

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE

2009

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGIES

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

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PRODUCE INDUSTRY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

BACKGROUND - New Jersey's growers annually produce nearly \$300 million dollars worth of the healthiest and freshest fruits and vegetables available anywhere. In 2007, New Jersey's vegetable commodities were valued at \$125 million and New Jersey's fruit production of apple, blueberry, cranberry, peach and strawberry production were valued at \$159 million. Local access to large affluent markets has long been an advantage for the marketing of those products. While our markets are still there, competition for those markets has become tougher. New Jersey's produce industry must continually work to rediscover its competitive advantages improving access to nearby markets and strengthening consumer loyalty.

In 2008, passage of the federal Farm Bill, on which New Jersey agricultural interests had significant influence, created opportunities for the produce industry through increased Specialty Crop research and marketing funds, expansion of the School Snack program in which schools are to offer a fresh fruit or vegetable each day as a snack, and the inclusion of fruits and vegetables as eligible purchases by recipients of the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program. The WIC funding alone is estimated to enable \$500 million worth of fresh fruit and vegetable purchases nationwide this year.

These linkages to school and community nutrition programs, along with state-level provisions directing that food purchases be made from local sources to the greatest extent practicable, will strengthen the efforts of the Department of Agriculture to promote the freshness of New Jersey's locally grown produce through the Jersey Fresh campaign. The campaign's message, "*Jersey Fresh, as Fresh as Fresh Gets*" was advertised in print and through radio advertisements in 2008, as budget reductions precluded the use of television. To reinforce the media buys over 2,500 retail supermarkets, community and farmer's markets received *Jersey Fresh* advertising materials to brand New Jersey produce at the point of sale. Through industry visits and involvement with the Eastern Produce Council, the Department continues to closely coordinate advertising with our region's major buyers and retailers.

In partnership with the New Jersey Restaurant Association, approximately 350 restaurants participated in the "Proud to Offer Jersey Fresh" signage program. Working closely with the Produce News, Produce Business and the Packer national industry publications, the Department continues to keep the *Jersey Fresh* program in the national spotlight. Through active membership and participation in the United Fresh Produce Association and the Produce Marketing Association trade shows, the *Jersey Fresh* program's high profile is supported and maintained at the national level.

To ensure the integrity of the *Jersey Fresh* promotion, the Department also spurred efforts to propose legislation that would provide a more direct ability to counteract those who would sell non-New Jersey items as *Jersey Fresh*. The "mislabeling and misbranding bill" would give Department inspectors the ability to immediately cite such violations instead of referring them to the Division of Consumer Affairs in the Department of Law and Public Safety.

Quality assurance is an important component of the *Jersey Fresh* brand. Each year hundreds of New Jersey growers of fresh fruits and vegetables voluntarily register for quality and grade inspections under the Department's *Jersey Fresh* Quality Grading Program. To ensure retailers of good farm management practices, and product traceability, the Department will continue providing grower accreditation for third party food safety certification. In 2008, with funding from the Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program, mock third party food safety audits continued to be available to provide grower training prior to initiating their third-party farm certifications. As food safety increases in importance, and consolidation continues in the retail produce industry, the benefits of the department's affordable third-party farm certifications will continue to grow, as retailers require the improved trace-back ability third-party certifications offer.

Efforts to improve food safety also were behind the Department's work in 2008 with the Department of Health and Senior Services to publish "Chapter 24 and You: A Practical Guide to Selling Safely at Farmers Markets." Spurred by local health officials' concerns about homemade prepared foods being offered for sale, the guide explains to those pursuing value-added items how to prepare, store and market them in accordance with Chapter 24 of the state Health Code. Related to that effort, the Department has worked to identify and develop community kitchens where entrepreneurs can prepare value-added items. In addition, the Rutgers Food Innovation Center was opened in Bridgeton, where food products can be safely developed and agricultural or food-related businesses can be incubated.

In 2008, state food purchasing programs received \$3 million to support locally grown, nutrient dense foods consistent with good dietary guidelines. The Department will also continue to manage the Emergency Food Assistance Program that distributes over 10 million pounds of USDA commodities to 660 food pantries, soup kitchens and other feeding operations. As a cornerstone to quality assurance, the Department will continue to provide affordable third-party farm certifications. Working in conjunction with Rutgers University extension agents, the Department has trained nearly 1,000 farmers in the basics of food safety and in the requirements of third-party audits.

Work will continue to open new community farmers markets, providing growers greater direct access to consumers. Currently, there are 111 community farmers markets throughout the state, many in urban areas where the populations are underserved by supermarkets. The Department also will continue to integrate WIC, Senior Farmers Market coupons and food stamps into the purchasing options at farmers markets. This will be facilitated where possible by incorporation of Wireless Electronic Benefit Transfer technology.

1. PRODUCE STRATEGIES

1.1 Produce Safety Task Force

1) STRATEGY – The produce safety taskforce will continue to guide the Department's efforts assisting New Jersey's fruit and vegetable growers to offer the highest quality locally grown products while adapting their operations to new food-safety standards. As food safety increases in importance, and consolidation continues in the retail produce industry, the importance of the Department's affordable third-party farm certifications will continue to grow, as retailers require the improved trace-back ability third-party certifications offer. The Department will work to;

- 1) Influence the regulatory process to ensure that it is relevant to small, medium and large scale producers.
- 2) Ensure that all types of agriculture including traditional in ground, above ground and tree fruit growers are considered in the development and implementation of food safety standards and regulations.
- 3) Following up on efforts funded by the USDA Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program continue to work with Rutgers to train growers in food safety practices in preparation for third party food safety audits.
- 4) Use the *Jersey Fresh* brand to promote the food safety of New Jersey agricultural products to supermarket chains and all other retailers.

1.2 Jersey Fresh Hospitality Industry Program

2) STRATEGY – Continue to develop and strengthen the *Jersey Fresh* and *Jersey Seafood* Hospitality Industry Program by bolstering many elements of the marketing of those products to the hotel, restaurant and the institutional food service industries. The program will;

1. Continue to involve members of the NJ Restaurant Association, Slow Food of Central NJ, South Jersey Hot Chefs and local chapters of the Professional Chef’s Association.
2. Continue to promote participating restaurants to the public via the internet and other means, including the NJDA website.
3. Continue to provide supplier directories and point of sale advertising to the industry.
4. Promote *Jersey Fresh* produce and menu themes to restaurants and culinary contests such as the “Farm to Fork Week” and the “*Jersey Seafood Challenge*.”

1.3 Increase Produce Branding

3) STRATEGY – Through a Specialty Crop Block Grant, work to improve and strengthen the point of purchase labeling of individual produce items, continue to distribute *Jersey Fresh* advertising materials to growers, marketing cooperatives and retailers to expand the branding of *Jersey Fresh* on packaging and at the point of sale; continue to support efforts in the Legislature to enable the Department to directly enforce mislabeling and misbranding violations.

