

Secretary's Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture
March 24, 2021

Hemp Testing Development – Plant laboratory staff have developed a method to test cannabinoids in fresh or dry hemp material by using high-performance liquid chromatography with a diode-array detector (HPLC-DAD). The method will measure 10 major cannabinoids under 17 minutes of run. The method is under a validation process. The plant laboratory's personnel have submitted a manuscript for testing cannabinoids in hemp to ACS Publications, Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry. The manuscript is under review by the editor in charge.

New Jersey Chapters Celebrate National FFA Week – New Jersey FFA's 36 chapters joined 8,739 chapters from around the country in the celebration of National FFA Week from February 20-27. State officers and state staff attended various chapter events. While celebrations may have looked a little different this year, chapters still held activities to promote Agricultural Education and the FFA and to demonstrate premier leadership, personal growth, and career success in action.

Emergency Planning and Preparedness – A virtual State Animal Response Team (SART) meeting was conducted to review the organization's mission statement and goals, prepare for upcoming training, and introduce working group options for the volunteers. In cooperation with the NJ Department of Human Services Office of Emergency Management, the DAH has slightly revised presentations and course materials developed by The Center for Food Security and Public Health Virtual to align with NJ SART's mission. These presentations serve as the initial foundational training sessions for the participating volunteers that began on March 10.

National Nutrition Month – March is National Nutrition Month and the Food and Nutrition Division's Child and Adult Care Food Program marked the occasion by hosting a live virtual event on TEAMS called, "In The Know With CACFP" on March 18. They shared what's new in the New Jersey Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) as more than 200 participants attended the event.

Grant Programs – Marketing and Development Division staff are fulfilling required obligations under our grant programs, Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBG), Animal Feed Regulatory Program Standards (AFRPS) Produce Safety, Livestock, Risk Management (RMA), Rural Development, Organic Cost Share and Wine Industry Grants, including research and development. In addition, we are monitoring Grant Proposal Awards and preparing proposals. The 2021 SCBG has been submitted to the USDA and is awaiting award.

Spotted Lanternfly – A total of 16,904 spotted lanternfly (SLF) egg masses were scraped in the last month. Teams are working to designate new priority areas for the 2021 treatment season based on numbers of egg masses and SLF adults observed. Teams continue to secure permissions for treatments from property owners using the new SLF treatment agreement. SLF staff collected 111 signed treatment agreements and assessed 217 properties this month. In addition, staff continues to conduct grid surveys mostly in the northern counties of the state. During this time, a total of 61 grids were completed.

Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Program – The program has been seeing a continued uptick in building activity along the eastern shore and even in some parts of the northwest of New Jersey. This includes several larger housing and warehouse development projects, which have been somewhat scarce in the past several years. Anecdotal information attributes the increase in residential construction to people leaving more urbanized areas for more suburban and rural areas to seek asylum from potential COVID-19 infection. This has been reported by many of the larger builders in the state.

Live Bird Market Working Group Meeting – Three Division of Animal Health technicians attended the Virtual Live Bird Market Working Group (LBMWG) Meeting. The three-day event covered various topics, including current nationwide findings for avian influenza and the challenges with COVID-19. Additional presentations included “lessons learned” from avian influenza incidents during the 2020 calendar year in different states. In addition, discussions continued with an update on cooperative agreements, education and outreach presentations, and an update on cleaning and disinfection methods. Attendees included state, federal, and industry from across the country. This year’s meeting had the highest attendance for any LBMWG Meeting ever.

Organic Certification – Marketing and Development Division Organic Certification employees are completing work on certifications and in-house field inspectors are conducting inspections via the modified inspection protocol of reviewing documents prior to doing on-site visits. Training continues to take place to train more in-house staff to do organic inspections. Other staff are being trained to complete organic certification packets for handlers and producers. The organic section is also switching filing forms over to electronic versions of the forms in order to modernize the packet submission process.

Food Distribution – The Food and Nutrition Division has distributed a food survey/catalog out to the food banks. The catalog offers supplemental USDA foods offered through the new CARES COVID Supplemental funds (COSUP). The \$7.9 million towards the purchase of The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) foods has been offered by fair share to the food banks.