Raised program. She thanked the Department and Farm Bureau for working with the State House Commission on the land leases. She noted that the DMC coverage enrollment is up this year because of the premium consideration. She suggested the State Board hold a meeting during the State Ag Convention.

Barney Hollinger attended the Cape May County Board of Ag and noted that the DEP has hired a new Biologist, who is supposed to deal with just deer. He attended the Cumberland County Board meeting where they mention that the Joint Legislative dinner is cancelled. He did note that Cumberland County is planning to have a Legislative tour/dinner in the coming months.

Debbie Norz thanked Department staff for the terrific job they did at the Convention as well as Jeff Beach and Bill Cutts with the Resolutions. She congratulated Hillary Barille, who is NJ's Outstanding Young Farmer as well as a National Winner. Over the past weekend, Ms. Barille won another National level competition. Ms. Norz mentioned that the Legislative Committee has met to review many new bills.

ON the MOTION of Debbie Norz, seconded by Barney Hollinger, to send a letter stating that the Board needed more time to review and make comment on S 757, Special Occasion Events legislation.

Paul Hlubik commented that he did not feel that there were enough changes to prevent this from moving forward. Secretary Fisher commented that the Sarlo Bill that has been re-introduced had been approved by the State Board.

Lisa Specca commented that this legislation is very positive; it was crushed before, it would be a shame to lose this. Secretary Fisher also read a letter that was sent by the Board in November '21 in support of the SOE legislation.

There was a good deal of discussion by Board members on the motion. President DeFrance asked for a roll call vote on whether to send the letter or not.

Kurt Alstede – not in attendance

Lisa Specca – no

Warren Hollinger – yes

Holly Sytsema – yes

Paul Hlubik – no

Debbie Norz – yes

Ernest Beier – no

David DeFrance – yes

President DeFrance stated that the Committee needs to move forward at its earliest convenience to complete the thorough review.

Vice President Beier reported that the Convention Committee had met earlier that day and would be sending a letter to the Vegetable Growers Convention planners asking them for a meeting to discuss the most recent convention and how we can improve on future conventions. He noted that Salem County farmers are getting ready for planting. Salem County is also planning some type of tour for legislators. He mentioned that there has been some confusion about NRCS / FSA programs and contact information. Finally, he commented that with Rowan starting a Veterinary School – it will be an 8–year process if they go through Rowan. He was wondering about previous legislation regarding tuition in the hopes of getting more large animal vets in the state.

President DeFrance thanked everyone involved with the State Agricultural Convention; he wanted to specifically thank the delegates to the Convention, their participation was key. He appreciated the Board's input at the Convention as well.

REPORT OF RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

Dr. Laura Lawson noted that the Convention seemed to be a great success from her vantage point. She appreciated the time that she was given to present to the Convention delegates and members of the audience. She announced that the Soil Health Symposium will be held on March 4 and the Turfgrass Symposium will be held on March 17.

REPORT OF FARM SERVICE AGENCY (FSA)

Sarah Fenwick introduced the new State Director for New Jersey, Robert Andrzejczak, who was appointed to the position just a week prior.

Director Andrzejczak thanked the Board for the meeting invitation. He is happy to be back working for New Jersey agriculture. He previously had served in the New Jersey Senate and Assembly and was able to accomplish a lot of work on behalf of agriculture. He wants to be sure that farmers are aware of the programs and assistance that FSA can provide and looks forward to making himself available as much as possible. He noted that he will be touring the State so that he can learn firsthand what is going on in all parts of the state.

Ms. Fenwick reported the following to the Board:

- Robert Andrzejczak has been appointed FSA State Executive Director for New Jersey
Born and raised in Cape May, New Jersey, Robert Andrzejczak joined the United States Army as an Infantryman in 2005. On his second deployment to Iraq, he was severely wounded when his convoy was attacked. After two years of recovering from his injuries at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington D.C., Andrzejczak returned home to New Jersey. He was active in multiple community-based service organizations before being appointed to serve in the New Jersey General Assembly in 2012. While in the Assembly, Andrzejczak served as Chairman of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee. He was appointed to the New Jersey Senate in 2018 and served until 2019.
- County Committee Elections
Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Committees are a critical component of FSA operations and allow grassroots input and local administration of federal farm programs. Farmers and ranchers who are elected to serve on FSA County committees use their judgment and knowledge to help with the decisions necessary to administer FSA programs in their counties, ensuring the needs of local producers are met. Ballots were counted in February for a make-up election in the Frenchtown office. William Wagner was elected to the Committee and will begin his term on March 1, 2022.
- Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage Program (ARCPLC)
ARCPLC 2022 Election and Enrollment period ends March 15, 2022. Producers who wish to change the current elections on the farm MUST file by March 15th. Unlike Enrollment, there are no late file or succession provisions for election changes.

REPORT OF NJ FARM BUREAU

Ashley Kerr reported on the following topics:

- Thanked the Department for a great State Agricultural Convention.
- They sent a letter to the Governor for the deer fencing appropriation in the budget as well as the \$3M for the Experiment Station; additional \$400K for Solar; \$95K for the Equine Science Center; \$300K for Jersey Fresh, marketing for seafood and native plants.
- Excited to see the Sarlo SOE legislation moving, hoping they will get it to the floor of both houses and signed by the Governor.
- Organic Growers were not happy about the Department no longer doing the certification.
- Looking forward to the Rutgers Ag Viability Update.

REPORT OF NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE (NASS)

Bruce Eklund reported the following:

- Hemp report has been completed. He thanked Plant Industry Director Joe Zoltowski for his help in getting growers to participate in the survey.
- Annual Vegetable Summary for summer crops recently completed.
- Working on collecting data on peaches, blueberries, etc.
- Organic Survey will be upcoming.

REPORT OF NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS)

Julie Hawkins reported the following:

- They are in the midst of moving their office from Somerset to Hamilton Square so they can co-locate with FSA, this is expected to take place in September.
- Committee on Urban Agriculture did not have any members selected from New Jersey but some from the Northeast were selected.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

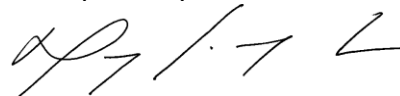
MEETINGS

The next regular meeting of the State Board of Agriculture will be held on Wednesday, March 23 beginning at 1:30 pm at the new offices for the Department of Agriculture at 200 Riverview Plaza in Trenton.

ADJOURNMENT

ON the MOTION of Debbie Norz, seconded by Barney Hollinger, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the regular meeting at 3:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Douglas H. Fisher