

**Secretary's Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture**  
**July 27, 2022**

**Two Grants Awarded** – The Agricultural and Natural Resources Division has had two grant proposals selected for funding. The USDA NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) to develop the New Jersey Manure Link website, connecting manure producers with composters, is for \$85,000. The key objectives of New Jersey Manure Link are to recycle valuable nutrients, generate accessibility to organic materials, reduce animal waste stream in landfills, and protect/improve waterways adjacent to livestock/equine farmland. The NJDA will partner with Rutgers University, Office of Research Analytics to develop and deploy the New Jersey Manure Link website. New Jersey Compost Council (NJCC), a partner in the project, will provide support for the outreach and educational components including hands-on composting field days and resources for the website. The second grant through the NJDEP Division of Watershed Protection and Restoration Water Quality Restoration Grants to mitigate Nonpoint Source Pollution is for \$399,000. Our proposal is for “Animal Waste Management Plan Development and Implementation to Reduce Agricultural Non-Point Source Pollution”. This grant seeks to assist farms with the development and implementation of Animal Waste Development Management Plans.

**Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza** – Through June, surveillance activities were conducted in response to the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) case in Monmouth County. At the completion of surveillance and required testing, the control area and surveillance zones were released on July 16, 2022. Standard protocol, specific to the surveillance and sick bird call response to an HPAI case, will be added to the NJDA HPAI Response plan.

**Jersey Fresh Campaign** – The 2022 Jersey Fresh media campaign is in full swing with radio, billboards, airplane banners, trade ads and social media content and the #JerseyFreshisBest social media photo contest. Also, marketing staff attended the Foodtown/Allegiance trade show in late June and had good discussions with produce managers. Additionally, staff is planning to attend conferences and trade shows including North American Agricultural Marketing Officials (NAAMO) conference in July, Northeast Produce Council (NEPC) Show in August, and the International Fresh Produce Association Show in October on the immediate horizon.

**Beekeepers Registrations** – The State Apiarist continues to work on getting New Jersey beekeepers registered and is working with the New Jersey Beekeepers Association to get the word out to their members through emails and newsletters. An update was made to the 2022 registration database which includes a Hive Identification field. This will help inspectors and municipal officials identify the beekeeper/owner when hives are found or abandoned on public lands. The Apiarist also is in the process of mapping out registered apiaries in the state. This will be beneficial in locating hives to prevent disease or invasive pest spread.

**USDA Funding for P--EBT** – The USDA Food and Nutrition Service made funds available to state agencies administering the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program to provide local operators with additional funding to reimburse administrative costs associated with P-EBT in Fiscal Year 2022. The amount of funding provided to each program operator will be determined based on the number of P-EBT eligible children served by the school food authority (SFA). The total amount of P-EBT administrative funding received by New Jersey was \$834,343. Payments were issued to eligible SFA's on June 24.

**Ag Education** – At the end of this past school year, six agriculture teachers left their programs for a variety of reasons causing vacancies. For the upcoming school year, three positions were added, and

one school needs a leave replacement. So far, nine of the openings have been filled and one is in the process of interviewing. Several of the openings were filled by alternatively certified teachers. The STAR (State Teach Ag Results Team) Program continues to create a greater awareness about the ag teacher demand and help ensure traditionally certified teachers are available to meet the demand.

**Livestock Processing** – Marketing and Development Division staff continue to work on the livestock processing project, including having discussions between the groups and potential funding sources at the State and Federal level. The Department is assisting any processor group or processor in obtaining federal grants that their operation may be eligible for. The Department is working with five established entities for processing projects.

**PHEAL Expansion Planning** - The Department of Health (DOH) is planning an expansion of the Public Health, Environmental, and Agricultural Laboratory (PHEAL) facility. The State hired a lab planner in Spring 2022. The lab planner conducted meetings in May/June 2022 with various agencies and lab programs housed in the PHEAL facility to gather facility expansion needs for enhanced public health. The NJDA employees, including Animal Health, One Health, and Plant Industry, met with the planner to explain the needs of the Department. The PHEAL facility expansion constitutes a One Health effort, including all agencies housed at the PHEAL, such as DOH, NJDA, and DEP.

**Summer Food Service Program** – Division staff joined Secretary Fisher at the Food Bank of South Jersey's kick-off event in Camden on Friday, July 15. The kick-off event was the start of the sponsors summer operations where they welcome the NJDA staff and other constituents to be a part of the program. Meals are provided to the children in attendance and are sometimes claimed for reimbursement. Activities are also included for the children.

**Spotted Lanternfly** – Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) crews treated 99 parcels representing 98 acres of treatment area with a broad spectrum contact insecticide sprayed directly on the insect while on any type of vegetation. The use of systemic insecticides will likely begin in later in the month. These treatments are applied only to Tree-of-Heaven and cause the entire tree to become toxic to feeding spotted lanternfly adults for the remainder of the season. Additionally, besides conducting treatments this project also has trapping and survey components. Spotted lanternfly circle traps have been deployed in high priority areas in a high-density trapping scheme. A total of 172 traps are being serviced regularly by SLF staff. Grid surveys continued this month as well, with 17 grids completed.