



State of New Jersey

## **BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING**

**March 22, 2023**

**(Wednesday)**

Public meeting notice was certified by communication on March 16, 2023.

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq. adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by giving written notice of the time, date, location and to the extent known the agenda of this meeting. At least 48 hours in advance this notice has been posted on the third floor, Riverview Plaza, Trenton, New Jersey; mailed to the Newark Star Ledger; the Camden Courier Post; the Philadelphia Inquirer and filed with the Office of the Secretary of State.

President David DeFrange called the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture to order at 12:45 pm. Board members in attendance included President David DeFrange; Vice President Dr. Ernest Beier (TEAMS), Paul Hlubik, Debbie Norz, Warren Hollinger, Holly Sytsema, Kurt Alstede, and Lisa Specca. The meeting was held at 200 Riverview Plaza, Trenton, NJ.

Also in attendance were Secretary Douglas Fisher; Dr. Amar Patil, Director, Division of Animal Health and Sebastian Reist (TEAMS); Rose Chamberlain, Director, Division of Food & Nutrition and Linda Walker (TEAMS); Assistant Secretary Joe Atchison, Director, Division of Marketing & Development; Joe Zoltowski, Director, Division of Plant Industry; Susan Payne, Executive Director, SADC and Chuck Roohr; Frank Minch, Director, Division of Agricultural and Natural Resources; Chris LaRegina, Jeff Wolfe, Jeff Beach, Rob Vivian, Nathan Schatz and Christina Rasiewicz, Office of the Secretary. Also in attendance were Dr. Brian Schilling, Rutgers University; Peter Furey and Ashley Kerr, NJ Farm Bureau; Executive Director Bob Andrzejack and Sarah Fenwick, Farm Service Agency; Evan Madlinger, NRCS; Bruce Eklund, National Agricultural Statistics Service, and Nancy B. Wood, NJ Department of Agriculture.

### **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

ON the MOTION of Paul Hlubik, seconded by Holly Sytsema, the Board voted to approve the minutes of the February 7, 2023, regular meeting with minor corrections.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

John Landau representing the New Jersey Forest Task Force was there to discuss the topic of invasive plants and noted that New Jersey is one of five states that does not have control of invasive plants. He

noted that there is a great deal of work to be done on this topic and hopes to work with the nursery industry and would appreciate the support of the State Board.

Mike Van Clef, Director of the New Jersey Invasive Species Strike Team commented on the importance of the invasive species issue. He reported that the information would be put into a new rule which will ultimately come back before the Board for approval.

President DeFrance commented that he appreciated their efforts and thanked them for coming today.

Christina Chrokowa, 360 Earthworks – Conservation community and became a land care consultant. She stated that she is becoming an advocate for SPS because we cannot afford to lose any more precious soil. She appreciated the opportunity to speak.

### **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Secretary Fisher commented on the recent Forestry Task Force report and noted that the meeting of Invasive Task Force went well with representation from many agricultural groups. He stated that it was an excellent exchange of information and that they will be working to craft a bill that can be supported by the industry. Senator Booker met with Ag Secretary Vilsack on You Tube where they discussed the definition of rural for USDA programs.

Secretary Fisher noted that there were several issues related to DEP's upcoming stormwater and inland flood rules that NJDA is working on with the DEP. He also reported that the NJDA lab had performed the necropsies of the seven stranded dolphins in Sea Isle City. Finally, Secretary Fisher commented that there is a movement to get whole milk back into the school lunch program. He commented that the State Board Subcommittee and the SADC SPS Committee had met, and that the topic would be discussed later.

Dr. Amar Patil reported to the Board that HPAI is raging in the eastern part of the US. He reported that our neighboring state of Pennsylvania is on high alert for HPAI. At this time, they have placed several hundred farms under quarantine, with required testing that will be on-going. He reported that they have reached out to all the live bird markets to be sure that they are following all health and safety guidelines related to HPAI and that they should be on high alert. He reported that the deadline had been extended for comments to USDA re: electronic tags; 2:5 has been published in the NJ Register and is open for public comment for 60 days. The new comment period ends April 19, 2023.

Board member Debbie Norz asked about the status of the tissue digester. Dr. Patil reported that the tissue digester continues to be requested each year through the capital budget improvement request.

