

**Secretary's Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture**  
**June 26, 2019**

**Hemp Legislation** – The following hemp legislation passed both Houses and is on the Governor's desk. The Hemp Bill passed the Senate 36-0 and the Assembly 73-0-1.

- A-5322 Burzichelli (D3) - Establishes program for cultivation, handling, processing, transport, and sale of hemp; repeals New Jersey Industrial Hemp Pilot Program.
- S-3686 Sweeney (D3) — Establishes program for cultivation, handling, processing, transport, and sale of hemp; repeals New Jersey Industrial Hemp Pilot Program.

**Jersey Fresh Marketing** – The Jersey Fresh marketing season is in full swing. As noted at previous board meetings, we are underway with a comprehensive outdoor advertising campaign, and will be featuring different produce items on digital billboards throughout the summer. Right now, we are in market with blueberry-specific billboards, and our efforts are being complemented by additional billboards sponsored by the New Jersey Blueberry Council. Additionally, we went live with radio advertisements – including on streaming radio – and are using a new set of ads featuring Secretary Fisher.

**Canadian Blueberry Program** – Thirty-three New Jersey blueberry growers have been approved for this year's Canadian Blueberry Fruit Certification Program (BCP). The BCP program is designed to facilitate the export of fresh blueberry fruit into Canada while protecting against the introduction of blueberry maggot; *Rhagoletis mendax* – a native pest to northeastern United States. Nursery Inspection Program staff members have trained all NJ participants in this year's BCP on protocols and grower responsibilities, so they comply with Canadian Food Inspection Agency regulations. There are three new growers to the program this year. Movement certification labels have been issued to participating growers and shipments to Canadian fresh fruit markets were anticipated to begin around the second full week of June.

**Envirothon Winner** – The Marine Academy of Technology & Environmental Science Team #1 (MATES) from Ocean County was the 1st place winner of the 2019 Envirothon held in May at Great Times Day Camp in Camden County. Twenty-five teams competed in the 26th annual event, which tests high school students' knowledge in six environmental subject areas including aquatics, a current environmental issue, forestry, soils, wildlife, and a team presentation. The West Windsor - Plainsboro High School North from Mercer County finished second and Marine Academy of Science and Technology Team # 1 (MAST) placed third from Monmouth County. New Providence High School placed fourth and Cedar Creek High School placed fifth. The Envirothon is sponsored by the NJ Association of Conservation Districts, NJ Department of Agriculture-State Soil Conservation Committee, 15 Soil Conservation Districts, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Rutgers Cooperative Extension and the Department of Environmental Protection.

**School Nutrition Program** – School Nutrition Program representatives recently awarded the Eat Right Move More Program (ERMM) Grand Prize to Brick Township High School. The school received a \$20,000 grant. This program is represented through a partnership among the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, the New York Jets, and the American Dairy Association North East. The program recognizes schools that support and promote healthier food options, overall student wellness, and increased opportunities for physical activity through the Jet's Play 60 Eat Right, Move More Program. The two Division Champion prizes were awarded to Essex Regional Educational Services Commission and to Lakewood Middle School. Both Division Champion winners received a \$5,000 grant. Half of the funding received must be used on infrastructure or equipment improvement directly for or related to the School Nutrition Programs and the other half must be used for the purchase of physical education equipment.

**Animal Health Pathology Lab Testing** – The Animal Health Pathology Laboratory Section for the months of April and May 2019 completed a total of 343 and 253 tests and/or procedures, respectively. Tests and/or procedures involved gross necropsy examination, histopathologic (microscopic), and parasitological preparation and evaluation. Species submitted for testing in the month of May 2019 included bovine, equine, ovine, alpaca, canine, feline, domestic poultry/backyard birds, pigeons, marine mammals, zoo, exotic and wildlife species. Cases for these months generated additional diagnostic tests for other laboratory sections (e.g., bacteriology, virology, and molecular). Results from these case submissions help to support practicing veterinarians (large, mixed and small animal), private food and companion animal owners, NJ State Agencies, racetrack, wildlife, zoo, and nonprofit animal facilities.

**Food Safety Modernization Act Inspections** – The FSMA Produce Safety team is conducting inspections throughout the state as part of the roll-out of the FSMA Produce Safety Rule. As discussed previously, operations with \$500k or more in annual sales are required to be compliant with the Produce Safety Rule this year. The focus of these inspections continues to be on education rather than enforcement.

**Spotted Lanternfly Surveys** – Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) survey crews continue performing property assessments and obtaining homeowner treatment permissions from Mercer through Warren Counties. Overall, a total of 14,788 properties encompassing 48,195 acres are identified in the project. Of this number, assessments and treatments have been conducted on 227 properties encompassing over 5,325 acres. The proposed expansion of the existing quarantine has been published in the New Jersey Register for public comment until August 2, 2019. To date, no comments have been received. A total of 20 full-time, temporary hourly employees were hired for the Spotted Lanternfly Survey in 2019. Combined with five existing employees there are a total of 25 workers on the project. The final new hire began June 24.

**Summer Food Service Program** – All sponsor applications for the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) have been reviewed and approved, and all approval letters have been mailed. The required sponsor pre-approval visits have been conducted. SFSP staff conducted Program Operations trainings in our office on June 4, 5 and 11. Final bid openings were held on June 12th. Staff participated in a Summer Food kickoff event at Plainfield Recreation Department on June 14 and is scheduled to participate in the South Jersey Food Bank kickoff on June 27.

**21<sup>st</sup> Annual Animal Emergency Working Group Symposium** – The Department hosted the 21st Annual Animal Emergency Working Group (AEWG) Symposium in May with 45 attendees from 10 counties at Rutgers University's Cook College. The symposium provides animal responders the opportunity to keep their skills sharp and help define their understanding of their role in the event of an emergency or disaster. This year's event focused on foreign animal disease and emerging disease threats in the state of New Jersey. An overview of agricultural terrorism was presented by an FBI special agent. Also, a USDA/APHIS veterinarian explained to the group the importance of biosecurity.

**Sports Turf Management Apprenticeship Ceremony** – Ag education staff attended a special ceremony at the Monmouth County Career Center on June 11 to celebrate the approval for a Greenskeeper and Sports Turf Management Apprenticeship from the Department of Education and Department of Labor. This is the first of its kind in the state and could be a model for other programs and agricultural career sectors. This apprenticeship program will allow students to learn while they earn and gain specialized skills that can lead to sustaining careers. Apprenticeship programs can be customized to meet the needs of nearly every part of the agriculture industry and could be a solution to finding qualified talent to fill employment demands.