



State of New Jersey

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

MINUTES OF MEETING

June 26, 2024

(Wednesday)

Public meeting notice was certified by communication on June 20, 2024.

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 Holly Sytsema called the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture to order at 1:20 pm. Board members in attendance included President Holly Sytsema; Vice President Barney Hollinger, Kurt Alstede, Lisa Specca, Bob Blew, David DeFrange, John Hart and Stephen V. Lee, IV. The meeting was held at Hudson Farm Club, Andover, NJ.

Also in attendance were Secretary Wengryn; Assistant Secretary Joe Atchison; Dr. Sandra Strilec, Division of Animal Health; Rose Chamberlain, Director, Division of Food & Nutrition; Nancy Wood, Division of Marketing & Development; Joe Zoltowski, Director, Division of Plant Industry; Franch Minch, Director, Division of Agricultural & Natural Resources; Chuck Roohr, Deputy Director, SADC; Christopher LaRegina, Nathan Schatz, Robert Vivian, Jeff Wolfe and Jeff Beach, Office of the Secretary. Also in attendance were Allen Carter, President and Peter Furey, Executive Director, NJ Farm Bureau; Dr. Brian Schilling, Rutgers University; Sarah Lally, Farm Service Agency; Jake Bailey, NRCS; Jasmine Moreno, Organic and Regenerative Farming Board; Kendrya Close (via Teams), Foodshed Alliance; Jeanine Cava (via Teams), NJ Food Democracy Collaborative; Lori Jennsen, NJNLA; Bruce Eklund, State Statistician and Linda Walker, NJ Department of Agriculture.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

ON the MOTION of Bob Blew, seconded by Lisa Specca, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the May 22, 2024 regular meeting and the May 29, 2024 special meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

REPORT OF RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

Dr. Brian Schilling represented the College and reported on the following topics:

- Updated the Board on several positions that they are still searching for and new agents that will be starting in Ocean County and they have made verbal offers for a position in Monmouth and Middlesex County starting. All positions should be filled by the end of July. In addition, he noted that they are still searching for candidates in Warren County as well as Atlantic County. But still are awaiting approvals from the Chancellor's Office. He noted that with the round of retirements that they are expecting, it will be a struggle for them to keep up.
- Awaiting the outcome of the Governor's Budget.
- The Board of Managers will meet on July 2 at the Cream Ridge Research farm where they will be putting about \$2,000,000 into a failed dam that was also found to be non-compliant with State regulations.
- Heat stress - he noted that Extension staff have formed a Farm Safety Team and they are making sure that all agents have the information to disseminate to the industry on heat stress.

REPORT OF FARM SERVICE AGENCY (FSA)

Sarah Lally represented the Farm Service Agency and gave the following report:

Grasslands CRP

The Grassland Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is part of the CRP program, a federally funded voluntary program that contracts with agricultural producers so that environmentally sensitive agricultural land is not farmed or ranched, but instead used for conservation benefits. FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. Contract duration is 10 or 15 years. Grassland CRP helps landowners and operators protect grassland, including rangeland, pastureland, and certain other lands, while maintaining the areas as grazing lands. The program emphasizes support for grazing operations, plant and animal biodiversity, and grassland and land containing shrubs and forbs under the greatest threat of conversion. Grassland CRP is reauthorized by the 2018 Farm Bill. The current Grassland CRP signup runs June 3 - 28, 2024. FSA encourages agricultural producers and landowners interested in conservation opportunities for their land in exchange for yearly rental payments to consider Grassland CRP.

Online Disaster Assistance Decision Tool for Livestock, Honeybee and Farm-raised Fish (including mollusk) producers

FSA, in partnership with FarmRaise, launched a new, online Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees and Farm-raised Fish Program (ELAP) Decision Tool. The tool is designed to assist agricultural producers who have been impacted by natural disasters to access available program support. The Decision Tool is a resource only and is not an application for benefits or a determination of eligibility. <https://www.farmraise.com/usda-fsa>

COC Elections & Nominations

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) is now accepting nominations for county committee members and encourages all farmers, ranchers, and FSA program participants to take part in the County Committee election nomination process.

Elections will occur in certain Local Administrative Areas (LAA) for members. LAAs are elective areas for FSA committees in a single county or multi-county jurisdiction. Visit www.fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/New-Jersey/index to find out which LAA(s) are up for election in your County Office. Customers can identify which LAA they or their farming or ranching operation is in by using our GIS locator tool available at fsa.usda.gov/elections. County committee members make important decisions about how Federal farm programs are administered locally. All nomination forms for the 2024 election must be postmarked or received in the local FSA office by Aug. 1, 2024.

