

Secretary's Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture
February 26, 2020

Hemp Program – The Plant Industry Division has hired a Manager, Secretary, Lab Testing staff and one Inspector for the Northern Counties along with various equipment to be prepared to begin site inspection and testing activities for this upcoming growing season. To date, 11 Hemp Licenses have been issued to applicants for the upcoming growing season.

Marketing and Development – February was highlighted with efforts on agricultural marketing and economic development projects. Division personnel represented the Department at the annual meetings of the Vegetable Growers Association of New Jersey, North Jersey Vegetable meeting, and the annual meeting of the New Jersey Council of Farmers & Communities. The Department was also represented at a meeting of the New Jersey Agricultural Education Advisory Council and is scheduled to attend the annual FFA Advocacy & Legislative Leadership Day. As the Vice President of the Board of Directors of the Keystone Development Center, staff chaired the Nominating Committee and was responsible for bringing in several new Board members. A meeting of the New Jersey White Potato Industry Advisory Council was coordinated as well.

USDA Foods Conference – The Food and Nutrition Division hosted a USDA Foods Conference on February 6, 2020 at the New Jersey Expo Center in Edison. All units within the Division of Food and Nutrition were represented with sessions being presented by Schools, Summer, Child and Adult Food Program, Food Distribution and the USDA. More than 400 representatives from school districts throughout New Jersey attended, including Food Service Directors, Business Administrators, Superintendents, Management Companies and Front-Line Employees. The vendor exhibit was very successful with 49 of our 50 Processors participating. The layout of the exhibit enabled the attendees a spacious flow and visibility of all exhibits.

Animal Health Diagnostic Lab Pathology Examinations – The Animal Health Division's Pathology Laboratory Section for the month of January 2020 completed a total of 355 tests and/or procedures. Tests and/or procedures involved gross necropsy examination, histopathologic (microscopic), and parasitological preparation and evaluation. Species submitted for testing in the month of January 2020 included equine, bovine, ovine, caprine, canine, feline, domestic poultry/backyard birds, zoo/exotic and wildlife species. Cases for this month generated additional diagnostic tests for other laboratory sections (e.g., bacteriology, virology and molecular). Results from these case submissions help to support practicing veterinarians (large, mixed and small animal), private food and companion animal owners, NJ State Agencies, racetrack, wildlife, zoo and nonprofit animal facilities. Cases involved diagnostic testing for disease and/or cause of death diagnosis and routine and /or sporadic disease surveillance for large and small ruminant, companion animal and exotic/zoo species; sudden death with no clinical symptoms; assessment of backyard and small flock health issues; large scale flock disease; law enforcement forensic investigation and animals exhibiting neurologic symptoms.

Trenton Central High School Meeting – State Ag Education/FFA Leader Erin Noble met with Scott Munro, STEM Chair at Trenton Central High School to discuss the possibility of starting an agriculture program. Specifically, the school is looking to utilize the Agricultural Power and Technology and the Mechanical Systems in Agriculture courses that are part of the Curriculum for Agricultural Science Education (CASE). These courses are designed to prepare students for an array of career opportunities in agricultural engineering. Specifically, students learn shop safety, fabrication, materials selection and use, engineering, technology applications, electrical systems, structural systems, GIS/GPS, mechanical design, energy systems, and machine service and maintenance. CASE is one solution for opening new

agriculture programs throughout the state, since it offers a logical sequence of courses in four pathways (animal, plant, natural resources and power, structure and technology) that are rigorous, and industry validated.

Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBG) – The Marketing and Development Division was requested by the USDA to provide some clarifications on sub-grantee year end reports but most were very minor. A revised version of the year-end report will be submitted by February 25, 2020. We expect to hear in the coming weeks about the next grant cycle and solicitation of applications will begin shortly thereafter. We are in the process of scheduling interviews for a grant administrator.

Nursery Inspection – Members of the Plant Industry Division Nursery Inspection Program and staff from the USDA APHIS PPQ completed trace forward inspections at two southern New Jersey nurseries in January. The inspectors examined host plants that were shipped from a nursery in Washington state where *Phytophthora ramorum* was detected earlier this year. Six samples were taken and submitted to USDA diagnostic laboratories for testing. All lab results were negative for *P. ramorum*.

Summer Food Service Program – The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) online system is live and sponsors are currently being trained on the application module. Trainings are scheduled throughout the month. Sponsors were asked to submit their myNewJersey account login information for the unit to enter their sponsor details for access to the system. To date, over 80 entries have been made which allows sponsors to now access the application module. We have placed all paper documents and links such as USDA guides, memos etc. into the resource link for sponsors to access and upload for their application submission. The 2020 waiver requests have been submitted to USDA Mid-Atlantic Regional Office for forwarding to USDA FNS for review and approval.

Emergency Planning and Preparedness – The Animal Health Division's emergency preparedness coordinator has secured a timeslot for a breakout session at the 22nd Annual New Jersey Emergency Preparedness Association Conference in May. Organizers of the conference review proposals submitted by prospective presenters and select which will be confirmed to the agenda. The session will consist of a panel including the animal emergency preparedness coordinator, the New Jersey Emergency Support Function (ESF) 6 Coordinator, and a New Jersey Certified Emergency Manager from the Middlesex County Animal Response Team. In collaboration with the Northeast ADA, the Service Animal Working Group is drafting an informational fact sheet regarding service animals and emergencies. The working group consists of representatives from the NJ Division of Disability Services, NJ Office of Emergency Management, and the NJDA. The group members will collectively determine the federal and state laws that address the right of service animals during emergencies that should be included in the fact sheet. The fact sheet will be added to the state's Shelter Manager Kits as well as be available through the New Jersey Department of Human Services.

Aquaculture Development Plan – The draft of the 2020 Update to the Aquaculture Development Plan is now under review by the Aquaculture Advisory Council (AAC). After AAC review and comment, the draft document will be distributed for public review. A revised draft will be ready for the April 24, 2020 AAC meeting. Per the Aquaculture Development Act, the AAC is charged with updating the Aquaculture Development Plan every five years.