

Secretary's Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture
October 28, 2020

Animal Health Diagnostic Lab Receives Award – The Animal Health Diagnostic Laboratory (AHDL) staff received the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Group Recognition Crosscutting Award at the 60th FDA Honor Awards for extraordinary efforts to develop and evaluate a method for detection of aflatoxin B1 in dog food. The mold *Aspergillus flavus* produces aflatoxin B1, which can grow on corn and other grains used as pet food ingredients. Aflatoxin can cause illness and death in pets if ingested at high levels. The FDA Honor Awards program recognizes accomplishments and significant contributions that have resulted in the agency's goal of meeting its mission of protecting and promoting public health.

School Nutrition Programs – Food and Nutrition Division staff are in the process of approving Seamless Summer Option application extensions, based on the latest guidance received from the USDA extending critical waivers that allow the continued operation of the Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Option through June 30, 2021. Staff continues to approve Meal Pattern Flexibility Waivers, which were also extended through June 30, 2021.

Fall Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Education Professional Development Conference – The 2020 Fall Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR) Education Professional Development Conference focused on “Surviving and Thriving in the Virtual World” and welcomed nearly 50 teachers and guests. Held virtually via Zoom, ag teachers participated in a full day of workshops including topics about Culturally Inclusive Classrooms; Best Practices in the Ag Education Classroom; Safety for All Youth in Agriculture; New and Early Career Teachers; and What’s New in Curriculum for Agricultural Science Education (CASE). Participants heard updates from Erin Noble (Office of FANRE) David McNair (Career and Technical Education) and Kristianne Dowd (FFA). The New Jersey Association of Agricultural Educators also kicked off a book club that will discuss the book “Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People.” Each conference participant received a copy.

Spotted Lanternfly Treatment Program – During the last month, pesticide applications continued in the Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) quarantine areas. Treatments consist of field crews using an herbicide to kill ailanthus trees (Tree of Heaven) to remove the required nutrient source of SLF and a systemic insecticide on ailanthus trees to make them toxic to feeding. A total of 17,670 trees were treated using an herbicide (Garlon 3A) and 712 trees were treated using Dinotefuran. Overall, 118 properties covering 2,994 acres were treated last month.

Grants – Marketing and Development Division staff are fulfilling required obligations under our grant programs, Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBG), Animal Feed Regulatory Program Standards (AFRPS), Produce Safety, Livestock, Risk Management, Rural Development and Wine Industry Grants; including research and development. In addition, we are monitoring Grant Proposal Awards and preparing proposals. The 2021 SCBG has been submitted to the USDA and is awaiting award.

Live Bird Marketing Inspections – During the month of September, Division of Animal Health technicians (AHTs) conducted unannounced inspections at 27 registered NJ live bird markets and sampled eight markets for avian influenza by sampling poultry. Additional activity during the month of September included: 1. The quarterly closure of 11 live bird markets. Quarterly closures consist of cleaning and disinfecting the entire market, followed by a minimum of 24 hours of “down-time.” Following the “down-time,” environmental samples are taken at the market for testing. 2. The inspection of seven poultry distributors. Records were reviewed and ensured compliance with 2:9-4.2(c), reviewing vehicle cleaning and disinfection logbooks. 3. Avian influenza testing of seven poultry

distributors. 4. Avian Influenza testing of 38 backyard flocks throughout New Jersey.

CARES Reimbursement Claims – The Food and Nutrition Division has received CARES funding in the amount of \$224 million for the reimbursement of Child Nutrition claims March – September 2020. To date, \$193 million has been expended. When CARES funding has been fully expended, the use of regular program funding for reimbursement of claims will resume.

CARES Act Funds for Fisheries Approved – The National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has approved the New Jersey spending plan for distribution of CARES Act Fisheries Assistance funding. Applications for the program will be accepted through Nov. 18 and are available through DEP's electronic grants management system, NJDEP SAGE at <https://njdepsage.intelligrants.com>. For more information on the program go to: https://www.njfishandwildlife.com/cares_info.htm.

Organic Certifications – Marketing and Development Division organic certification staff are completing work on certifications, and in-house field inspectors are starting to do a modified inspection of existing operations for renewals while doing on-site inspections of new applicants. Training scheduling has taken place to train more in-house employees to do organic inspections. Other personnel are being trained to complete organic certification packets for handlers due to the vacancy being created by the staff member taking a new position with the EPA.

Emerald Ash Borer Bio Control Release – The biocontrol releases of Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) egg and larval parasitoids were completed for the season during the previous month in six locations throughout the state. This year, a total of 33,318 egg and larval parasitoids were released every two weeks from May 20 to September 16 at six locations in Camden, Hunterdon, Morris, Passaic, Sussex and Warren Counties.