



State of New Jersey

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

MINUTES OF MEETING October 23, 2024 (Wednesday)

Public meeting notice was certified by communication on October 17, 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 Trenton Times and filed with the Office of the Secretary of State.

President Bob Blew called the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture to order at 1:05 pm. Board members in attendance included President Bob Blew; Vice President Lisa Specca, Kurt Alstede, David DeFrange, John Hart, Stephen V. Lee, IV and Joel Viereck (Teams). The meeting was held at 200 Riverview Plaza, Trenton, NJ.

Also in attendance were Agriculture Secretary Ed Wengryn, Assistant Secretary Joe Atchison, Dr. Amar Patil, Director, Division of Animal Health; Rose Chamberlain, Director, Division of Food & Nutrition; Frank Minch, Director, Division of Agricultural & Natural Resources; Joe Zoltowski, Director, Division of Plant Industry; Nancy Wood, Lynn Mathews and Cindy Dashko, Division of Marketing & Development; Chuck Roohr, Deputy Director, SADC; Tameko Webster, Chief of Staff; Christopher LaRegina, Nathan Schatz, Robert Vivian, Alyssa Pitt, OKaitlynn Dixon, Jeff Wolfe and Jeff Beach, Office of the Secretary. Also in attendance were Allen Carter, President, Peter Furey, Executive Director, Ashley Kerr and Al Murray NJ Farm Bureau; Dr. Brian Schilling, Rutgers University; Bob Andrzejczak, State Executive Director, Lindsay Caragher and Sarah Lally, Farm Service Agency; Jacob Bailey, NRCS; Bruce Eklund, State Statistician; Jared Krawitz, Organic & Regenerative Farming Board (Teams); Richard Gardner, State Board Member-Elect and Linda Walker, NJ Department of Agriculture.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

ON the MOTION of Holly Sytsema, seconded by Lisa Specca, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the September 25, 2024 regular meeting.

NEW JERSEY JUNIOR BREEDER'S FUND REORGANIZATION

David DeFrange called the New Jersey Junior Breeders to order.

ON the MOTION of David DeFrange, seconded by Steven Lee, Lisa Specca was nominated as President; Robert Blew was nominated as Vice President, Secretary Ed Wengryn as Secretary/Treasurer and Assistant Secretary Joe Atchison as Assistant Secretary/Treasurer. It was noted that there had been no action for some time due to the Covid 19 pandemic.

Lisa Specca reported that the New Jersey Junior Breeder's Fund, a low-interest loan program, offers agricultural education/FFA students and 4-H members the opportunity to advance the breeding of purebred livestock and the production quality of livestock. Loan applicants must be New Jersey residents, have adequate facilities for livestock and be either 4-H members or FFA/agricultural education students. Each year the organization holds a Symposium in conjunction with Rutgers University where there are more than 250 participants where they have workshops to have hands on learning.

There were no nominations from the floor.

ON the MOTION of Robert Blew, seconded by David DeFrange, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the October 23, 2019 meeting.

Assistant Secretary Joe Atchison gave a brief Treasurer's report. It was noted that the next Symposium would be held on Saturday, March 29, 2025.

The next meeting of the Junior Breeders Fund will be held on July 23, 2025 concurrent with the State Board of Agriculture Reorganization meeting.

ON the MOTION of Robert Blew, seconded by Lisa Specca, the New Jersey Junior Breeders meeting was adjourned at 1:15 pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

REPORT OF RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

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

- He remarked that Board member Stephen Lee had done a fantastic job on the Cranberry Tour that he organized to include the Phillip Marucci Center on Friday, October 19 to highlight the work that they do for the cranberry/blueberry industry. The tour was an excellent opportunity for the many legislators in attendance to see firsthand the work that is being done there and the services that they provide with the agricultural technology that they have. Board member Lee commented that it was a team effort and the staff at the Marucci Center were key in organizing and making sure that everything came together.
- The ribbon cutting ceremony for the Rutgers Agrivoltaics Program (RAP) was held on September 30. The site at the Rutgers Cook Campus Animal Farm has the first vertically mounted bifacial agrivoltaics project built in New Jersey and will be used for research on pasture production and large animal grazing. He noted that RAP is a multidisciplinary group of Rutgers University faculty and staff conducting applied agrivoltaics research and outreach at three sites in New Jersey. RAP

is part of the NJ Agricultural Experiment Station and Rutgers Cooperative Extension which provides research, outreach, and education resources to residents, communities and businesses in New Jersey and beyond.