1.4 Promote Vertical Integration

4) STRATEGY - Encourage industry attendance at national produce industry trade shows, continue to work with representatives of nationally marketed produce brands and seek new methods to better integrate New Jersey’s produce industry into the year-round supply model.

5) STRATEGY - Promote improved communication within industry members and greater coordination between the East Coast growing regions. Work with other state departments of agriculture to develop improved networking opportunities between East Coast growers and marketing cooperatives.

1.5 Continue to Seek New Markets

6) STRATEGY – Work to explore and develop opportunities that facilitate state purchases of New Jersey farm products.

1. Review and examine purchasing opportunities at the Department of Corrections.
2. Continue to promote produce purchasing for school breakfast and lunch programs.
3. Strengthen the State’s emergency feeding programs.

7) STRATEGY - Continue supporting fresh exports of New Jersey agricultural products to the New England states and Canada. Through industry visits and participation in such shows as the New England Produce Council and the Canadian Produce Marketing Association trade shows, keep key industry contacts current on New Jersey agriculture and the latest promotions of the *Jersey Fresh* brand.

1.6 Strengthen Existing and Seek New Community Markets

8) STRATEGY – Work to communicate the best practices and the costs and benefits of direct marketing to growers. Maintain a current list of existing and new community farm markets that seek increased farmer participation.

9) STRATEGY - Promote the existence of community farmers markets to the public. Maintain an interactive directory of community farmers markets on the Department’s website and continue to offer community farmers market lists for publication in local papers. Distribute community farmers’ market lists to agencies responsible for distributing Farmers Market Nutrition coupons to seniors and participants in the Women, Infants & Children (WIC) nutritional program. Promote the use of wireless electronic bank transfers technology and expand the availability of seafood products at community farmers markets.

1.7 Expand Jersey Fresh Program

10) STRATEGY – Continue to strengthen the appeal of the *Jersey Fresh* brand and communicate the benefits of our state’s produce food safety program to supermarket chains and all other retailers. Discourage the use of the “Locally Grown” product claim and increase the use of the *Jersey Fresh* brand name.

11) STRATEGY – Through the use of Specialty Crop Block Grant funds, seek to expand the budget for the *Jersey Fresh* matching-funds grant program and continue to award grants to applicants with the best past performance and greatest potential industry impact.

12) STRATEGY – Continue to broaden the *Jersey Fresh* promotional program to be more inclusive of all New Jersey produced fruits and vegetables, especially herbs, hydroponics and greenhouse produced fruits and vegetables and ethnic produce items, and seek to update *Jersey Fresh* Quality Grading standards to include non-traditional produce items if necessary.

13) STRATEGY – Develop and adopt standards for the use of “Made with Jersey Fresh” labeling utilized on appropriate processed foods.

1.8 Improve Retailer and Processor Coordination

14) STRATEGY – Continue weekly dialogue, including weekly updates, involving Department representatives, growers, producers, wholesalers and retailers of New Jersey agricultural products. Conduct farmer and buyer meetings to bring retailers, processors and growers together.

15) STRATEGY - Improve coordination and communication with the USDA Market News that collects information on the current supply, demand and prices on fruits, vegetables, ornamental and specialty crops.

ORNAMENTAL HORTICULTURE INDUSTRY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

BACKGROUND

Ornamental horticulture, including greenhouse, sod, nursery and floriculture operations, is New Jersey's leading agricultural sector, representing almost 42 percent of the state's agricultural production with \$381 million in cash receipts. New Jersey's horticultural products offer esthetic value, providing shade and a cooling effect and re-charge the air with oxygen.

To increase demand for New Jersey nursery stock, the Department is continuing to expand its marketing program to include more horticultural crops and is working to develop and adopt standards for greenhouse produced products.

The year 2008 saw the continuation of the *Jersey Grown* quality-grading program promotion of Christmas trees. The upgraded retail nursery and garden center listing on the *Jersey Grown* website features an interactive search feature to assist consumers to locate garden centers and nurseries by county, town, business name or product.

The Department continues to work with New Jersey's horticultural producers to produce our state's high quality of horticultural products. The Department will continue to inspect and certify nurseries, enabling growers to sell certified disease-free material in and out of state, and conduct seed certification and seed control testing programs to ensure high quality turf grass seed for New Jersey sod growers.

In 2008, the Department's ornamental horticulture economic development strategies will continue to focus on expanding the promotion of the *Jersey Grown* brand. The *Jersey Grown* website will continue to expand, and inspections for harmful pests and certifying seed will be continued.

2. ORNAMENTAL HORTICULTURE STRATEGIES

2.1 Ensure Plant Health

16) STRATEGY – Work to have a comprehensive approach to ensuring plant health. The following methods to be employed include:

1. Continue inspections for harmful pests and disease.
2. Seek ways to increase use of new methods of pest control and beneficial insects
3. Inspect and certify nurseries, enabling growers to sell certified disease-free material in and out of state.
4. Conduct seed certification and seed control testing programs to ensure high quality turf grass seed for New Jersey sod growers.
5. Encourage the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station to continue its research in identifying new varieties of agricultural products resistant to pests, diseases and new plant introductions.

17) STRATEGY- Support legislation establishing a drought emergency protocol for implementation of predictable, effective and sound restrictions for future emergencies. Work with the Nursery and Landscape Industry, the NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection, and the Department's Agricultural Water Working Group prior to future drought emergencies.

2.2 Increase Consumer Awareness

18) STRATEGY – Use Specialty Crop Block Grant funding to strengthen the *Jersey Grown* brand name to enable the industry to benefit from a common trademark identifying locally produced horticultural products.

1. Work with growers and independent garden centers and nurseries to strengthen their efforts to promote *Jersey Grown* products with advertising tools such as point of sale materials.
2. Distributing a new *Jersey Grown* banner for use at the point of sale and also to identify growers participating in the program.
3. Continue to include horticultural crops in the Department's marketing program and communicate the benefits of buying *Jersey Grown* products.
4. Maintain the retail nurseries and garden center listings on the *Jersey Grown* website. Continue efforts with major area retailers to coordinate the promotion of locally produced *Jersey Grown* products
5. Publish the list of certified *Jersey Grown* growers on the Department's *Jersey Grown* website.

2.3 Improve State and Public Contract Requirements

19) STRATEGY- Continue to work with government agencies including the National Resource Conservation Service, the Department of Transportation through its highway planting program, and the Department of Environmental Protection through its forestry program, to use New Jersey produced products whenever possible and ensure that all products meet the pest-free standards of the New Jersey Nursery Law and satisfy the quality standards set by the *Jersey Grown* Rule as established by the Department.

