



State of New Jersey

## **BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING**

**July 26, 2023**

**(Wednesday)**

Public meeting notice was certified by communication on July 20, 2023.

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 Paul Hlubik called the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture to order at 1:40 pm. Board members in attendance included President Paul Hlubik; Vice President Debbie Norz, Warren Hollinger, Holly Sytsema Kurt Alstede, Lisa Specca, Bob Blew and David DeFrango. The meeting was held at Norz Hill Farm, Branchburg, NJ.

Also in attendance were Assistant Secretary Joe Atchison, Dr. Amir Patil, Director, Dr. Sebastian Reist (Teams), Division of Animal Health; Rose Chamberlain, Director, Division of Food & Nutrition; Nancy Wood, Division of Marketing & Development; Chuck Roohr, Deputy Executive Director, SADC; Frank Minch, Director, Division of Agricultural and Natural Resources; Joe Zoltowski, Director, Division of Plant Industry; Christina Rasiewicz, Chris LaRegina, Nathan Schatz (Teams), Robert Vivian, Jeff Wolfe and Jeff Beach, Office of the Secretary. Also in attendance were Ashley Kerr, Liz Thompson and Al Murray NJ Farm Bureau; Dr. Brian Schilling, Rutgers University; Sarah Fenwick, Farm Service Agency, Arelys Ortiz, NRCS; Bruce Eklund, NASS, and Linda Walker, NJ Department of Agriculture.

### **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

ON the MOTION of Kurt Alstede, seconded by Holly Sytsema, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the June 28, 2023 regular meeting.

### **SWEARING IN OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS**

Board member Kurt Alstede thanked both Paul Hlubik and Debbie Norz for their time and dedication to the Board over the four years.

At this time the new members, John Hart and Stephen V. Lee, IV, of the State Board were officially sworn-in by Assemblyman Roy Freiman and Assemblyman Brandon Umba respectively and took their seats around the table.

Assistant Secretary Atchison thanked both Assemblyman Freiman and Umba for being part of the swearing in of the new Board members.

### **REPORT OF THE NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE**

Lisa Specca, Chair of the Nominating Committee reported that the Committee had met, and the following motion was made:

ON the MOTION of Kurt Alstede, seconded by John Hart, Holly Sytsema was nominated as President of the State Board.

ON the MOTION of Kurt Alstede, seconded by John Hart, the Board voted unanimously to close the nominations for President.

The vote was unanimous in favor for Holly Sytsema as President of the State Board of Agriculture.

President Sytsema took over the meeting.

ON the MOTION of Kurt Alstede, seconded by John Hart, Barney Hollinger was nominated as Vice President of the State Board.

ON the MOTION of Bob Blew, seconded by Dave DeFrance, the Board voted unanimously to close the nominations for Vice President.

The vote was unanimous in favor of Barney Hollinger as Vice President of the State Board of Agriculture.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

### **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Assistant Secretary Joe Atchison commented that the Division of Markets continues promote Jersey Fresh in every way possible and that Division staff would be on the Boardwalks on August 7 distributing grape tomatoes and on August 22 distributing peaches.

Rose Chamberlain, Director, Division of Food & Nutrition, reported to the Board that the Farm to School Program was accepting applications for the Best in Jersey Farm to School as well as Farmer of the Year Awards. She noted that all the information was available on the Department website. She reported that

the Food Research & Action Center (known as FRAC) released a report today that named New Jersey as #1 in the nation for reaching children in the summer months through our summer feeding programs. She noted that staff does a tremendous job with outreach, support and a tremendous sponsor effort in the program.

Dr. Amir Patil, Director, Division of Animal Health, reported that there were no new animal diseases reported. He noted that there was scare in a New York City live bird market where there was a positive test for HPAI. He reported that because of that, testing was required in some PA and NJ markets. Thankfully, no additional cases were found. He noted that the Division has had staffing shortages and turnover. He reported that they certified a newly hired veterinarian as a livestock inspector under the humane rules. The veterinarian was hired in the spring and has gone through the training process to be certified and will now be able to go out in the field to do the humane inspections.

Joe Zoltowski, Director, Division of Plant Industry, reported to the Board that the Department proposes to assist New Jersey counties up to \$50,000 and municipalities up to \$15,000 by reimbursing efforts for costs they accrue for chemical treatment activities associated with spotted lanternfly control. A total of \$2,180,000 of state and federal funding has been encumbered to reimburse 132 municipal and four county governmental agencies to date. In addition, he reported that the 2023 statewide aerial defoliation survey began on June 15<sup>th</sup> in the southern counties of the state and was completed on July 11<sup>th</sup>. Overall, the majority of the defoliation was observed on state lands in Sussex County.

