

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

May 22, 2024

**Jersey Fresh** – Marketing and Development Division staff participated in several events including an Eastern Produce Council meeting hosted by South Carolina, a Jersey Fresh Kickoff Event, and Apple, Blueberry, and Wine Council meetings as well as Sire Stakes and Vegetable Growers Association meetings. Division staff continues to work with OIT and a vendor to finalize FindJerseyFresh.com website as there have been some technical glitches that need to be resolved.

**Plant Shipment Tracing** – Plant Industry Division's Nursery Program staff conducted trace forward inspections with USDA APHIS PPQ staff at the request of the USDA to collect samples from plants that may have been infected with *Phytophthora ramorum*. Over 50 plants were sold online to eight separate locations in New Jersey. These plants were shipped from a nursery in California that is under a federal quarantine for *P. ramorum*. All the collected samples were tested and found to be negative for *P. ramorum*.

**FFA Spring Career Development Events** – More than 300 agricultural education students from 30 different chapters participated in Spring Career Development Events (CDEs) on April 18, 2024, at Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences. Thirty-one industry and education representatives served as event coordinators and judges. These events serve as an extension of the classroom and test students' competency in various areas of agriculture. First-place winners were Union County FFA in the Agricultural Sales and Environmental & Natural Resources CDEs, Northern Burlington FFA in the Agricultural Technology & Mechanical Systems CDE, Newton FFA in the Agronomy CDE, Warren Hills FFA in the Floriculture CDE, Hunterdon County in the ESEA Nursery/Landscape CDE, and Allentown FFA in the Veterinary Science CDE. All teams have the opportunity to represent New Jersey at the National FFA Convention in October.

**Summer EBT Update** - The Food and Nutrition Division continues to collaborate with other departments on Summer EBT. A webinar on April 17 was successful and the recording is available in the School Nutrition Electronic Application and Reimbursement System (SNEARS). School Food Authorities have started uploading their template with enrollment. As of May 14, there were 147 already uploaded representing 99,122 Summer EBT eligible children.

**Animal Emergency Working Group Symposium** – The 26th annual Animal Emergency Working Group (AEWG) Symposium was held on Wednesday, May 8 at the Horse Park of New Jersey. The training consisted of interactive instructional sessions from Burlington and Somerset County Animal Response Team (CART) leaders regarding emergency trailer upkeep and inventory. A representative from Garden State Animal Resource Team (GSART) and USDA Regional ESF #11 provided an overview on emergency pet sheltering supplies and resource procurement. The Horse Park served as an ideal venue, both in facility infrastructure and its central location within the state. The NJDA was thrilled to host 115 attendees, which included members of CART, State Animal Response Teams (SART), the Office of Emergency Management, law enforcement and others.

**Dairy and Livestock Processing** – Marketing and Development Division staff continues to work with dairy and livestock processors to further define programs and monies available for each specific project. Work continues on expanding the innovation center to have poultry and dairy defined in the current red meat project. Work is also being done on the North Jersey Processing Center while they await news on the Meat Poultry Processing Expansion Program (MPPEP) application. It was expected mid- to late April but to date there is no indication when it will be announced. Additional funding capital is also being investigated.

**Erosion Control Standards** – Agricultural and Natural Resources Division staff completed final versions of three erosion control standards for offsite stability, detention basins and solar array installations that are now ready for the rule adoption process. The stability standard was first established as a memorandum of agreement between NJDA and NJ DEP in 1990 as a technical agreement for discharging stormwater in locations which would be less likely to erode. The MOA was codified into a standard in 1999. This represents the first major upgrade to the standard since its initial introduction 34 years ago.

**Lymantria Lymantria Dispar (LDD – Formerly Known as Gypsy Moth)** – The LDD Aerial Suppression Program began on May 8 in South Jersey. A total of 290 acres were treated in four blocks in Dennis and Upper Townships, Cape May County. Plans are to conduct treatments in five blocks in Bass River Township, Burlington County as well as providing a second application on a block in Dennis Township, Cape May County, the week of May 13. Once applications are completed in South Jersey, the operations will then move to North Jersey to begin treatments in Sussex and Passaic Counties the week of May 20.

**Avian Influenza In Dairy Cattle Update** – A Federal Order established by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) went into effect on Monday, April 29. The order identifies specific requirements related to the emerging disease issue of Influenza A (HPAI) in cattle. With the goal of protecting the nation's livestock industry, the USDA has implemented required Influenza A testing on lactating cows prior to interstate movement. Additionally, the Federal Order requires laboratories and state veterinarians to report Influenza A detections in livestock to USDA APHIS. There have been no suspect cases in New Jersey to date. The NJDA Division of Animal Health distributed memos and copies of USDA guidance documents to dairy farmers and veterinarians in New Jersey. The memos provided updates on the situation, guidance for testing and cattle movement, and links to resources for further information. All veterinarians and cattle producers in New Jersey were encouraged to be alert for unusual or unexplained illnesses in herds. NJ farmers and herd veterinarians were reminded to evaluate their personal and onsite biosecurity protocols to minimize the risk of exposure to the virus and identify areas of possible improvement. The USDA has announced support for producers with affected dairy farms at <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/usda-support-hpai-affected-premises.pdf>.

**Farm to School** – The Food and Nutrition Division's Farm to School Team attended several events as part of Earth Month. They included speaking at the Department of Education Lunch & Learn on Farm to School & Food Miles where participants collaborated on ways to reduce food waste, and advance local procurement; attending the Monmouth County Board of Agriculture meeting and providing information and resources for the Local Food for Schools (LFS) grant; attending the Ocean County Soil Conservation Workshop and providing an introduction on Farm to School for educators; being part of a panel discussion on an NJ School Nutrition Association Live Webinar on LFS; and being a panel speaker at the NJ Sustainability Summit on resources for the classroom, providing information on Farm to School grants including LFS, the Farm to School Formula Grant, sample actions on implementation of the funding and resources for educators.

**Heat Stress Information** – The Department continues to work with Rutgers and New Jersey Farm Bureau on updating fact sheets concerning heat stress and agriculture. Rutgers will be hosting webinars on Heat Stress in Agriculture on June 5 and June 12. You can register at <https://bit.ly/3Vdscm4>. Rutgers recently released a fact sheet on symptoms of heat stress that can be found at <https://bit.ly/3QTXVGc>. The Center for Disease Control has a heat stress tool where you can enter your zip code to find heat stress risk at your location at <https://ephtracking.cdc.gov/Applications/HeatRisk/>. Also, the New Jersey Department of Health released a flyer on heat-related illnesses and protecting farm workers. It can be found at [https://www.nj.gov/health/ceohs/public-health-tracking/climate-change/FactSheets/Protecting\\_Farmworkers.pdf](https://www.nj.gov/health/ceohs/public-health-tracking/climate-change/FactSheets/Protecting_Farmworkers.pdf).