2.4 Develop Sales Tax Guide

20) STRATEGY – Promote the availability and distribute the Department's Landscaping Services and New Jersey Sales Tax informational guide to help nursery, landscaping service and retail garden centers to better understand amendments to the New Jersey Sales and Use Tax Act. The guide can be found on the Department web site at:

<http://www.nj.gov/agriculture/pdf/InfoGuideLandscapingServices.pdf>

NEW JERSEY SEAFOOD INDUSTRY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

BACKGROUND

As the world's leading supplier of surf clams, ocean quahogs, and mackerel, New Jersey's commercial fishermen have been supplying the world's finest seafood for over 300 years. The variety of New Jersey seafood is impressive: clams, sea scallops, blue crabs, squid, monkfish, tuna, and flounder, and many others. (((NEED 2007 NUMBERS HERE))) In 2007, approximately 154 million pounds of seafood valued at \$152.2 million was landed in New Jersey's six thriving ports. With annual retail, import and export sales in excess of \$2 billion, New Jersey Seafood is important to our state's economy

The state also has 186 aquatic farms including 107 hard clam farms, 43 oyster farms and 15 finfish farms producing trout, koi, hybrid striped bass, sport fish species, and tilapia. Four other aquatic farms produce a variety of aquatic plants destined for ornamental ponds and remediation projects. According to USDA 2005 Census of Aquaculture, the number of acres devoted to saltwater aquaculture in New Jersey has risen from 1,402 in 1998 to 4,466 in 2005.

New Jersey is located in one of the nation's largest, and culturally diverse, upscale consumer seafood markets. But stiff competition from other states, and from around the world, is resulting in lower prices and lost markets. In fact, nationwide about 80 percent of all seafood consumed by Americans is imported from overseas. To combat this trend, the Department is working closely with industry to help consumers better understand the quality and availability of local seafood.

The Department has initiated programs to brand seafood landed by New Jersey vessels or farmed in New Jersey and to develop value-added seafood products to meet the needs of today's consumers. The *Jersey Seafood* branding program allows consumers to identify local seafood while also meeting new country of origin label requirements. Through promotional materials, point of sale advertising, an enhanced website, and work with strategic partners, awareness is expanding for the *Jersey Seafood* brand name. With 70 percent of seafood consumed in restaurants, the *Jersey Seafood* brand promotion is also heavily targeted at chefs and restaurateurs who are the opinion leaders in the industry.

Coastal tourism contributes \$15 billion annually to our state's economy. Restaurants play a key role in a successful tourism industry in New Jersey. Recognizing this, our program identified strategic partnerships and a comprehensive promotional plan to support the positive branding of the New Jersey Shore along with *Jersey Seafood*.

3. SEAFOOD STRATEGIES

3.01 Promote the "Jersey Seafood" Brand

21) STRATEGY-Continue to develop a more consistent year-round demand for *Jersey Seafood* products through the strategic scheduling of promotional activities that highlight New Jersey landed or grown products as distinct from, and of higher value than, competing products. Work to educate future consumers about the importance of seafood in the diet and the production of sustainable and eco-friendly seafood, with a focus on consumer interest in purchasing food locally and emphasizing *Jersey Seafood* as an integral part of a healthier, more active lifestyle.

22) STRATEGY – In order to develop a high quality brand image for New Jersey seafood, as well as maintain a safe and high quality supply of *Jersey Seafood* products, implement standards for seafood using the *Jersey Seafood* brand.

23) STRATEGY - The Department will continue to support the branding of *Jersey Seafood* through our *Jersey Seafood* website as well as point of sale materials developed and distributed to *Jersey Seafood* retailers, community markets, restaurateurs, chefs, and directly to the general public at festivals and events.

3.02 Developing Restaurant Promotions & Branding

24) STRATEGY- The Department will continue to establish promotional relationships with professional culinary organizations such as the New Jersey Restaurant Association, Professional Chefs' Associations, and Slow Foods Organizations of New Jersey. Identify strategic partnerships to support the positive branding of the Jersey Shore and *Jersey Seafood*. The *Jersey Seafood* Suppliers Directory and promotion of the *Jersey Seafood* website electronic directory will help to link buyers and sellers. .

25) STRATEGY - Institutionalize the Annual *Jersey Seafood* Challenge, a hot food competition for professional chefs, to promote locally harvested sustainable seafood and local restaurants.

3.03 Facilitating Retail Promotion & Sale of Jersey Seafood

26) STRATEGY- Increase consumer awareness and promotion of *Jersey Seafood* to emphasize sustainability and eco-friendliness through variety of channels including foodservice (chefs, restaurateurs, corporate feeding programs), media outlets, non-governmental organizations and retailers. Increased awareness and appreciation will increase demand for local seafood and drive sales.

27) STRATEGY- As part of the promotional campaign, a wholesale market report will continue to be distributed to chefs, restaurateurs, retailers and other interested parties to provide current information about the availability of *Jersey Seafood*.

3.04 Supporting Direct Marketing Opportunities

28) STRATEGY- Identify new market opportunities and expand existing markets for *Jersey Seafood* and value-added *Jersey Seafood* products through greater participation at community farmers markets and other new venues such as the internet. A database of farm markets has been helpful to identify the best venues for seafood sales. Initial efforts will be to expand seafood sales in those identified markets. USDA funding will be sought to help in the expansion of farm market sales.

3.05 Development of a Branded Value-Added Seafood Products

29) STRATEGY – Continue to work with the industry to identify specific opportunities for value-added products and assist in securing funding for product development.

3.06 Export of New Jersey Seafood Products

30) STRATEGY – In partnership with USDA and Food Export USA Northeast programs for 2008, identify and promote the development of export marketing opportunities for New Jersey's seafood products.

3.07 Provide Health Certification to Allow Interstate Transport of Live Fish

31) STRATEGY- Working closely with the Division of Animal Health, identify a revenue stream to develop testing/certification for finfish to allow the transport and sale of New Jersey live farm-raised fish to markets in other states and expand the program to meet the needs of ornamental koi hobbyists.

3.08 Support the Aquaculture Education Programs at Cumberland County College and Rutgers University

32) STRATEGY - Recognizing the exigencies of the current budget; continue to build public-private partnerships to develop energy-efficient and economically viable models to offset operational costs, develop strategies that allow expertise/resources to be shared among the various institutions that offer training in aquaculture, identify strategies to bring in additional expertise on an “as needed” basis, and help to identify a part-time academic development director to secure additional support.

3.09 Development of a Supportive Regulatory Path to Foster the Growth of Aquaculture

33) STRATEGY – Continue to assist in crafting a supportive policy and a regulatory path that will allow a viable aquaculture industry to grow in New Jersey, including the revision of the aquaculture rule that provides for the Aquatic Farmer License program, and assist the industry and NJDEP in utilization of the Aquaculture Development Zones, revision of the current traditional shellfish leasing program, development of land-use permitting customized for aquaculture, establishment of a harmonized import program for aquatic species, and better utilization of current State resources to address finfish and shellfish health needs.

