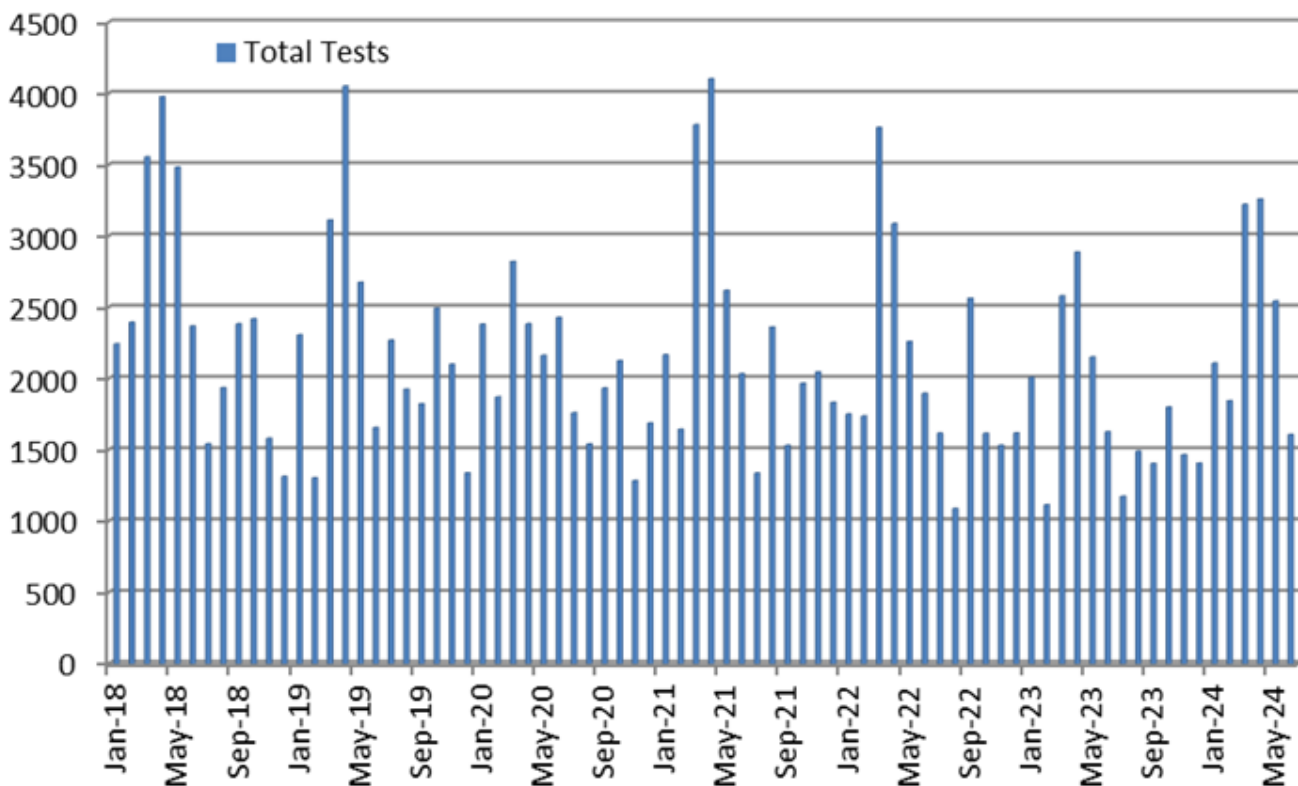


Secretary's Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture

August 28, 2024

School Meals and Summer EBT Applications - The Food and Nutrition School Unit staff is approving school districts' individual application packets that provide access to the School Meals and Summer EBT Application for the upcoming 2024-25 School Year. They will be distributing this application to all households prior to the beginning of the 2024-25 School Year. This year the application will be used for three purposes: to apply for School Meal Program Eligibility, to determine eligibility for Summer EBT, and replace the NJ Department of Education Household Survey for Schools participating in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). All schools and districts operating in the CEP will determine household incomes for state reporting purposes by using the School Meals and Summer EBT Application, for both standard and CEP schools/sites.