Agricultural producers who participate or cooperate in a USDA program and reside in the LAA that is up for election this year, may be nominated for candidacy for the county committee. A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information about their farming or ranching operation to FSA, even if they have not applied or received program benefits.

Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP)

FSA County Offices began accepting OCCSP applications for the 2024 program year on May 13, 2024. Sign-up ends October 31, 2024. The 2024 program year covers eligible expenses paid by certified organic operations between October 1, 2023 and September 30, 2024. OCCSP provides cost share assistance to producers and handlers of agricultural products for the costs of obtaining or maintaining organic certification under the National Organic Program (NOP). Organic certification is obtained through certifying agents accredited by the NOP. For 2024, OCCSP will reimburse 75 percent of a certified operation's allowable certification costs, up to a maximum of \$750 for each of the following categories or "scopes": • crops • wild crops • livestock • processing/handling • State organic program fees.

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, Aly.Dyson@usda.gov, with any questions.

Continuous CRP

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will begin accepting applications for the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (Continuous CRP) signup on Jan. 12, 2024. USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) encourages agricultural producers and landowners interested in conservation opportunities for their land in exchange for yearly rental payments to consider the enrollment options available through Continuous CRP, which also includes the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) offered by FSA partners. Additionally, producers participating in CRP can apply to re-enroll beginning Jan. 12, 2024 if their contracts will expire this year.

To submit an offer, producers should contact the FSA at their local USDA Service Center by July 31, 2024, in order to have an offer effective by Oct. 1, 2024. To ensure enrollment acreages do not exceed the statutory cap, FSA will accept offers from producers on a first-come, first-served basis and will return offers for approval in batches throughout the year.

Additionally, producers with acres enrolled in Continuous CRP set to expire Sept. 30, 2024, can offer acres for re-enrollment beginning Jan. 12, 2024. A producer can both enroll new acres into Continuous CRP and re-enroll any acres expiring Sept. 30, 2024.

REPORT OF NJ FARM BUREAU

President Allen Carter thanked the State Board for their strong resolution on the heat stress bill. He reported that their Directors and County Board Presidents immediately hit the pavement and reached out to our legislators, of which many of them were not informed on what the heat stress bill entailed. He commented that they received a lot of positive feedback and noted that the legislation was not going to be called for a vote at this time and hopefully not even in the fall. He commented that much of the industry came together to go out and advocate for this and he is very appreciative for that.

Peter Furey reported on the following topics:

- State budget is looming and hopes that it will be finalized this week. He reported that Senator John Burzichelli submitted a Resolution for the Experiment Station, he noted that it is a very big deal when a member of the Budget Committee consolidates his asks and he chose the Experiment Station to be one of them and he should be applauded for that, this is a significant development of the state budget.
- Heat Stress legislation is paused – that’s a good thing, but it is not going away. We need to respond as an industry with the implementation of more of a protocol and the implementation of what can be done to mitigate heat on farms. He noted that we are in the spotlight, let’s answer with good leadership and tradition that agriculture has.
- Watching the Senate for the confirmation of the State Board nominees, fingers crossed that the two nominees get through.
- The revised SPS rule will be published in the NJ Register shortly for a new round of public comments.
- Farmland Assessment Committee has been brought to the table for further discussions which included a discussion on the minimum income, etc.
- Solar on farms has had a couple of significant announcements in the northern half of the state. In addition, there is a plan underway for a livestock facility, an application for monies for the first phase of the project have been requested.
- County Fairs – many of our directors are heavily involved in their County Fairs. He noted that it is a significant opportunity to interface with the public as some of these fairs draw from 50,000 to 100,000 people.

REPORT OF NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

Bruce Eklund, State Statistician, reported that we are just days away from releasing the crop report for the June Ag Survey for New Jersey will include corn, soybeans and hay. In addition, they would be working on surveys for cranberries, blueberries and peaches in the coming months. He further reported that they would be conducting a survey on conservation for NRCS and at the end of the year they would be undertaking the Census of Horticulture.

