

**Secretary's Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture**  
**April 26, 2017**

**Drought Warning Lifted For All But Two Counties** - On April 12, 2017, following months of sufficient precipitation, NJDEP Commissioner Bob Martin lifted the drought warning for 12 of 14 counties in the northern, central and northern coastal regions of New Jersey and removed a drought watch for four counties in the southwestern part of the state. Due to Round Valley and Spruce Run reservoirs in central New Jersey remaining below normal capacity at 72 percent and 69 percent capacity, Hunterdon and Somerset counties will remain under a drought warning.

**Jersey Fresh Promotion Underway** - The first Jersey Fresh availability report went out last week. This report, an outcome of the hard work of Bill Walker, who routinely contacts growers across the state to evaluate product availability and quality, is distributed to several hundred retailers, restaurateurs and other buyers across the state. Going forward, the Division is working toward a revamp of its Jersey Fresh wholesale buyers guide, the purpose of which is to ensure that prospective buyers not only know what is in season, but also where they can connect with growers that participate in the Jersey Fresh quality grading program.

**Equine Herpes Virus** - The NJDA quarantined properties in Hunterdon and Somerset counties after a horse developed highly infectious equine herpes myeloencephalopathy (EHM). EHM is the often deadly neurologic form of the Equine Herpes Virus (EHV-1) infection. No recent movement had occurred at the farm where the virus was reported prior to this case. The horse was moved into the isolation barn at a local animal hospital the evening EHM was confirmed. Both the horses at the original farm and the hospital were under quarantine. Temperatures were taken twice daily for 21 days at all the quarantined facilities while following strict biosecurity protocols. The original horse has received treatment and is recovering. The original horse and exposed horses were released from quarantine Friday, April 21, after 21 days of intense monitoring. No fevers or clinical signs were noted in the exposed horses. There are no premises under quarantine for neurologic EHV-1 in NJ at this time.

**Gypsy Moth Spray Program** – A total of nine municipalities in Cape May, Morris, Ocean, Sussex and Warren Counties have opted for treatment using *Bacillus thuringiensis*, var. *kurstaki*, (B.t.k.) on a total of 3,177 acres at a dosage rate of 38 B.I.U.'s per acre. Three municipalities in Passaic and Warren Counties, totaling 2,723 acres, have opted not to participate in this spring's aerial suppression program. All treatments in the program will be made using a single application of Btk (FORAY 76B) at a dose of 38 B.I.U.'s and at a rate of 64 oz. per acre.

**Summer Food Service Program** - The Summer Food Service Program continues to work with the Farm to School Coordinators on summer outreach and planning. Plans are still underway for the 2017 kick off season with the Community Food Bank Southern Branch and the Trenton YMCA.

**Direct Delivery DOD Fresh Produce Program for the 2016-2017 School Year** - A total of 27,467 cases at 665,970 pounds with a value of \$682,079 were ordered during the month of March which included 80 various items of fresh fruits and vegetables delivered directly to the participating RAs. There were 206 of the 262 DoD Direct Delivery Program schools participating during the month of March 2017.

**Canadian Produce Marketing** - Next month, Marketing Division staff will travel to Toronto, Ontario, Canada for the annual convention and trade show of the Canadian Produce Marketing Association.

Historically, the Department has attended this trade show whenever it has been hosted on the east coast of Canada, representing New Jersey's produce growers in our largest export market.

**Emerald Ash Borer** - Purple sticky EAB traps will be deployed by volunteers and seasonal USDA APHIS personnel to identify municipalities that currently do not have EAB. Over 100 sites are planned for trap deployment this season. The counties and municipalities picked for deployment of this year's traps were determined using a predictive EAB spread model developed by a Rutgers student. This year's trapping program will provide two important facts. First it will determine where EAB has spread in the state and verify the validity of the model. Program staff responded to 17 calls and or emails from tree care professionals and the general public regarding possible EAB infestations. Seven investigations were positive for EAB.

**Shrimp Farm Visit** - In early April, NJDA staff visited the State's first and only fully operational shrimp farm. The highly efficient facility is one example of innovative farming techniques used to produce healthy and sustainable seafood in the US (and notably NJ). The first harvest and sales are expected by the middle to end of May, with additional updates on the farm's progress as it continues to learn the best path forward and ways to assist others interested in the system.

**Secure Milk Supply** - Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Salem County submitted two videos which are currently under review regarding the Secure Milk Supply. One video will teach producers how to maintain a line of separation between the farm and milk tank hauler to prevent the spread of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) during an outbreak. The second video teaches the milk processing plant to maintain good biosecurity during a FMD outbreak in order to prevent the spread of the virus through raw milk at the plant.

**State FFA Convention** – Planning for the State FFA Convention, to be held May 24-26 at Monmouth University in West Long Branch, is well underway. The Office of Ag Education continues to send electronic mailings for judge's invitations, as well as many thank you letters for events leading up to the convention. In addition, state FFA officers participated in their state convention video shoot where they filmed portions of the state convention opening session videos.