DAIRY INDUSTRY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

BACKGROUND

In 2007 New Jersey's commercial dairy producers marketed 168 million pounds of milk valued at \$34 million. New Jersey's estimated 10,000 cows produced on the average ,16,800 pounds of milk per cow and are primarily located in the counties of Salem, Sussex, Warren, Gloucester and Burlington. Those five counties represent 85 percent of New Jersey's milk production. Sustaining New Jersey's Dairy industry is imperative in order to provide a fresh and healthy source of dairy products to all New Jersey residents young and old, as well as maintaining open space and productive agricultural lands.

During 2007, New Jersey dairy producers have experienced a rebound in milk prices, while at the same time facing record-high feed, fuel and fertilizer costs that have significantly impacted profit margins.. In 2007, New Jersey dairy producers saw a stable market during the first six months and declining prices in the second half of the year.

In 2008, following the decision of the dairy hearings, the Department continued the Fuel Adjustment Add-on program to assist producers with elevated diesel fuel costs. This action was warranted and allowable within the current USDA minimum pricing structure. Producers in 2007 received \$419,113.23, and in the first 10 months of 2008 received payments totaling \$769,703.68 through this market-driven program of Class One fluid milk sales.

Today, though challenged with the above items, the number of commercial dairy farms statewide totals approximately 104 farms. This number has not changed much in recent months but the number of cows per farm has fallen compared to previous years. During 2008, the increased daily production output per farm and the decrease in total cow numbers should relate to an increase in per-cow production during the year.

The Department will continue to support value-added products through the *Jersey Fresh* Quality Grading Program and promote the nutritional benefits of milk and milk products through programs such as "Eat Right, Move More." Farm profitability and infrastructure redevelopment will continue to be a priority, and legislation and regulations that affect the industry will be monitored. In 2009, educational programs for the general public and elected officials on the value of the industry to the State of New Jersey will be continued, as will outreach through the Garden State Dairy Alliance in the areas of animal health, bio-security and food safety.

4.0 DAIRY STRATEGIES

4.1 Evaluate Legislation and Regulation

34) STRATEGY – Continue submission of concepts and ideas for possible federal legislation to ensure more stable short-term on-farm milk pricing program. Work with the State's Ratification Committee to continue to seek alternatives that will update and improve the regulations that affect the dairy industry that encompasses, but is not limited to, the Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) program, Clean Air and Water legislation, and establishing a Northeast compact type pricing program. As well as working with licensed milk dealers to provide a sound productive market within New Jersey.

35) STRATEGY – Continue to monitor options related to creating unified New Jersey Dairy Council to meet the needs of both North and South Jersey producers and allow for greater local control over advertising budgets.

36) STRATEGY – Seek to create a new industry working group of distributors, processing and retail representatives which will be responsible for identifying and evaluating practices and programs that will help to sustain the entire New Jersey’s dairy industry and marketing channels.

4.2 Increase Demand for Milk

37) STRATEGY- Continue to support the distribution of milk and milk products as “Jersey Fresh,” “Made with Premium Jersey Fresh Milk,” “Made with Jersey Fresh Milk”, “Jersey Fresh Flavored Milk” and “Jersey Fresh Milk.” Integrate the sale and promotion of Jersey Fresh dairy product sales at community and retail markets throughout the State.

38) STRATEGY – In conjunction with the “Eat Right, Move More” initiative, continue to promote the nutritional benefits of drinking milk at a young age. The Department and producers will work with the New Jersey Dairy Council as well as the American Dairy Association / District Council and Mid-Atlantic Dairy Promotion Council to promote the initiative.

4.3 Ensure Quality Production and Food Safety

39) STRATEGY – Reorganize and redefine the Garden State Dairy Alliance so that it is better able to assist in the support the dairy industry with technical assistance and to coordinate a multi-disciplinary team of state and federal partners to cooperatively address issues related to risk management, animal health, milk quality, nutrient management, bio-security and dairy industry development.

1. The Alliance will work to aid in the sustainability of a complete, viable and thriving dairy industry in New Jersey.
2. Work with the North East Dairy Leadership Team as well as other federal and state agencies within the northeast region to develop relationships beneficial to New Jersey’s dairy industry and the wholesale and retail of milk and milk products. Continue working to protect the health of the dairy industry from the threat of devastating and economically damaging financial losses.
3. Seek to secure funding for the Garden State Dairy Alliance Milk Quality and Risk Management Program. Establish benchmarks for the industry and develop methods to increase productivity of the entire dairy industry. Document the quality of raw and processed milk and milk products produced processed and marketed to the consumers of the state and assure the safety and wholesomeness of dairy products.
4. Continue working with Rutgers and NJ Farm Bureau to promote the FIN PAK and Risk management programs so that producers are able to understand and utilize all financial tools available in the management process.

The alliance benchmarks when implemented will help position dairy operations to compete and sustain a viable, thriving, highly productive and high quality dairy industry in New Jersey if mastered.

40) STRATEGY – Establish a balanced health and safety standard for the sale of raw milk directly to consumers should the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services allow such sales, including: A strict Animal Health testing program implemented at the cost of the producer, which would cover all the communicable and transmittable diseases to

humans; strict daily sanitation testing and recordkeeping required to provide a level of food safety; and requirements for a label informing the general public that “ Raw Milk may be hazardous to the health of the consumer,” or similar language pointing out that safety of the product cannot be guaranteed.

FIELD AND FORAGE CROPS INDUSTRY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

BACKGROUND

In 2007 New Jersey harvested more than 331,000 acres of field crops worth an estimated \$114.3 million. The leading field crops harvested were 115,000 acres of hay, 81,000 acres of soybeans, 95,000 acres of corn for grain and silage, 31,000 acres of winter wheat plus additional acreage of barley. Contributing to the State’s agricultural economy, field crops provide animal feed and help to maintain New Jersey’s working agricultural landscape.

Due to the state’s high land values, property taxes and labor rates, production costs in New Jersey are higher than in most other production areas. With commodity prices based on national production costs, yields and demand, it can be less profitable to produce commodity items in New Jersey than elsewhere. However, in 2007 prices for New Jersey field and forage crops were strong.

One area that has offered opportunity for field crops is the renewable fuels part of the Green Energy sector. New Jersey’s field and forage farmers may be positioned to capitalize on the growing national movement toward ethanol-blended and bio-diesel fuels and their crops would be in higher demand should plans for bio-fuel production facilities come to fruition. Meanwhile, opportunities are emerging for crop residues and warm season grasses to be turned into pellets that can be burned in stoves, and those same materials are being targeted for use in biomass energy projects that generate electricity and/or heat. Even if New Jersey farmers’ crops are not being utilized for such fuels, the increase in demand for feedstocks elsewhere in the country has pushed the overall price of field crops higher over the past few years. That trend began leveling off in mid-2008, with prices dropping back toward more traditional levels.

In 2008 market opportunities between organic growers and processors were supported and progress toward the establishment of bio-fuel plants will be continued in 2009.

