

Secretary's Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture
May 22, 2019

Jersey Fresh Marketing – Throughout the early part of May, we were in market with a statewide billboard advertising campaign promoting Jersey Fresh asparagus. This promotion was co-sponsored by the New Jersey Asparagus Council, and kicks off our 2019 seasonal marketing campaign. This year, we'll once again be aggressive with our outdoor advertising strategy, and will be cycling different digital billboards throughout the season to promote different crops as they become available in peak volumes. Also, this month, our first "Jersey Fresh Chef's Series" video debuted. These professionally produced videos will highlight different chefs, food bloggers and other food artisans that source Jersey Fresh ingredients when in season. The first video features food blogger Nikki Marie, who has a cookbook coming out this summer featuring pasta dishes that pair with seasonal fruits and vegetables from New Jersey. Her tortellini dish is complemented by Jersey Fresh asparagus and leafy greens and was rolled out on social media last week.

Ag and Natural Resources Technical Webinar – The Agricultural and Natural Resources Division had staff members participate in a technical webinar produced by the National Association of Conservation Districts on the subject of New Jersey's coastal water resources. Staff presented via a live webinar, the NJDA Hydrologic Modeling Database, an online resource built by NJDA and Soil Conservation Districts to catalogue and map all storm water management basins regulated by the New Jersey Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Program. The database is accessible by the public and may be found at <https://hydro.rutgers.edu>

Mexican Bean Beetle – April production of *Pediobius foveolatus* in the Plant Industry laboratory yielded approximately 71,300 from 2,852 mummies. Production is steadily increasing to summer levels. An extra set of larvae were collected to meet a very large *Pediobius* request from an agricultural extension agent in North Carolina who plans to introduce the agent to bean farmers in that state. Two shipments of both *Epilachna varivestis* and *P. foveolatus* were successfully sent to a university in Switzerland. The researcher there intends to produce a promotional video about the benefits of the bio-control agent. Field staff contacted growers for potential *P. foveolatus* release sites and have also visited eight wisteria sites in Gloucester, Salem, Cumberland and Cape May Counties to check for the presence of Kudzu bug. All surveys were negative.

School Nutrition Program – School Nutrition Program field staff are conducting reviews at Residential Child Care Institutions (RCCI). Unit staff are gearing up to finalize reviews towards the end of May and the month of June. Summer goals and projects are being developed for distribution in June. Also, on May 9th we offered two Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) webinars jointly with Department of Education representatives. One webinar is for schools that are doing CEP for the first time and the other webinar is for school district representatives that have been participating in CEP and have chosen to continue for School Year 19-20.

Animal Health Diagnostic Lab Recognized – The Animal Health Diagnostic Lab staff members received an Innovation and Efficiency Award at the State Employee Recognition Day on May 9, 2019. The award recognizes employees who have identified and implemented business processes that make services more accessible to our clients, link budget decisions and program priorities more closely with program performance to achieve cost savings, generate revenue enhancements, and implement more efficient methods of service delivery. The award was presented to recognize ISO 17025 accreditation of the laboratory services.

FSMA Produce Safety Team Honored – On May 9th, the FSMA Produce Safety Team won a Governor’s Team Excellence Award for its efforts over the past year to educate growers across New Jersey about their obligations under the Food Safety Modernization Act Produce Safety Rule. Congratulations to team lead Chris Kleinguenther, Bureau Chief for Commodity Inspection and Grading, and team members John Keller, Charlotte Muetter, Clint Shontz, Elizabeth Stiles and Mike Testa.

Agriculture Teacher Vacancies – Monmouth County Technical School posted a vacancy for a horticulture teacher and Burlington County Special Services posted a vacancy for a floriculture teacher. There is the possibility of more postings from districts this month. NJDA Ag education staff continues to monitor the openings and help districts in finding the best solutions. Staff members also work with the New Jersey Department of Education to assist those pursuing Teacher of Agriculture certification. Teacher demand remains strong in New Jersey and nationwide.

Nursery Inspection Program – A total of 154 Plant Dealer locations were inspected by Plant Industry Division horticultural staff to verify their nursery stock remains free from insect and disease pests. Plant dealer inspections become increasingly important during the spring months when there is an influx of plant material being transported into New Jersey from other states. As part of the inspection, nursery program staff assisted the Seed Certification and Control Program and inspected 543 containers of agricultural, vegetable, flower, and turf seeds. These materials were inspected for germination test expirations. Five violations occurred resulting in the removal of several containers. A total of 136 Nursery/Greenhouse locations were visited by horticultural staff during the month. These inspections occur annually throughout the growing season to ensure that regulated ornamental plant material is free from injurious pest, insects and diseases.

Live Bird Marketing System – During April, animal health technicians (AHTs) conducted unannounced inspections at 21 registered New Jersey live bird markets and sampled 11 markets for avian influenza by sampling poultry. Additional activity during the month of April included: The quarterly closure of 20 live bird markets. Quarterly closures consist of cleaning and disinfecting the entire market followed by a minimum of 24 hours of “down-time”. Following the “down-time”, environmental samples are taken at the market for testing at NJPHEAL. The inspection of four poultry distributors including reviewing records as well as insuring compliance with 2:9-4.2(c), reviewing vehicle cleaning and disinfection logbooks; Avian influenza testing of three poultry distributors included environmental sampling of the poultry distributor vehicle and premises; Avian influenza testing of approximately 22 backyard flocks took place.

Food Direct Delivery Department of Defense (DOD) Fresh Produce Program – We had 243 of the 334 DOD direct delivery program schools participate during the month of April 2019. A total of 21,194 cases equaling 481,622 pounds with a value of \$587,646 were ordered during the month of April. Approximately 60 various items of fresh fruits and vegetables were delivered directly to the participating resident agencies. Food Distribution is currently evaluating the usage by each school and will move some funds away from school districts that are not utilizing them, to the school districts who have depleted their funds. All funds set aside for the 2018-2019 school year must be used by June 30, 2019.