



State of New Jersey

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

MINUTES OF MEETING

January 26, 2022

(Wednesday)

Public meeting notice was certified by communication on January 21, 2022.

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq. adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by giving written notice of the time, date, location and to the extent known the agenda of this meeting. At least 48-hours in advance this notice has been posted on the third floor, Riverview Plaza, Trenton, New Jersey; mailed to the Newark Star Ledger; the Camden Courier Post; the Philadelphia Inquirer and filed with the Office of the Secretary of State.

President David DeFrango called the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture to order at 1:35 pm. Board members in attendance included President David DeFrango; Vice President Dr. Ernest Beier, Paul Hlubik, Debbie Norz, Warren Hollinger, Holly Sytsema, Kurt Alstede and Lisa Specca. The meeting was held virtually.

Also in attendance were Secretary Douglas Fisher; Dr. Manoel Tamassia, Director, Division of Animal Health; Rose Chamberlain, Director, Division of Food & Nutrition; Assistant Secretary Joe Atchison, Nancy Wood, Division of Marketing & Development; Susan Payne, Executive Director, SADC; Joe Zoltowski and Frank Minch, Director, Division of Agricultural & Natural Resources; Mary Tovar, Robert Vivian, Jeff Wolfe and Jeff Beach, Office of the Secretary. Also in attendance were Peter Furey, NJ Farm Bureau; Dr. Brian Schilling, Rutgers University; Sarah Fenwick, Farm Service Agency, Julie Hawkins, NRCS, and Linda Walker, NJ Department of Agriculture.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

ON the MOTION of Paul Hlubik, seconded by Barney Hollinger, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the December 22, 2021, regular meeting.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Secretary Fisher called on Assistant Secretary Joe Atchison to report on the testing procedures and mandates that will be required to attend the convention sessions/meals. He reported that the Department will provide testing kits if needed. It was suggested that people test prior to making the trip to Atlantic City. He reported that information was sent to all certified operations in the Organic Certification Program on January 11 via hard copy and email regarding the program transition. He

reported that staff would be available to help them transition to a new certifier. They will still offer the Cost-Share option. He reported that the Livestock Committee would be meeting the next day to finalize language for the Jersey Raised meats program that we hope to unveil at the Convention as well. The Department is working to have the ability to livestream the Convention for those that cannot attend in person. This would be a viewing source only.

Secretary Fisher stated again that the Livestream would be viewing only. He also reported that there may be grant monies available for livestock processing. In addition, he responded to a question from Board member Kurt Alstede regarding who would serve as his designee in his absence from an SADC meeting. Frank Minch would serve as his designee and that a letter has been sent to the SADC in this regard.

Dr. Manoel Tamassia, Director, Division of Animal Health, reported that USDA has confirmed additional cases of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in wild birds. Cases have also been confirmed in North America. It was announced that Rowan University would be opening NJ's first veterinary school. Vice President Beier asked if he should refer any clients of his that have problems with their birds to the Department. In addition, Secretary Fisher announced that there had been interviews for the One Health Coordinator and the Department is working to fill that position. Dr. Tamassia also announced that they had interviewed for the Humane Investigator position and hopes to have someone on staff soon.

Rose Chamberlain, Director, Division of Food & Nutrition, reported that the division is working at the request of USDA with Mathematica to provide data as to the division's response to COVID. In addition, regarding the Commodity Selection Worksheet, they will now have flexibility to choose what works best for them. Finally, a press release had been issued seeking nominations for the Farmer Recognition Program. Applications are being accepted through March 31. Secretary Fisher also reported that through the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) all children will continue to receive free meals through the end of this school year. A question was asked if Ms. Chamberlain thought that the free school lunch would become a federal provision going forward. It gave every student the same meal and there was no way of knowing who was receiving free school lunch.

Susan Payne, Executive Director, SADC, announced that the appropriation bills had all been signed and that monies would be going out shortly. She reported that the soil protection standards would not be discussed at the meeting the next day as they are not quite ready. They are working to set-up a meeting with the sub-committee for them to review. Finally, she reported that 2023 will be the 40th Anniversary of the Right to Farm Act, which created the SADC and then the Farmland Preservation Program. A question was asked about information that is on the SADC website and if it was the most current information. Ms. Payne noted that she would look into it.

Secretary Fisher reported that the Special Occasion Event legislation was not signed. It was noted that all operations that have been operating under the original pilot program no longer have the express authority to continue. It is hoped that the new Legislature will pass the legislation.

Joe Zoltowski, Director, Division of Plant Industry, reported that staff conducted a Gypsy Moth scoping session on January 5 in the PHEAL Auditorium to outline the proposed suppression program of the Department and DEP. He noted that during the winter months both NJDA and USDA SLF crews are

working to prepare sites for future treatments and destroying egg masses by scraping or the use of golden oil. Finally, he announced that Senate Bill 1016, which restricts the use of neonics in the State, was signed by the Governor and takes effect October 2023.

Secretary Fisher announced that Jonathan VanNess did a special for Netflix on Getting urious about bugs and filmed at PABIL.