In 2009 efforts will be continued to support organic crop production, farm income diversification, the establishment of a bio-fuels plant and grower education about agri-tourism opportunities will be continued.

5.0 FIELD CROPS STRATEGIES

5.0 Ensure Plant Health

41) **STRATEGY** - Through the implementation of the Mexican Bean Beetle parasite program, soybean rust monitoring surveys and the release of beneficial insects to control tarnished plant bug and mile-a-minute weed, the department will continue working to protect the health of the field and forage crops from the immediate threat of devastating and economically damaging plant pests and diseases.

42) STRATEGY - Aid in the development of strategies, to improve New Jersey production and yield per acre for corn, soybeans, small grains, grass hay, alfalfa hay, pasture and other alternative forage & feed crops. Work to support improved management practices, increased economic and environmental sustainability of forage-livestock systems, and improved production and quality of conserved feeds, including alfalfa and other hays and silages.

Work with Rutgers Cooperative Extension and NRCS to:

1. Provide regional producer workshops that will emphasize the benefits of good pasture and cropland management and preservation of water quality.
2. Explore the use of demonstration plots that will emphasize renovation and intensive management systems to improve yield per acre.

5.1 Support Organic Field Crop Production

43) STRATEGY – Continue to encourage the production of certified organic soybeans, corn and wheat to increase the value of these crops.

44) STRATEGY – Continue to assist in linking growers with organic food processors, retailers, animal feed suppliers and all other handlers to help identify new market opportunities and take advantage of the growing demand for processed food products made from organic ingredients.

5.2 Support Plans for a Green Energy Initiative

45) STRATEGY – Continue to facilitate and support efforts to construct bio-fuel plants in New Jersey. These plants could create a major new local market for the state agricultural production and has the potential to elevate the price paid for regionally produced grain or other agricultural products.

LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY INDUSTRY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

BACKGROUND

With an estimated value of \$ 45.5 million, New Jersey's livestock and poultry sector is a significant contributor to the state's agricultural economy. The competitive pricing of the U.S. commodity market structure combined with New Jersey's higher than average feed and production costs can be disadvantages for our state's livestock industry. New Jersey's livestock industry is currently approaching a new marketing era with fewer commercial size operations and a trend toward alternative livestock and production methods. Direct or value-added marketing will be a driving factor for the livestock industry in New Jersey. The Department has worked to ensure that the existing structure of the industry is maintained and has facilitated growth in the emerging market structure.

The Department continues to work to protect livestock and poultry from disease. A healthy industry is also largely dependent upon well cared for animals. The New Jersey Department of Agriculture administers numerous disease control programs to ensure the health of livestock and poultry throughout the state. As a part of the Garden State Dairy Alliance, the Department offers voluntary animal health programs such as, "New Jersey Cattle Health Assurance Program" and the "New Jersey Sheep and Goat Health Assurance Program." These programs improve the management of livestock operations as well as assuring a safer food product for the consuming public.

Through education and inspections, the Department is active in avian influenza surveillance and eradication, periodically testing the live poultry markets, livestock auctions, and backyard flocks while helping owners to limit the risk of avian influenza in the markets.

The successful *Jersey Fresh* brand was extended to the equine and 4-H raised lambs with the promotion of the *Jersey Bred* brand in 2005. As a result of the Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program grant to study the economics of raising and marketing goats, a new goat purchasing program was established to support this significant new industry.

Through grants, the New Jersey Junior Breeders' Fund is helping future generations of agricultural education/FFA students and 4-H members to continue to advance the breeding of purebred livestock and the production quality of grade livestock.

In 2009, the Department will continue working to ensure animal health, enhance industry marketing, and encourage production while examining new and non-traditional New Jersey livestock products and markets for those products.

6.0 LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY STRATEGIES

6.1 Ensure Animal Health

46) STRATEGY – Through the continued implementation of best management practices for bio-security, the department will continue working to protect the health of the livestock and poultry industry from the immediate threat of devastating and economically damaging diseases.

6.2 Enhance Marketing Efforts

47) STRATEGY- Work to strengthen the branding of livestock products under the *Jersey Bred* program.

6.3 Encourage Production of Goat Products

48) STRATEGY – Continue to work to match the farm management practices of new and beginning farmers to include the feed out of goats on a seasonal basis to maximize inputs and reduce costs associated with feeding these ruminant animals. This will also aid in maintaining the open space benefits of rougher grasslands. Assist in the expansion of New Jersey's goat production through support for a goat purchasing program established through the New Jersey Junior Breeder's program.

6.4 Encourage Production of Grass-Fed Animals

49) STRATEGY – The marketing and distribution of fresh and frozen grass-fed and organic grass-fed livestock products throughout the state will be supported.

50) STRATEGY – Seek to expand the number of farmers markets that currently offer fresh meat products.

6.5 Work with Markets

51) STRATEGY – Continue to support the progress being made with the state's livestock markets to upgrade their facilities and adapt their operations to better meet the particular needs of both traditional and ethnic markets. Initiate a dialogue with the auction markets to conduct graded sales.

52) STRATEGY – Support the sale and marketing of locally produced poultry meat and eggs. Monitor the health code and market regulations that affect this industry to ensure that they address current industry models of production and distribution. Distribute, and communicate the principles contained in, the guidance document “Chapter 24 and You: A Practical Guide to Selling Safely at Farmers Markets” (<http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/pdf/chapter24guide.pdf>) to ensure the safe and legal sale of poultry and eggs at community farmers markets.

6.6 Promote an Annual Market for Sheep, Goats

53) STRATEGY – Continue to develop and promote livestock sales at several locations throughout the State and enhance support for the sale of market lambs and 4-H animals.

6.7 Support Youth Programs

54) STRATEGY - Continue to support the New Jersey Junior Breeders’ Fund loan program which is helping future generations of agricultural education/FFA students and 4-H members to continue to advance the breeding of purebred livestock and the production quality of grade livestock.

ORGANIC INDUSTRY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

BACKGROUND ((Awaiting updates from Erich B.))

The Organic Trade Association’s 2007 Manufacturer Survey conducted by Packaged Facts shows the U.S. organic industry grew 21% to reach \$17.7 billion in consumer sales in 2006. Organic foods are still by the largest segment of organic products making up over 95% of all organic product sales. The Nutritional Business Journal (NBJ) forecasts 10-15 percent growth in organic sales from 2006-2010. The NBJ predicts that the organic food category should exceed \$30 billion by the year 2025.

For more than a decade, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture has worked with the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Jersey to certify organic producers and handlers. In September 2003, the legislation passed allowing the Department to establish rules and regulations for a New Jersey Organic Certification Program. The New Jersey regulations defining the organic certification program were established in 2006.