Rose Chamberlain reported that there are processed commodities that are formulated specifically for school foods and the Lunchables idea could be something like that. All school food lunches must follow the USDA nutritional guidelines to receive reimbursement. She noted that school lunch has come a long way. She noted that whole milk in school is not allowed under the USDA nutritional guideline. In addition, she noted that the Summer Food Service Program was currently undergoing an onsite, for the first time since COVID, Management Evaluation by USDA staff and that all was going well. She reported

that the Farm to School Program held a stakeholder meeting the previous day and it was very well received. She noted that the Farm to School Coordinator has been planning spring workshops. The workshops will include an overview of Farm to School implantation through the classroom, cafeteria, and community. Finally, she noted she, along with Secretary Fisher had visited a Medical Daycare for children with special medical needs.

Frank Minch noted that he had been meeting with DEP on a number of issues, including the coastal management rule, wetlands, etc. He reported that he had met with the blueberry growers, about fifteen operations that did not submit the required paperwork for the potable water wells, and they are working to help get the paperwork completed. He noted that the Coastal Zone Management Rules will most affect aquaculture. He noted that the wetlands rules would also be coming. DEP is sending out surveys to fruit and vegetable farms re: potable water use/wells was sent to ninety-two farms. Board member Lisa Specca suggested that growers complete the survey form and return it to DEP. It was asked if there were any Conservation monies available to help the growers that may be affected. There was a lengthy discussion regarding stewardship and conservation efforts. Finally, he reported that the deer fencing program was currently being reviewed by legal staff.

Susan Payne reported that the SADC would be rolling out all the SOE (Special Occasion Event) documents at their meeting the next day. All information related to the forms would also be posted on the website and sent to all partners and will hold webinars as needed. She reported that there was a good meeting with both SPS subcommittees and thought it was productive. She reported that ag viability needs a funding source. She noted that language to the laws would have to be rewritten. In addition, it was suggested that they seek funding through the USDA. Board member Kurt Alstede asked about the SPS mapping tool and how close we are to having the property maps. She noted that they are trying to be sure that everything is 100% ready.

Joe Zoltowski noted that the Division staff was gearing up for spring; they are setting insect traps; the vendor for gypsy moth spraying has been selected. He reported that there would be releases for emerald ash borer; he gave an update of what work was being done at the beneficial lab updates. Secretary Fisher noted that there was a township questioning the legality of the bee legislation. He could not comment any further on the issue at this time.

Assistant Secretary Joe Atchison reported that he had been attending commodity and council meetings. He reported that the Division had received five nominations for OYF; and that SCBG applications would close April 7<sup>th</sup>. He attended a trade show in Florida and because of an article in the Produce News, that vendors saw, they arranged for several meetings. He reported that the Jersey Fresh ad campaign would be starting with an asparagus billboard; this year's Jersey Fresh campaign – Grown Right Here! He noted that they would be travelling to Canada for their produce show.

### **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Dave DeFrance noted that since Secretary Fisher has announced his retirement effective July 1, he wanted to thank him for his dedicated service to New Jersey agriculture. He announced that the Personnel Committee would be starting the process for selecting a new Secretary of Agriculture. He noted that the process will take time. He noted that many appointments are still on hold. He noted that a

few additional RTF surveys had been received and that the Committee would be meeting soon to evaluate the surveys. He noted that if anyone wants to change their committee assignments that they should please come forward and we can make any changes that may be necessary. He reported that there are lots of trees coming in and lots of moving parts for Spring underway. Everyone needs to stay on track.

Kurt Alstede congratulated Secretary Fisher on his upcoming retirement. He thanked him for giving the advance notice so that a transition plan can be put in place. He reported that at the County Board level some of the things he is hearing about are the increased labor costs in H2A fees; proposed rules on H2A and H2B labor. He noted that regarding the SPS, people want to move on and know where they stand while others are waiting to see what happens. This needs to be resolved so that we can move forward. In addition, he noted regulatory pressures and cost compliance on wells, septic and labor housing; the issue of ash tree removal, there are so many dead ash trees, they will pay if it falls and does damage, but it will not pay to take it down prior to the damage. He reported that North Jersey is interested in a livestock processing facility that would be USDA licensed. He noted that RTF & SOE concerns are on everyone's mind. In addition, he commended Farm Credit East for giving a great presentation on crop insurance. He noted that things are starting to move on the fruit tree front, noting that some are starting to bud.