- PPE for AI is still available through the County Extension offices. Please feel free to share that news with growers.
- Hoping to get a candidate soon for the Salem County agent position with a specialty in agronomy and livestock. He noted that Extension has been lucky to have received approvals in order to keep up with retirements in the County Agent ranks however, he noted that some of the specialist positions are also getting thinned out due to retirements. They are searching now for an agronomy position which is critical, they have not had that dedicated capacity in about two decades, a fruit pathologist and a farm viability specialist as well as a marine aquaculture position.

REPORT OF FARM SERVICE AGENCY (FSA)

Bob Andrzejczak, State Executive Director introduced Lindsay Carragher, as the new Deputy State Executive Director of the Farm Service Agency, Lindsay previously served as the District Director. Lindsay has been with the agency for many years and has worn many hats, including Acting State Executive Director, which made it a very easy choice to move her to this new position. He noted that she will continue to do great things in this new role.

Sarah Lally reported the following for the Farm Service Agency:

FSA County Committee Elections

Farm Service Agency County Committees are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA and allow grassroots input and location administration of federal farm programs. Elections occur each year in certain Local Administrative Areas (LAA). LAAs are elective areas for FSA committees in a single county or multi-county jurisdiction. Ballots will be mailed to eligible voters beginning November 4, 2024. The last day to return voted ballots to the USDA Service Center is December 2, 2024. Additional information regarding the LAAs up for election in each NJ FSA office can be found on the NJ FSA website: www.fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/New-Jersey/#Elections_2024.

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.

ELAP – H5N1

FSA is now accepting applications through Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-raised Fish Program (ELAP) to provide financial assistance to eligible dairy producers who incur milk losses due to Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, also known as H5N1 infection in their dairy herds. The program assists with a portion of financial losses resulting from reduced milk production when cattle are removed from commercial milking in dairy herds having a confirmed positive H5N1 test. Positive test

results must be confirmed through the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL).

H5N1 infections have been detected in 14 states including California, Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas and Wyoming. Dairy producers in all states are reminded to stay vigilant and follow established APHIS biosecurity, detection and testing guidelines. In addition to testing, enhanced biosecurity is critical to containing this virus. USDA works closely with state animal health officials, producers, and industry organizations to provide guidance and resources for cleaning and disinfection not only on affected farms but for all livestock producers as a part of practicing good biosecurity.

Eligible adult dairy cattle must be:

- Part of a herd that has a confirmed positive H5N1 test from NVSL;
- Initially removed from commercial milk production at some point during the 14-day time period before the sample collection date for the positive H5N1 test date through 120 days after the sample collection date for the positive H5N1 test;
- Milk-producing, currently lactating; and
- Maintained for commercial milk production, in which the producer has a financial risk, on the beginning date of the eligible loss condition.

Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops Program (FSCSC)

FSCSC provides financial assistance for specialty crop operations that incur eligible on-farm food safety program expenses related to obtaining or renewing a food safety certification. This program helps offset costs to comply with regulatory requirements and market-driven food safety certification requirements. Signup for program year 2024 closes January 31, 2025. January 1, 2025– January 31, 2026 will be open for the program year 2025. To be eligible for FSCSC, an applicant must:

- Have obtained or renewed a: 2024 food safety certification that was issued between June 26, 2024, and December 31, 2024; or 2025 food safety certification issued during the 2025 calendar year, and
- Have paid eligible expenses. Expenses that have been incurred by the applicant, but have not yet been paid, will not be eligible.
- Be a specialty crop operation; and meet the definition of a small business or a medium-sized business.
 - o A small business has an average annual monetary value of specialty crops the applicant sold during the three-year period preceding the program year of no more than \$500,000.
 - o A medium size business has an average annual monetary value of specialty crops the applicant sold during the three-year period preceding the program year of at least \$500,001 but no more than \$1,000,000.
- Be located in the 50 United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

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 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>

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.

Farm Storage Facility Loan

Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFLs) provide low-interest financing for producers to store, handle and/or transport eligible commodities they produce. This includes acquiring, constructing or upgrading new or used, portable or permanently affixed, on-farm storage and handling facilities, acquiring new or used storage and handling trucks, acquiring portable or permanently affixed storage and handling equipment.