In 2007 the New Jersey Department of Agriculture earned National Organic Program Accreditation to certify crops, livestock, wild crafting, and handling operations. In that year the program certified more than sixty organic farms representing with over 2,350 acres of organic production. In addition to two organic dairy applications in another twenty-two certified organic handling facilities will be accredited making various products from humus, to pasta products; coffees to non-dairy organic frozen deserts.

The Department provides New Jersey farmers and processors access to a quality organic certification program. Farmers who are transitioning to organic production now have the ability to market their products under the new Department “Transitional Sustainable” label, which is not available under the NOP program. In doing so, New Jersey farmers will not have to wait the required 36-month “free of prohibited materials” to realize increased prices this niche market supports.

In support of the marketing of organic products, the Notice of Adoption for the Department's Jersey Organic rules was published in 2006. Organic price cards are printed and distribution will begin with the mailings of price cards to NJDA certified farms who had requested them this summer. The next step in the Jersey Organic Program will be to establish and define the infrastructure to be used to implement the program, and to conceive and order promotional materials.

Over the last several years the Department received USDA funds to help offset the costs of organic certification. In 2009, the Department will continue to promote and administer cost sharing of organic certification fees for eligible operations, preparing informational brochures and fact sheets, and fully integrating organics into the Department's promotional programs.

7.0 ORGANIC STRATEGIES

7.1 Promote Cost-Sharing

55) STRATEGY – Continue outreach efforts to educate growers about federal funds available to help offset organic grower certification costs. Through a cost-sharing agreement with the Department and USDA, each operation is eligible for a reimbursement of up to 75 percent of its certification costs, not to exceed \$500.

7.2 Educate Growers and Food Handlers about Regulatory Requirements

56) STRATEGY – Following the USDA accreditation efficiently implement the Department's Organic Certification Program to offer quality organic certification services to growers and food handlers in New Jersey.

57) STRATEGY – Continue to distribute fact sheets outlining the legal and regulatory requirements for production and sale of organic products, including livestock and livestock products. Make the fact sheets available on the Department's website and distribute to handlers and retailers of organic produce.

7.3 Promote the Marketing of Organic Agricultural Products

58) STRATEGY – Encourage integration of the marketing of the *Jersey Organic* brand along side of the *Jersey Fresh* promotional program. Represent *the Jersey Organic* brand at national produce industry trade shows and promote the availability of organic products and the use of the *Jersey Organic* promotional brand to wholesalers and retailers.

7.4 Encourage Technical Assistance

59) STRATEGY - Encourage research and technical assistance for organic growers including certification requirements, production practices and the harvesting and handling of organic products.

60) STRATEGY – Update the certification process and incorporate the Department's Information Technology improvements to allow for Department services to be accessed on-line.

EQUINE INDUSTRY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

BACKGROUND

During the past 30 years, the region's horse racing industry has faced many challenges including the advent of casino gambling, an increasingly popular state lottery, the 2001 closure of Garden State Park, the loss of racing days at Atlantic City Racetrack and declining audiences at live races due to simulcasting and other reasons. To compensate, states neighboring New Jersey have combined different wagering technologies with horse racing. Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New York already have implemented either slot machines or video lottery terminals at tracks in their states. These efforts are attracting larger racetrack audiences and increasing purses for horses competing at those tracks.

Based on the most recent data, New Jersey's equine industry, composed predominately of pleasure breeds, accounts for an estimated 176,000 total acres of farmland, 96,000 of which are directly related to equine operations and 78,000 devoted to pasture and hay production. The 2007 Equine Industry Study by Rutgers University shows \$4 billion in equine related assets with \$582 million of that value the value of the animals. The industry has a total economic impact of \$1.1 billion annually.

As part of its efforts to support the equine industry, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture administers numerous disease control programs to help keep horses healthy. The Department is a leader in the research on West Nile Virus and its work has been used throughout the world to develop programs that address the disease.

New breeder programs have been established for standardbreds and thoroughbreds. The Equine Science center continues its research, and the NJ Equine Advisory Board continues to bolster promotion and education efforts that stimulate interest, attract new owners, and create career opportunities in the equine industry.

As one of the most progressive equine states New Jersey offers racing as well as riding trails, rodeos, active 4-H and handicapped riding programs as well as many horse shows and competitions.

The Horse Park of New Jersey continues to grow and has become one of the largest equestrian venues in the Eastern United States. In 2007 the Horse park hosted one hundred and twenty-one days of activities as well as the Garden State Standardbred Sale and three international events highlighted by the *Jersey Fresh CCI**/CCI**** (Contours Complete International) three day event which then served as a final selection trial for the 2008 Pan American Equestrian Games where the team was the Gold Medal winner.

8.0 EQUINE STRATEGIES

8.1 Ensure Horse Health

61) STRATEGY - Work with horse owners to assure awareness of disease threats and animal safety. Continue working to protect the health of horses from the immediate threat of devastating and economically damaging diseases.

62) STRATEGY – Work with Rutgers University to continue development of a state-of-the-art research facility for its Equine Science Center. As an example the cost-effective techniques for nutrient and waste management ensuring compatible co-existence of horse farms in urban and suburban environments, developed by the Equine Science Center, is also proving be critical to other livestock industries.

8.2 Promote the Industry

63) STRATEGY - Work to implement the recommendations of the Department’s “Focus on New Jersey’s Horse Racing Industry” report and seek to augment purse values, increase track attendance, and improve the industry’s supportive infrastructure.

64) STRATEGY – Continue to host Olympic caliber events, training clinics, horse shows, festivals, industry meetings and auction sales, and to promote the state’s many quality venues and prestige events.

65) STRATEGY – Continue to improve the New Jersey equine website highlighting the sectors of New Jersey’s Equine Industry activities. The website will improve coordination of all equine activities in the state and feature schedules of events, horseback riding trails and other industry related activities.

66) STRATEGY - Bolster promotion and education of the pleasure horse and racing industries to increase interest and work to stimulate new owners and create career opportunities. Re-design the New Jersey All Breed Horse Show to bring new people into the program and make it more user-friendly for owners and breeders of pleasure horses statewide

67) STRATEGY Continue working with youth programs to establish new 4-H clubs to expand the interest in standard bred racing and work with computer based programs for the Boy Scouts Horsemanship and Animal Science Badges and for the Girl Scouts including Horse Fan, Horse Sense, and Horse Rider.

68) STRATEGY – The Jersey bred logo will be promoted and work will continue on strengthening the *Jersey Bred* brand and logo.

8.3 Improve Right to Farm Protection

69) STRATEGY – Promote and create general awareness of the development of Equine AMP (Agricultural Management Practices), which was adopted by the State Agriculture Development Committee in 2008, to allow for increased right-to-farm protection for New Jersey’s equine industry.

WINE INDUSTRY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

BACKGROUND

With over 35 wineries, New Jersey wines are becoming increasingly sophisticated, and the results are showing in their award-winning products. The state's wine industry has received countless awards locally, nationally and internationally. New Jersey's wine industry adds an important diversification to New Jersey agricultural sector offering agri-tourism opportunities while providing a value-added product.

