



State of New Jersey

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

MINUTES OF MEETING September 25, 2024 (Wednesday)

Public meeting notice was certified by communication on September 19, 2024.

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 Trenton Times and filed with the Office of the Secretary of State.

President Robert Blew called the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture to order at 1:00 pm. Board members in attendance included President Bob Blew; Vice President Lisa Specca, Kurt Alstede, David DeFrange, Holly Sytsema (Teams), John Hart, Stephen V. Lee, IV and Joel Viereck . The meeting was held at 200 Riverview Plaza, Trenton, NJ.

Also in attendance were Assistant Secretary Joe Atchison; Dr. Amar Patil, Director, Division of Animal Health; Joe Zoltowski, Director, Division of Plant Industry; Rose Chamberlain, Director, Denise Liptak, Division of Food & Nutrition; Frank Minch, Director, Division of Agricultural & Natural Resources; Nancy Wood, Scarlett Goodacre, Division of Marketing & Development; Chuck Roohr, Deputy Director, SADC; Tameko Webster, Chief of Staff, Kaitlynn Dixon, Governor's Fellow, Alyssa Pitt, Christopher LaRegina, Nathan Schatz, Robert Vivian, Jeff Wolfe (Teams) and Jeff Beach, Office of the Secretary. Also in attendance were Peter Furey, Executive Director, Ashley Kerr, Al Murray, NJ Farm Bureau; Dr. Brian Schilling, Rutgers University; Bob Andrzejczak, State Executive Director, Sarah Lally, Farm Service Agency; Julie Hawkins, State Conservationist, NRCS; Bruce Eklund, State Statistician, NASS; Jeanine Cava, NJ Food Democracy; Amy Rico, Mercer County Community College; Dave Watts, Organic & Regenerative Farming Board; Richard Gardner, State Board Member-Elect and Linda Walker (Teams), NJ Department of Agriculture.

*Secretary Wengryn was not in attendance as he was at the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) Annual meeting in Indianapolis.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

ON the MOTION of Kurt Alstede, seconded by Lisa Specca, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of August 28, 2024, regular meeting as well as the September 11, 2024, special meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jeanine Cava, NJ Food Democracy Collaborative, reported that they have scheduled three regional summits for the State of the Food Systems. The agenda will be the same at each and then once completed they will compile the information and will provide it to the industry. She encouraged Board members to attend.

Amy Rico, representing the Horticulture Program and Plant Science Program at Mercer County Community College, was on hand to thank the Board as they were the recipient of one of the Specialty Crop Block Grant awards last year and wanted to give the Board an update on the progress with that grant. She reported that the grant was used to encourage high school students in Trenton for Urban Agriculture. They proposed that they begin an urban outreach program with students that are already in their Upward Bound Program. They worked on a tree ambassador program that supported 1,000 trees being planted in Trenton. In addition, in the Spring they started some vegetable production in raised beds, all the students were able to take home their transplanted tomatoes. They also worked over the summer and were able to take a trip to Fernbrook Nursery, where the 40 students were able to tour the farm, from the standpoint of the food production and the nursery aspect. They were able to walk the fields, harvest produce, have a cooking lesson and ended with a Farm to Table lunch. She again thanked the Board for the opportunity that the grant extended to these students.

Board member David DeFrange noted that it is very important that this program can keep going forward. He thanked Ms. Rico for her time and dedication to the students and the program.

REPORT OF RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

Dr. Brian Schilling represented the College and reported on the following topics:

- Busy time of year, he noted that they were lucky to have good success in hiring for Extension this year. They have received approval to hire four Extension Specialists, these are not County Agent positions, including marine and fisheries; fruit pathology; farm viability; and agronomy positions. He noted that the positions have been approved, that is not the same as getting. It is a very tough market out there right now.
- Hopeful to have a new county agent in Warren County by the beginning of the new year. In addition, he reported that they are currently interviewing for a position in Salem County, as well as ag and natural resource agents in Burlington and Bergen Counties.
- Board of Managers met earlier in the month and noted their concern about PFAS forever chemicals, they are getting many inquiries. Currently working with the University of Maine, who is a little ahead of New Jersey right now on this issue, they have a Center and state funding because of the issues that they have experienced. He noted that the testing of chemicals is very expensive, and Rutgers does not have the capacity to do commercial testing.
- Agriculture and smart technology, they have been purchasing over the past year smart technology equipment that they will be having training at RAREC on the new equipment and how it can help the agricultural industry.
- Over the summer, Rutgers submitted a report to the Legislature on Special Occasion Events, which the SADC incorporated into its report to the Legislature and the Governor's Office. The