Lisa Specca reported that Atlantic County Board of Agriculture reorganized, and Jen LaMonaca has been elected as the new president. John Vannini had served as President for a few terms and will remain as South Jersey Caucus chair. She noted the continued concern for the blueberry growers and the issues with DEP. She reported that they would like to plan a legislative spring meeting at a blueberry farm so that legislators can see the issue in person. In addition, it was reported that Rick Van Vranken would be retiring in the fall after 40 years, this will leave a huge hole in the County. There is great concern about the looming retirements and positions in the County that have been vacant for a number of years. She reported that there is a meeting on March 30 on farm labor meeting in Atlantic County; did not attend Ocean CBA meeting; Camden CBA is doing a good job coming back and moving their meetings around they have a one-hour meeting followed by food and guest speaker as well as applying to return to the Ag Convention. She noted the concern about DEP inspections in Camden County. She noted Joel Verick was named the new President of the VGA and Jim Abma was named Vice President.

Barney Hollinger reported that he did not attend the Cape May County Board of Agriculture; Cumberland County Board of Ag has been working on their bylaws; Cumberland County Government has taken over the extension building and are moving in their planning department and that they are updating the entire building with new furniture, etc.

Holly Sytsema reported that there was no Sussex CBA due to weather and Bergen CBA cancelled due to a COVID outbreak. She attended Passaic County Board of Ag, and they had a great meeting with many new members, there was excitement. She reported that the Livestock Committee had met several times and had a letter drafted to the NJ Congressional Delegation that deals with medications availability to farmers w/ veterinarians and getting large animal veterinarians. She noted that she had talked with Pat Butch of the NJAES Board of Managers and that we would be setting up a meeting to update them on the livestock processing issues and what they can do to help. She noted that everything for the livestock processing is moving quickly in the North, but that South Jersey is not moving as quickly. She reported

that there was no report for the Wildlife Committee. In addition, she reported that the Nominations Committee continues to be in a holding position until the new members are appointed and then the Board can reorganize.

Debbie Norz reported that Union CBA met, discussed it was time to start planning and how the winter season went. The next meeting in June will be a dinner meeting. They were reviewing the meeting held by Farm Bureau and Rutgers on how to conduct a meeting. Somerset County Board of Ag met and discussed the upcoming spring season, the scholarship and the upcoming Ag in Action will be June 10<sup>th</sup> at Puskas Dairy Farm. Also, through Somerset County CADB and Cultural Commission worked together on a Farm to Frame event grand presentation will be on Friday, the artwork will be on display through May.

Paul Hlubik announced that the Grain & Forage Producers met recently at Etsch Farm, this was the first time in a long time that the Committee had met, it was a great opportunity to talk with those in the industry. He noted that there was a letter from Soybean & Grain & Forage industry requesting an agronomy agent.

ON the MOTION of Paul Hlubik, seconded by Holly Sytsema, to have an agronomy agent and send a letter to Rutgers for support and endorsing the institution of agronomy specialists. Brian Schilling explained about agents and specialists and that position was advanced as important. The Board voted unanimously to approve a letter to Rutgers regarding an agronomy specialist.

Board member Kurt Alstede asked what the plan was going forward for positions at the College and what specialists are being considered important. Dr. Schilling commented that he hopes to provide specialists that can cover more than just one sector.

Paul Hlubik reported that the Policy Committee and the Legislative Committee had received the highlights of the 2023 Convention Resolutions Priorities Survey: #1 – Farm Viability; #2 – Right to Farm; #3 – Livestock Industry; #4 – and Farmland Preservation; #5 – Deer Impacts on Agriculture; #6 – Animal Health and Veterinary Medicine; #7 – Farm Labor; #8 – Preserving Pesticides for Agriculture; #9 – Soil Protection on Farmland; and #10 (Tie) – Ag and the Minimum Wage, NJAES and Wildlife and Ag.