REPORT OF NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Jake Bailey represented the Natural Resources Conservation Service and reported the following:

- Julie Hawkins has returned to her post here in New Jersey; however she is currently attending a meeting in Washington.
- Mini boot camp for about 30 Junior employees in Clifton learning the basics of working with customers and conservation practices.
- Hosted the State Technical Meeting on June 12 with two site visits, one to Board member John Hart's farm and a meeting at the State Office in Hamilton.
- He noted that all monies for projects being funded must be obligated by July 12.
- Hosting Organic Webinar

ORGANIC AND REGENERATIVE FARMING BOARD

Jasmine Moreno reported that the Board first met on June 10, 2024. She thanked the State Board for their warm welcome the previous month. She reported that there are currently five of the seven members seated. Jess Neiderer has been named as the Chairperson and that Committees are also being established.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Secretary Wengryn reported to the Board that it had been a busy month. He attended the Northeast Association of State Departments of Agriculture meeting in Maine where he had a chance to learn about some of the issues that each of those states have been facing over the past year. He noted that in Maine, one of the biggest issues that they are facing is PFAS. PFAS is a synthetic chemical that resists water, oil and grease. It is used in many products, from nonstick cookware to firefighting foams. He reported that all states at some point are going to have this problem. We will need to work with our sister agencies to make sure that the information that we have is solid. In addition, he announced that he had received from the Department of Labor, and shared with the Board, the 2024 (and inaugural) New Jersey Agricultural Industry Profile. He reported that the Farmland Evaluation Committee (FEC) held a special meeting to discuss the gross sales threshold, Farmland Assessment enforcement/fraud prevention and identify actions that can be made to improve field inspections. He had attended the NJNLA Grower meeting where the topic of conversation was the Heat Stress legislation. He noted that OSHA has been doing some on farm inspections, so it is important that growers are following the guidance/messaging from the College. He attended the third virtual meeting of the Food Democracy Collaborative where they are working on the food connectivity between the food banks, schools and nutrition. In addition, he reported that he had attended almost all the County Boards except for Camden, which he will attend in September.

Rose Chamberlain, Director, Division of Food & Nutrition, reported on the Division's newest program, the Summer EBT Program. She reported that New Jersey was the first state in the Mid-Atlantic Region that had benefits distributed to kids. In addition, she reported that more than 555,000 children are in the process of receiving benefits. She explained that the Division has been working with the Office of Innovation to help with the number of calls that the Division was experiencing was not working. They were able to establish a phone tree that was able to be up and running within a few days, as everyone

stepped up to help us. She reported that the Summer Food Service program has more than 178 sponsors this year across the state. She noted that July 1 marks the beginning of the 24–25 school year and with that the School Nutrition staff has been actively training sponsors, working with new sponsors, so that they can start off the new school year successfully with all the programs that they are operating.

Joe Zoltowski, Director, Division of Plant Industry, reported that the LDD Aerial Suppression Program took five operational days from May 8 to May 28 to perform both single and double applications on 3,161 acres of municipal and state lands on the program. The first of three inspections of newly imported boxwood plants took place in late May. A total of 42 New Jersey nurseries are participating in the 2024 Boxwood Blight (BWB) “Cleanliness Program”. In addition, during May, he reported that crews continued egg scraping masses and destroyed over 2,797 egg masses. Finally, he reported that giant hogweed has officially been eradicated from the site in Monroe Township.

Joe Atchison, Director, Division of Marketing & Development, thanked the Board members that were able to attend the Legislative tour on June 14 in Atlantic County. He stated that they had an excellent turnout of legislators and there was a very good exchange of discussions and conversations. He looks forward to hearing the ideas of Board members for legislative tours going forward. He attended, along with staff from the Division, the first meeting of the Organic & Regenerative Board and Division staff will be working with them as they begin work. He noted that the Jersey Fresh campaign was in full swing with this week’s billboards featuring blueberries and squash. He announced that he would not be attending the next Board meeting as he will be attending the conference for marketing officials, NAAMO, which New Jersey will be hosting next year. Beach giveaway days are coming up with July 8 for blueberries; August 5 for grape tomatoes; and August 22 for peaches.