report is now available on the SADC website. He noted that the report was favorable, it showed that we need more people to be aware of the process and the opportunities for the program.

- SADC Formula funding for preservation projects, feels that we are going in a promising direction for preservation easements.
- He invited the entire Board to join them for the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Rutgers Agrivoltaics Program on Monday, September 30 at the Rutgers Animal Farm.

REPORT OF FARM SERVICE AGENCY (FSA)

Sarah Lally reported the following on behalf of FSA:

Sarah reported that the emergency program for ash trees would be closing this Friday, September 27. This was the extended date per the Board's request. She urged anyone still wishing to take advantage of the program to get their information to the office at their earliest opportunity.

Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) & Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) is accepting applications for the [Emergency Conservation Program \(ECP\)](#) and the [Emergency Forest Restoration Program \(EFRP\)](#) from New Jersey agricultural producers and owners of forestland to address damage from recent severe storms that occurred January 1 through June 30, 2024. The statewide signup period for both ECP and EFRP runs July 29 through September 27, 2024. ECP provides cost-share reimbursement to producers to restore farmland to pre-disaster conditions. EFRP is a cost-share program that provides financial and technical assistance to owners' forestland to restore forested land damaged by a qualifying natural disaster event. For more information on ECP or EFRP, please contact your [local USDA service center](#) or visit farmers.gov/recover.

Loss Adjusters

New Jersey Farm Service Agency is seeking Loss Adjusters (LAs) for the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and the Tree Assistance Program (TAP). Loss Adjusters are required to have knowledge of field crops and specialty crops, as well as a thorough understanding and execution of crop adjusting guidelines and program provisions, as applicable to FSA programs. If interested, please contact Aly Dyson, NJ FSA Farm Program Disaster Specialist, Aly.Dyson@usda.gov, with any questions.

ELAP – H5N1

FSA is now accepting applications through Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-raised Fish Program (ELAP) to provide financial assistance to eligible dairy producers who incur milk losses due to Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, also known as H5N1 infection in their dairy herds. The program assists with a portion of financial losses resulting from reduced milk production when cattle are removed from commercial milking in dairy herds having a confirmed positive H5N1 test. Positive test results must be confirmed through the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL).

H5N1 infections have been detected in 14 states including California, Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas and Wyoming. Dairy producers in all states are reminded to stay vigilant and follow established APHIS biosecurity, detection and testing guidelines. In addition to testing, enhanced biosecurity is critical to containing this

virus. USDA works closely with state animal health officials, producers, and industry organizations to provide guidance and resources for cleaning and disinfection not only on affected farms but for all livestock producers as a part of practicing good biosecurity.

Eligible adult dairy cattle must be:

- Part of a herd that has a confirmed positive H5N1 test from NVSL.
- Initially removed from commercial milk production at some point during the 14-day time period before the sample collection date for the positive H5N1 test date through 120 days after the sample collection date for the positive H5N1 test.
- Milk-producing, currently lactating; and
- Maintained for commercial milk production, in which the producer has a financial risk, on the beginning date of the eligible loss condition.

Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops Program (FSCSC)

FSCSC provides financial assistance for specialty crop operations that incur eligible on-farm food safety program expenses related to obtaining or renewing a food safety certification. This program helps offset costs to comply with regulatory requirements and market-driven food safety certification requirements. Signup for program year 2024 closes January 31, 2025. January 1, 2025– January 31, 2026, will be open for program year 2025. To be eligible for FSCSC, an applicant must:

- Have obtained or renewed a:
 - 2024 food safety certification that was issued between June 26 – December 31, 2024: or
 - 2025 food safety certification issued during the 2025 calendar year, and
- Have paid eligible expenses. Expenses that have been incurred by the applicant, but have not yet been paid, will not be eligible.
- Be a specialty crop operation; and meet the definition of a small business or a medium-sized business.
 - A small business has an average annual monetary value of specialty crops the applicant sold during the three-year period preceding the program year of no more than \$500,000.
 - A medium size business has an average annual monetary value of specialty crops the applicant sold during the three-year period preceding the program year of at least \$500,001 but no more than \$1,000,000.
- Be located in the 50 United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Online Disaster Assistance Decision Tool for Livestock, Honeybee and Farm-raised Fish (including mollusk) producers

FSA, in partnership with FarmRaise, launched a new, online Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-raised Fish Program (ELAP) Decision Tool. The tool is designed to assist agricultural producers who have been impacted by natural disasters access available program support. The Decision Tool is a resource only and is not an application for benefits or a determination of eligibility. <https://www.farmraise.com/usda-fsa>

Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP)

FSA County Offices began accepting OCCSP applications for the 2024 program year on May 13, 2024. Sign-up ends October 31, 2024. The 2024 program year covers eligible expenses paid by certified organic operations between October 1, 2023, and September 30, 2024. OCCSP provides cost share assistance to producers and handlers of agricultural products for the costs of obtaining or maintaining organic certification under the National Organic Program (NOP). Organic certification is obtained through certifying agents accredited by the NOP. For 2024, OCCSP will reimburse 75 percent of a certified operation's allowable certification costs, up to a maximum of \$750 for each of the following categories or "scopes": • crops • wild crops • livestock • processing/handling • state organic program fees.

Farm Storage Facility Loan

Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFLs) provide low-interest financing for producers to store, handle and/or transport eligible commodities they produce. This includes acquiring, constructing or upgrading new or used, portable or permanently affixed, on-farm storage and handling facilities, acquiring new or used storage and handling trucks, acquiring portable or permanently affixed storage and handling equipment

REPORT OF NJ FARM BUREAU

Ashely Kerr represented the Farm Bureau and commented on the report sent to the Board prior to the meeting:

Legislation update:

- Heat Stress – meeting among ag agencies? What can we agree to?
- SADC Appropriations – money needs to be released without delay.
- Invasive Species – movement this fall? Results from dialogue with DEP?
- Horse racing purses – Governor signed bill with appreciation from equine interests
- Bear baiting bill – issues on banning bear baiting and deer baiting in areas with acute bear populations (released from Assembly ACE); sportsmen oppose.
- Lawsuit by farm worker interests over minimum wage and overtime exemption.
- NJREAL rules by DEP – comment period closing November 3; land value impacts to ag.
- SADC update: hiring new SADC Director; appraisal formula timeline (thank you to SADC staff for online info sessions); would like SADC Treasury seat to be filled by Director of GSPT, as has been the case for decades.
- New DEP rules (ACT) for sale of diesel trucks – coming January 1, 2025.
- Loss of critical animal rendering service (MOPAC) in PA; affects slaughter/butcher services for many NJ livestock farmers.
- Atlantic City Electric: rate charges to farmers and other customers objectionable.
- State Board appointee for North Jersey delay: needs closure.
- NJFB Convention – new location this year at the Doubletree in Cherry Hill (Nov 18–19). Policy development underway; October 8 meeting of Resolutions Committee.

REPORT OF NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE (NASS)

Bruce Eklund reported the following to the Board:

- Survey of soybeans expected ag yield and noted that we are looking at about 41 bushels statewide which would average about two bushels less than last year but we are up about 5,000 harvested acres which would put us at about 4.2 million bushels in NJ.
- Looking for data people as they will be rolling out the census.
- Independent census of water management and irrigation yielded a very good response from NJ farmers.
- December 16 the Census of Aquaculture will be released.