Board member Paul Hlubik reported on the importance of the SPS meeting and felt that it was an extremely productive meeting with SADC's subcommittee. He reported that Brian Schilling had replaced Dennis Germanio on the SADC SPS Subcommittee.

Board President Dave DeFrance questioned what stewardship to others is, to him it is innovations. What can we do to go forward? Everyone has the ability to see what is being considered.

Board member Holly Sytsema commented that the meeting was very productive. She noted that the group all has a love of agriculture, and the goal was to promote that with the task that they were given and the objective of the farm community. Board member Lisa Specca commented that the meeting was extremely productive, and each side heard a different perspective.

Susan Payne also commented that she felt that it was an extremely productive meeting and that she feels that there can be a way that everyone can work together moving forward.

Board member Kurt Alstede remarked that he appreciates all the work that the SADC has done on this issue, and we are bound to the convention resolution on SPS that says they do not want to have any retroactive approach. He feels this is the guidance that we are supposed to follow. One of the biggest concerns continues to be how do we address that issue. A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the SPS.

Secretary Fisher read the Summary of Soil Protection Standards (SPS) Approach Discussed with SBA at their Mach 15, 2023 meeting:

### Soil Disturbance Allowance

- **12% or 4 acres**, whichever is greater, **OR**
- an additional **2% or 1 acre** (whichever is greater) disturbance over current condition.

### Waiver Provision

- All farms can seek a **waiver** to go up to **15% or 6 acres**, whichever is greater.
- Waiver would be conditioned on implementation of an approved **“stewardship plan”** – requiring best management practices implemented on the farm to address resource conservation concerns: e.g., erosion control, water quality, stormwater management, water recharge, soil compaction, compliance with construction BMPs, forest management, etc.
- Farmers can **apply for an additional waiver** to have agricultural development beyond 15%/6acres – approval would be dependent on demonstrating that the proposed development does not have negative impacts to soil and water conservation concerns. This allows farmers the opportunity to **“innovate beyond the limit.”**

### Who is affected by the Standards

- **Disturbance limit applies to all farms** – the same disturbance standard applies to those already preserved and those preserved in the future.
- **Waiver eligibility applies to all farms** – the same waiver eligibility applies to all those already preserved and those preserved in the future. Does not sunset on change of ownership.

### Remediation of Disturbed Area

- Previously disturbed areas can be remediated – so they no longer count as “disturbed.”
- Application for remediation is submitted to SADC, reviewed, and approved, implemented, and confirmed. SADC will then amend the site disturbance mapping to reflect the subject area no longer considered disturbance.

### Contiguous Cluster Option Available

- An owner of contiguous preserved farms can apply to “cluster,” or consolidate, the total disturbance allowance for both farms into one farm. Results in both farms being “joined” together and not able to be sold separately from each other in the future.

### **Other Recent Changes**

- Compacted livestock pastures and confinement areas – no longer count as disturbance (now an “exempt” practice).
- Vegetated parking/storage areas – do not count as disturbance (exempt practice).

A copy of the summary was distributed to all State Board members.

Board member Kurt Alstede asked what the current timeline for the process. It was noted that with this new information, we are not sure of the timeline. Open dialogue continues on this matter.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Debbie Norz reported that a letter was sent in June 2022 regarding the Board’s concerns and opposition to A4035 – the appointment of the Executive Director of the State Agriculture Development Committee be a direct appointment by the Governor, as well as making the term of that appointment five years. This legislation is now moving quickly through the legislature.

ON the MOTION of Paul Hlubik, seconded by Lisa Specca, the Board voted to send another letter to the sponsor reiterating their opposition to the bill.

Board members Debbie Norz and Kurt Alstede abstained from the vote.

Debbie Norz reviewed the 3/10/23 draft letter urging the NJ Congressional Delegation to explore federal measures for addressing the shortage of large–animal veterinarians.

ON the MOTION of Debbie Norz, seconded by Barney Hollinger, the Board voted unanimously to approve the draft letter and send it to the NJ Congressional Delegation.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Application for Membership to the State Agricultural Convention – Camden County Board of Agriculture**

ON the MOTION of Kurt Alstede, seconded by Debbie Norz, the Board voted unanimously to approve the Camden County Board of Agriculture’s application for membership to the State Agricultural Convention.