Frank Minch, Director, Division of Agricultural & Natural Resources, noted that he had been meeting with DEP on several topics. He reported that the Stormwater Rule had been published and that it would take effect immediately. He noted that they have been discussion with DEP and they seem amendable to allowing non habitable structure work within the flood area provided that there is some permitting discussion we still need to get through, but he thinks that is a huge step forward. In the past they were not open to talking about that. He reported that the next big thing is NJ PACT (Protection Against Climate Threats) which will be a very substantial rule (1200 pages) that will be published soon.

Chuck Roohr, Assistant Executive Director, SADC, reported that the next SADC meeting would be held the next day. He reported that at the June SADC meeting, the Committee approved to advance the proposed SPS rule for publication in the NJ Register. The proposed rule was submitted to the OAL for review and approval and is awaiting authorization for publication. In addition, the SADC has been informed that multiple counties are in receipt of SOE requests from landowners and staff has been fielding numerous questions from CADBs related to eligibility and procedural issues. He updated the Board on the letter and map that will be sent to all affected parties within the next few weeks.

#### **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Lisa Specca reported that business has been good for direct marketers. The weather has been challenging. She reported that the Burlington County Farm Fair was recently held and that it was a great success. She reported that at the Ag Convention in February there was a Resolution regarding the plastic bag ban and a special committee was established to look into this issue. She reported that the Committee had met a few times. She noted that in some meetings with DEP they said that you could use

up the inventory of bags that you had. At the most recent meeting of the Committee, they discussed some alternatives that could be used. Frank made the argument that many pick your own or roadside markets may not be able to adapt easily to a reusable bag environment. Pick your own items often have residual field dirt and are wet, it's not the same as a supermarket or even a large retail farm market. They did not want to make any kind of exception for agriculture. Board member Kurt Alstede, a member of the Committee shared that he has historically used cardboard totes in various sizes for pick your own and charges for the tote. He has also used a drawstring bag for apples etc. which are available in various sizes and materials. Lisa reported that their farm now uses poly vented bags in various sizes that are a reasonably cost-effective replacement for the tee shirt bag for pick your own. They also use cardboard trays for strawberries. She stated that the Committee questioned whether this is the hill we want to die on. There are so many issues that are more important. It was suggested that possibly the Farm Bureau could share a list of vendors that could be used.

She noted that the Plastic Bag Ban Subcommittee has investigated and come to a resolution on the possible solution to this and it was unsuccessful. No further action is needed at this time.

Kurt Alstede thanked the Norz family for hosting the Board today. He reported that water/weather issues recently impacted Warren and Sussex Counties. It was suggested that the Department send a notice to all growers to contact FSA for any recent storm related damage. He reported that on August 21, his farm will be hosting Congressman Kean for an agriculture round table to discuss issues facing the agriculture industry. He noted that the fruit conditions have been good statewide, and that Georgia just recently reported that most of their peach crop had been lost due to weather conditions. He noted that he had sent a copy of a letter signed by the entire Congressional delegation in the Northeast states in support of apple crop insurance as there have been some changes made to the apple crop insurance that would take effect in 2025. It would be helpful if New Jersey could also send a letter of support. In addition, he noted that the ash tree situation continues to be a problem. Finally, he reported that the EBT system for the WIC/ Senior Program has been going better than previously but the problem is that there is no support on the weekends and asked that that issue be relayed to the Department of Health.

Bob Blew reported that they had been dry most of the season, but then had rain to cause a later wheat harvest for Cumberland County but it looked good. He noted that since July 4<sup>th</sup> business had been slow for the nursery. He reported that the Cumberland County had a very successful fair and that the Salem Fair was coming up in August.

Dave DeFrance reported that in the north, the nursery industry had a slow start, but they were seeing an uptick now. He noted that the erratic weather has been a concern for all counties, and they are trying to address ways to cope on their farm. He noted that the Hunterdon County Fair is scheduled for the end of August and they are gearing up for what hopes to be a very successful fair.

