

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

August 24, 2022

**Jersey Fresh Campaign** – Division staff participated in the National Eat A Peach Day Promotion and Distribution on Monday, August 22, with complimentary Jersey Fresh peaches available on the Seaside Heights, Atlantic City, and Wildwood boardwalks. The 2022 summer media campaign continues through Labor Day with radio, billboards, airplane banners, trade ads and social media content and contest. We are planning agritourism media outreach for the Fall with details to follow next month.

**Ag Education** – There have been several new agriculture teachers hired, and some have transitioned to new schools. Some positions were added, and some were open for a variety of reasons. There are new teachers at schools in Hunterdon, Warren, Sussex, Burlington, and Cumberland counties. One open position remains at Camden County Technical School – Gloucester Campus. Nine veteran teachers with a service range of 23-34 years could be eligible for retirement within the next 1-2 years. This doesn't include teachers who are nearing retirement based on age and started teaching later in life. Currently, more than a quarter of the ag teachers in the state have less than five years of teaching experience.

**Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza** – A new Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza case on the eastern border of Pennsylvania has caused most of Warren County in New Jersey fall into the control zone. An import permit and 72-hour testing requirement is in now effect for birds from the control zone area moving into Live Bird Markets.

**Spotted Lanternfly Funding** – A spotted lanternfly (SLF) reimbursement treatment funding opportunity has been offered to all county governmental agencies to help provide additional treatments against SLF infestations. Agencies in Camden, Cumberland, Gloucester, Hudson, Mercer, Monmouth, Morris, and Union counties have applied and been accepted to participate.

**School Nutrition Program** – Division of Food and Nutrition school nutrition program specialists conducted a live Q & A Session for school personnel responsible for determining eligibility for free and reduced priced school meals on Thursday, August 18. This webinar was a follow-up to the comprehensive pre-recorded webinar on Determining Eligibility for Free and Reduced-Price School Meals - Application Training for School Personnel that was posted in the School Nutrition Eligibility Application Reimbursement System (SNEARS) last month.

**Site Inspection** – Division of Agricultural and Natural Resources staff visited a farm in Monmouth County in response to a complaint of color change in a pond. Staff met with water specialists from Rutgers University to try and determine the reason for the pond's color change. Another pond on a different farm is located upstream and it was hypothesized it may have been treated with a dye to prevent algae growth, with the dye washing into the first pond causing darkened water. According to the specialists, the first pond appeared healthy and there was no reason for immediate concern. NJDA staff checked with a company that services the second pond, which said they did not apply a dye. The findings were reported back to the manager of the farm for the first pond.

**Child and Adult Care Food Program** – The Food and Nutrition Division launched its 2023 online Child & Adult Care Food Program Renewal in the CACFP Application Reimbursement Electronic System (CARES) on August 15, 2022. Additionally, institutions will have a tutorial webinar and the Annual Application Memo to assist in completing the renewal. The CACFP online system improvement team continues to communicate with the IT unit daily for ongoing CARES updates and future enhancement developments.

**Jersey Raised** – The Marketing and Development Division is still receiving and processing the "Jersey

Raised” livestock marketing pilot program applications and continuing to research and finalize some labeling technicalities with processors while we develop point-of-purchase materials for the program. Work continues with the livestock processing project, including discussions between the groups and potential funding sources at the State and Federal level. The Department is assisting any processor group or processor in obtaining federal grants that their operation may be eligible for.

**Emergency Preparedness** - The Division of Animal Health’s emergency preparedness coordinator, in partnership with NJ Department of Human Services Office of Emergency Management, has organized a pet sheltering training this Fall. Two venues have been confirmed, one for October 1, in Gloucester County, and another for October 2, in Middlesex County, for a CART (County Animal Response Team) and SART (State Animal Response Team) training. The two events will have identical agendas, allowing team members to choose one nearby location to attend. Subject matter experts from Red Rover, a nationally recognized organization, will travel to New Jersey and lead the exercise. The primary focus of the one-day training will be the intake and registration process at an emergency pet shelter, utilizing the current CART/SART Standard Operating Guidelines as a framework for the content.

**Mile-A-Minute Program** – *Rhinoncomimus latipes*, a Mile-a-minute weed defoliating weevil, was discovered in China and imported in the U.S. to mass produce and release as a biocontrol organism for the invasive weed. The Phillip Alampi Beneficial Insect Lab has been rearing these weevils since 2003 and will continue as long as there is a demand. A total of 8,800 adults were shipped to cooperators in Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and New York during the report period. More than 25,000 weevils have been shipped during the 2022 release season. Mile-a-minute weed, *Persicaria perfoliata*, is a vine that originated in Asia and is now out-competing native plants in the United States. This can lead to a monoculture, which reduces habitat for wildlife and prevents regeneration of trees.