#### **Approval – Rules for Readoption (w/technical changes) by Notice – N.J.A.C. 2:68 – Commercial Feeding Stuffs**

ON the MOTION of Barney Hollinger to table N.J.A.C. 2:68 – Commercial Feeding Stuffs, seconded by Debbie Norz, the Board voted unanimously to table the rule for further review.

#### **Approval – Rules for Readoption (w/technical changes) by Notice – N.J.A.C. 2:89 – Aquaculture Development**

ON the MOTION of Barney Hollinger to table N.J.A.C. 2:89 – Aquaculture Development, seconded by Debbie Norz, the Board voted unanimously to table the rule for further review.

### Approval – Agricultural Fairs

ON the MOTION of Debbie Norz, seconded by Paul Hlubik, the Board voted to approve the 2023 Agricultura Fairs as presented.

Lisa Specca abstained from the vote.

President DeFrage referred Senate Bill 2186 to the Policy Committee and asked that the Legislative Committee write a letter requesting extending the deadline to April 30<sup>th</sup> in order to have more time to review the bill.

ON the MOTION of Debbie Norz, seconded by Paul Hlubik, to send a letter requesting to extend the deadline in order to review the bill thoroughly, discussion followed, and the Board voted unanimously to send the letter.

### Legislative Committee Updates

Debbie Norz provided the following update to the Board from the Legislative Committee:

#### **Support**

A5209/S3615 – Establishes Agritourism Fund; Requires Annual Appropriation of \$2.5 Million from General Fund

There was discussion of the bill and the Division of Travel & Tourism not administering the fund and dispense grants to New Jersey businesses involved in agritourism.

ON the MOTION of Kurt Alstede, seconded by Paul Hlubik, a letter be drafted to reflect the Board's concerns regarding the administration of the funds and grants. The Board voted unanimously to have a letter drafted to the sponsor reflecting their concerns.

A5072/S3643 – Establishes Bee-Friendly Habitat Pilot Program in the Department of Agriculture; Appropriates \$1 Million

A5162/S3542 – Establishes Spotted Lanternfly Control Grant Program in the Department of Agriculture; Appropriates \$5 Million

A4729/S3279 – Revises Method for Appraisals of Farmland to be Acquired for Farmland Preservation Purposes

A5223 – Increases Cap on Grants for Farmland Stewardship Activities to \$100,00 per Application; needs a Senate Sponsor

ON the MOTION of Debbie Norz, seconded by Barney Hollinger, the Board voted unanimously to send a letter to Senator Cruz-Perez about the importance of A5223 and urging her to sponsor an identical companion bill in the Senate.

A4087/S2464 – Clarifies that Veterinarians are not within Ambit of Telemedicine and Telehealth Law

There was extensive discussion on the legislation concerning OTC drugs and the need for large–animal veterinarians.

ON the MOTION of Debbie Norz, seconded by Paul Hlubik, the Board voted unanimously to send a letter the New Jersey Legislature concerning the need for legislation concerning the large–animal veterinary community in the state and a separate letter to the FDA regarding the veterinary medication available over the counter (OTC).

### **Mention**

A5201 – Directs the State Agriculture Development Committee to identify farmland ineligible for County Farmland Preservation Programs, notify owners of State requirements, and invite applications for farmland preservation under the State program

### **Awareness**

A5215 – Establishes program to foster improvements in customer service in State government agencies

A5191/S421 – Establishes statewide targets to reduce disposal of organic waste in landfills; requires DEP to adopt regulations to achieve targets

A5197 – Directs DEP to identify oyster reefs in need of restoration and allow certain entities to establish no–harvest restoration sites

A5198/S3470 – Requires registration and regulation of certain hemp–derived cannabinoids manufactured and sold in New Jersey

Kurt Alstede volunteered to be on the Board’s Convention Committee. He remarked that it was great to be back without Covid restrictions; to have the Board’s February meeting prior to the beginning of the convention; to have a keynote speaker at the dinner banquet and having a day and half convention. There needs to be more done with the awards – adding a two–minute video for each award and there should be Distinguished Service recipients. There was discussion on the convention site.

Paul Hlubik brought up Farm Bureau’s written report number four bullet – the Plastic Bag Ban and awaiting State Board action on a t–shirt bag work group. He recommended adding Jim Giamarese, the NJ Farmers Direct Marketing and Frank Minch to that working group.

