

NEWS FROM THE NJDA

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Department of
Agriculture

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From the Secretary's Desk



NJ Secretary of Agriculture, Douglas H. Fisher

As the winter season is recently arrived and the majority of the crops harvested, we all give thanks that New Jersey is fortunate to have such a dedicated farm community that provides for our families on so many different levels. I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family a happy and healthy holiday season. All of us at the New Jersey Department of Agriculture hope 2014 is another great season for agriculture in the Garden State!



Congratulations to the Wyckoff family of Belvidere for winning the 2013 National Christmas Tree Association Contest! A testament to the quality New Jersey produces!

From the State Board President



State Board of Agriculture President, Rob Swanekamp

The State Board of Agriculture will be holding their North Jersey Open Public meeting on Wednesday, January 22, 2014 at the New Jersey Convention Center, Edison, New Jersey. The Open Meeting will begin at 1:00 pm with the Board's regular monthly meeting immediately following. The purpose of the open public meeting is to give the public an opportunity to bring the Board suggestions, problems, or other input about New Jersey agriculture. Please look for the next issue of this newsletter or check the NJDA website: <http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/about/sba/sboardate.html> for more detailed information as the date gets closer. We hope to see you there!

With that, the members of the State Board and I would like to wish you and your families all the joys of the holiday season!

Important Dates for your Calendar:

December is National Write a Friend Month

Dec. 22 - National Date Nut Bread Day

Dec. 24 - National Eggnog Day

Dec. 24 - Nat'l Chocolate Day

Dec. 25 - Christmas Day

Dec. 29 - Pepper Pot Day

Jan. 1 - New Year's Day

Jan. 10 - Houseplant Appreciation Day

Jan. 21-22 - NJ Plants Show in Edison, NJ

Happy Holidays

NEW JERSEY RECEIVES GRANT FOR CROP INSURANCE EDUCATION

New Jersey One of 16 States Receiving Grant

The New Jersey Department of Agriculture has been awarded a \$282,000 crop insurance education grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Risk Management Agency (RMA) to ensure producers get the information they need to effectively manage risk and ensure their businesses are productive and competitive.

"This funding will help teach New Jersey farmers the best way to protect the investment they make in their crops and how to utilize crop insurance effectively," said NJ Secretary of Agriculture Douglas H. Fisher. "Producers in our state must contend with a variety of challenges, such as flooding, drought and storm damage."

This is the 13th year the Department has received the grant. The funds will be used for education and outreach to producers so they are fully informed of existing and emerging crop insurance products. All educational activities undertaken will be structured to allow producers to have a true understanding of the kind of risks addressed by crop insurance; the features of existing and emerging crop insurance products; using crop insurance in managing risk; the impact of crop insurance on other risk management decisions; making an informed decision on crop insurance prior to sales closing date deadlines; and record keeping requirements of crop insurance.

The Department is partnering with the County of Salem and Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Salem County for this risk management education program.

New Jersey is one of 45 states to benefit from \$10 million allocated to two RMA programs, The Targeted States Program and The Risk Management Education Partnership Program.

Undergoing a period of historic performance, U.S. agriculture continues to be an area of growing strength in the American economy thanks to producers' ability to manage risk, reduce their debt and capitalize on expanding market opportunities. Currently, agriculture supports 1 in 12 jobs here in this country, from transportation to processing in both large and small businesses.

To learn more about crop insurance or a list of crop insurance agents in New Jersey, call the NJ Crop Insurance Education team at 1-800308-2449 or visit <http://saalem.rutgers.edu/cropinsurance>.

STUDENTS IN GRADES 2 – 12 ENCOURAGED TO PARTICIPATE IN STATE CONSERVATION POSTER CONTEST

Winners To Receive Savings Bonds

If you have children or grandchildren in grades 2-12, New Jersey's Soil Conservation Districts are now accepting entries in a poster contest designed to raise awareness of natural resources and related issues among young people. The theme for this year's poster is "Dig Deeper--Mysteries in the Soil."

Students may compete in the following categories: Grade 2-3; Grade 4-6; Grade 6-8; and Grade 9-12. First place winners in each category will receive \$200 savings bonds; second-place \$100 bonds; and third-place \$50 bonds.

All first-place winners will be entered in the National Association of Conservation Districts poster contest.

The competition is sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Committee, New Jersey Association of Conservation Districts and the state's 15 Soil Conservation Districts, which work to conserve and manage soil and water resources in the state.

To find your local Soil Conservation District, go to www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/anr/nrc/conservdistricts.html. All entries must be submitted through the local districts.

For more information and the entry form, visit www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/anr/pdf/conservationpostercontest.pdf.

FINAL CALL FOR OUTSTANDING YOUNG FARMER NOMINATIONS

Nominations for the 2015 Outstanding Young Farmer Award will be accepted until **January 15, 2014**.

Nominees must be actual farm operators, deriving a minimum of two-thirds of their income from farming and must be between the ages of 21-40, not becoming 41 prior to January 1, 2015. For a copy of the Official State Nomination Form visit www.nj.gov/agriculture/about/sba/cover.html. If you have questions contact **Karen Kritz**, NJ OYF Program Manager at **(609) 984-2506** or e-mail at Karen.Kritz@ag.state.nj.us.

COMMENTS?

Joe Atchison, Agricultural Marketing Coordinator for the NJDA, is the editor of this newsletter. If you have comments, concerns or an item that you would like considered for the next issue of the newsletter, please contact him at: joe.atchison@ag.state.nj.us or at **609-984-2223**.