Frank Minch, Director, Division of Agricultural & Natural Resources, reported that there was a meeting on June 19 to discuss PFAS soil testing conducted by NJDEP in an area where a potential contamination/further investigation was identified. In addition, he reported that they have taken steps to identify exactly what’s going on to the land, what the situation is and how we could potentially mitigate the situation. He noted that DEP has been very forthcoming and asking for assistance. He has been meeting with the Office of the Food Security Advocate for the past few months to start looking at ways to bridge the gap between food production and food needs. There have been several meetings with industry groups to see how we can work together. He noted that with the warmer weather, we have to be careful with harmful algae blooms. He reported that the information will be posted on the website. In addition, he reported that the Farmland Valuation Committee met to prepare for the upcoming August meeting as there have been a lot of questions. Finally, he reported that PFAS is an issue that will involve all the Divisions of the Department at one time or another, this is a very serious issue that we are in the fact-finding phase at this time. He reported that it is a national issue, and that DEP is used to dealing with it on commercial/industrial sites and that would be treated differently in terms of mediation.

Chuck Roohr, Deputy Director, SADC, reported that this was the first State Board meeting since the Executive Director retired and noted that they are some very big shoes to fill and that he along with the rest of the SADC staff they are continuing the work. He reported on a few staffing updates that include the Chief of Acquisitions, which has been vacant for a year and a half; in addition, they have hired two new Next Gen Farming Coordinators that started a few weeks ago and are doing their research to see what some of the problems are that new/beginning farmers are having. He noted that they already have

scheduled meetings with several industry groups to see how they can help them. He reported on the recent purchase of the Buckhorn Creek Farm, a 566-acre farm in White Township, Warren County, which had been slated for two million square feet of warehouse development. He explained that the property consists of highly productive farmland and is located within the Environmentally Sensitive Planning areas of the Highlands Region. He reported that the SADC approved, at its April 2024 meeting, the publication of notice of substantial changes to the original soil protection rule proposal. He noted that the changes are reflected in a red-line version of the notice that will be available on SADC's website. The SADC will notify all partners of the exact publication date once it is known. Revisions to the Ag Mediation and Ag Management Practice rules were sent to the NJ Register on May 28, 2024 for publication.

Dr. Sandra Strilec, Field Veterinarian, Division of Animal Health, reported to the Board that she has heard the discussions in this meeting about heat stress and she reported that the office does tend to see an increase in humane complaints or citizens calling or submitting forms with concern for care of animals, livestock and poultry when the heat really kicks in. She reported that the Humane Chief and certified livestock inspectors, or (CLI), have been diligent and swift responding to those and getting out to the site to look to be sure that everything is ok. In addition, she reported that with HPAI on the poultry side has been kind of quiet. Since the middle of April there has only been one to five new domestic poultry cases throughout the country. She noted that 12 states have detections in dairy cattle. She noted that Ohio and North Carolina are the states closest to New Jersey, but proximity may not matter because we know it can come from wild birds to cattle. They have been keeping the messaging clear that biosecurity is of the utmost importance particularly when out in the field. She noted that further information is posted on the Department website. She also noted that the lab is available for testing milk samples that are required for interstate testing. She noted they have provided outreach to stakeholders in the dairy industry, specifically dairy farmers and veterinarians who may see cattle, fair organizers, etc. The USDA has started a pilot program for volunteer herd testing, where a dairy herd can be tested on a routine basis and would eventually test out of the requirement for a 7-day free movement test. Finally, it was noted that the Division of Animal Health partnered with NJDOH to coordinate an effort that will distribute Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to dairy farmers and their staff to ensure that the equipment is available when necessary to help protect workers against potential exposure to H5N1. The PPE will be available from the Department of Health through Rutgers Cooperative Extension County offices.

Chuck Roohr stated that President Sytsema asked that he give an overview of P.L. 2023, C.245 which became law on January 8, 2024. The law authorizes the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) to adopt rules establishing a Statewide Farmland Preservation Formula (Statewide Formula) as an alternative method for the valuation of farmland to be acquired for Farmland Preservation Program (FPP) purposes. He reported that he and other SADC staff have been visiting the County Boards/CADB's to give this presentation for all of them to see and be able to make comments. He provided the Board with a copy of the questions that are being distributed at the presentations looking for feedback.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Kurt Alstede reported that the lack of rain is concerning, those with irrigation are doing ok, the peach and apple crops look good so far. He commented that the heat stress legislation has become one of the biggest concerns. In addition, he noted that he has heard from several producers that the demand for

completing paperwork and filling out reports has become a real burden. He reported that there is proposed legislation that would bring some permanent funding to the Highlands/TDR bank.

