

**Secretary's Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture**  
**January 26, 2022**

**FFA National Leadership Seminar** – New Jersey FFA State Officers Abigail Goodenough (President), Emily Sadlon (Secretary) and Jonathan Finney (Treasurer) traveled to California for the 2022 National Leadership Seminar for State Officers (NLSSO) hosted by the National FFA Organization. This experience replaced the cancelled international seminar that typically happens this time of year. During NLSSO, they visited Sacramento, Santa Rosa, Sonoma County, San Francisco, Monterey, Santa Barbara and San Diego. Participants visited with members of the California Water Board and Department of Agriculture, toured the largest caviar producer in the U.S., a fourth-generation family dairy with over 700 head, an oyster farm, and visited the nation's third largest horticulture grower.

**Animal Health Diagnostic Lab Whole-Genome Sequencing** – The Division of Animal Health's Animal Health Diagnostic Lab (AHDL) implemented whole-genome sequencing (WGS) utilizing recently purchased Illumina MiniSeq Next Generation Sequencing Technology. The AHDL is a member lab of the FDA's Genome Trakr Network, responsible for tracing foodborne outbreaks using molecular epidemiology. The AHDL sequenced 21 E. coli bacterial isolates in December 2021. The genome sequences were submitted to the National Center for Biotechnology (NCBI) genome database. The AHDL will continue sequencing all foodborne organism isolates in its possession. This is a significant accomplishment by the AHDL.

**Federal Supply Chain Assistance Funding** – The Food and Nutrition Division has received Federal Supply Chain Assistance Funding in the amount of \$24 million. These funds will be distributed to School Food Authorities (SFAs) to purchase unprocessed or minimally processed domestic food products to help SFAs deal with challenges, such as unanticipated cancellation of food and supply contracts, reduced availability of certain foods, unexpected substitution of certain products, unpredictable increases in food and supply prices and other obstacles related to pricing or availability.

**USA Plants Database Upgrade** – Plant Industry Division staff worked with a representative from NJDA Application Services - Information Technology and our Nursery Inspection System software vendor for an upcoming enhancement to the USA Plants database system. This enhancement will include producing a reporting tool capable of calculating total stock acreage inspected in a year. The report will provide acreage by county and stock type. This enhancement should be included in the next system update in the late spring, or early summer of 2022.

**Dairy** – Milk dealers are reporting an extreme shortage of drivers plus multiple processing plants are cutting back on stock keeping units in order to focus on products in demand and thus offsetting the shortage of plant labor availability and increased packaging costs. There is also a shortage of on-farm pick up drivers with some farms being skipped or some procurement companies looking at going to the maximum of 72 hours allowed by the Pasteurized Milk Ordinance between pickups.

**Spotted Lanternfly Outreach** – Plant Industry Division Entomologists were contacted by the NJ DEP Forest Service requesting pinned specimens of spotted lanternfly (SLF). The request came from the state of Maine's Forest Service for the purpose of expanding their SLF outreach efforts with the public. Staff prepared several displays containing specimens of all SLF life stages. These specimens were collected by NJDA SLF field staff from a park in Hillsborough Twp. in Somerset County in 2019. Each display included first and last instar nymphs and adults presented in both resting and flight phases. Additional displays were prepared for the NJDA to use for the same purpose during our own outreach efforts in New Jersey.

**Animal Waste Management Plan** – Agricultural and Natural Resources Division staff performed a field visit to a Hunterdon County farm that had requested assistance with developing an Animal Waste Management Plan (AWMP). Staff walked the property and made recommendations to the landowners and discussed the steps of developing an AWMP. The landowners had questions regarding some trees on their property and if they were toxic to horses. After the field visit, NJDA staff researched if any of the identified trees were toxic to horses and notified the landowners of their findings. A trip report was written for this visit and the completed AWMP will be mailed out this month.

**Jersey Fresh** – Revisions to the FindJerseyFresh.com website and hosting are continuing and discussions are ongoing with OIT to transfer hosting of the site. Division staff are attending in-person and virtual industry meetings, delivering point-of-purchase materials to retailers, writing articles, and continuing to publish and disseminate Jersey Fresh social media updates.

**Summer Food Service Program** – Earlier this month, The Sustainable Growth Plan was submitted to USDA Mid-Atlantic Regional Office. This Plan is written to support the goals and vision of the USDA with support from the regional office to help increase participation and sustain expansion of the Summer Meals Program while maintaining program integrity. The plan includes unit goals, growth goals, plans for sustainable growth, customer service community awareness, access to nutritious foods and summer meal partners.

**Animal Health Pathology Laboratory Testing** – The Division of Animal Health's Pathology Laboratory Section completed 233 tests and/or procedures last month. Tests and/or procedures involved gross necropsy examination, histopathologic (microscopic), immunohistochemical and parasitological preparation and evaluation. These cases generated additional diagnostic tests for other laboratory sections (e.g., bacteriology, virology and molecular). Cases involved diagnostic testing for disease and/or cause of death diagnosis and routine and/or sporadic disease surveillance for large and small ruminant, companion animal and exotic/zoo species; sudden death with no clinical symptoms; assessment of backyard and small flock health issues; large scale flock disease; law enforcement forensic investigation, and animals exhibiting neurologic symptoms. Results from these case submissions help to support practicing large, mixed, and small animal veterinarians, private food and companion animal owners, New Jersey State Agencies, racetrack, wildlife, zoo, and nonprofit animal facilities.