

Secretary's Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture
February 7, 2023

Jersey Fresh Marketing – Marketing and Development Division staff continue performing data updates as part of the redevelopment of the FindJerseyFresh.com website with the intended relaunch in late spring of 2023. Division staff is also shipping and delivering point-of-purchase materials to retailers, writing articles, and continuing to publish and disseminate Jersey Fresh social media updates. Staff is planning to attend Southeast Produce Council (SEPC) trade show in early March and the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) trade show in late April with the New England Produce Council show in August and the International Fresh Produce Association (IFPA formerly PMA) show in October.

HPAI Presentation – In December, NJDA Division of Animal Health (DAH) staff presented a webinar hosted by the South Jersey Poultry Association and Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Salem County that educated poultry growers on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) and its potential flock impacts. This was an important opportunity for public outreach to directly educate poultry farmers on the latest on the national HPAI outbreak and how it relates to New Jersey's poultry industry. Also, the DAH conducted a meeting with the Division of Agricultural and Natural Resources to re-evaluate the use of composting as a disposal method for HPAI-related organic materials.

Mexican Bean Beetle Program – Plant Industry Division staff at the Phillip Alampi Beneficial Insect Lab have continued winter production of *Pediobius foveolatus*, a parasitoid wasp originating from India, that attacks and kills Mexican Bean Beetle. Approximately 105,975 adults were produced from 4,239 mummies during the report period. Mexican Bean Beetle, *Epilachna varivestis*, is a Coccinellid beetle that can produce severe leaf damage in bean plants and is a serious agricultural pest in the mid-Atlantic region. Since the wasp is unable to overwinter in New Jersey, PABIL maintains the colony perpetually and makes targeted releases throughout the state each summer to keep MBB populations suppressed.

Water Supply Advisory Council Meeting – The Division of Agricultural and Natural Resources staff attended the Water Supply Advisory Council Meeting. A water availability presentation suggested that unconfined aquifers are most effected by sea level rise and saltwater intrusion. Sea level rise is higher in New Jersey than other coastal states. Sea level rise allows infiltration of seawater into freshwater sources, existing areas with saltwater intrusion issues need active management however sea level rise will not cause significant new saltwater intrusion impacts to potable aquifers. How climate change effects demand and water quality are one of the two biggest factors that are looked at. Over the years, research indicates the northeast is getting warmer each year and precipitation has increased. Groundwater recharge is currently increasing, and New Jersey is getting more pumpable water, but it is happening differently and in different months, wetter in fall and spring. The reservoirs have adequate supply, even with decreased flow and increased demand. New Jersey will continue to have more available water as a result of climate change through 2050.

Child and Adult Food Care Program – The Food and Nutrition Division's Child and Adult Care Program's new Institution Team conducted a virtual webinar for the Building Healthier, More Equitable Communities (BHEC) collaborative group on January 19, 2023. Several of their teams have early childhood education (ECE) components in this initiative. There were representatives from Asbury Park, Camden, Newark, and Paterson in attendance. Division staff highlighted how the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) will help strengthen this initiative and described how to apply to the program. Division staff followed up immediately after the meeting by emailing preregistration packet and information on feeding infants in CACFP.

Animal Emergency Working Group Symposium – Preliminary planning and advertising for the Animal

Emergency Working Group (AEWG) Symposium 2023, including outreach for guest speakers and creation of a save the date flyer was completed. The event, planned for Monday, May 8, 2023, at the Horse Park of New Jersey, will be the first in-person AEWG Symposium since 2019. Working group partners at the local, county, state, and federal levels, including County Animal Response Teams, State Animal Response Teams, Animal Control Officers (ACOs) and Humane Law Enforcement Officers (HLEOs), and emergency managers, are welcome to attend. Also invited are members of the Service Animal Working Group, which recently met on January 19, 2023, to conduct its quarterly meeting. During this meeting, a representative of The Seeing Eye joined to collaborate on an ongoing project aimed to equip those with service animals with resources involving emergency preparedness.

Nursery Inspection Program – NJDA Plant Industry Division and nursery inspection staff conducted inspections at 15 nursery locations and 150 plant dealers to ensure that regulated ornamental plant material are free from injurious pest, insects, and diseases. Winter inspections are carried out in the time between the end of fall dealer inspections and the beginning of spring dealer inspections. Anything of note found during the winter is communicated to the grower with a plan for control. Five Federal inspections were conducted certifying the re-export and export of, 14,325 bulbs, 450 roots, 150,000 individual seeds packs and 2,250 grams of seeds to Canada, Guatemala, and Uruguay. There were 10 domestic shipments of 28,252 plants and 420 plug plants to California and Idaho. Nursery staff continue to communicate with nursery owners and their staff about making sure they have the permit required to ship plants out of the spotted lanternfly quarantine area and that they are inspecting shipments for the presence of spotted lanternfly as they are being loaded

FFA Banquet Speech Workshop – The New Jersey FFA Alumni Association hosted the Banquet Speech Workshop for state officers. Twenty-seven parents, advisors, alumni members, and guests attended the event. State Officers go through rigorous speech writing and presentation training prior to the event. At the Banquet Speech Workshop, they deliver their banquet speeches to the audience, who in turn evaluate it on content and presentation. This event helps prepare the officers for the banquet season which is in May and June.

School Nutrition Program – The Food and Nutrition Division’s School Nutrition Program staff is developing the introduction of the Working Class Families Legislation requirements, and has scheduled an informational session for vendors on February 22, 2023. Additionally, a School Food Authority training will be offered in March. At the same time, Division staff is working on the creation of letters and documents for the School Breakfast Program mandate and the non-participating report is being finalized.

Dairy and Livestock Processing – Marketing and Development Division staff attended five meetings of dairy and livestock processors to further define programs and monies available for each specific project. Work continues on expanding the innovation center to have poultry and dairy defined into the current Red Meat project. This will allow for a complete livestock protein innovation center.