New Jersey wines are a \$30 million-a-year industry. New Jersey is the fifth-largest wine producer in the nation, with 40 different varieties made by the state's wineries.

In 2007, New Jersey's Outer Coastal Plain, an area encompassing most of southern New Jersey, was granted a federal designation as an approved "American Viticulture Area" (AVA). Influenced by the Atlantic Ocean and Delaware Bay the region's moderated winter temperatures and later frost dates, many cold-sensitive grape varieties, difficult to grow in other areas, excel there. The Outer Coastal Plain is New Jersey's largest physiographic area, consisting of about 2.25 million acres including all of Cape May, Cumberland, Atlantic, and Ocean Counties and parts of Salem, Gloucester, Camden, Burlington, and Monmouth Counties. It is known for its unique, well-drained soils of sandy loam, which are amongst the best on the East Coast for producing high-quality wine grapes.

As more wineries open the demand for New Jersey grown grapes continues to expand. New Jersey's wine industry now ranks fifth in production behind California, Oregon, Washington and New York. This means the industry is becoming less dependent on New Jersey grapes and more dependent on out-of-state grapes, and risks losing its legitimate claim as an agricultural concern in the state.

The New Jersey Department of Agriculture administers a promotion and research fund for the wine industry supported by per-gallon tax refunds collected by the New Jersey Wine Industry Advisory Council. The Council prints promotional materials, conducts publicity programs, funds promotional festivals and conducts varietal and production oriented research with the funds.

In 2009, the Department will continue to support a Jersey Fresh quality guarantee for wines. Wines must pass a rigorous quality test and be produced from grapes grown in New Jersey can now put a Jersey Fresh quality guarantee on their wines. In order to be considered a wine is tested for appearance, color, aroma and bouquet, acesence, total acid, sugar, body, flavor, astringency and general quality.

Also in 2009, efforts will be continued to increase New Jersey grape production and expand the Jersey Fresh Wine Festival to include more restaurants and farmers offering fresh produce. The industry will be supported as it seeks additional retail outlets and licenses to produce fruit based spirits. Opportunities will be created to support New Jersey wines at domestic and international trade shows. Support for federal export development funding of New Jersey fruit wines will be continued.

9.0 WINE STRATEGIES

9.1 Increase New Jersey Grape Production

70) STRATEGY – Encourage support for new production research to increase the state’s grape production and expand the locally grown content of New Jersey wines. To increase demand, support the industry’s efforts to highlight the “made with Jersey Fresh” origins of the wines. Promote products from the newly established “Jersey Coastal Plain” American Viticulture Area.

71) STRATEGY – In an effort to increase the local agricultural input of New Jersey’s wine industry, promote the use of locally produced fruits in the making of New Jersey wines.

9.2 Support the Wine Industry at Trade Shows

72) STRATEGY – Seek opportunities at domestic and international trade shows for New Jersey’s wine industry to expand the marketing and promotion of its wines. Support these efforts with any available state, regional or national cost sharing programs such as the USDA Market Access Program.

9.3 Expand the Jersey Fresh Wine Festival

73) STRATEGY - Support the expansion of the Jersey Fresh Wine Festival to include additional producers of Jersey Fresh and Jersey Seafood products and the offerings of area restaurants that feature Jersey Fresh items.

9.4 Promote Product Categories

74) STRATEGY – Continue to support the wine industry’s effort to obtain licenses to distill fruit based spirits such as fruit brandies and grappa.

9.5 Expand Retail Outlets

75) STRATEGY – Support the wine industry’s effort to expand its number of eligible retail outlets and also the ability to sell their wines at farmer’s markets.

AGRI-TOURISM INDUSTRY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

BACKGROUND

With New Jersey farmers facing rising costs and stagnant commodity prices, agri-tourism offers an important opportunity to generate additional farm income and keep farms economically viable. Agri-tourism presents opportunities for New Jersey growers seeking to add value to their crops and/or capture more of the market price of their products by directly accessing consumers. Many residents consider agriculture a novelty and something to be explored and enjoyed. They desire to share the agricultural experience while increasing farm income at the same time. New Jersey’s agri-tourism industry provides for a great introduction to the agriculture of the Garden State. The educational and economic contributions of agri-tourism to the state’s agricultural economy are many.

A National Agricultural Statistics Survey (NASS) study conducted this year determined that the economic impact of agri-tourism upon New Jersey's economy was \$91 million in 2006. This quantitative information confirms the qualitative recommendations of a 2005 Rutgers University study that examined farmers' and farm leaders' perceptions of the opportunities and challenges associated with agri-tourism.

There are other states that have comprehensive agri-tourism programs and these will be studied as work moves forward to more closely cooperate with the various agencies that share a common interest in promoting tourism in New Jersey.

A new interactive, GIS-based, agri-tourism industry website, "visitnjfarms.org", allows for easy consumer mapping based on products, services and location, within a specified town or county, or within a specified driving radius of a user-defined beginning point. It also allows farmers password access to the site to provide updates to their own listing.

To assist in the development of the agri-tourism industry, the Department will be focusing on three major objectives: developing strategic partnerships, consumer promotion and industry education.

10.1 Develop Strategic Partners

76) STRATEGY – Continue to support the New Jersey Agri-Tourism Industry Advisory Council in their charge to develop, support, and market this sector of the agricultural community.

77) STRATEGY – Continue working with the N.J. Office of Travel & Tourism (T&T) to develop and market agri-tourism. Develop three agri-tourism based travel tours for each of the state's six tourism regions. Encourage T&T to integrate an agri-tourism press familiarization tour into their work. These tours acquaint the regional travel and tourism media with New Jersey agri-tourism. Encourage T&T to incorporate agri-tourism research into their established travel industry research program. Market agri-tourism to the travel and tourism trade through participation in the annual Governor's Conference on Tourism, cooperative advertising, and other industry opportunities.

78) STRATEGY –Publicize the National Agricultural Statistics Survey (NASS) study that assessed the economic impact of agri-tourism upon New Jersey's economy.

10.2 Consumer Promotion

79) STRATEGY – Produce and distribute an inexpensive agri-tourism brochure with industry websites and contact information. This brochure would promote seasonal events, special attractions, and direct farm marketing opportunities. Create and disseminate regular press releases promoting the agri-tourism industry and related websites. Work to expand the promotion of the agricultural fairs in New Jersey.

80) STRATEGY – Continue to develop and promote the "visitnjfarms.org" website.

10.3 Industry Education

81) STRATEGY - Coordinate an Agri-Tourism symposium to address common opportunities and challenges and to provide some basic tourism and hospitality industry training. Work with Rutgers Cooperative Extension to develop and implement this training.