ON the MOTION of Paul Hlubik, seconded by Barney Hollinger, the Board voted unanimously to move forward with the t–shirt bag work group.

ON the MOTION of Holly Sytsema, seconded by Paul Hlubik, the Board voted unanimously to send a letter to Congressman Thompson supporting changing the USDA National School Lunch Program requirements to allow for whole milk to be offered in schools once again.

## **REPORT OF NJ FARM BUREAU**

Peter Furey presented the Board with a written report:

1. DEP Wells/Septics Issue – Survey pending with growers
2. Soil Protection Standard Proposal – Glad to see March 15 SADC/State Board meeting
3. Deer Fencing – Anxiously awaiting NJDA rules to launch the \$1 million cost/share grants
4. Plastic Bag Ban – Awaiting State Board action on T-shirt bag work group
5. Forestry Report to the Legislature
6. NJAES Ag Viability Listening Sessions (4) – Glad to see this underway
7. Legislative Priorities including Judiciary Committee Appointments
8. NJALDP Class in DC this week – Farm Bureau assisted

## **REPORT OF RUTGERS UNIVERSITY**

Brian Schilling represented the College and commented that he had spoken on a number of topics today and provided a written report.

## **REPORT OF FARM SERVICE AGENCY (FSA)**

Bob Andrzejczak and Sarah Fenwick represented the Farm Service Agency:

### **Emergency Relief Program – Phase 2 (ERP Phase 2)**

ERP is authorized under the Extending Government Funding and Delivering Emergency Assistance Act, which includes \$10 billion in assistance to agricultural producers impacted by wildfires, droughts, hurricanes, winter storms and other eligible disasters experienced during calendar years 2020 and 2021.

Phase Two builds on ERP Phase One, which was rolled out in May 2022.

Phase 2 is a tax year-based certification program that provides assistance for producers that suffered a loss in revenue due to necessary expenses associated with losses of eligible crops (excluding crops intended for grazing), due in whole or in part, to a qualifying disaster event that occurred in the 2020 or 2021 calendar year.

Qualifying natural disaster events include wildfires, hurricanes, floods, derechos, excessive heat, winter storms, freeze (including a polar vortex), smoke exposure, excessive moisture, qualifying drought, and related conditions.

The enrollment period for ERP Phase 2 began on January 23<sup>rd</sup> and will run through June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023.

Please see your appropriate County Office or the attached Fact Sheets for more details. Fact Sheets are also available at farmers.gov.

### **Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program (PARP)**

PARP is authorized and funded by the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021.

PARP provides assistance to producers of agricultural commodities who suffered at least a 15% decrease in allowable gross revenue for the 2020 calendar year, as compared to either 2018 or 2019 as elected by the applicant. The enrollment period for PARP began on January 23<sup>rd</sup> and will run through June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023. Since PARP has limited funding, no payments will be issued until after the enrollment period ends and a determination of whether a payment factor will apply is made.

Please see your appropriate County Office or the attached Fact Sheets for more details. Fact Sheets are also available at [farmers.gov](http://farmers.gov).

### Pandemic Market Volatility Assistance Program

PMVAP assists producers who received a lower value due to market abnormalities caused by the pandemic and ensuing Federal policies. As a result of the production cap increase, USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) will make PMVAP payments to eligible dairy farmers for fluid milk sales between five million and nine million pounds from July through December 2020. This level of production was not eligible for payment under the first round of the PMVAP. Payment rates will be identical to the first round of payments, 80 percent of the revenue different per month, on fluid milk sales from five million to nine million pounds from July through December 2020. USDA will again distribute monies through agreements with independent handlers and cooperatives, with reimbursement to handlers for allowed administrative costs. USDA will contact handlers with eligible producers to notify them of the opportunity to participate.

As part of the first round, PMVAP paid eligible dairy farmers up to five million pounds of fluid milk sales from July through December 2020. The first round of payments distributed over \$250 million in payments to over 25,000 eligible dairy farmers. These dairy farmers received the full allowable reimbursement on fluid milk sales up to five million pounds. More information about the PMVAP production cap increase is available at [www.ams.usda.gov/pmvap](http://www.ams.usda.gov/pmvap).