REPORT OF NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS)

State Conservationist Julie Hawkins reported the following:

- ACT Now: NJ accepting applications for 2025 program offerings. She noted that the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in New Jersey is now accepting FY2025 applications for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), climate-smart practices through EQIP funded by the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), the Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) program, the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), and Conservation Incentive Contracts (CIC). Also being offered through ACT NOW funding are Conservation Planning Activities (CPAs), Design and Implementation Activities (DIAs), Conservation Evaluation and Monitoring Activities (CEMAs), Soil Health Practices, Tree Mortality Practices, and High Tunnels. New Jersey producers and landowners should apply by October 18.
- Act Now minimum ranking thresholds and eligible practices are determined at the state-level. The process enables states to pre-approve a ranked application in a ranking pool designated for Act Now when an application meets or exceeds a state's pre-determined minimum threshold ranking score.
- Through EQIP, NRCS provides agricultural producers with one-on-one help and financial assistance to plan and implement conservation practices to address a variety of issues such as water quality degradation, soil erosion, soil quality degradation and inadequate habitat for fish and wildlife.
- Provided Board members with information on the New Jersey Aquaculture Initiative information sheet.

ORGANIC & REGENERATIVE FARMING BOARD

Dave Watts reported the following on behalf of the Organic and Regenerative Board:

- Still awaiting word on the two additional Board members at this time they only have five members, and they are hopeful that the others will be named soon.
- Very close to having their By-Laws established because they state that they meet quarterly, they are considering September, November, January and April so that farmers are available to meet.
- Finalizing the questions for the survey they have been working on. The point of the survey is to fill in some of the gaps between some of the small-scale organic producers around the state

that may not typically complete a census survey and to give them a better idea of what some of the big issues are right now for them.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Assistant Secretary Joe Atchison made the following comments:

He reported that the Department has a new Governor's Fellow working with us in Kaitlynn Dixon and the former Governor's Fellow, Alyssa Pitt, has joined the Department as Public Policy Specialist and that the Division of Markets has a new Marketing Specialist, Scarlett Goodacre. In addition, he noted that staff were working on the upcoming Legislative tour, scheduled for October 2 in Camden and Gloucester counties. He announced several upcoming trade shows such as the Food Export Conference and the International Fresh Produce Association, formally the PMA trade show that he and some Division staff would be attending. Finally, he reported that they are working with Secretary Wengryn to develop an apple picking video to help promote apple picking and what a fun family event it can be. Assistant Secretary Atchison reported that the SADC would be meeting the next day and that he would be Chairing the meeting until Secretary Wengryn returns from his NASDA trip.

Dr. Amar Patil, Director, Division of Animal Health, reported that he attended the Rowan University Veterinary School Beam signing ceremony, unfortunately Secretary Wengryn was not able to attend but Dr. Patil was excited that he was able to sign the beam and that his signature will forever be there. He noted that the Department is looking forward to working with the school and they are in the final stages of working out an agreement with them for some of the shared services that we provide. He announced that a second case of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) was confirmed in a Salem County geriatric gelding and since then two additional cases have been reported and confirmed in Ocean County. Further, he reported that HPAI has been identified in California in dairy and livestock, with more than 36 or 37 dairies testing positive. He noted that there have not been any cases in New Jersey, but that they are trying to brainstorm how to proceed to prevent the introduction of HPAI in New Jersey.

Joe Zoltowski, Director, Division of Plant Industry, reported that LDD municipal ground egg mass surveys began the week of August 26 in the southern counties of New Jersey, were completed and have now moved to the northern counties and will continue until the end of the year. To date, a total of ten municipal surveys have been completed (40%) with proposed treatment areas identified in 28 blocks in six municipalities. He reported that there was a case of *Bostonia* discovered in Middlesex County Community Garden on ginger.

Chuck Roohr, Deputy Director, SADC, reported that the SADC staff continues with outreach, having met with most CADBs, non-profit partners, environmental community as well as government entities on the statewide formula value. He noted that at the request of the State Board, they scheduled two virtual meetings for anyone who could not attend the in-person county meetings, with notices and links to the meetings have been included on the SADC and Department website as well as advertised in the Farm Bureau newsletter. The goal of the meetings is to briefly review the law and gather feedback from stakeholders in the agricultural community as part of the development process. In addition, he reported that the SADC submitted its Special Occasion Events (SOE) Annual Report to the Governor and Legislature. Finally, he reported that the next meeting of the SADC would be held the following day, September 26.