Stephen Lee thanked everyone for the well wishes and is excited to be on the Board. He stated that he is the third generation to be part of the Board. His family has been growing cranberries and blueberries for seven generations. He introduced his wife Monica and son Andrew. He thanked Assemblyman Umba for coming today to swear him in and also thanked Assemblyman Freiman for attending as well, noting that having two Assemblymen attend a meeting under a tent is a big deal! He noted that he comes from

Chatsworth but is also familiar with the Hammonton and the blueberry industry and the issue of the market being flooded with blueberries and is concerned for the industry going forward. He stated that he was extremely proud to be here.

John Hart stated that he was very pleased to join the Board and looks forward to working on issues facing the industry. He noted that he comes from Mercer County where the weather conditions have been very dry. He noted that they also have significant deer problems. He stated that he is very involved with Hunters Helping the Hungry deer program at this farm. He reported that the Mercer County 4-H Fair is scheduled for this upcoming weekend.

Vice President Hollinger welcomed the new Board members and thanked both Paul Hlubik and Debbie Norz for the help that they have given him during his time on the Board. He reported business has been good and that sales are up. He reported that the recent Cape May Legislative Tour held on July 13, started at their farm and felt that it was very successful. He noted that the Board is planning a few other tours and hopes that they are as successful.

President Sytsema asked former Board President Paul Hlubik to report on a meeting that he had with the Governor's Office regarding the Secretary of Agriculture search. He reported that he had a good meeting with Governor's office personnel regarding the Secretary search. He reported that he briefed them on the Board's process so far. There was concern noted that perhaps the deadline for applications should be extended as the summer is such a busy time. He noted that the staff was very interested and thanked him for the update of the process to date. He noted that the Board was undergoing a transition and he would be providing an introduction of the Governor's staff to the new Board President. He stated that they look forward to working with the Board.

President Sytsema thanked both Assemblymen for attending the Board meeting today, especially in the very warm conditions. She thanked the Norz family for hosting the Board today, everything was wonderful! She also thanked both outgoing members Paul and Debbie for serving as mentors to her during her time on the Board serving with them. She reported that the Bergen County Fair was upcoming in September and that they would be holding a twilight meeting on August 8 from 3-5 on Deer Management. She noted that the the NJ State Fair would be held August 4-12 with a Jersey Fresh tent. She reported that the recent Warren County weather event dumped 12-17 inches of rain over two days and that several farms suffered tremendous loss. She noted that a recent survey ranked Farm Viability #1; Right to Farm #2; Livestock Industry and Farmland Preservation tied for #3 and Deer Impacts #4; which gives the Board a lot to work on.

#### **REPORT OF NJ FARM BUREAU**

Ashley Kerr represented the Farm Bureau. The following written report was forwarded to the Board:

- Washington - work is underway with appropriations bills which when decided for agriculture will set the parameters for the heavily significant farm bill. The House Ag Committee has convened a study panel on ag labor/immigration. We are seeking on-farm roundtables in August with Reps. Tom Kean and Jeff Van Drew, possibly Andy Kim and Mikie Sherrill.

- State appropriations – as you know, the NJDA and NJAES received funding in the new FY’24 state budget in several important areas. Most pleasing was the addition of \$2.5 million to the NJAES for general support.
- State legislation – we are still compiling a summary update of passed bills and other ag–related bills that are awaiting final action either by the governor now or during the lame–duck session post–election. Most concerning, of course, is the committee–approved Assembly bill to transfer the NJDA Division of Food and Nutrition to the Department of Human Services (A5462, S4050).
- Agritourism grants – as presented in last week’s newsletter, we think the \$2.5 million grant program just signed into law (June 30) is highly significant for farm operators with retail business. We look forward to the Division of Tourism rule–drafting process.
- Solar on farmland – note the recent BPU action rejecting expensive industrial scale projects; BPU will soon release the “straw proposal” for its rules regarding dual use projects on farmland; we are pleased to see an additional \$900,000 in funding for the NJAES agrivoltaics research.
- Plastic bag ban – we remain interested in the State Board review of the impact of this ban that took effect in May, ’22.
- Hunger mitigation – the state budget has appropriated significant funds for the purchase of local produce for the EFO/food bank network throughout the state. We have facilitated these relationships right along, and believe this initiative is a win–win situation for the farm producers and the state’s goal of hunger abatement.
- County fairs underway – we support and applaud the annual farm fairs now well underway. Burlington had a successful fair last week; more will follow. Temperate weather helps!