### Organic Dairy Marketing Assistance Program

The new ODMAP, to be administered by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), is intended to help smaller organic dairy farms that have faced a unique set of challenges and higher costs over the past several years that have been compounded by the ongoing pandemic and drought conditions across the country. Many small organic dairy operations are now struggling to stay in business and FSA plans to provide payments to cover a portion of their estimated marketing costs for 2023. Final spending will depend on enrollment and each producers projected production, but ODMAP has been allocated up to \$100 million.

The assistance provided by ODMAP will be provided through unused Commodity Credit Corporation funds remaining from earlier pandemic assistance programs. The assistance will help eligible organic dairy producers with up to 75 percent of their future projected marketing costs in 2023, based on national estimates of marketing costs. This assistance will be provided through a streamlined application process based on a national per hundredweight payment. The payments will be capped at the first five million pounds of anticipated production, in alignment with preexisting dairy programs that target assistance to those smaller dairies that are most vulnerable to marketing challenges. This program is still in development.

Details about the Organic Dairy Marketing Assistance Program will be available and updated at [www.farmers.gov](http://www.farmers.gov) as more details are released in a Notice of Funds Availability later this year.

### Loss Adjusters

New Jersey Farm Service Agency is seeking Loss Adjusters (LAs) for the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and the Tree Assistance Program (TAP). Loss Adjusters are required to have knowledge of field crops and specialty crops, as well as a thorough understanding and execution of crop adjusting guidelines and program provisions, as applicable to FSA programs. If interested, please contact Aly Dyson, NJ FSA Farm Program Disaster Specialist, [Alyson.Dyson@usda.gov](mailto:Alyson.Dyson@usda.gov), with any questions.

### Important Dates:

- **March 31st:** Marketing Assistance Loan Deadline for prior year harvested wheat, barley, canola, crambe, flaxseed, honey, oats, rapeseed, and sesame seed
- **May 1:** NAP coverage closing date for Nursery (2024)
- **June 2:** Application deadline for ERP Phase 2
- **June 2:** Application deadline for PARP

### Farm Loan Program

#### Disaster Declarations

- a. The Farm Service Agency has ten (10) disaster designations for Emergency Loan programs available to provide assistance when disasters strike due to damages and losses resulting from a natural disaster. A qualifying loss occurs if FSA determines a minimum 30 percent production loss of at least one crop in the disaster county occurred as a result of the disaster. Farmers in the following counties are eligible for Emergency Loans through the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA):
  - i. **Secretarial Disaster Declaration S5364** was triggered for Farmers in Cumberland and Salem counties who suffered losses due to Drought and Excessive Heat that occurred on August 1, 2022, through November 11, 2022. Applications must be received by October 6, 2023.
  - ii. **Secretarial Disaster Declaration S5359** was triggered for Farmers in Sussex and Warren counties who suffered losses due to Drought that occurred on July 1, 2022, through September 4, 2022. Applications must be received by October 2, 2023.
  - iii. **Secretarial Disaster Declaration S5338** was triggered for Farmers in Warren, Hunterdon, Mercer, and Burlington counties who suffered losses due to Drought that occurred on April 7, 2022, through October 3, 2022. Applications must be received by August 21, 2023.
  - iv. **Secretarial Disaster Declaration S5348** was triggered for Farmers in Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Salem, Burlington, Camden, Hunterdon, Ocean, Somerset, and Union counties who suffered losses due to Drought that occurred on July 1, 2022. Applications must be received by August 21, 2023.
  - v. **Secretarial Disaster Declaration S5347** was triggered for Farmers in Burlington, Camden, Ocean, Atlantic, Gloucester, Mercer, and Monmouth counties who suffered losses due to Drought and Excessive Heat that occurred on June 18, 2022, through

September 5, 2022. Applications must be received by August 21, 2023.

