**Secretary’s Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture**

**October 26, 2016**

**Animal Health Diagnostic Laboratory** - The AHDL received approval from the USDA to perform aquatic viruses testing for export purpose. This approval lasts till April 2018. The laboratory was approved to perform Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS), Infectious Hematopoietic Necrosis (IHN), and Spring Viremia of Carp (SVC) viruses testing.

**Jersey Fresh Social Media** - Staff continues the development and promotion of the Jersey Fresh Recipe video series. Since last month, they have filmed, edited and published videos of Jersey Fresh Parmesan Zucchini Chips, Baked Hash browns, Applesauce, Potato Leek Soup and Mashed Butternut Squash. The applesauce recipe had a reach of 99,500 with 47,800 views. Upcoming videos will highlight fall produce.

**USDA Honey Bee Survey** - New Jersey has been chosen again for funding to conduct another round of the National Honey Bee survey for 2016 - 2017. The purpose of this survey is to determine the presence of various diseases and parasites in the nation’s Honey Bee industry. They are trying to determine if honey bee health is improving or getting worse and what are the causes. New Jersey is one of 30 states participating in this year’s survey. During the survey, 24 apiaries will be sampled from the state. Samples of live bees, bees in alcohol, and comb knock residue are to be collected from eight colonies in each apiary and submitted to the USDA bee lab in Beltsville, MD for analysis. The analysis will determine what if, any viruses are circulating. If nosema disease is found it will be specified as *apis* or *cerani.* Mite levels will be noted, as well as any exotic mites present in the comb knock sample. This year we are again sampling the stored pollen from 10 of the apiaries for pesticide analysis. Plans are to target queen breeders, migratory pollinators, and stationary honey producers.

**New Aquaculture Rules and Permits -** Coordination of permit applications (one through the NJDEP Bureau of Marine Water Monitoring (BMWM) and one through the Office of Aquaculture Coordination) for the new shellfish aquaculture and hatchery/nursery permits was quite successful. Permits will be issued through the BMWM office and the two Departments are now focusing on ways to streamline renewals for 2017.

**Water Supply Advisory Council** - The Water Supply Advisory Council is watching the drought status and water supply deficit/surplus. As of the most recent update of October 7, 2016 the drought watch has been expanded to 18 counties. The Drought Watch issued on July 25th, for the Central, Northeast and Northwest regions, has been expanded to include Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, Monmouth, Ocean and Salem counties. A pattern of below-average precipitation that has been in place continues to constrain the drinking water supply indicators monitored by the NJDEP. The lack of rainfall coupled with high water demands continues to deplete reservoir storage, stream flows and shallow ground water levels in several regions of the state. Also, NJDEP held a public hearing to explore the need for a Drought Warning designation for the regions that have been under a Drought Watch since late July.

**Agricultural Education -** After many months, the Teacher of Agriculture Certificate of Eligibility Advanced Standing (CEAS) information has now been posted on the Teacher Licensure website of the Department of Education. Given the critically low supply of agriculture teachers, having this site up to date will assist in recruiting agriculture teachers from in-state and out-of-state institutions.