Frank Minch, Director, Division of Agricultural & Natural Resources, reported that staff is still looking at the NJREAL rules by DEP, he noted that the permit by registration specifically, which is a new addition which would essentially replace the permit by rule. This would have you register for that activity on a system that they developed, which would be a one-time registration with no fee, but they are still seeking clarification. He noted that this is a set of series of rules, storm water, flood hazard, wetlands and coastal zone management rules all bundled together in one giant proposal. He noted that it's taking up a great deal of time because of the complicated nature of each of the rules. In addition, he reported that the staff continues to conduct research on PFAS and aquaculture with a focus on specific crops and seafood. As an emergent topic, staff want to stay informed on the subject and be ready should items arise that need to be addressed.

Rose Chamberlain, Director, Division of Food & Nutrition, announced that this was the 14th year of NJ Farm to School Week! She along with Assistant Secretary Atchison had attended and would be attending several excellent Farm to School Events including stops at Fernbrook Farms for the Farmer Recognition Award; Ethel Jacobsen School for the Cream of the Crop Award; Dogwood Elementary for the Best of NJ Award and finally, Union City School District for the Full Bloom Award. She reported that all the award recipients were extremely excited to participate in the Farm to School Program. Finally, she reported that on October 9, Farm to School would be hosting a professional development workshop at the Philip Marucci Center for Blueberry and Cranberry Research with an afternoon visit to the cranberry bog. The workshop is sponsored through the USDA Farm to School Formula Grant.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Holly Sytsema reported that she attended the Sussex County Board of Agriculture meeting earlier in the week and noted that they are not as dry as some of the other parts of the state, so the crop yields look good, and many are working in the fields getting that done. She noted that there have been two applications for SOE through the CADB and they are working through that process. In addition, she reported that problems with bears continue, and producers are getting permits, but the damage has been extensive. She noted that Steve Komar, County Extension Department Head is aware of the damage and will be doing some reporting through drone surveillance. Unfortunately, the Sussex Fair really suffered due to rain most every day, so attendance was down, which in turn affects the proceeds that they use to subsidize some local entities. Finally, she reported that the annual chicken barbecue would be held this coming weekend and encouraged others to attend as this will be the only fundraiser for the year.

John Hart reported to the Board that Mercer County Board of Agriculture held their annual Legislative Breakfast at Terhune Orchards, the event was well attended. In addition, he attended the Middlesex County Board of Agriculture meeting which just followed their County Fair. He noted that in his home county of Mercer in the past eight weeks he only had .02 tenths of rain, while in Pennington, just a mile south of his farm, they had five inches of rain in one hour. He noted that because of the dry conditions, it's been difficult getting a plow in the ground. Further, he reported that there is a lot of farmland around him owned by individuals that are not farmers and there are many deer that are causing so much damage. It would be great if we could in some way allow for deer hunting on these lands.

David DeFrance reported that the Hunterdon County Board of Agriculture held an on-farm meeting this month, which they feel will be more productive, with more involvement, and there is more engagement with the community and possibly some legislative presence. He reported that the weather has really been depressing and very challenging for many growers between the low prices for commodities and the lack of rain. In addition, the greenhouse operations and the garden centers have been very challenged with pushing out production. Finally, he reported that many are hoping to finish up “as strong as we can.”

Joel Viereck reported that he had attended both Salem & Gloucester County Board of Agriculture meetings where both counties selected their delegates for Farm Bureau and the State Agricultural Convention. He noted that both county meetings were similar in discussing yields and seemed upbeat even though prices were not as high as everyone hoped but that yields were good despite the lack of rain. In addition, he noted that some farmers have started combining corn, but the same story, the commodity prices are lower, so it doesn't help as much. He reported that Gloucester County elected James Rambo as President of the Board and Dr. Ernie Beier as Vice President. He reported that they discussed the successful Legislative Tour that Gloucester and Salem County held and noted that they will be planning one for next year as well.

He reported that the Convention Committee had met to discuss a preliminary agenda/budget and do some review of the most recent Convention and how we could make some changes going forward. He noted that there will be a meeting with the Convention Committee of the Vegetable Growers and our Convention Committee as well as a meeting with the Harrah's representatives.