Farm Storage Facility Loan Rates for October 2024

3-year loan term: 4.625%

10-year loan term: 4.125%

5-year loan term: 4.375%

12-year loan term: 4.125%

7-year loan term: 4.375%

REPORT OF NJ FARM BUREAU (NJFB)

Peter Furey represented the New Jersey Farm Bureau and reported on the following topics:

- Legislature
 - Heat Stress – NJDA recommendation for plans? Record keeping, retaliation and enforcement provisions
 - SADC Appropriations
 - Tax credit for produce donations – in Assembly ACE Thursday, asking to match Senate amendments for MD program (50% wholesale value).
 - A 4603 – Allows commercial farmer to be awarded reasonable costs and attorney fees for defending against bad faith complaints under the “Right to Farm Act”.
- Lawsuit by farm worker interests over minimum wage and overtime exemption – amicus brief.
- NJREAL rules by DEP – comment period extended to November 7, working on FB position.
- Ag viability consultations: convened by Brian Schilling.
- Farm sales to food banks success!

- DEP ACT rules for sale of diesel trucks – coming January 1, 2025, ag joins legis and motor truck association push back.
- Loss of critical animal rendering service (MOPAC) in PA; NJDA recommendations?
- Changes coming to farmland assessment; Gov office opinion?
- State Board appointee for North Jersey: on Senate Judiciary schedule for Thursday.
- Congressional races: Kim – Bashaw, Kean – Altman.
- Federal issues: Farm Bill/tariffs/immigration.

REPORT OF NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE (NASS)

Bruce Eklund stated that due to the dry conditions, he wanted Board members to know that the most widely read national report is called crop progress which is a weekly report that goes from April to November and it shows what is going on with different crops as far as harvest and petal fall and it showed how dry it is in New Jersey compared to normal.

- As of October 1, soybean yields have dropped as predicted with 38 bushels an acre compared to 43 last year.
- Interesting things coming up census on irrigation and water management, there was a very good response from New Jersey growers.
- November 20 the quarterly labor report will be released

REPORT OF NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS)

Jacob Bailey reported on behalf of Julie Hawkins who was hosting their National Resources team for a three-day training session in Stockton. About 80 employees gathered to go over a variety of conservation planning and some of the associated data tools that they use and how they can make those better. In addition, he reported that they are finishing up their annual roll up of their FY24 data that gets collated with the National Association of Conservation Districts Congressional report. He noted that the information should be finalized within the next week, and it will be ready soon.

ORGANIC & REGENERATIVE FARMING BOARD

Jared Krawitz reported the following:

- By-laws finalized and submitted for approval so that they can get down to business.
- Finalized questions for their initial outreach survey which Meredith Melendez of Rutgers will be helping them get that out to the public so that they can begin to collect relevant data.
- The first quarterly meeting will be held November 14 at 4:00 pm at 200 Riverview Plaza, Board Room and invite all to attend to meet with the members of the Board.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Assistant Secretary Joe Atchison announced that Secretary Wengryn was on a train on his way back from Washington, DC where he attended the 33rd Tri-National Accord. Assistant Secretary Atchison reported that Secretary Wengryn had sent disaster requests earlier in the year for Sussex, Morris and Warren. He noted that FSA encourages farmers to report losses related to the heat and drought to FSA as the drought continues and to do it as you observe it. In addition, Secretary Wengryn attended the National

Association of State Departments of Agriculture in Indianapolis, where there was a good conversation on the farm bill and they think it looks hopeful for post-election passage. He noted that they are working with neighboring states on possible milk sampling for HPAI as the feds start voluntary program. The budget process has started, the Governor's Office has requested that each agency find a 5% reduction at a minimum. He noted that the recent tours have been well received. Assistant Secretary thanked the members of the State Board for the basket that they sent to his family on the recent loss of his mother. In addition, he noted that Chris Kleingunther, Chief of Inspections, Division of Markets, Vineland Office, who helped lead that unit to be #1 in the country in food safety inspections and audits, recently passed away following a long illness. He announced that he, along with Markets staff Bella Walz attended the International Fresh Produce Association trade show last week in Atlanta. It was a very good trade show and we were able to have conversations with fellow states and potential buyers. Also on the list of events was the New Jersey Food Council event in the beginning of October and the Food Export Show in Chicago. He noted that the Department is currently without an ad agency because the state contract expired and that everything for that is currently on hold. Finally, he reported that in July 2025 New Jersey will be hosting the North American Agricultural Marketing officials (NAMO) conference and that initial planning showcasing the different aspects of agriculture in New Jersey was just underway.

