

Secretary's Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture
March 23, 2022

Avian Influenza Measures – The Division of Animal Health emergency preparedness staff has primarily focused its efforts on the threat of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). The disease has been detected in wild ducks in Cape May County, and in numerous states, including New York, Delaware, Connecticut, Delaware, and Maryland having HPAI confirmed in domestic poultry. Messaging that targets different stakeholders in the New Jersey poultry grower community has been distributed. This includes a memo to the State's veterinarians reminding them to be alert for suspected HPAI cases. Also, a letter of guidance for monitoring bird health, enforcing biosecurity measures, and notifying the NJDA of any concerns was provided to live bird markets in the State. The content on the NJDA website continues to be updated for outreach regarding HPAI.

Agricultural Education Improvement Grants – The Office of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Education offered a Program Improvement Grant opportunity to all approved food, agriculture, and natural resources programs. Five school districts applied for funds totaling \$18,489. Grants will be used to renovate greenhouse facilities; install a turtle pond habitat and aquatic plant water garden; subscribe to Pro Landscape Design software and purchase drafting boards; and purchase a precision laser cutter.

Movement of Bees – The State Apiarist is working with beekeepers who move bees in and out of the state to obtain permits for moving. This is especially important for beekeepers going into or out of spotted lanternfly (SLF) quarantine counties and states. A condition statement will most likely be used for any beekeeper who requests it for SLF. The next major movement of bees is taking place this month from out of California to return to New Jersey or the Southern states.

Jersey Fresh Milk Projects – The Marketing and Development Division has received multiple questions regarding Jersey Fresh milk projects. Most are in the concept stages to see if product lines can be co-packed and then distributed through existing market channels. Producer involvement will be a requirement for such a project if any move forward.

Child and Adult Care Food Program – March is National Nutrition Month and March 14-18 was National CACFP Week. A national education and information campaign is organized annually in the third week of March to raise awareness of how the program works to combat hunger. The CACFP brings healthy foods to tables across the country for children in childcare centers, homes, and afterschool programs as well as adults in day care.

Nursery Program Outreach – Plant Industry Division nursery staff members attended the Total Pro Landscape Expo show in Edison in February. This event is a professional landscape and nursery trade show that promotes horticulture and landscaping industries in the area. The staff hosted a display outlining the services offered through the NJDA nursery inspection program and answered many questions from attendees. Several nurseries and plant dealers were provided information and direction they will need to become properly certified with the New Jersey Department of Agriculture. Most of the questions from the attendees were about Spotted Lanternfly control options in the landscape and residential environments. Program staff met with over 80 visitors to the nursery program booth during the event.

Soil and Water Cost Share Program – Agricultural and Natural Resources Division staff visited a term preserved farm in Hunterdon County to discuss issues the producer is experiencing with existing drainage that was installed in 2002 in a hay field. Using state cost share funding, the producer whose property is now term preserved can add additional tile drainage in the field or improve the existing

drainage system. The tile no longer functions to outlet water from the hay field because the outlet is blocked. A ground penetrating radar field visit is scheduled so that the location of the buried outlet can be identified and can be moved to a more suitable location downstream where it will not be covered with sediment during heavy storm events.

Livestock Processing Update – Work continues with the livestock processing project with discussion between the group and potential founding sources at the state and federal level. Some producers that attended the webinar on March 9 have reached out to learn more of the next steps with any projects. The Department is assisting processor groups or processors in obtaining grants that their operations may fit into for any federal funding rounds that have been announced.

School Nutrition Program – This month school district representatives are uploading information in the School Nutrition Electronic and Reimbursement System (SNEARS) for the system to verify if they qualify for participation in the Community Eligibility Provision. In addition, schools will be performing the last required Direct Certification match to increase the number of children dually eligible for free meals in school with SNAP benefits.

Foreign Animal Disease Testing – The Division of Animal Health's Animal Health Diagnostic Lab (AHDL) coordinated submission of two foreign animal disease (FAD) investigations to the USDA's Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (FADDL). The samples tested negative for FADs at the FADDL. The AHDL performed a necropsy on a pig and tested pig samples for the foreign animal diseases of African Swine Fever (ASF) and Classical Swine Fever (CSF). The pig tested negative for ASF and CSF at the AHDL as well as at the FADDL.