Dr. Beier stated that he has heard from different counties about the pesticide credits being issued in a timely fashion so that products can be ordered.

Frank Minch, Director, Division of Agricultural & Natural Resources, reported that they have been awarded the Seafood Processor Block Grant. They will be meeting the next day for discussion of what exactly the monies will be used for.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Paul Hlubik reported that he attended the Monmouth County Board of Ag meeting where there was a presentation done by Dave Specca on Agrivoltaics; he thinks there is a lot of promise in this area. In addition, he reported that Assistant Secretary Joe Atchison will make a presentation on Jersey Fresh at their March meeting. Burlington County had reorganized with the same officers. It was noted that many had a good year but that all are concerned with the rising costs of materials. He noted that he has been serving on the Resolutions Committee and thanked Bill Cutts and Jeff Beach for their tireless efforts to make this process happen every year.

ON the MOTION of Paul Hlubik, seconded by Holly Sytsema, the Board voted unanimously to approve sending a copy of the Resolutions to the Legislature and posting them on the website.

Debbie Norz noted that Somerset County is preparing for the State Agricultural Convention. She reported that three members of Class 11 are from Somerset County. They are preparing for the upcoming weekend weather as there may be some new goats born in the snow.

ON the MOTION of Debbie Norz, seconded by Paul Hlubik, the Board voted unanimously to send a letter to the Governor thanking him for his approval of several pieces of key legislation.

ON the MOTION of Debbie Norz, seconded by Holly Sytsema, the Board voted unanimously to have the Livestock Committee take over the information regarding the Dairy Margin Coverage. She thanked the new Assembly Ag Committee Chairman Roy Freiman and his Chief of Staff Shelly Bell for attending the Legislative Committee meeting last week as well as today's meeting. Finally, she reported that she would be attending the National Outstanding Young Farmer Conference the following week. New Jersey is being represented by the Class of 2021 Hillary Barile, Class of 2022 Mike Beneduce.

REPORT OF RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

Board President asked that Brian Schilling be allowed to report early as he had another meeting that he needed to attend.

Dr. Brian Schilling reported on the following topics:

- Upcoming retirements, Dr. Bruce Clark will be greatly missed.
- Very excited with the Agricultural Leadership Class 11 and looks forward to finally being able to move forward.
- State Ag Convention participation – some staff will be in-person, some will be participating virtually.
- Hires – Cape May County position has had a verbal agreement; they also have approvals for Somerset and Morris Counties positions for 4-H. Evaluations of needs are still being done by the Board of Managers.

Barney Hollinger reported that the Cumberland Board of Ag meeting had to be postponed due to COVID. He attended the Aquaculture Advisory Council (AAC) and thanked Assistant Secretary Joe Atchison for attending to discuss how to develop a commodity council. The AAC then established a Marketing Committee to further discuss.

Holly Sytsema reported that the Sussex County Board of Ag meeting had their reorganization meeting. Meetings have not been well attended due to COVID restrictions. Farmers would like to thank those that have worked on the neonics legislation. She noted that the situation with the bear population has become extremely dangerous with people and pets being attacked. She noted that seasonal labor is also a concern; dairy shortages continue to be a problem as well. Some input costs for planting this year have tripled. She thanked all who worked on the Dairy Margin Coverage and looks forward to the next steps.

Lisa Specca reported that she attended the Atlantic County Board of Ag meeting virtually as they are not opening the County Buildings due to COVID. She reported on the State land lease issue and the Soil Protection Standards and looks forward to the SADC's interpretation. She noted that Atlantic County was going to send a letter to Senator Cory Booker asking him questions related to farming in New Jersey. She noted that all counties that she visited are concerned with the wage increase for H2A workers. She noted that Camden County is trying very hard to increase board participation. She noted that they sent \$1,000 to the Del Val Scholarship fund for Ray Samulis. There was discussion about the dual use solar and about H2A labor issues especially regarding fire suppression.

Kurt Alstede reported that he too has heard many of the same concerns that Holly and Lisa had reported. He is returning from his meeting with Farm Credit, this is the first since the merger. He noted that we are lucky to have Farm Credit and all of the services that they offer – not all offer the same benefits. Soil Disturbance issue continues to be a serious concern. He suggested that we continue to work hard on the neonics and state land leases.

Vice President Beier reported that March 19 the Ag Society would be hosting their annual Gala. There were questions about the new Organic Certification process. He noted that Cumberland County would be meeting the following week, he was not able to attend the last due to COVID lockdown. Assistant Secretary Atchison reported that there were several options for growers to use. He noted that the rapidly changing weather had caused issues with some animals and infection. They are beginning with kidding and lambing season.

President DeFrance reported that the upcoming State Agricultural Convention has been a topic of discussion for some time, and he believes that with all of the efforts by the Department, he feels that it will be a successful convention. We are putting in place procedures to try to be able to have a safe convention. He noted that all reports from Board members seem to echo each other. Many are experiencing the same problems. He noted that ag viability seems to be the most important topic. He noted that it is trade show season and there have been many challenges due to COVID, but all are trying to move forward. He stated that Right to Farm seems to be the other most important issue.