Dr. Amar Patil, Director, Division of Animal Health, reported that HPAI continues to be a problem in the United States but that he has heard from USDA wildlife services that they are not seen as many infected wild birds recently which is good news, and they will continue to keep track of that information. If the pattern continues and if the HPAI in wild birds is going down, eventually the HPAI in poultry will go down as well. He reported that the Division has done outreach to backyard poultry owners and veterinarians in the state to let them know of the HPAI resources available to them through the Department as well as the requirement of them to report any cases of HPAI or any suspected cases of HPAI. In addition, the Governor's Office has a website with information from various other state agencies regarding HPAI for the public.

Rose Chamberlain, Director, Division of Food & Nutrition, reported that the Division is in full swing working with sponsors, providing technical assistance and training, helping them to make sure that they are in compliance. She reported that there were a lot of changes that were reviewed during the summer. She announced that the last week of September was Farm to School Week, October is National Farm to School month and Division staff are busy with Farm to School activities and gearing up for the upcoming NJEA and NJ SNA Conferences where staff will present on different topics. One of the Farm to School events was a Farm to School Academy at the Phillip Marucci Center for Blueberry and Cranberry Research, where the attendance was very good and there was great enthusiasm to see the way things happen on the farm. Finally, she reported that the Food Distribution staff has been planning for the USDA Foods Show on December 5, where there will be representation from all the processors that are approved for USDA foods. In addition, every unit in the Division will be presenting a workshop and Jersey Fresh will be attending the conference as well this year. She encouraged Board members to attend if their schedule permits.

Joe Zoltowski, Director, Division of Plant Industry, reported that over 68% of the requested LDD surveys have been completed and crews continue the remaining surveys in the northern counties. To date, a total of 18,748 acres of municipal and 1,017 acres of state lands have been proposed for single and double applications of *Btk* for the spring of 2025 in Burlington, Cape May, Morris, Passaic and Sussex

Counties. In addition, program staff continue to conduct *Phytophthora ramorum* trace work with USDA APHIS PPQ at the request of the USDA to collect samples from plants that may have been infected with *Phytophthora ramorum*. There were 13 nursery businesses impacted, in seven counties of New Jersey. These plants were shipped from a nursery in Oregon in a county under Federal Quarantine. He reported that during the month of September, staff serviced insect traps at 21 soybean farms and 37 nurseries. Traps that have been up for more than five service visits are being taken down and this month traps were removed from eight soybean sites and five nursery sites. All traps will be taken down by mid-October thus ending the field season. Soil from the potato farms is also being examined for non-cyst nematodes.

Board member John Hart asked about the status of the renovations at the Bug Lab, Director Zoltowski reported that the process is continuing to move forward and hopes that they will break ground possibly next summer.

Chuck Roohr, Deputy Director, SADC, reported that at its September meeting the SADC held its first Right to Farm hearing related to an aquaculture operation. The Committee found that the activity of air curing recycled clam and oyster shell in preparation for being reseeded was a generally accepted practice. He noted that the SADC staff have concluded their outreach, having met with most CADBs, the State Board, their non-profit partners, the environmental community, government entities and the general public. In addition, the SADC staff are currently conducting outreach through surveys, meetings and focus groups to help guide the direction of the program. In addition, staff is seeking input on how the SADC can support existing efforts and the next generation of farmers in New Jersey.

Frank Minch, Director, Division of Agricultural & Natural Resources, provided members of the Board with an informational sheet on the drought conditions. He noted that DEP is closely monitoring the situation and reported that we are currently in a drought warning status but that the status could change at any time. He noted that if at any time we get an emergency declaration that would affect any new allocations or applications for both. At that time anyone with an existing allocation under an emergency declaration would not be allowed to exceed their monthly rate for any circumstance. He reported that Division staff have prepared a brochure for the wildlife fencing program in an effort to promote the program more and that he has shared with Rutgers County Agents so that they can share at each county level. He reported that Division staff continue to work on the PFAS issue and discussions are ongoing regarding the NJDEP Real rule proposal.