### **REPORT OF RUTGERS UNIVERSITY**

Dr. Brian Schilling, represented the College and reported on the following topics:

- Recent hires include Ann Gould, SEBS Dean of Academic Programs; Veronica Jones as a Family and Community Health Sciences (FCHS) Educator in Essex County; Ricardo Kairios as an FCHS Educator for Mercer County; and Shailja Mathur is the New FCHS Educator in Somerset County.
- Tomato Tasting and Open House at Snyder Research Farm on August 30.

### **REPORT OF FARM SERVICE AGENCY (FSA)**

Sarah Fenwick represented the FSA and made the following comments:

#### County Committee (COC) Elections

Committee members are a critical component of the day–to–day operations of FSA. The COC assists in the delivery and administration of farm programs in the community and provide local agricultural guidance and insight to FSA staff. The nomination period is now open and will end August 1.

#### Organic Dairy Marketing Assistance Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announces assistance for dairy producers with the new Organic Dairy Marketing Assistance Program (ODMAP). ODMAP is established to help mitigate market volatility, higher input and transportation costs, and unstable feed supply and prices that have created unique hardships in the organic dairy industry. Specifically, under the ODMAP, USDA’s Farm Service

Agency (FSA) is making \$104 million available to organic dairy operations to assist with projected marketing costs in 2023, calculated using their marketing costs in 2022.

FSA is providing financial assistance for a producer's projected marketing costs in 2023 based on their 2022 costs. ODMAP provides a one-time cost-share payment based on marketing costs on pounds of organic milk marketed in the 2022 calendar year. ODMAP provides financial assistance that will immediately support certified organic dairy operations during 2023 keeping organic dairy operations sustainable until markets return to more normal conditions. FSA will begin accepting applications for ODMAP on May 24, 2023. Eligible producers include certified organic dairy operations that produce milk from cows, goats and sheep.

The signup period opened on May 24 and runs through August 11, 2023. Details about the Organic Dairy Marketing Assistance Program will be available and updated at [www.farmers.gov](http://www.farmers.gov) as more details are released.

#### Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP)

The 2023 Organic Certification Cost Share Program is now open, and FSA will be accepting applications through October 31, 2023 for certification expenses paid October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2023. Organic producers will be reimbursed up to 75% of costs associated with organic certification, up to \$750 per scope (crops, wild crops, processing/handling).

#### Loss Adjusters

New Jersey Farm Service Agency is seeking Loss Adjusters (LAs) for the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and the Tree Assistance Program (TAP). Loss Adjusters are required to have knowledge of field crops and specialty crops, as well as a thorough understanding and execution of crop adjusting guidelines and program provisions, as applicable to FSA programs.

#### Disaster Declarations

- a. The Farm Service Agency has seven (7) disaster designations for Emergency Loan programs available to provide assistance when disasters strike due to damages and losses resulting from a natural disaster. A qualifying loss occurs if FSA determines a minimum 30 percent production loss of at least one crop in the disaster county occurred as a result of the disaster. Farmers in the following counties are eligible for Emergency Loans through the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA):
  - i. **Secretarial Disaster Declaration S5364** was triggered for Farmers in Cumberland and Salem counties who suffered losses due to Drought and Excessive Heat that occurred on August 1, 2022 through November 11, 2022. Applications must be received by October 6, 2023.
  - ii. **Secretarial Disaster Declaration S5359** was triggered for Farmers in Sussex and Warren counties who suffered losses due to Drought that occurred on July 1, 2022, through September 4, 2022. Applications must be received by October 2, 2023.
  - iii. **Secretarial Disaster Declaration S5338** was triggered for Farmers in Warren, Hunterdon, Mercer, and Burlington counties who suffered losses due to Drought that occurred on April 7, 2022 through October 3, 2022. Applications must be received by August 21, 2023.

- iv. **Secretarial Disaster Declaration S5348** was triggered for Farmers in Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Salem, Burlington, Camden, Hunterdon, Ocean, Somerset, and Union counties who suffered losses due to Drought that occurred on July 1, 2022. Applications must be received by August 21, 2023.
- v. **Secretarial Disaster Declaration S5347** was triggered for Farmers in Burlington, Camden, Ocean, Atlantic, Gloucester, Mercer, and Monmouth counties who suffered losses due to Drought and Excessive Heat that occurred on June 18, 2022 through September 5, 2022. Applications must be received by August 21, 2023.
- vi. **Secretarial Disaster Declaration S5346** was triggered for Farmers in Hunterdon, Somerset, Mercer, Middlesex, Morris, Union, and Warren counties who suffered losses due to Drought that occurred on July 1, 2022 through September 14, 2022. Applications must be received by August 21, 2023.
- vii. **Secretarial Disaster Declaration S5345** was triggered for Farmers in Morris, Sussex, Warren, Essex, Hunterdon, Passaic, Somerset, and Union counties who suffered losses due to Drought and Excessive Heat that occurred on July 1, 2022 through August 19, 2022. Applications must be received by August 21, 2023.

