

## Secretary's Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture

March 27, 2024

**Farm to School** – The Food and Nutrition Division's Farm to School Team has been accepted into the 2024-2025 cohort of the Farm to School Institute Adaptation Program at Shelburne Farms in Vermont and will receive a \$7,500 stipend to cover travel and costs associated with developing the program. There are plans to implement a Farm to School Institute in New Jersey next year.

**Jersey Fresh** – Marketing and Development Division staff continues to work with OIT and a vendor to finalize the FindJerseyFresh.com website so ag businesses will be able to edit and update their own profiles for the 2024 season. There have been some technical glitches that are being resolved. Planning for the Jersey Fresh season is almost complete and will focus on the 40 Years of Jersey Fresh.

**Deer Fencing Application** – Agricultural and Natural Resources Division staff is working on a Farm Conservation Plan for a state preserved farm in Hunterdon County in need of a plan as part of its deer fence cost share application. The farm plans to deer fence its hay field. Part of the hay field will be converted to four acres of grapes for wine making. Staff completed the necessary forms for the plan and created cultural resource maps, practice maps, and completed job sheets for each relevant practice.

**Animal Emergency Corral Demonstration** – A training on the NJDA's portable corral was conducted recently at PHEAL. The use of the Titan West product "Corral Buddy" was demonstrated by a representative of the vendor. Numerous members of NJDA and its emergency management team, USDA APHIS VS, and other state partners attended the training. The NJDA Public Information Officer was present to capture images and recordings of the demonstrations, to be used for future reference. The portable corral has numerous applications in the state, including disease response requiring livestock sorting or isolation facilities. Another important potential use is in response to natural or technical disasters affecting livestock needing temporary housing or corralling after escaping facilities that have been damaged in a storm.

**Spotted Lanternfly Program** – All spray treatments have stopped for the winter for spotted lanternfly (SLF), so treatment now consists exclusively of physically scraping and crushing egg masses. Crews scraped 13,060 egg masses at 43 properties in February. Before treatments can occur at a particular location, SLF teams must secure permission by getting property owners to sign our treatment agreement. Often in the winter staff will obtain signatures for summer treatment but this month no new permissions were secured. Properties where permission for treatment is secured need to be assessed for the presence of the tree of heaven. During this reporting period, 11 properties were assessed.

**Summer EBT** – The Food and Nutrition Division continues to work collaboratively with the Department of Education, Department of Human Services and Governor's office staff on Summer EBT. The memorandum announcing the upcoming Summer EBT training and flyers to promote the program was posted in the School Nutrition Electronic and Reimbursement System (SNEARS) on Friday, March 15. Flyers were provided in English and Spanish. The webinar is scheduled for Wednesday, April 17.

**Contagious Equine Metritis Training** – The Division of Animal Health's Contagious Equine Metritis (CEM) Program coordinator attended the USDA's Veterinary Services CEM Programmatic training in Lexington, Ky., on March 12-13. One significant role of the division is the oversight of federal programs to protect the country from reportable diseases of livestock. The Division is the primary regulatory body with oversight on equine movement and disease control, a first line of defense in protecting the New Jersey and national

equine population and industry. CEM is a venereal disease in horses caused by the bacteria, *Taylorella equigenitalis*. While the United States is considered CEM-free, CEM is a foreign animal disease which is reportable at both the federal and state level. Horses imported to the United States must meet certain import criteria or undergo CEM quarantine procedures at an approved facility to demonstrate freedom of CEM. The Division maintains oversight on two such quarantine facilities that serve to test and treat imported horses.

**School Milk Supply** – Due to changes and renewed interest in supplying schools with milk, the Marketing and Development Division dairy section has requested all schools supply the required information of who they are purchasing milk from to verify compliance with N.J.A.C. 2:55. The distribution of letters requesting information has sparked calls as some dealers have not sourced New Jersey-produced milk to fill contracts.

**Curriculum for Agriculture, Science, Education (CASE) Grants** – Five school districts received 2024 Curriculum for Agriculture, Science, Education (CASE) Grants totaling \$21,000.00 and six school districts received 2024 Program Improvement Grants totaling \$20,000. Applications were made available to all schools approved by the Department of Education to offer agriculture, food and natural resources programs. The available funds are made possible by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJ DOE) through the Memorandum of Agreement between the NJ DOE and the NJDA. CASE Grant funds will be used to continue the development of the CASE program to build programs of study by supporting teacher professional development and expenditures for class/lab equipment and supplies. Program Improvement grants will be used to purchase a storage shed, replace a floral cooler, upgrade welding equipment and PPE, and purchase a MARSfarm, a countertop-sized greenhouse designed for the classroom.

**Nursery Inspection Program** – The Plant Industry Division had nursery program staff attend the Landscape New Jersey Tradeshow and Conferences in Secaucus in February. The Landscape New Jersey Tradeshow is for horticultural industries and landscape contractors. The booth displayed outreach materials on invasive insect pests and diseases affecting the horticulture industry, along with an overview of the nursery inspection program. The booth was well attended with over 90 visitors. Most of the questions asked were about insects and diseases and the types of informational resources available.

**Animal Emergency Working Group Symposium** – The 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Animal Emergency Working Group Symposium is scheduled to take place from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 8 at the Horse Park of New Jersey. The day will feature breakout sessions on Animal Emergency Sheltering, and Law Enforcement, as well as remarks from the NJ Forest Fire Service, and guest speakers on how to handle exotic pets, and how climate change is impacting emergency planning. Registration information is available at <https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/animalemergency/aewg/>.

**Chemical Storage Filing Deadline** – The deadline for farmers/pesticide applicators for filing chemical storage inventory and its location to local fire departments is May 1. This does not pertain to pesticides stored for personal use, or to those storing pesticides at loading or application areas for less than 7 days. Applicators and dealers must keep the cover letter on file for a minimum of three years and should have it available for NJDEP upon request.