- vi. **Secretarial Disaster Declaration S5346** was triggered for Farmers in Hunterdon, Somerset, Mercer, Middlesex, Morris, Union, and Warren counties who suffered losses due to Drought that occurred on July 1, 2022, through September 14, 2022. Applications must be received by August 21, 2023.
- vii. **Secretarial Disaster Declaration S5345** was triggered for Farmers in Morris, Sussex, Warren, Essex, Hunterdon, Passaic, Somerset, and Union counties who suffered losses due to Drought and Excessive Heat that occurred on July 1, 2022, through August 19, 2022. Applications must be received by August 21, 2023.
- viii. **Secretarial Disaster Declaration S5312** was triggered for Farmers in Middlesex, Somerset, Hunterdon, Mercer, Monmouth, Morris, and Union counties who suffered losses due to Drought that occurred on August 16, 2022. Applications must be received by June 12, 2023.
- ix. **Secretarial Disaster Declaration S5305** was triggered for Farmers in Bergen, Essex, Hudson, and Union counties who suffered losses due to Drought that occurred on August 9, 2022. Applications must be received by June 5, 2023.
- x. **Secretarial Disaster Declaration S5306** was triggered for Farmers in Bergen, Passaic and Sussex counties who suffered losses due to Drought that occurred on August 9, 2022. Applications must be received by June 5, 2023.

### Inflation Reduction Act

- a. On August 16, 2022, President Biden Signed into law the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (IRA). This legislation repealed Section 1005 of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).
- b. The inflation Reduction Act is a historic, once-in-a-generation investment and opportunity for the agricultural communities that USDA serves. The Inflation Reduction Act will help producers stay on the farm, prevent producers from becoming ineligible for future assistance, and promote climate-smart agriculture by increasing access to conservation assistance.
- c. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced on October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022, that distressed borrowers with qualifying USDA farm loans have already received nearly \$800 million in assistance as part of the \$3.1 billion in assistance for distressed farm loan borrowers provided through Section 22006 of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). The IRA directed USDA to expedite assistance to distressed borrowers of direct or guaranteed loans administered by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) whose operations face financial risk. For more information on this press release, please visit <https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2022/10/18/usda-provides-payments-nearly-800-million-assistance-help-keep>.
- d. USDA continues to work on longer-term assistance and improving the way that USDA approaches borrowing and loan servicing. More information will be posted to this webpage as it becomes available. <https://www.farmers.gov/inflation-reduction-investments>.

### Simplified Direct Loan Application

- a. FSA developed a new, simplified direct loan application for producers seeking a direct farm loan. The new application, reduced from 29 to 13 pages, provides improved customer experience for producers applying for loans and enables them to complete a more streamlined application.

- b. Producers not also have the option to complete an electronic fillable form or a traditional, paper application for submissions to their local FSA farm loan office.

### Loan Assistance Tool

- a. FSA launched a new online tool to help farmers and ranchers better navigate the farm loan application process. This uniform application process will help to ensure all farm loan applicants receive equal support and have a consistent customer experience with USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) regardless of their individual circumstances.
- b. USDA experiences a high rate of incomplete or withdrawn applications, particularly among underserved customers, due in part to a challenging and lengthy paper-base application process. The Loan Assistance Tool is available 24/7 and gives customers an online step-by-step guide that supplements the support they receive when working in person with a USDA employee, providing materials that may help an applicant prepare their loan application in one tool.
- c. Farmers can access the Loan Assistance Tool by visiting [farmers.gov/farm-loan-assistance-tool](https://farmers.gov/farm-loan-assistance-tool) and clicking the 'Get Started' button. From here they can follow the prompts to complete the Eligibility Self-Assessment and start the farm loan journey.

### Loan Interest Rates for March 1, 2023

- Farm Ownership- 4.875%
- Operating- 4.750%
- Emergency- 3.750%

### REPORT OF NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE (NASS)

Bruce Eklund represented NASS and reported the following:

- Promotion of the Census of Agriculture is needed, and he has been visiting each county board of agriculture.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

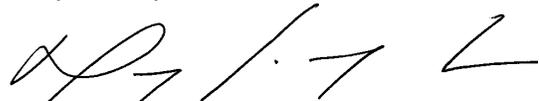
### MEETINGS

The next regular meeting of the State Board of Agriculture will be held on Wednesday, April 19, 2023, at 200 Riverview Plaza in Trenton beginning at 12:30 pm.

### ADJOURNMENT

ON the MOTION of Paul Hlubik, seconded Debbie Norz, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the regular meeting at 5:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Douglas H. Fisher