#### Inflation Reduction Act Extraordinary Measure Assistance

- a. On May 19, 2023, USDA sent a letter to all FSA direct loan borrowers detailing a new opportunity to receive assistance if they took extraordinary measures to avoid delinquency between February 29, 2020 and October 18, 2022. The letter provides the specific type of actions that may qualify for assistance and the documentation needed to receive assistance.
- b. Borrowers can submit requests for extraordinary measure assistance in two ways:
  - i. Send a direct request using the farmers.gov 22006 assistance request portal at <https://www.farmers.gov/loans/inflation-reduction-investments/request-assistance>
  - ii. Work with your local Farm Loan Officer to submit this request through the portal.
- c. All requests for assistance must be received by December 31, 2023. Assistance is subject to funding availability.

#### Inflation Reduction Act Assistance for Distressed Borrowers

- a. On August 16, 2022, President Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) into Law. Section 22006 of the IRA provided \$3.1 billion for USDA to provide relief for distressed borrowers with certain Farm Service Agency (FSA) direct and guaranteed loans and to expedite assistance for those whose agricultural operations are at financial risk.
- b. USDA is implementing this provision with the goals of keeping borrowers farming, removing obstacles that currently prevent borrowers from returning to their land, and improving the way that USDA approaches borrowing and loan servicing in the long term.
- c. USDA has allocated up to \$1.3 billion for initial steps to help distressed borrowers. This includes both automatic and case-by-case assistance.

#### Simplified Direct Loan Application

- a. FSA developed a new, simplified direct loan application for producers seeking a direct farm loan. The new application, reduced from 29 to 13 pages, provides improved customer experience for producers applying for loans and enables them to complete a more streamlined application.



- b. Producers also have the option to complete an electronic fillable form or a traditional, paper application for submissions to their local FSA farm loan office.

#### Loan Assistance Tool

- a. FSA launched a new online tool to help farmers and ranchers better navigate the farm loan application process. This uniform application process will help to ensure all farm loan applicants receive equal support and have a consistent customer experience with USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) regardless of their individual circumstances.
- b. USDA experiences a high rate of incomplete or withdrawn applications, particularly among underserved customers, due in part to a challenging and lengthy paper-based application process. The Loan Assistance Tool is available 24/7 and gives customers an online step-by-step guide that supplements the support they receive when working in person with a USDA employee, providing materials that may help an applicant prepare their loan application in one tool.
- c. Farmers can access the Loan Assistance Tool by visiting [www.farmers.gov/farm-loan-assistance-tool](http://www.farmers.gov/farm-loan-assistance-tool) and clicking the 'Get Started' button. From here they can follow the prompts to complete the Eligibility Self-Assessment and start the farm loan journey.

#### **REPORT OF NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE (NASS)**

Bruce Eklund reported that New Jersey corn harvested for grain is expected to be 65,000 acres. New Jersey farmers are expected to harvest 108,000 soybean acres. The expected 30,000 wheat harvested acres are the highest since 2011. Hay area harvested is estimated at 96,000 acres, 11,000 of those being alfalfa. Corn planted area for all purposes is estimated at 72,000 acres. Soybean planted area is estimated at 110,000 acres. Winter Wheat area planted estimate increased to 35,000 acres, the highest since 2011. Nationally, corn planted was up 6% from 2022, soybean acreage was down 5%, and all wheat acreage was up 9%.

#### **REPORT OF NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS)**

Arelys Ortiz represented NRCS and reported the following:

- FY2024 Funding Announcements
  - Applications for EQIP, EQIP-IRA (climate-smart practices), AMA, and RCPP (Salem River Bog Turtle Protection and Restoration and the Northern NJ Small Food Link Conservation Project) are due October 20, 2023.
  - Producers and landowners interested in ACEP (ALE AND WRE) should apply by Oct. 31, 2023 to be considered for funding in the current cycle.
- Disaster Assistance Available to New Jersey Communities Impacted by the July 15 Storm
  - NRCS in New Jersey is now accepting applications for natural disaster recovery efforts aimed at relieving imminent hazards to life and property caused by the July 15 storm in Warren County through the NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program.
  - Applications will be accepted through September 13, 2023.

