

Secretary's Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture
June 22, 2022

Jersey Fresh Campaign – The 2022 Jersey Fresh media campaign has begun running on radio and digital billboards as of the time of this report with social media, and airplane banners coming by the end of June. The #JerseyFreshisBEST social media photo contest and a new landing page are in place and went live on June 20.

NJ Manure Link Grant Application – Agricultural and Natural Resources Division staff led the Department's application for a USDA NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) to create a New Jersey Manure Link program. If awarded the grant the NJDA and the Division will partner with Rutgers University, Office of Research Analytics to develop and deploy the New Jersey Manure Link website. New Jersey Compost Council (NJCC), a partner in the project, will provide support for the outreach and educational components including hands-on composting field days and resources for the website. The hands-on field days will attract livestock farmers and composters, as well as producers across all agricultural sectors including urban farming. Field days will educate and demonstrate the importance of composting, nutrient management, and how to effectively incorporate organic materials in your farming practices. Honey Brook Organic Farm will also partner on this project and has years of successful composting experience and is an established farm currently incorporating manure from local equine farms into their composting operation.

Nursery Inspection Program – For a third consecutive season, a large number of virus-infected rose plants were detected by Division inspection staff at New Jersey's largest shipping nursery in May. The plants arrived dormant earlier this spring. Virus symptoms display once the foliage is actively growing. According to program regulations governing the "sale and distribution of plants and plant material" N.J.A.C. 2:19-2.1 Rose Plants, roses must be certified free of rose virus from the State of origin in order to prevent the movement of diseased, virus-infected plants into the State. Inspectors flagged 5,206 infected roses during inspections. The plants were removed from the nursery and destroyed.

Live Bird Marketing System – During May, Division of Animal Health technicians (AHTs) conducted unannounced inspections at 38 registered New Jersey live bird markets and sampled poultry from 20 markets for avian influenza. Four live bird markets were quarantined due to the detection of H2N2 (Avian Influenza); State and/or Federal AHTs and VMOs disinfected each market and conducted an additional eight inspections for 24 and 48-hour post disinfection sampling and quarantine release. Additional activity included: The quarterly closure of 10 live bird markets; the inspection of two poultry distributors where records, vehicle cleaning and disinfection logbooks, were reviewed ensuring compliance with 2:9-4.2(c); Avian influenza testing of two in-state poultry distributors.

School Nutrition Program – Summer programs promotion, handouts and sign-up information is posted and available for all participants in School Nutrition Electronic Application Reimbursement System (SNEARS). Food and Nutrition Division staff have also recorded and posted handouts for the Direct Certification 2.0 training. These are available for school district representatives. Clarification has been provided in SNEARS about the Reduced-Price Meal State subsidy indicating that, although the cost to the child (.40 for lunch and .30 for breakfast) will be reimbursed to the School Food Authorities, the counts must still be submitted on the reimbursement voucher as reduced if the child is a qualified for the reduced program. Additionally, all internal recordkeeping practices related to the reduced category must continue to be maintained at the school district.

State FFA Convention – More than 500 FFA members, advisors and guests attended the State FFA Convention to recognize FFA members and chapters for their accomplishments throughout the year and conduct State Association business. Thirty-one FFA members received their State Degrees. Seventy-

eight received new FFA jackets through a special project of the New Jersey FFA Foundation. Eighty-four judges representing the NJDA, the USDA, the NJDOE, FFA Alumni, past state officers and agricultural industries evaluated members competing in career development events. The convention welcomed many distinguished speakers such as New Jersey Secretary of Agriculture, Douglas Fisher; Division Director for Ag & Natural Resources, Frank Minch; ESPN and SEC Sports caster Lauren Sisler; and National FFA Eastern Region Vice President, Mallory White. The conclusion of the convention saw the election of the 2022-23 State FFA Officer team. Jonathan Finney of the Salem Tech FFA Chapter will lead the team as the new state president.

Dairy Margin Coverage – Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) reimbursement program applications submission has been completed and the Department is monitoring treasury records to verify producers have finalized accepting payments.

Animal Health Diagnostic Lab – In May 2022, the Animal Health Diagnostic Lab Pathology Section completed 356 tests and/or procedures. 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). 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. Results from these case submissions help to support practicing veterinarians (large, mixed, and small animals), private food and companion animal owners, NJ State Agencies, racetracks, wildlife, zoo, and nonprofit animal facilities.

Supply Chain Assistance Funding for School Meals – The USDA has provided \$24,917,949 in federal funding to NJ schools in Federal Fiscal Year 2022 for Supply Chain Assistance (SCA). This funding is in response to the unprecedented challenges in purchasing and receiving food that operators of the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program are experiencing in School Year (SY) 2021-2022. A base payment of \$5,000 is being awarded to eligible school districts, as well as a proportional funding amount based on each SFA's share of statewide student enrollment. Funding will be available for use during the 2022-2023 school year. SCA funds must be used to exclusively purchase unprocessed or minimally processed domestic food products and may not be used to cover the cost of past expenditures. There are 614 School Food Authorities that have opted to receive these additional funds, and these payments will be issued in July.

Mexican Bean Beetle Program – The Mexican Bean Beetle (*Epilachna varivestis*) is 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, PABIL maintains the colony perpetually and makes targeted releases throughout the state each summer to keep MBB populations suppressed. Laboratory production of *Pediobius foveolatus* remains at winter maintenance levels. Approximately 23,775 adults were produced from 951 mummies during the report period.