82) STRATEGY - Conduct tourism industry outreach activities for agri-tourism operators. Promote listings in the N.J. Office of Travel & Tourism’s “Calendar of Events”. Promote participation in “The 2007 New Jersey Governor’s Conference on Tourism”. Promote the use of the “Tourism Cooperative Grant Program” to organizations representing various facets of the New Jersey’s agri-tourism industry.

83) STRATEGY – Continue to review, comment, and support work towards the adoption of agri-tourism Agricultural Management Practices (AMP’s) as proposed by the State Agriculture Development Committee. Compliance with the agri-tourism AMP’s will aid grower protection under the Right to Farm Act.

GENERAL STRATEGIES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

BACKGROUND

Many different agencies, councils, and organizations working through a variety of programs, have the common goal of assisting New Jersey’s agricultural community. Strengthened communication and coordination between agencies and programs can result in multiple benefits for the agricultural community.

In 2009, the Department will continue working on broad strategies and reaching out to better coordinate efforts with other agencies. In keeping with the goals outlined in its strategic plan; the Department continues to identify strategies to ensure the economic viability of the state's agricultural industry.

11. GENERAL STRATEGIES

11.1 Inter-Agency Coordination

84) STRATEGY – Continue to link together the internal plans and initiatives of the New Jersey Department of Agriculture. Strive to consistently implement the Economic Development Strategies with the Smart Growth, Green Energy and the Agricultural Development Initiative. Continue to strengthen communication between the department, Rutgers’ School of Environmental & Biological Sciences, County Agricultural Agents, the Food Innovation Center, the Food Policy Institute, 4-H staff, the USDA personnel to improve program coordination. Continue close coordination Rutgers and the USDA with the following marketing and economic development grant programs; Rural Business Enterprise Grants, Federal-State Marketing Improvements Program grants and Specialty Crop Block Grants.

85) STRATEGY – Through the multi-agency Biofuels Action Group, establish a model for small- and medium-sized towns to become energy self-sufficient through the use of biofuels, alternative energy methods and conservation, with an emphasis on making the most of the town’s existing natural and economic characteristics and lessening the emphasis on alternative energy systems that require large sums of up-front infrastructure funding.

11.2 New Market Opportunities List

86) STRATEGY – Maintain a current list of “New Market Opportunities.” The list could be drawn from projects within the Economic Development Work Group and available to the

agricultural community.

11.3 Assist in Addressing Labor Issues

87) STRATEGY - Continue the commitment to programs that support worker training, worker health and safety, and farm labor housing. Support reform of policies and procedures addressing temporary agricultural worker visas at the federal and state level. Create a listing of all training, agricultural and business development resources on the department's website.

88) STRATEGY – To improve farm safety, work with the NJ Junior Breeder Program and the NJ Farm Bureau to develop and present the 1st Progressive Agricultural Safety Day in New Jersey in the spring of 2008.

11.4 Training and Workplace Development

89) STRATEGY – In conjunction with the Department's Agricultural Development Initiative, use Specialty Crop Block grant funds to continue to implement an entrepreneurial and executive training and development program to provide training for growers and mid-level farm management. To increase the success rate of agricultural businesses training will assist in the utilization of personal computers, proper maintenance of power machinery used in agricultural operations, business marketing and communications and bi-lingual technical language training.

11.5 Farmland Assessment and Crop Insurance and Technical Assistance

90) STRATEGY – Provide support, policy analysis, and information on farmland assessment to the Farmland Evaluation Advisory Committee, the Director of Taxation's Farmland Assessment Committee, agricultural organizations, municipal tax assessors and to landowners. Update the document – New Jersey's Farmland Assessment Act – A Primer on Basic Requirements. Create documents to help farmers in filling out the applications for Farmland Assessment and for providing guidance to tax assessors in determining eligibility.

91) STRATEGY - Implement the New Jersey Crop Insurance Education Initiative in partnership with the Risk Management Agency USDA and Rutgers Cooperative Extension to improve the financial health of all farmers, increase their skill and knowledge in using crop insurance, and to increase crop insurance participation as additional products and programs become available.

92) STRATEGY- Actively assist farmers as an advocate with issues related to agricultural production, taxation, regulations, economic development, value-added opportunities as well as a variety of other matters that impact the long-term viability of New Jersey agriculture.

93) STRATEGY – Provide technical assistance to farmers, architects, engineers, farm building consultants and agricultural contractors concerning the New Jersey Uniform Construction Code administered by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs as it relates to farm buildings.

94) STRATEGY - Assist farmers with interpreting the Real Property Appraisal Manual, Farm Building Section with changes in construction techniques and building materials as well as building specifications and cost schedules. Provide information on calculating replacement costs and accrued depreciation.

95) STRATEGY – Increase participation in New Jersey’s agricultural plastics recycling programs and assess the feasibility of expanding the program to include other materials generated by farmers and aqua culturists. Assist the State’s food processing industry in finding markets or utilization for soon-to-expire and expired food products and work closely with other agencies in matters that require creative recycling solutions for non-traditional materials.

96) STRATEGY – Provide farmers and agribusinesses with information about the requirements concerning motor vehicle regulations and license plates for farm vehicles, requirements for the International Registration Plan, the International Fuel Tax Agreement, and commercial drivers license provisions. The Department will identify federal and state motor vehicle laws and regulations that impact interstate and intrastate of agricultural commodities and distribute information to continue the orderly transportation of New Jersey farm products. Continue to update a user friendly website providing the necessary information about the motor vehicle registrations, fuel taxes and commercial driver licenses in an easily understood format.

97) STRATEGY – Disseminate information and respond to inquiries on the availability of financing from federal, state, and commercial lending institutions for agricultural loans. Advise individuals on the importance of developing business plans, maintaining financial records, and

11.6 Improve Roadside Signage

98) STRATEGY – Working with the New Jersey Department of Transportation, the League of Municipalities and the Legislature continue to advocate a statewide standard for directional signage on New Jersey’s roadways to heighten consumer awareness and provide a more visible marketing profile for the industry. Seek industry specific exemptions and changes in existing signage regulations to increase signage opportunities.

11.7 New and Beginning Farmers

99) STRATEGY – Seek Farm Bill funding for new and beginning farmers, and use all resources and programs for welcoming new people into the agricultural industry. Storngly promote these strategies for attracting new and young farmers through the New Jersey FFA.

11.8 Export Development

Through the Department’s membership in Food Export USA, continue to provide export development services to over six hundred food and agricultural companies in the Northeast United States.

100) STRATEGY – Work with New Jersey based exporters of food products to secure a minimum of \$1.6 million in matched promotional grant funding from the USDA Market Access program for at least twenty-five New Jersey companies. Provide export education and promote the federally funded export market research and development programs of Food Export USA – Northeast to New Jersey’s fresh and processed food industries. Secure federal grant funding for an export development intern position responsible for programs of export education and export program promotion. Seek the development of export markets including an effort to coordinate a buyers mission from the Caribbean Basin and South and Central American markets.