- Public and private landowners are eligible for assistance but must be represented by a project sponsor. Sponsors include legal subdivisions of the State, such as a city, county, general improvement district or a conservation district.
- Typical streambank restoration projects funded under EWP include removing debris from waterways, protecting eroded stream banks, reseeding damaged areas, and in some cases, purchasing floodplain easements on eligible land. Maintenance and repair of existing structures, such as bridges and culverts, as well as damage to homes and businesses are not eligible for assistance.
- **USDA Seeks Proposals for Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership**
  - The USDA is asking for proposals for the Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership to improve forest health on public and private lands by September 4, 2023.
  - Joint Chiefs' project proposals are submitted by the local NRCS and Forest Service offices, through their state and regional offices, to national headquarters for consideration. These proposals are developed through a collaborative process between NRCS, Forest Service and local partners.
  - Proposals may address one, two, or all three program objectives:
    - reduce the risk of wildfire;
    - protect water quality and supply;
    - improve wildlife habitat for at-risk species.
- **Working Lands for Wildlife Frameworks for Conservation Action**
  - USDA announced last month that it will expand its work on wildlife conservation by investing at least \$500 million over the next five years and by leveraging all available conservation programs, including the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), through its Working Lands for Wildlife (WLFW) effort.
  - The new funding includes \$250 million from the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) and \$250 million from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).
  - USDA will also work with partners on the ground to develop four new frameworks to be released in 2024–25. The two that cover the eastern part of the U.S. include:
    - Eastern Deciduous Forest: A strategy to achieve forest health and habitat restoration that benefits declining wildlife dependent on young forests.
    - Eastern Aquatic Connectivity: A strategy to guide restoration of rivers and wetlands to support habitat connectivity in watersheds with significant at-risk species.
- **New Investments to Improve Measurement, Monitoring, Reporting and Verification of Greenhouse Gas Emissions**
  - Secretary Vilsack announced this month that USDA will invest \$300 million through President Biden's Investing in America agenda to improve measurement, monitoring, reporting and verification of greenhouse gas emissions and carbon sequestration in climate-smart agriculture and forestry.

- The new investments, made possible by the Inflation Reduction Act, will advance priorities set by the broader Federal Strategy to Advance Greenhouse Gas Measurement and Monitoring for the Agriculture and Forest Sectors.
- USDA Invests \$7.4 Million in 25 Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Efforts
  - This includes 17 new Urban Service Centers (our closest locations are in Philadelphia and NYC), ten new urban county committees, as well as approximately \$10.7 million in investments for the Patrick Leahy Farm to School Program and an expansion of the Healthy Food Financing Initiative, including approximately \$30 million in funding availability for the new Local and Regional Healthy Food Financing Partnerships Initiative.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Approval – Commodity Councils’ Budgets and Nominations**

ON the MOTION of Kurt Alstede, seconded by David DeFrange, the Board voted to approve the Commodity Councils’ Budgets and Nominations as presented by the Division of Marketing and Development.

Stephen Lee abstained from the vote.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**RESOLUTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION**

ON the MOTION of Kurt Alstede, seconded by John Hart, the Resolution for Executive Session was read:

*“The Board adopts a resolution to enter executive session pursuant to NJSA 10:4-12(b)(7) pending or anticipated litigation or contract negotiation other than in subsection b.(4) herein in which the public body is, or may become, a party, or matters falling within the attorney–client privilege.*

*The Board will not disclose those issues covered by attorney client privilege.”*

ON the MOTION of John Hart, seconded by Barney Hollinger, the Board voted to go back into the public section of the meeting.

ON the MOTION of Barney Hollinger, seconded by Bob Blew, the Board voted unanimously to extend the deadline for applications for the Secretary of Agriculture position until September 1, 2023.

**MEETINGS**

The next regular meeting of the State Board of Agriculture will be held on Wednesday, August 23, 2023, at Riverview Plaza, Trenton.

**ADJOURNMENT**

ON the MOTION of John Hart, seconded by Barney Hollinger, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the regular meeting at 4:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Assistant Secretary of Agriculture