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

**December 14, 2016**

**Animal Health Diagnostic Laboratory** - The Pathology Laboratory Section for the months of October and November 2016 completed a total of 242 and 211 tests and/or procedures, respectively. Tests and/or procedures involved gross necropsy examination, histopathologic (microscopic), cytologic and parasitologic preparation and evaluation. Species submitted for testing in the month of November 2016 included dog, cat, goat, horse, chicken, turkey, pigeon, wildlife (blackbirds) and zoo/exotic/small mammal species (finch, conure, cockatiel, antelope).

**Food Distribution –** The Emergency Food Assistance Program **(**TEFAP) foods for soup kitchens, shelters, and pantries were allocated for November from Safeway Cold Storage. A total of 27,740 cases and 668,900 pounds of TEFAP foods were offered as allocation for distribution to six Emergency Feeding Organizations (EFOs) from United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) suppliers. Foods allocated: Whole Chicken, Canned Beef Stew, Rice, Whole Grain Macaroni, Dried Cherries, Frozen Blueberries, UHT Fluid Milk, Concentrated Cranberry Juice, Bottled Grape Juice and Grapefruit Juice.

**Bee Colony Condition** - Fourteen Apiaries were sampled for Varroa mites; the average found from the inspection was 17.8 mites per 100 bees which is significantly higher than last season and is too high for successful overwintering in New Jersey. Supplemental feeding was necessary in some parts of the state to prepare the bees for winter as a result of a poor fall honey flow. This feeding stimulates brood production so the colonies have a larger population of young bees, and it helps the colony get fat for the winter.

**Quarantined Brown Stink Bug Found in NJ -** An Asian parasitoid of the Brown marmorated stink bug, Trissolcus japonicus, currently under quarantine at the USDA BIIL in Newark, DE and being considered for release as a potential biological control agent, was recovered in New Jersey! Although recovered in the past in Maryland, Virginia, and Washington State, this is a first for New Jersey..

**Water Supply Advisory Council** - Persistent drier than normal weather has depleted water reserves, prompting a Drought Warning designation on October 21, 2016 for the 14 north and central New Jersey counties. This action was deemed necessary to implement DEP’s non-emergency authority to address depleted reservoir storage, stream flows and shallow ground water levels in several regions across the state. In addition, Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, and Salem counties remain under a Drought Watch, while only Atlantic, Cape May and Cumberland counties are classified as “normal”. Under a Drought Warning, the DEP acts to preserve and balance existing supplies in affected areas in order to reduce the likelihood or severity of an impending water shortage or emergency. Administrative Order 2016-10 was issued on October 22, 2016, directing several actions, including modified stream passing flows/reservoir releases, water transfers between affected systems, and other modifications aimed at reducing water losses and maximizing water efficiency. It is critical that all New Jersey residents and businesses do what they can to conserve water at this time.

**Agricultural Education -** More than 160 NJ representatives from sixteen chapters and the State FFA Association attended the 89th National FFA Convention. Highlights included Grace Zhang and Jodie Chiou, of Biotechnology High School in Freehold, winning the national team competition in the Division 4 Environmental Services/Natural Resources Systems category.