Stephen Lee welcomed back Vice President Hollinger. He reported that the Legislative Tour on June 14 in Hammonton, Atlantic County was a huge success. It was a very hot day, but it was a great day and a good example of when agriculture works together what can be done, noting that there was a very good dialogue with the Legislators. He noted that the relationships between legislators and farmers at the grassroots level is very critical to our success and that is what we need going forward with future legislative tours. He suggested that farmers invite legislators to their farm, it helps tell the story. He noted that their operation is looking at some thunderstorms coming through the region and because of the warm spring we have had, the cranberries are about a week ahead in terms of development and what that also means is that the blueberries are accelerating very fast.

Stephen Lee then stated that he had spoken to our Counsel and asked to make a change to the current by-Laws which would allow the Board to reorganize in July whether the new members have been sworn in as the by-laws currently have the Board waiting for the new members to be sworn in. As noted, this can sometimes hold up members for a very long time as they require their Senator's sign off and then must be voted on by the Judiciary Committee as well as the full Senate. In addition, he noted that the Board may wish to review the current by-laws to see if there are any other modifications that could be made.

ON the MOTION of Stephen Lee, seconded by Bob Blew, the Board voted unanimously to accept the by-laws change as presented.

John Hart reported that they had not had rain in six weeks, it's good for hay but not for corn. All that have corn must irrigate because of the extreme heat. He reported that at a dinner meeting that he attended in Middlesex County, he was able to speak with some legislators about the heat stress bill and was able to give them important information.

Bob Blew reported that they have been very hot and very dry in Cumberland County and the warm weather came on very quickly. Again, for those with grow crops, if they have irrigation, they should make it, if not, it looks pretty scary.

Lisa Specca commented that she had attended the Atlantic County Legislative tour, and it was a great day with a lot of interest from the legislators. Several of the freshman legislators really enjoyed seeing everything up close and it was a great opportunity for the farmers to speak one on one with the legislators. She noted that there is local demand for corn and tomatoes. She noted that they were late in planting due to the very dry conditions.

David DeFrance reported that they have been using mulching intervals for tree installations and it seems to be working. He noted that one of the reasons that they did this was because they were having massive erosion problems because of the topography on his property with the water runoff. They have updated their pruning and they are seeing a great response.

President Sytsema thanked Hudson Farms for hosting the Board today and hopes that everyone enjoyed the tour and lunch. She reported that the Sussex CADB heard the presentation that Chuck just gave, and they were given a lot of good recommendations as well. She noted that Sussex is also gearing up for the fair but noted concern because of all the new regulations that are in place and there are some that will keep changing depending on what is happening now for HPAI. In addition, she reported that the bear situation continues to be a problem for farmers and the public safety. Finally, she reported that the Sussex County Commissioners are planning a tour that will hurdle Route 519 and will address the farms along that route and it is hoped that it may bring some agritourism to the area. She reported that Sussex County currently has four applications for farmland preservation.

Vice President Hollinger reported that Cumberland County did not meet, in Cape May County they discussed the heat stress legislation and then the rest of the meeting was devoted to discussions on the upcoming fair. He noted that disease pressures were down on oysters because of the rain that we have had. He noted that the daytime temps are now up over 80 degrees which is good for oysters because they need that to spawn, and they are getting ready. He noted that the market has not been as good this year as in the past.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Stephen Lee, Chair of the Nominations Committee reported that he sent a letter to all Board members asking if they were interested in serving in a leadership role for the coming year. He stated that the Committee had met earlier that week and submitted the name of Bob Blew for President and Lisa Specca for Vice President of the State Board when the Board reorganizes in July. He stated that this does not prevent another name coming to the floor during the Reorganization, but those were the two names that were presented to the Committee.

In addition, Stephen Lee reported that the Committee has also discussed the application of the Foodshed Alliance to become a delegate member of the annual State Agricultural Convention in February.

ON the MOTION of Stephen Lee, seconded by Kurt Alstede, the Board voted unanimously to approve the Foodshed Alliance as a delegate member of the annual State Agricultural Convention.

David DeFrance, Chair of Legislative Committee, reported that having everyone in on the collaboration of the heat stress legislation was great. Everyone seemed to come together for this issue as it affects everyone. He asked Lori Jennsen to make a few brief comments on behalf of NJNLA regarding the efforts that had the entire industry working together. There was a lengthy discussion regarding this topic and since the Department, the Farm Bureau and the College are working on this, perhaps it would be better to have the Policy Committee involved as we move forward with the language changes that we would like to see.

ON the MOTION of David DeFrance, seconded by Lisa Specca, the Board voted to move the heat stress legislation to the Policy Committee.