President Blew reported that the Policy Committee would be meeting next week to discuss the REAL rule proposal the following week.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Steve Lee thanked Rutgers staff for the work that they did to make the October 18 Cranberry tour such a huge success, in addition he also thanked the Department staff who worked on communication with the legislators to make sure that day was successful, especially Rob Vivian and Chief of Staff Tameko Webster. He reported that he was able to attend one of the Farm to School events and found it to be an excellent opportunity to talk with some of the leadership at Food & Nutrition. He stated that communication is a key component to the agricultural industry, and we need to do a better job at it through the various channels that we have available to us through the Farm Bureau, the College, social

media, etc. We need to do better with communication. He reported that their last rain event at their farm was on August 8 and concern about the drought becoming more serious each day. He reported that wildfires are also a very serious concern, there are fires that have been burning since July, it's a very scary situation. Finally, he reported that with the success of the legislative tours to date, we will continue to do them and try to make each other better than the one before. He reported that the Legislative Committee would be meeting following election day and will be including Farm Bureau.

Holly Sytsema reported that Sussex County is extremely concerned about the dry weather, silage and high moisture corn were hard to get in because of the dry conditions. Also, in the county there is extensive bear damage and noted that Rutgers was working on the bear survey over quite a bit of land in Sussex and there was active drone footage as they were surveying bears in the field, and they were able to watch the destruction happen. She reported that the pictures were unbelievable. On their property they have two sows with multiple cubs. The Sussex County Board of Agriculture held their annual chicken barbecue fundraiser and noted that it was a great success, they were sold out, which was helpful as the County Fair had such terrible weather. She reported that Warren County is also suffering from very dry conditions and that farmers were having similar problems getting crops in/or out. It was noted that there are some issues with DEP and the stopping of farm vehicles on Route 519. Frank Minch commented that they are talking with DEP and DOT on the Route 519 issue to get some clarification. Finally, she reported that the SADC values for Sussex County were very discouraging compared to those in Morris County which is an adjacent county.

John Hart reported that he had attended the recent Mercer County Board of Ag dinner where one of the topics was the drought conditions and how it is going to be a challenge for many grain farmers. In addition, the deer problem in Mercer County and that Mercer County and DNR Greenways do not allow hunting on their grounds and in Hopewell especially they have grounds on both sides of the county and the land is not farmed or hunted and the number of deer killed on the road continues to climb. At his operation they have a butcher shop so they take deer in but there are more deer than usual, and many are from other counties.

Kurt Alstede reported that RMA has recently announced that they will expand coverage for certain perineal crops (grapes) in Hunterdon, Mercer and Monmouth counties, in addition, they have added clam coverage for Atlantic, Cape May and Ocean counties. This was a result of the correspondence that the Board had with RMA last year. He continued that the only silver lining of the dry conditions is that direct marketers and retailers last year had rain seven out of eight weekends and this year they have had bright, sunny weekends and consumers have responded and are coming out in droves and spending money. He noted a recent article reported that many ag economists feel that we are on the brink of a recession and while interest rates have dropped some, most operating loans have a variable interest. He stated that we need to recognize the trepidation that many are feeling from these outside pressured and now the drought conditions are starting to scare a lot of people.

David DeFrance asked about the Route 519 situation and if there were violations issued. He noted that they have run into some problems as they are relocating plant material up north because they are accessing another farm at this point. They have commercial plated vehicles and have been pulled over but with the destination of where they are going and what they are doing on their letterhead they have not been ticketed. He, too, commented on the number of dead deer on the roads, especially on Route

31. He commented that at Hunterdon County Board they discussed the wildlife fencing program and that the cost share was more difficult as you have to front the money, while already in a tough year. In addition, he noted that the SADC Director position; the formula value and the appropriation bill are some of the big concerns that he is hearing at the county level. He noted that there have been discussions on the Real Rule proposal and the concerns about that. He reported that the Farm Viability Committee had met earlier that day and there were some robust discussions about how to move forward while keeping the message united.

Vice President Specca reported that Ocean County did not meet this month and at the Monmouth County Board meeting she gave them an update of the Board's Resolution Review process and they were very interested to know that there was continuing conversation from the Convention and the follow up being done. Another topic of discussion was enforcement on the heat stress legislation, and they would like to have a carve out for agriculture. She reported on a recent issue with deer depredation permits and the work involved in getting deer tags and the reports that need to be filled out and the time and effort that goes into all of this and the frustration of working with some State agencies that do not understand that agriculture needs to have some special exemptions when it comes to these situations.

