

**Secretary's Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture**  
**November 17, 2021**

**National FFA Convention** – NJDA Ag Education leaders and several New Jersey chapters attended the FFA National Convention late last month. The NJDA State Program Leader for Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Education/State FFA Advisor Erin Noble was elected the National Association of Supervisors of Agricultural Education Eastern Region Vice President from 2021-2023. The Allentown and Woodstown chapters each received Three Star National Chapter Recognition and members from the Salem Vo-Tech, Northern Burlington, Belvidere, Woodstown, and Penns Grove chapters each were American Degree recipients. In the Agriscience Fair, Bergen County Academies' Pranav Hooda took second in Division 3 Plant Systems, and Meera Parel took second in Division 5 Social Science.

**Annual American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD) Meeting** – The Animal Health Division's Diagnostic Lab Director and other staff attended the annual AAVLD Meeting virtually in the month of October. Staff members attended the following workshops/symposia: Quality Assurance, High-thruput COVID and viruses testing, Bacteriology, Foreign Animal Diseases, and Toxicologic Pathology. The knowledge acquired from participating in training workshops and symposia is very valuable to delivering service excellence.

**New Jersey Hemp Program** – The Plant Industry Division had 21 processors/handlers and 58 growers licensed for the 2021 season. This season, 48 growers actively cultivated hemp varieties. Overall, the harvest season has been completed in the state leaving only one indoor grower still active. To date for 2021, the Plant Laboratory has tested 260 regulatory samples including initial and retest samples for regulatory compliance. Out of those regulatory samples, a total of nine have failed for THC. The National Hemp Regulators group is holding an online video conference this week. The USDA Agricultural Marketing Service is rolling out an online reporting program called HeMP Management that staff will be trained on soon.

**Jersey Fresh Marketing** – Marketing and Development Division staff launched fall billboards and radio creative focused on Jersey Fresh fall crops and agritourism, with the campaign concluding in early November. The year-end consumer tracking study for Jersey Fresh is underway with results expected in December.

**USDA Seafood Processor Grants** – The NJDA has continued to work with project partners at the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) to draft and apply to the USDA for the Seafood Processor Block Grants. These grants are awarded to States who then pass on funding for eligible items related to worker and consumer safety implemented during the pandemic (e.g., PPE for workers, safety shields at payment windows, market pivots). The NJDEP is the grant applicant (only one agency per State), with the NJDA and NJDEP working in tandem to develop the application and terms of the program (e.g., applications from industry, review process). The NJDOH is assisting with outreach to the industry, which commenced in late October to obtain the industry information needed for the grant application. Additional outreach to the industry will be needed after funding is awarded. The grant application must be submitted by NJDEP to the USDA no later than November 22.

**Gypsy Moth Suppression Program** – Gypsy moth ground egg mass surveys were completed in 22 municipalities in nine counties (Atlantic, Bergen, Burlington, Cape May, Mercer, Middlesex, Ocean, Passaic, and Sussex). Surveys in four municipalities remain to be completed in Gloucester and Bergen counties by the end of the year. Overall, a total of 5,148 acres have been proposed for treatment in seven municipalities in Cape May and Burlington counties during the spring of 2022. Of this number,

3,037 acres are recommended to be treated a second time.

**Dairy** – According to October reports from processors and major packaged milk dealers in the state, fluid milk sales may have seen additional recovery during the last month as schools and food service sales have increased. At the time of submission, the Market Administrators office had not released the October milk prices.

**Pathology Laboratory** – The Division of Animal Health (DAH) organized a poultry euthanasia and depopulation training session that occurred on October 18. Multiple members of the DAH and USDA-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Veterinary Services (APHIS-VS) field staff participated. Dr. Chrislyn Wood, a USDA-APHIS-VS Pa.-based poultry specialist, led the instruction on considerations for euthanasia and depopulation and the acceptable four methods for poultry euthanasia. In the event of a highly consequential or economically devastating poultry disease in New Jersey, DAH staff may be involved in the depopulation effort. Preparing for an emergency animal disease event involves practicing the various American Veterinary Medical Association approved depopulation methods.