

Secretary's Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture
August 23, 2017

Appropriation Bills Signed – Bills that appropriate \$65.3 million for farmland preservation, were signed into law by Governor Christie on August 7. The SADC is looking to schedule a meeting later in August to issue the first final approvals for farms that will be preserved with the new funding.

Implementation of Modern Laboratory Technology – The Animal Health Diagnostic Lab purchased a mass spectrometer (MALDI) for identification of bacterial organisms using funds provided by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The funding was part of the Animal Feed Regulatory Program Standards (AFRPS) grant. MALDI is able to provide rapid identification of bacterial organisms decreasing turnaround time of culture results. Rapid turnaround will help regulators as well as private veterinary clients respond quickly to animal health disease situations caused by bacterial pathogens leading to improved public health.

Jersey Fresh Dairy - During the month of July the first ice-cream retail stand featuring “Ice Cream Made From Jersey Fresh Milk” opened and is experiencing great volume. Additional plans at this operation include a complete processing plant for milk and Depot for distribution.

Direct Delivery DOD Fresh Produce Program - A total of 310 School Districts will be participating in the direct delivery DOD fresh produce program during the 2017-2018 school year with \$8,510,330 in entitlement dollars. The DOD direct delivery pilot program began in the 2014-2015 school year, when \$2,500,000 was set aside for DOD produce. An additional \$6,010,330 has been set aside for DOD produce over the last 4 years. NJDA will conduct a webinar at the end of August 2017 to review the ordering process. The participating school districts will begin placing fresh produce orders in September 2017.

Agricultural Education - Eight (8) agriculture teachers (4 from NJ) traveled to Allentown for the CASE ESI institute co-hosted by Rutgers and Allentown High School. ESI is a specialization course (third year course) for the natural resources pathway. Secretary Fisher visited the institute and participated in a discussion around current agricultural and environmental issues that the teachers were studying. NJ continues to be a leader in the nation with 21 schools implementing this academic/STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) based food, agriculture and natural resources education program.

Boxwood Blight - Boxwood blight, *Calonectria pseudonaviculata*, was detected at four New Jersey nursery locations during the month. Once infected with this blight a boxwood plant cannot be adequately treated back to health and must be destroyed. For every detection, a temporary quarantine is implemented on those boxwoods until the Nursery removes and destroys all infected plants. A total of 239 boxwood plants were destroyed at these locations in Morris, Somerset, Gloucester, and Cumberland Counties.

Bureau of Commodity Inspection and Grading - For July 2017, Terminal Market Inspections totaled 7,900,168 pounds of 18 various fresh fruits and vegetables received from other growing regions. The principal commodities certified were Avocados (4,155,840 pounds), Kiwi (3,190,384 pounds) and Blueberries (1,066,368 pounds). A southern New Jersey shell egg facility received 29,204 cases of 30 dozen shell eggs, of which 15,846 cases were officially sampled and graded by New Jersey state graders.

State Lunch Program reimbursement - The State Lunch Program reimbursement rates for FY18 will change slightly. The paid rate will change from .04 to .05. Free and reduced reimbursements will remain the same as FY17. The rates are expected to be sufficient to expend the entire funding to satisfy the State Match requirement. If necessary, the balance of funds will be expended by issuing an additional payment to qualified school sponsors next July.

Quality Management System (QMS) Training – A staff member attended QMS training offered by the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) in Ames, IA, from July 11-14. The training comprised of topics to help laboratories comply with the ISO 17025 standard. The AHDL is accredited to the ISO 17025 standard. It is important to maintain competency by attending QMS related training for ISO 17025 compliance and successful accreditation.

USDA APHIS Honey Bee Survey - New Jersey has again been funded to conduct another National Honey Bee survey for 2017. The purpose of this survey is to determine the presence of various diseases and parasites in the nation's Honey bee industry. New Jersey is one of about 30 states participating in this year's survey. Twenty four apiaries are planned to be sampled throughout the state. Samples will be collected from eight colonies from each apiary. Samples would consist of live bees, bees in alcohol, and comb knock residue and submitted to the USDA bee lab in Beltsville Maryland for analysis. The analysis will determine what viruses and diseases are circulating.

2,500 Farms Preserved – The state Farmland Preservation Program reached a milestone in July with the preservation of the 2,500th farm under the program. More than 226,000 acres have been preserved at a total cost of \$1.7 billion since the inception of the program.

Water Supply Advisory Council - The Council's discussions focused on official comments on the Draft New Jersey Water Supply Plan 2017-2022. In regards to the Regional Drinking-Water-Supply Indicators & Declared Water-Supply Status, the Central Region, consisting mainly of Hunterdon County and Somerset County, which are primarily served by reservoirs, remained under a drought warning through July. This allowed for continued modified passing flows designed to conserve storage.