

**Secretary's Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture  
February 22, 2017**

**AG CONVENTION**

Many thanks to the NJDA staff for delivering a successful and informative Agricultural Convention. The discussion topics and speakers were well-received by the delegates and attendees. The Resolutions process led by Bill Cutts went very smoothly due to the detailed and comprehensive work of the Resolutions Committee.

**NASDA**

Assistant Secretary Purcell attended the NASDA Winter Policy Conference in Washington DC for Secretary Fisher due to his recent accident. She took part in the NEASDA business meeting, the Natural Resources & Environmental Committee meeting and the Marketing & International Trade Committee meeting. Major topics included discussion on the new administration and immigration, Federal programs and staffing and regulatory reform. She also attended a very informative Panel Discussion on global demand, the 2018 Farm Bill, Trade Policy and border security.

**Veterinary Feed Directive Meetings** - The outreach meetings for livestock operators on the new Veterinary Feed Directive are now scheduled. Meetings will be held on March 7th, 8th and 9th at the RCE offices in Warren, Burlington and Salem, respectively with a 7 p.m. start time for each.

**Direct Delivery DOD Fresh Produce Program for the 2016-2017 School Year** – Grower training seminars on the Food Safety Modernization Act Produce Safety Rule continue. The seminar held concurrently with the State Agriculture Convention drew more than 80 attendees from across the state, far in excess of our expectations.

**Water Supply Remains An Issue** - Although rainfall has increased through January 2017, the overall Regional Drinking Water Supply Indicators have not shown significant improvement as indicated in the February 5, 2017 Regional Drinking Water Supply Indicators publication. The lack of improvement prompted a Drought Warning designation for 14 north and central New Jersey counties on October 21, 2016. Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, and Salem counties remain under a Drought Watch, while only Atlantic, Cape May and Cumberland counties are classified as “normal”.

**Agricultural Education** - Thirty-seven (37) FFA members, nine (9) advisors and seven (7) parents attended State Officer Candidates' School at South Hunterdon High School in Lambertville. This event prepares potential state officer candidates and nominating committee members for the state officer selection process.

**Plant Pest Survey** - Work continues in planning for a Farm Bill funded survey of potato farms for a specific plant disease (*Dickeya solani*) and nematode (*Globodera pallida*). Both are extremely harmful pests of potato.

**Boxwood Blight** - A total of 14 Boxwood plants held at a re-wholesale nursery location in northern New Jersey were found infected with boxwood blight (*Calonectria pseudonaviculatum*). Every infected plant was removed, double-bagged and destroyed to quickly mitigate the spread of this fungus.

**Veterinary Accreditation** - Four veterinarians from the DAH presented at the USDA APHIS Veterinary Accreditation for NJ held at the PHEAL Auditorium on February 15, 2017 to 15 veterinarians who will be practicing in NJ.

**Salmonella and Listeria PT** - The AHDL staff passed the Salmonella and Listeria proficiency test (PT) on an animal feed sample offered by a 3rd party as required by the Animal Feed Regulatory Program Standards (AFRPS). The PT helps the AHDL comply with the ISO 17025 testing standard.

**School Breakfast Program** - The annual School Breakfast Scorecard, released on February 14 by the Food Research and Action Center, shows New Jersey improved its national ranking to 19th in 2015-16. We have demonstrated continued growth in the program since 2010-2011, when N.J. was 48th.

**Direct Delivery DOD Fresh Produce Program** - 230 of the 262 DOD direct delivery program schools participated during the month of January 2017. A total of 32,965 cases at 756,681 pounds with a value of \$769,539 were ordered during the month of January.