ON the MOTION of Debbie Norz, seconded by Barney Hollinger, the Board voted unanimously to create a Right to Farm Committee of the State Board.

He looks forward to seeing everyone at the Convention.

NEW BUSINESS

Board member Kurt Alstede had mentioned about sending a letter to RMA earlier during this meeting. He then reported that Secretary Vilsack had just announced that there has been a 60-day extension on the apple policy changes.

REPORT OF FARM SERVICE AGENCY (FSA)

Mikayla Kramer made the following report:

Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP):

Cost Share for certification expenses paid October 1, 2020, through September 30, 2021, **can be late filed through February 4, 2022**. Producers can receive cost share through both OCCSP and OTECP if applicable.

Organic and Transitional Education and Certification Program (OTECP)

Certified organic operations may receive reimbursement for certification application fees, inspection expenses, fees related to equivalency agreement/arrangement requirements, travel/per diem for inspectors, user fees, certifier sales assessments, and postage, as well as soil testing and educational event registration fees paid in 2020, 2021, or 2022. Transitional operations may receive reimbursement for fees charged by a certifying agent or consultant for pre-certification inspections and development of an organic system plan, soil testing, and educational event registration fees paid in 2020, 2021, or 2022.

Registration has been extended through February 4th, 2022. Contact your local service center for more information.

Spot Market Hog Pandemic Program (SMHPP)

The Spot Market Hog Pandemic Program (SMHPP) was announced on December 13 and addresses gaps in previous assistance for hog producers. FSA will accept applications **through Feb. 25, 2022**. SMHPP provides assistance to hog producers who sold hogs through negotiated sale from April 16, 2020 through Sept. 1, 2020. The application approval process is currently on hold as National Office reviews policy and program implementation concerns.

Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) and Supplemental Dairy Margin Coverage (SDMC)

Supplemental DMC (SDMC) will provide \$580 million to better help small- and mid-sized dairy operations that have increased production over the years but were not able to enroll the additional production. Now, they will be able to retroactively receive payments for that supplemental production. The signup ends **Feb. 18, 2022**. Supplemental DMC will require a revision to a producer's 2021 DMC contract and must occur before enrollment in DMC for the 2022 program year. Producers will be able to revise 2021 DMC contracts and then apply for 2022 DMC by contacting their local USDA Service Center.

After making any revisions to 2021 DMC contracts for Supplemental DMC, producers can sign up for **2022 DMC coverage**. DMC provides eligible dairy producers with risk management coverage that pays producers when the difference between the price of milk and the cost of feed falls below a certain level. The signup period coincides with SDMC and ends **Feb. 18, 2022**.

Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage Program (ARCPLC)

The ARCPLC 2022 Election and Enrollment period ends March 15, 2022. Producers who wish to change their current elections must file by **March 15th**. Unlike Enrollment, there are no late file or succession provisions for election changes. Please contact your local county office for more information on your current enrollment.

NAP:

March 15th – NAP Coverage closing date for summer/fall crops and Hemp

Important Dates:

- **January 31st**- Deadline to submit 2021 ELAP Applications for losses of honeybees
- **February 4th**- Organic and Transitional Education and Certification Program (OTECP) application deadline
- **February 4th**- Organic Certification Cost Share Program late file deadline
- **February 8th-10th**- Come visit our table at the Veggie Growers Convention!
- **February 18th**- Deadline to apply for DMC & SDMC
- **March 15th** – NAP Coverage closing date for summer/fall crops and Hemp
- **March 15th**- 2022 ARCPLC program enrollment and election change

REPORT OF NJ FARM BUREAU

Peter Furey reported on the following topics:

- Quite a range of topics have been covered today. Locally grown bill being signed was a great gesture of support for Locally Grown / Jersey Fresh
- Deer fencing legislation was also signed by the Governor, it is hoped that either the Governor or Legislature will fund it in their budget.
- Other topics of importance include the State Budget, Ag Viability and Wildlife damage.
- They are working on a way to approach Senator Booker.
- Bear issue is a continuing serious concern with recent attacks on people and pets.

REPORT OF NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE (NASS)

Bruce Eklund reported the following:

- Strong yields in corn, soybeans and wheat.
- Winding down their fruit chemical use survey.
- ARMS survey: if asked to participate, we need your responses.
- Floriculture survey will underway.

REPORT OF NRCS

Julie Hawkins, State Conservationist:

- CIC – Conservation Incentive Contract – this is the first time that they have had the opportunity to use this program.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jeff Burd, NJ Beekeepers reported that they were very disappointed that the Food Cottage Bill S 73, was not signed by the Governor. He has offered to work with the Legislative Committee on that topic.

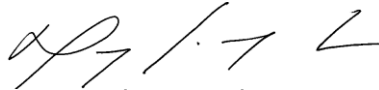
MEETINGS

The next regular meeting of the State Board of Agriculture will be held on Wednesday, February 23, 2022, beginning at 1:30. The meeting will be held virtually.

ADJOURNMENT

ON the MOTION of Paul Hlubik, seconded by Ernest Beier, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the regular meeting at 4:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Douglas H. Fisher