Joel Viereck is traveling today so he submitted a written report that President Blew summarized for the Board and noted that Salem County is excited about interviewing candidates for the County Agent position and had discussions regarding the heat stress legislation. He reported that Gloucester County would be meeting the following week but noted that DEP water enforcement has been hitting up a lot of Gloucester County producers in the last couple of months and it is becoming very burdensome. He reported that he and other Department staff would be meeting with the Vegetable Grower leadership at Harrah's regarding the upcoming convention. He noted that Zach Heiken is now the Vice President of the Vegetable Growers and Jimmy Abma is now the President.

President Blew stated that the issue of road safety continues to be a topic that should be paramount to all of us, and he would like to see an Ag Traffic Safety month. Can we be doing more to promote that, especially at this time of year, there are lots of slow-moving agricultural vehicles and drivers have to be aware of and follow all safety rules. The quality of drivers is very concerning and some of our ag producers are paying the ultimate price. Secretary Wengryn commented that we maybe could do something to coincide with National Ag Safety Week and work on some of the social messaging.

John Hart, Chair of the Wildlife/Livestock Committee, had met to review the Veterinary Health resolution and there is a shortage of large animal veterinarians and now that New Jersey will have their first veterinary school at Rowan University.

ON the MOTION of Kurt Alstede, seconded by Lisa Specca, the Board voted unanimously to approve the draft correspondence as discussed with minor changes.

There was some discussion on the proposed livestock processing facility in Warren County and Board member-elect Rick Gardner commented that there are still many issues and there will need to be approvals from DEP before anything can be done. He noted that it would be the perfect site to have it as it is very accessible from Route 31. He reported that Warren County was sending a letter of support for

the project. He noted that this project was something that would be very beneficial for livestock producers in the state.

Board member Kurt Alstede asked if there was any specific position of the Board on the Heat Stress legislation. There was a brief discussion about the heat stress legislation and Farm Bureau Executive Director Peter Furey said that they were trying desperately to get clarification on the enforcement prior to taking a position.

ON the MOTION of Kurt Alstede, seconded by Holly Sytsema, the Board voted that relative to the heat stress bill amendments that we are seeking, the position of the State Board is that the enforcement should rest with the rule-making authority which we support the Department of Agriculture.

ON the MOTION of Kurt Alstede, seconded by Vice President Lisa Specca, the Board voted unanimously to support the legislation for Right to Farm Frivolous lawsuits; Produce Donation and the 40th Anniversary of Jersey Fresh.

There was discussion regarding legislation in the upcoming weeks and President Blew stated that a Legislative Committee meeting should be held as quickly as possible. It was noted that the SADC appropriation legislation would be up and in its current form, the Board is not happy. It was noted that no action could be taken at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

Readoption by Notice without changes (and without public comment period) N.J.A.C. 2:53 (Stores) pertains to the retail sale of milk and milk products. N.J.A.C. 2:53 is scheduled to expire on March 29, 2025. If the Board approves the readoption of the rule by Notice, the current rule will be extended for a period of seven years.

ON the MOTION of John Hart, seconded by Holly Sytsema, the Board voted unanimously to approve Readoption by Notice without changes (and without public comment period) N.J.A.C. 2:53 (Stores) pertains to the retail sale of milk and milk products pursuant to the Administrative Procedures Act.

Approval – State Agricultural Convention Committees

ON the MOTION of Lisa Specca, seconded by John Hart, the Board voted unanimously to approve the Resolutions Committee as presented with President Blew and Steve Lee as liaisons to that Committee with a change to the Committee to be sure that there was a more equal geographic representation. It was then reported that Joel Viereck would serve as liaison to the Nominations Committee and Vice President Specca will serve as the liaison to the Credentials Committee.

RESOLUTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board adopts the following resolution:

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b)(7), the Board will also discuss a matter involving pending or anticipated litigation or contract negotiation other than in subsection b.(4) herein in which the public body is, or may become, a party, or matters falling within the attorney-client privilege. The Board will not disclose the contents of this part of the discussion because it falls under attorney-client privilege.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

MEETINGS

The next regular meeting of the State Board of Agriculture will be held on Wednesday, November 20, 2024 beginning at 1:00 at 200 Riverview Plaza, Trenton.

ADJOURNMENT

ON the MOTION of Holly Sytsema, seconded by Lisa Specca, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the regular meeting at 5:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Edward D. Wengryn", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Edward D. Wengryn