

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

August 25, 2021

Farmland Assessment Mapping Tool – The Farmland Assessment Soil Mapping Tool is available at <https://nida.njmapper.com/>. Staff presented the tool to the Farmland Evaluation Committee (FEC). The mapping tool was developed to provide open access to users in the agricultural and governance community to access, view, and print soil productivity reports by tax parcel. If desired, farms can apply for reassessment upon request to their local Tax Assessor.

Animal Health Laboratory Accreditation – The Animal Health Diagnostic Laboratory and the Animal Feed Chemistry section of the Plant Laboratory received continued accreditation to the ISO 17025 standard. The USDA and FDA require accreditation to ensure the highest quality results for the protection of animal agriculture, food safety, and public health in N.J. and the U.S.

Honeybee Hive Relocation – The State Apiarist was contacted by the Delaware River and Bay Authority (DRBA) about a swarm of bees on the Delaware Memorial Bridge. The Apiarist and a Salem County beekeeper collected the swarm and moved it to an apiary location in Salem County. This provided an excellent opportunity for the Apiarist to educate many DRBA employees about honeybee swarms.

Commodity and Inspection Grading Program – The Marketing Division's Commodity Inspection and Grading essential staff are conducting all requested USDA Terminal Market and Shipping Point inspections (average of 400 per month). Tomatoes for processing are underway while scheduling and conducting USDA on-farm Third Party Audits; scheduling and performing Produce Safety inspections; conducting 2021 FDA contract assignments; conducting requested on-farm fertilizer inspections; collecting animal feed and fertilizer samples (80 per month); updating Animal Feed, Produce Safety, and Organic Inventories, performing on-farm Readiness Reviews for the Produce Safety Rule; working with the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture on Produce Safety Standards; and performing Jersey Fresh Quality Grading inspections.

School Nutrition Program – The Food and Nutrition Division's School Nutrition Programs Unit is approving Letter to Parent and Application Packets and handling a high volume of questions regarding the waivers, reimbursements, and SSO Application integration into SNEARS 2.0. More than 100 electronic applications have been approved, the nonparticipating packet has been released, and Community Eligibility Program applications are being approved with the deadline of August 31, 2021.

The NJ Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Program – Many of New Jersey's Soil Conservation Districts (SCD) are continuing to experience high demand for new permitting and inspection for ongoing construction. Demand for new single-family homes along the east coast, along the Delaware River and Northwest part of the state remains high. During the 2021 fiscal year, the program saw 5,900 new applications for construction on 11,800 acres. SCD staff conducted 52,000 site inspections and issued 6,800 compliance certificates for new buildings.

Canadian Blueberry Program – There were 85 shipments including a total of 1.7 million containers of fresh blueberries that were certified for export into Canada for the month. Most of the 29 approved blueberry growers sent their final shipments to Canada this month and returned their unused movement certification labels to inspection staff. To date, 290 shipments including a total of 5.7 million containers have been certified and shipped under the program

Livestock Processing – The Marketing and Development Division continues to work on the livestock processing project, including compiling results of the Rutgers Survey. Initial indications show the need

for a north and south dedicated custom harvest, cut and wrap facility to create a positive impact to the livestock economy of the state and provide a local source of meat to the general public. Staff are working with a proposal of a custom processing plant that must be owned by producers and have an innovation center attached so it can sustain the business structure after the Economic Development Authority dedicates money to the project for initial startup funds.

Summer Food Service Program – The Food and Nutrition Division’s Summer Food Service Program monitors are conducting virtual monitoring visits through August 27. Visits continue to go well as USDA site requirements are being met. Meetings continue to be held every Wednesday to discuss visits, questions, problems, or any concerns. The New Jersey Department of Health continues to inspect sponsor feeding sites, and prep kitchens.

Animal Health Diagnostic Lab Pathology Section – The Pathology Laboratory Section for the month of July 2021 completed a total of 231 tests and/or procedures. Tests and/or procedures involved gross necropsy examination, histopathologic (microscopic), immunohistochemical and parasitological preparation, and evaluation. These cases 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), food and companion animal owners, NJ State Agencies, racetrack, wildlife, zoo, and nonprofit animal facilities. Cases involved diagnostic testing for disease and/or cause of death diagnosis and routine and/or sporadic disease surveillance for large and small ruminant, companion animal and exotic/zoo species; sudden death with no clinical symptoms; assessment of backyard and small flock health issues; large scale flock disease; law enforcement forensic investigation and animals exhibiting neurologic symptoms.