

Secretary's Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture
October 19, 2022

Second NJ HPAI Case Confirmed – The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA) confirmed the state's second Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) case in 2022 in a Warren County non-commercial backyard flock (non-poultry). The disease response was coordinated between state and federal partners. Samples were collected from ducks at the site in Warren County and were tested at the New Jersey Animal Health Diagnostic Laboratory. The duck flock had experienced high mortality, and some displayed neurologic signs before succumbing to the disease. Congruent testing was completed at the National Veterinary Services Laboratory, which confirmed detection of the disease on October 13, 2022. The virus is believed to have spread through wild birds, which were found deceased on the property and tested positive for HPAI. No products from the affected birds were sold off the premises.

Horticulture Inspection Society Meeting – Plant Industry Division staff hosted an Interstate Inspection meeting that took place on October 17-18. The meeting was organized by the Eastern Horticultural Inspection Society (HIS), of which NJDA inspectors are members. This event took place over two days and brings together plant regulatory staff throughout the northeast region from Maine to West Virginia. This meeting helps streamline multistate regulatory agency procedures including a Systems Approach to Nursery Certification (SANC). Attendees visited a nursery in northern New Jersey that has redesigned their operation to address current plant pest quarantine issues including spotted lanternfly. Afterward, the group toured the Phillip Alampi Beneficial Insect Laboratory (PABIL), heard from our NJDA research staff, and discussed current and future biocontrol options for various invasive plants and insects.

National FFA Convention – More than 165 New Jersey representatives from 13 chapters and the State FFA Association will attend the 95th National FFA Convention next week in Indianapolis. Schools with chapters attending are Allentown, Bergen County Academies, Cape May Tech, Cumberland Regional, Essex County, Freehold, Hunterdon County ESEA, Middlesex East Brunswick, Newton, Salem Tech, Union County, Warren Hills, and Woodstown. There are 84 members scheduled to participate in Career Development Events (CDEs), ranging from agricultural issues, agricultural sales, floriculture, food science and technology, to parliamentary procedure, poultry evaluation, and veterinary science. New Jersey State FFA President Jonathan Finney will be the state flag bearer at the convention.

Farm To School Workshop – The Division of Food and Nutrition hosted a professional development workshop at the Newark Conservancy on Wednesday, October 12 for educational professionals and school lunch professionals. The workshop focused on a beginner's approach to implementing Farm to School in their district/community. The Farm to School, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable and the NJDA FoodCorps members worked together to provide a hands-on learning approach to the program. The afternoon was spent at Hawthorne Farm, a 3-acre urban farm in the heart of Newark. There educators learned about Newark's approach to bringing agricultural education and fresh produce to the students and surrounding community.

Jersey Fresh – The Marketing and Development Division has received final approval to proceed on a redevelopment of the FindJerseyFresh.com website with an intended relaunch in late Spring of 2023. Also, marketing campaigns for the fall season activities and crops is taking place on various social media platforms.

Emergency Preparedness – The NJDA and NJ Department of Human Services Office of Emergency

Management hosted training offered to all County and State Animal Response Team (CART and SART) members, in addition to other Animal Emergency Working Group partners earlier this month. Instructors from Red Rover travelled to New Jersey to conduct emergency pet sheltering training at Rowan University and at Middlesex County Fire Academy. Members of CARTs, SART, American Red Cross, Medical Reserve Corps, and Community Emergency Response Teams were in attendance. The training consisted of a lecture and exercise portion on the topics of pet registration/intake and animal behavior and daily care at an emergency pet shelter. In total, 51 individuals completed the course and should now be able to apply the concepts learned in a disaster response requiring an emergency pet shelter.

Lymantria Dispar Dispar Surveys – Plant Industry Division staff have completed Lymantria Dispar Dispar (formerly known as the Gypsy Moth) surveys in five municipalities in Cape May, Burlington, and Cumberland Counties. A total of 30 more need to be completed by the end of November. To date, a total of 19 areas in Cape May and Burlington Counties have been identified for treatment during the spring of 2023.

Agricultural Best Management Practices Grants – Agricultural and Natural Resources Division staff participated in a kick-off meeting with staff at Rutgers NJAES Office of Research Analytics and New Jersey Compost Council concerning the USDA NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) Manure Link. Partner contracts are underway, and staff has begun working on the website layout, which will resemble the New Jersey Land Link website. The New Jersey Compost Council will be working on gathering references/resources to be included on the website.

Department of Defense Fresh Program – The Food and Nutrition Division's Assistant Food Distribution Manager participated in an American Commodities Distribution Association (ACDA) Facebook Live on Tuesday, October 18 to discuss how the NJDA manages its Department of Defense Fresh Program.

Marketing Grants – 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.