

Secretary's Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture
December 21, 2022

Livestock Innovation Center – Marketing and Development Division staff is helping the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (EDA) with rolling out potential funding to assist livestock processors. In addition, the EDA has discussed with the processor steering leadership the advancement of the innovation center and has guided them to include poultry and dairy into the current red meat project. This will allow for a complete livestock protein innovation center.

Biosecurity Exercise – NJDA Division of Animal Health (DAH) and USDA field staff participated in an on-farm biosecurity exercise at a sheep farm in Monmouth County owned by one of the USDA field staff. The demonstrations included the appropriate steps to place on and off personal protective equipment (PPE) when entering a property with a high risk for or known infectious disease, such as a foreign animal disease. Scenarios of a farm and urban field site were set up were reviewed as well. The participants were given the opportunity to practice the skills demonstrated. The biosecurity practices outlined during the exercise are important for any disease response, but particularly for foreign animal diseases such as Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI).

Quarantine Compliance Agreement Renewal – Plant Industry Division staff have begun the Quarantine Compliance Agreement renewal process for shipping nurseries this month. Several of these agreements must be updated to include new criteria for shipping. Businesses require this certification to ship their products domestically without the need for load-by-load phytosanitary inspections. Two of these agreements also require that permits be issued in advance by the state of California.

Teach Agriculture Recruitment Event – The Division of Agricultural and Natural Resources' Office of Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resources Education held its annual Teach Agriculture Recruitment Event at the Cook Student Center at the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences, Rutgers University on December 10. This event is made possible as the result of the State Teach Agriculture Results (STAR) Program. The day included a keynote speech, a recruitment workshop, a panel discussion of college students majoring in agricultural education, highlights of attending Rutgers University, Penn State and Delaware Valley University for agricultural education, tips for a successful college experience and a tour of Cook campus.

USDA Foods Conference – The NJDA hosted the USDA Foods Conference at the New Jersey Expo Center in Edison on December 13. More than 350 school districts were represented by food service directors, business administrators, board members, and food service management companies. The conference included training sessions presented by each of the Food and Nutrition Division's child nutrition units, followed by an exhibit featuring more than 40 of the state approved processors that highlighted their commodities with food samples as possible menu items for the 2023-24 school year.

Live Bird Market Testing – In the month of November, Division of Animal Health (DAH) technicians conducted unannounced inspections at 24 registered New Jersey live bird markets and sampled poultry from 13 markets for avian influenza. Additional activity included the quarterly closure of 15 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 for testing; Five markets voluntarily completed a clean and disinfect and had down time for approximately 72 hours following a New York City Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) case where the five NJ live bird markets were considered a "dangerous contact." Division staff inspected two poultry distributors, which included reviewing records, vehicle cleaning and disinfection logbooks to ensure compliance with 2:9-4.2(c); DAH staff also performed HPAI testing of two in-state poultry

distributors.

Spotted Lanternfly Program – NJDA Plant Industry Division and USDA staff are treating trees at high priority locations such as seaports, airports, train yards and high-volume shipping operations to slow the spread of the spotted lanternfly (SLF). All spray treatments have stopped for the winter including Golden Pest Spray Oil which should only be applied in weather above 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Treatment now consists exclusively of physically scraping and crushing egg masses. So far this season SLF teams have destroyed 19,881 egg masses at 18 properties.

Agricultural Best Management Practices Grants – The Ocean County Soil Conservation District was awarded a Regional Conservation Partnership Program grant for the next five years to implement their Conservation Opportunities Advancing Sustainable Technologies for Aquaculture Leases (COASTAL) Project. The primary goal of the project is to amplify the oyster restoration efforts within New Jersey's Atlantic coastal bays by partnering with shellfish growers. Utilizing Natural Resource Conservation Service approved standards for reef restoration, the project furthers partnership between aquaculture and restoration that grew out of the COVID support programs. The NJDA is one of the project partners for the COASTAL Project with Department support including outreach connections and technical project guidance.

New Jersey Equity Team Meeting – The Food and Nutrition Division's Child and Adult Care Food Program staff attended a virtual meeting hosted by the New Jersey Equity Team (NJET). The group was formed as a part of a virtual peer learning team focusing on strengthening existing relationships and building new out-of-school time systems with equity focus. The NJET meets monthly and consists of stakeholders from the NJ Department of Education Office of Student Support Services; school-age program providers at Bridgeton Public Schools and the FOCUS Hispanic Center for Community Development Inc.; the Central Jersey Family Health Consortium; Rutgers Southern Regional Child Care Resource & Referral Agency; NJ Department of Human Services Division of Family Development and the New Jersey School-Age Care Coalition, the statewide network for New Jersey's afterschool communities.

Dairy Margin Signup Extended – The Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) signup period has been extended to January 31. Marketing and Development Division staff are working with various Farm Service Agency offices to process applications that are being applied for and paid for the DMC coverage for 2023. The milk margin above feed costs for the month of October is \$10.71 which is above the \$9.50 threshold. Economists had predicted a trigger for the remainder of 2022, but lower feed costs and rising milk prices have yielded different results favorable to sustainability.