

Secretary's Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture
May 25, 2022

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza – New Jersey was confirmed to have its first case of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Monmouth County on Tuesday, May 17. State and federal personnel followed the appropriate response plan, including implementing site quarantine, proper biosecurity measures, and depopulation of poultry on the premises. Additionally, outreach to poultry owners, live bird markets, and the general public at www.nj.gov/agriculture was completed to provide recommendations on poultry management and measures to ensure the maintenance of a healthy flock.

Jersey Fresh Marketing – Marketing and Development Division staff concluded creative development for the 2022 Jersey Fresh marketing season and media buys are in place. This year's social media photo contest and a new landing page are in place to begin in mid-June.

Potable Water Questions – Agricultural and Natural Resources Division staff was alerted to new questions on irrigation water allocation renewals which focused on potable water wells. Subsequently staff has met with DEP Bureau of Water Allocation & Well Permitting twice, and Farm Bureau and Rutgers Cooperative Extension Staff at their request. DEP has informed the NJDA that potable water questions will not affect water allocation, nor count towards total usage. The purpose of these questions is to identify wells being used for potable water that were previously unidentified. Our understanding is that the impetus for this is safe drinking water. These questions appeared first in 2020, and potable water questions are on all water allocations – not just agricultural.

School Food Authority Supply Chain Funding – The Food and Nutrition Division has collected 647 attestation statements from School Food Authorities (SFA) for Supply Chain Funding. Of those SFA's, only 40 have declined to receive additional funding. Once all statements are received, each SFA electing to participate will receive a \$5,000 base payment in addition to an allocation based on their enrollment. We anticipate this funding being distributed by August and being available for the 22-23 school year. These funds will be used to purchase unprocessed or minimally processed domestic food products to help deal with challenges related to cancellation of food contracts, reduced availability of certain foods, unpredictable increases in food and supply prices and other obstacles related to pricing and availability.

Canadian Blueberry Certification Program – Plant Industry Division staff sent out applications for this year's Canadian Blueberry (fruit) Certification Program to previous years' participants. This program certifies New Jersey blueberry growers so they may ship their blueberry fruit from New Jersey to fresh fruit markets in Canada, while safeguarding against the unintentional introduction of the blueberry maggot, *Rhagoletis mendax*. Twenty-nine growers have received training and applied to participate in this quarantine compliance program between the United States and Canada.

Livestock Processing – The Division of Marketing and Development staff continues to work on the livestock project with discussion between the groups and potential funding sources at the State and Federal level. The Department is assisting any processor group or processor in obtaining any grants for their operations that fits into any federal funding rounds that have been announced.

Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease – The USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the NJDA confirmed Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus Type 2 (RHDV2) in a 1-year-old spayed female rabbit in Cape May County. The affected rabbit's sudden death on 05/08/2022 was reported to the NJDA and USDA. RHDV2 detection was confirmed via laboratory testing on 05/12/2022. A second rabbit died on the premises on 05/11/2022. The remaining rabbit was quarantined and has not shown any signs of the disease. The outbreak's source has not yet been identified, and there is no evidence of infection in

other locations.

Child and Adult Care Food Program – The Food and Nutrition Division’s Child and Adult Care Food Program staff has received several inquiries from child care institutions. Many school districts are trying to gather information in order to utilize their preschool expansion aid grants. We have collaborated with team members of the National School Lunch Program to help determine eligibility and to streamline the onboarding process.

Seafood Processors Grant – In partnership with the New Jersey Departments of Environmental Protection and Health, NJDA Agricultural and Natural Resources staff have been working to finalize the application portal for the Seafood Processors Grant. The grant process is administered by NJDEP, with the application run through their SAGE website. However, given the overlapping areas for the grant, it has required the three partner agencies be involved throughout. When the website is live there will be a link provided on the respective Departmental websites and announced through listservs.

Apiary Program – Bee populations are increasing in the colonies and some colonies have been observed to begin swarming on the warmer days. The State Apiarist continues to remind beekeepers to maintain an adequate water source on their property that does not run dry, as well as keep an eye out for possible queen cells during the swarming season. It was a difficult month for bees due to the cold and fluctuating temperatures. Many trees and flowers have started to bloom, and beekeepers are preparing for the season and placing colonies in farm fields for pollination activities. Many colonies were shipped to Atlantic County for blueberry pollination.