Stephen Lee reported that he and Vice President Lisa Specca had attended the Burlington County Board of Agriculture Legislative Breakfast meeting at Johnson's Corner Farm in Medford at 7:30 in the morning, where there were several legislators in attendance and that it was an excellent opportunity for attendees to talk about issues that they are facing whether they be federal or state and Vice President Lisa Specca spoke very eloquently about Food & Nutrition and there were several other presentations. He reported that Atlantic County held a virtual meeting and noted that they would be sending a letter to the State Board asking that the State Agricultural Convention be more efficient. Finally, he reported that August 9 was the last time it had rained.

Vice President Lisa Specca reported that she was not able to attend the Monmouth or Ocean County Board of Ag meetings due to a family emergency. She thanked Ashley for the meeting notes from Ocean County where they elected delegates to the Farm Bureau and State Agricultural Convention. She reported that Jeremy Posluszny was elected President and Vice President is Chris Mosely for the Monmouth CBA. She noted that several members left early to attend the SADC Formula Funding webinar. She reported that there was great concern about the Freehold Raceway closing because of the loss of the need for hay/straw but also because of the long legacy of harness racing that was held there. She noted that the Burlington County Legislative Breakfast was very well organized and found it to be very engaging for the more than 40 people in attendance. Finally, she reported that Stephen Lee spoke very well about the SADC appropriation bill.

President Bob Blew also reported that it was dry near them. He was unable to attend the Cumberland County Board of Ag and noted that Cape May would be meeting next week. He talked to Keith McIndoe

of Johnson Farms who reported to him that their company was hit with ransomware last week and that they have been dealing with that. President Blew commented that farmers should note that everyone is vulnerable to this, commenting that they were hit during the height of Covid and stated that anyone who relies on technology for their business needs to have an IT disaster plan, it is just as important as a flood plan or a fire plan, he stated that it is much more important than you think when you realize that you don't have access to your technology.

Kurt Alstede reported that Morris County and North Jersey areas have had adequate moisture with nice field crops and specialty crops. This is the height of apple season now and after last fall's disastrous marketing season due to weather, direct marketers are hopeful for a good season. He noted that NJ.com had recently written an article that was not favorable to apple picking and was happy that the Department will be filming an apple picking video that will feature all the fun apple picking can be. He reported on several regional meetings that he had attended, which included the Essex County Board of Agriculture where many of the producers are mainly landscapers and nurserymen who are extremely concerned about the proposed heat stress legislation.

Right to Farm Committee Chairman Kurt Alstede reported that the Committee had met earlier that day to come up with three key items that they would like the Board to consider supporting as policy priorities and each of these is identified in the Resolution from the delegates and there just happens to be corresponding legislation that that has been introduced for each them; they include: alternates for County Ag Development Boards, support for Farm Labor Housing, and Agritourism Liability Protection. He reported that the Committee believes that the delegates have asked for Right to Farm protection that is quick and decisive and that all the ways that we are navigating Right to Farm, we should be seeking pathways that are quick, decisive and affordable protection for them. He reported that this particular resolution has a lot of communication for the SADC. It was discussed that these priorities, along with copies of the legislation, should be discussed at the next meeting.

Ashley Kerr commented that it would be helpful if the Legislative Committee of the Board could meet with the Legislative Committee of the Farm Bureau as has been done before as both groups are concerned about many of the same legislative issues.

Ag Viability Committee Chairman David DeFrance reported that as we navigate through the Resolution, this is a very broad spectrum and extremely important on many levels. In addition, he reported that there had been a pre-meeting with Alex Rivera and Jeff Everett to get information on the Garden State Preservation Trust and how it works. He noted that this Committee will also be working closely with the SADC and commented that they would like to put together a broader spectrum group beyond just the Board members going forward with this discussion. This group would incorporate all our partners into one discussion.

There was an extensive discussion regarding this issue.