NEW BUSINESS

NJAC 2:6 Biological Products for Diagnostic and Therapeutic Purposes Readoption by Notice without changes.

NJAC 2:8 Humane Treatment of Domestic Livestock Readoption by Notice without changes.

NJAC 2:24 Diseases of Bees and Beekeeping Activities Readoption by Notice without changes.

NJAC 2:52 Processors, Dealers and Subdealers Readoption by Notice without changes.

NJAC 2:70 Agricultural Liming Materials Readoption by Notice without changes.

Board Delegation of Quarantine Authority to State Veterinarian: Request by the State Veterinarian pursuant to NJAC 2:5-2.1 to have the State Board of Agriculture grant authority to the State Veterinarian, for a period of 12 months, to issue prospective quarantines and violations and assess penalties for animal diseases without prior Board approval if, in the opinion of the State Veterinarian, the disease persistent and difficult to eradicate. If any quarantine is issued pursuant to this authority, the State Veterinarian will notify the Board of the quarantine and any violations issued, penalties assessed, or other actions taken, at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the State Board of Agriculture.

ON the MOTION of Bob Blew, seconded by Lisa Specca, the Board voted unanimously to approve the rules pursuant to the Administrative Procedures Act.

Bob Blew commented on the meeting that the Legislative Committee had with Assemblywoman Luanne Peterpaul and noted that it was an excellent opportunity to discuss one on one with a legislator some of the daily challenges that farmers face. It was almost one hour in which they talked about some of the legislation that makes farming more difficult, and the Assemblywoman was very interested to hear their concerns.

Vice President Hollinger also talked with her about the Department's budget and the need for more monies for Jersey Fresh and aquaculture.

Secretary Wengryn reported that the Department's budget is favorable going to the Governor and we have not had any questions at this point, so it looks like we are in good shape. He reported that the Assembly and Senate were meeting this afternoon and tomorrow. We should know more after today. In addition, he asked the Committee Chairs to review the Resolutions that specifically relate to your expertise and where we are in the process and how we are addressing the concerns from the Convention.

Board member Kurt Alstede discussed the upcoming calendar of Board meetings, and the topic of North/South meetings was suggested as was done years ago.

Outstanding Young Farmer Recommendation

ON the MOTION of Kurt Alstede, seconded by Bob Blew, the Board voted unanimously to approve the Outstanding Young farmer candidate as presented.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jeanine Cava (NJ Food Democracy Collaborative) reported that the Baseline Assessment of Socially Disadvantaged Producers is complete, and a draft was provided to the Community FoodBank of New Jersey (CFBNJ) in April and their feedback was incorporated and questions addressed. She reported that Department staff was also reviewing the information. She noted that we're implementing the second of our deliverables for LFPA – a Landscape Analysis of NJ's first year of LFPA implementation, and a review of the literature (both published papers and impact and analysis reports put out by nonprofit organizations and governments) about farm-to-pantry programs across the U.S. both prior to LFPA and current. Part of this is checking in with producers who we connected to CFBNJ during the first phase of our work, the outreach phase. We connected more than 50 producers to the LFPA team at CFBNJ; these are producers who learned of the program through a NJFDC-led focus group or other outreach method in fall 2023 and winter 2024. We're checking in with them to see if they're participating/have had a PO issued by CFBNJ (the food bank has decided not to issue contracts but use POs only – we'll ask the farmers if they prefer that to a contract). If so, how it's going. If not, why not, what the process was like; if they decided not to participate, why, and if CFBNJ decided they couldn't participate; what was the reason given. CFBNJ has confirmed the absence of a decision-making rubric or scoring system for determining which producers to enter POs with and which not to.

MEETINGS

The next regular meeting of the State Board of Agriculture will be held on Wednesday, July 24, 2024 beginning at 1:00 pm at 200 Riverview Plaza, Trenton, NJ.

RESOLUTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board adopts a resolution to enter into executive session pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b)(8), to evaluate the performance of an employee. The Board will evaluate the employee's performance in implementing strategic outreach to stakeholders and in reviewing and implementing hiring practices at the Department.

The Board will disclose the contents of the closed session as soon as we are able to do so. Minutes will be approved at a future Board meeting.

ON the MOTION of Holly Sytsema, seconded by Barney Hollinger, the Board voted unanimously to enter into executive session.

ADJOURNMENT

ON the MOTION of Bob Blew, seconded by Stephen Lee, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the regular meeting at 5:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Edward D. Wengryn