

Secretary's Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture
October 27, 2021

Ag Education Development Conference – The 2021 Fall Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR) Education Professional Development Conference “All Systems Go” welcomed more than 40 teachers and guests. The conference was held at the Rutgers Eco-Complex and emceed by New Jersey Association of Ag Educators President and Ag Teacher at Woodstown High School Deanna Miller. Participants engaged in a full day of workshops including topics about Augmented and Virtual Reality in Agriculture; Effective Practices for Working with Students with Disabilities; Resources from National Ag in the Classroom; Taking CTE a Step Further with Industry Credentials; How to Harvest, Clean, Grow, and Appreciate Native Plants; and Educator Resources on FFA.org. Participants heard updates from the NJDA’s Erin Noble (Office of FANRE update) and Kristianne Dowd (FFA update).

New Jersey Emergency Preparedness Association Conference – The animal emergency preparedness coordinator presented during the 22nd Annual New Jersey Emergency Preparedness Association Conference. The presentation was a 75-minute breakout session in which concepts of animal emergency preparedness were discussed. Two guest speakers, the Middlesex County Animal Response Team (CART) leader, and Office of Emergency Management (OEM) operation leader, contributed the county-level perspective on companion animal emergency response. Their recent experiences with storms Henri and Ida were reviewed, demonstrating the importance of county OEM support to the CARTs.

Cannabinoid Testing Method for Hemp – The Plant Industry Division’s Plant Laboratory has developed a method to test 10 cannabinoids in fresh or dry hemp material by using high-performance liquid chromatography with diode-array detection (HPLC-DAD). The method will measure 10 major cannabinoids under 15 mins of run. The method is currently under a validation process.

Grant Programs – Marketing and Development Division staff are fulfilling required obligations under our grant programs, Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBG), Animal Feed Regulatory Program Standards (AFRPS), Produce Safety, Livestock, Risk Management (RMA), Rural Development, Organic Cost Share and Wine Industry Grants, including research and development. In addition, we are monitoring Grant Proposal Awards and preparing proposals. The 2021 SCBG has been submitted to the USDA and is awaiting award.

CARES 2.0 Launches – The Food and Nutrition Division’s Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) launched the CACFP Application Reimbursement Electronic System (CARES) 2.0 system. CACFP Institutions now have access to the system and training resources. On October 5, the Tuesday Tips webinar demonstrated various functionalities within the revised online system and staff assisted sponsors in completing the FY2022 Renewal Application Process. There were approximately 144 sponsors that attended.

USDA Seafood Processor Grants – In late September, the USDA announced two grants aimed at supporting seafood processors that have implemented pandemic related precautionary measures. One of the grants is a direct application to the USDA and includes producers as well as processors. Staff at the NJDA distributed the grant information to the industry for those interested and eligible to apply. A second grant opportunity is for State agency applicants, the Seafood Processor Block Grants. Staff have been coordinating with partners at the NJDEP on the grant application, while also coordinating with staff at NJDOH on data collection and outreach strategies. Staff also attended an informational webinar hosted by the USDA on October 14 and coordinated with the industry to determine the areas where the grant would apply for NJ processors. Applications are due no later than November 22, with funding

arriving no earlier than January of 2022.

Mexican Bean Beetle Program – *Epilachna varivestis* (also known as Mexican Bean Beetle), a Coccinellid beetle that can produce severe leaf damage in bean plants, makes it a serious agricultural pest in the Mid-Atlantic region. *Pediobius foveolatus* is a parasitoid wasp, originating from India, that attacks and kills Mexican Bean Beetle (MBB). Since the wasp is unable to overwinter in New Jersey, the Phillip Alampi Beneficial Insect Laboratory maintains the colony perpetually and makes targeted releases throughout the state each summer to keep MBB populations suppressed. Laboratory production of *Pediobius foveolatus* is now decreasing to winter maintenance levels. Approximately 259,050 adults were produced from 10,362 mummies during the report period.

Livestock Facility – The Marketing and Development Division continues to work on the livestock project, including compiling results of the Rutgers Survey. There could be multiple groups working at various stages to set up small processing plants within the state. Guidance has been given to each project by the NJDA and Rutgers Extension. Initial indications from the survey show the need for a north and south dedicated custom harvest, cut and wrap facility which should create a positive impact to the livestock economy of the state and provide a local source of meat to the general public.

Summer Food Service Program – The Food and Nutrition Division's Summer Food Service Sponsor Debriefing was held virtually on Wednesday, October 13. This is a session where existing and new sponsors, the State Agency, New Jersey Health Department, and the USDA Mid-Atlantic Regional Office come together to discuss 2021 program operations, discuss challenges, share experiences, and ask the State Agency questions for program success.

Pathology Laboratory – The Animal Division's Pathology Laboratory completed 297 tests and/or procedures for September. Tests and/or procedures involved gross necropsy examination, histopathologic (microscopic), immunohistochemical and parasitological preparation, and evaluation. These cases 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 animals), 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, exotic/zoo species, sudden death, assessment of backyard and small flock health issues, large scale flock disease, law enforcement forensic investigation, and animals exhibiting neurologic symptoms.