ON the MOTION of David DeFrance, seconded by Kurt Alstede, the Board voted unanimously to approve the inclusion of adding the following individuals to the Ag Viability Working Group in addition to the Board members to include: Dr. Brian Schilling, NJAES; Jeff Everett and Alex Rivera, GSPT; Secretary

Wengryn; Frank Minch; Chuck Roohr; Allen Carter, Peter Furey, NJFB and any additional NJDA staff as needed for discussions regarding Ag Viability.

Invasives Committee Chairman David DeFrange reported that the proposed Invasives legislation continues to be of the utmost concern of the nursery and landscape groups, feeling that if we don't address the issue, it will be addressed for us. It was noted that the meeting that was held with DEP and NJDA each was to be getting their comments together and then once there was consensus, they would be getting that information to Senator Smith. Plant Industry Division Director Joe Zoltowski reported that there was no clear answer at this time.

Stephen Lee reported that the newly formed Food & Nutrition Committee had met with Division staff from Food & Nutrition, which was very informative. He reported that we have talked about the importance of the Division and the positive things that the Division is doing, but it was an opportunity for the Committee to be able to learn more about the Division and have at least some sort of more regular dialogue with the leadership there. He also noted that he feels that it is important to have the Chief of Staff, Tameko Webster, included in a lot of the subcommittee meetings going forward as she is very much up to speed about what is going on and helps her understand exactly what we're doing internally within the Board.

Grants Committee Chairman Stephen Lee also reported that the Grants Committee needed to meet to discuss the Gleaning Grant applications for 2025 and due to scheduling availability of the Committee members they were not able to meet prior to today's meeting and the applicants must be informed by September 30. He asked that the Grants Committee be given authorization to review the Gleaning Grants and meet with Food & Nutrition staff to review.

ON the MOTION of Stephen Lee, seconded by Joel Viereck, the Board voted to allow the Grants Committee to award the Gleaning Grants based on their recommendations due to the time constraints

Kurt Alstede recused from the discussion and vote.

Legislative Committee Chair Stephen Lee reported that they would be receiving information from Rob Vivian regarding some of the legislative issues that are coming up. He commented that the Cranberry Legislative Tour has been scheduled for October 18.

NEW BUSINESS

Final Approval of Proposed Rulemaking – Readoption of N.J.A.C. 2:48 (General Provisions) with Amendments. The rule proposal was published in the New Jersey Register in July. The public comment period has ended with no comments having been received. The Department recommends approval of the readoption of the rule with amendments as proposed. If the Board acts in favor, the Notice of Adoption will be published in the New Jersey Register, and N.J.A.C. 2:48 will be readopted with amendments for a period of seven years.

ON the MOTION of Kurt Alstede, seconded by Joel Viereck, the Board voted unanimously to approve the rules as presented pursuant to the Administrative Procedures Act.

Readoption by Notice without changes (and without public comment period) – N.J.A.C. 2:20 (Quarantines – plant pests and pathogens). N.J.A.C. 2:20 is scheduled to expire on January 25, 2025. If the Board approves the Readoption of the rule by Notice, the current rule will be extended for a period of seven years.

ON the MOTION of Kurt Alstede, seconded by Lisa Specca, the Board voted unanimously to approve the rules as presented pursuant to the Administrative Procedures Act.

Readoption by Notice without changes (and without public comment period) – N.J.A.C. 2:19 (Sale and Distribution of Plant and Plant Materials). N.J.A.C. 2:19 is scheduled to expire on March 1, 2025. If the Board approves the Readoption of the rule by Notice, the current rule will be extended for a period of seven years.

ON the MOTION of Kurt Alstede, seconded by Joel Viereck, the Board voted unanimously to approve the rules as presented pursuant to the Administrative Procedures Act.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Rick Gardener asked if there was any news about his appointment to the Board. He noted that his County Board asked if there was anything that could be done about this.

MEETINGS

The next regular meeting of the State Board of Agriculture will be held on Wednesday, October 23, 2024, beginning at 1:00 pm at 200 Riverview Plaza, Trenton.

ADJOURNMENT

ON the MOTION of Joel Viereck, seconded by David DeFrance, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the regular meeting at 3:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Joseph A. Atchison III
Assistant Secretary of Agriculture