Animal Health Diagnostic Laboratory – The Division of Animal Health Animal Health Diagnostic Laboratory performed and/or reported a total of 1,607 and 1,150 tests in June and July 2024, respectively. For comparison, historical test numbers are plotted on the graph below:



NJAAE Summer Teacher Professional Development Conference – The first New Jersey Association of Agricultural Educators (NJAAE) Summer Teachers Conference was held on July 31 – August 1. This initiative of the NJAAE was to provide the New Jersey agricultural educators two days of professional development including a cheese making workshop, a milk quality and products career development event workshop to help prepare students for state events, a shellfish dissection as well as a guest speaker from Rowen Veterinary Science. This year there were 12 teachers in attendance.

Jersey Fresh – Marketing and Development Division staff coordinated and attended the Farmers Market Week Grape Tomato Promotion Day on boardwalks in Atlantic City, Seaside Heights, and Wildwood on August 5, and at the same locations for the National Eat A Peach Day Promotion on August 22. Staff continues to work with OIT and a vendor to finalize the FindJerseyFresh.com website.

There have been some technical glitches that continue to be resolved weekly. Staff exhibited at the New England Produce Council Show in Boston and met with several buyers from regional supermarkets.

Canadian Blueberry Certification Program – Plant Industry Division staff continued their audits for this year's Canadian Blueberry (fruit) Certification Program in July, certifying New Jersey blueberry growers for freedom from blueberry maggot; *Rhagoletis mendax*. Rutgers Fruit IPM scouts reported low trap counts for blueberry maggot but increasing populations for spotted-winged drosophila and growers that wish to continue shipping to Canada must adhere to the required treatment schedule for both. Twenty-six growers enrolled in the 2024 program, of which 10 of them shipped a total 102,855 containers to Canada in July with one grower expected to continue shipping into August.

Live Bird Market Testing – In July, Division of Animal Health technicians conducted unannounced inspections at 23 registered New Jersey live bird markets and sampled poultry from 10 markets for avian influenza. Additional activities included: the quarterly closure of 18 live bird markets, which consists of cleaning and disinfecting the entire market followed by a minimum of 24 hours of down time. Following the down time, environmental samples are taken for testing; the inspection of two poultry distributors, including reviewing records, and vehicle cleaning and disinfection logbooks to ensure compliance with 2:9-4.2(c); and avian influenza testing of at one in-state poultry distributor and 38 backyard flocks.

Milk Processors – Marketing and Development Division staff continues to work with nine new or existing processors at various steps of grant applications or building projects. Work is underway to set up a survey to gauge the interest in development of alternative dairy operations in the state. Sheep, goat and buffalo milk have a significant market as defined in a study from the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center.

NJ ManureLink Composting Field Day – The NJ ManureLink Composting Field Day hosted by Copper Creek Landscape Management in Hunterdon County took place on August 14. The New Jersey Composting Council (NJCC) led the education and hands-on activities along with the NJDA's Division of Agricultural and Natural Resources, and host nurseryman David DeFrange II. The day was made possible through a USDA-NRCS, Conservation Innovation Grant as there were 23 attendees. Each participant learned how to make compost incorporating manure and received a bucket with compost to take home. One participant requested a follow-up meeting with the NJCC for guidance to begin composting on their farm. The NJ ManureLink website currently has 82 registered users.

Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) – The Plant Industry Division's Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey team has been deploying and servicing traps at nurseries and soybean farms. Traps at nurseries are being used to detect the following invasive insect pests: summer fruit tortrix moth (*Adoxophyes orana*); box tree moth (*Cydalima perspectalis*), Asian gypsy moth (*Lymantria dispar asiatica*), Pine beauty moth (*Panolis flammea*) and the Oak processionary moth (*Thaumetopoea processionea*); traps at soybean farms are being used to detect: the silver-y moth (*Autographa gamma*), golden twin spot moth (*Chrysodeixis chalcites*), bud borer (*Crocidosema aporema*), old world bollworm (*Helicoverpa armigera*), and the cotton cutworm (*Spodoptera litura*). During the month of July, staff deployed insect traps at 13 soybean farms and 11 nurseries. Currently traps have been deployed at 35 soybean farms and 39 nurseries. Many traps have been serviced on a bi-weekly basis since June. Trap catches are being delivered to the Rutgers Plant Diagnostic Lab for screening.

Summer Food Service Program Performance – A Food Research and Action Center Report showed that the NJDA's Food and Nutrition Division's Summer Food Service Program was a top performer in July 2023 for meeting its goal of reaching 40 children with summer lunch for every 100 children who received a school lunch during the 2022-2023 regular school year.