

Secretary's Report to the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture
July 22, 2020

Jersey Fresh – The Marketing and Development Division's Jersey Fresh marketing staff continue to work with the ad agency to adjust media plans that started with both Google Display ads and Google responsive ads. Radio and billboards as part of Phase 2 have begun and will run through Labor Day. Our social media efforts continue daily and the #ThankYouNJFarmers media is available on several platforms including Facebook and Instagram. In addition, staff are shipping and delivering Point-of-Purchase materials to retailers, writing articles, continuing to publish and disseminate Jersey Fresh Availability Reports and updating the FindJerseyFresh.com website.

Letter to Agricultural Community – A second letter was distributed from Secretary Fisher and Department of Health Commissioner Persichilli to the ag community to strongly encourage farm owners to work with the Federally Qualified Health Centers regarding COVID-19 education and testing services.

Food Distribution – A Memorandum of Understanding between The Treasurer of the State of New Jersey and The New Jersey Department of Agriculture has been finalized. Funds made available through the CARES Act will fund the Emergency Feeding Organizations (EFOs) with up to \$20 million through the State Food Purchase Program, enabling them to continue their fight against food insecurity in New Jersey. The funds are intended to assist their response to COVID-19.

Live Bird Marketing System – During June, Division of Animal Health technicians conducted unannounced inspections at 26 registered NJ live bird markets and sampled 11 markets for avian influenza by sampling poultry. Additional activity during the month of June included: 1) The quarterly closure of 11 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 for testing; 2) The inspection of 10 poultry distributors. Records were reviewed as well as ensuring compliance with 2:9-4.2(c), reviewing vehicle cleaning and disinfection logbooks. 3) Avian Influenza testing of 42 backyard flocks throughout New Jersey. Registration packets were emailed to all 2019-2020 registered live bird markets and poultry distributors on June 1, 2020. Animal health technicians are beginning to meet with owners, managers, and employees of markets and distribution facilities to review biosecurity protocols, operating procedures, and best management practices. The current registration expires on August 31, 2020.

Spotted Lanternfly – Plant Industry Division Spotted Lanternfly survey crews continued pesticide applications and property assessments. A total of three survey grids, two signed treatment agreements, 68 properties were treated, and 161 parcels were assessed for treatment by field staff during the last month.

Commodity Inspection and Grading – The Marketing and Development Division's Commodity Inspection and Grading Unit's essential staff are conducting all requested USDA Terminal Market and Shipping Point inspections (average of 350 per month); scheduling and conducting USDA on-farm Third Party Audits; conducting all required FDA contract inspections; conducting requested on-farm fertilizer inspections; updating Animal Feed and Produce Safety Inventory, reviewing farm Produce Safety plans, preparing risk evaluations and conducting Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) retail reviews as assigned by the USDA. In addition, we have completed invoicing of USDA Fruit and Vegetable certificates for all completed terminal market and shipping point inspections.

Summer Food Service Program – Food and Nutrition Division staff continue to provide daily technical assistance and guidance to current and potential sponsors regarding 2020 summer operations, waiver

extensions, and Food Service Management Company contracts. To date, 176 sponsor applications have been submitted and approved, which includes 53 new sponsors.

Hemp Licenses – The Plant Industry Division has issued 72 Hemp Licenses to applicants for the upcoming growing season. There are 54 growers, 13 processors, and five handlers who have been licensed and propose to grow approximately 446 acres in the field and 57 acres under glass. To date, actual field acreage planted throughout the state is 81 with two acres under glass.

Animal Emergency Planning and Preparedness – A conference call meeting with County Animal Response Team directors was conducted on June 24 to review and discuss the guidelines for pet sheltering in a COVID-19 environment. One concern discussed on the call was the number of willing volunteers. Primarily, the concern is that some volunteers may not be able to assist on-site at an operating shelter this summer due to existing health conditions. The directors were encouraged to delegate virtual and logistical tasks to these members to keep them engaged. Overall, the lack of recruitment and retention of volunteers was a significant concern for a few counties. Since then, efforts have been made to disseminate information about CART and its need for volunteers. During an NJ VOAD COVID-19 coordination call, the animal emergency preparedness coordinator reviewed the purpose of CART as an effort of recruiting interest and participation. A memo was sent recently to all New Jersey veterinary professionals that explained what CART is and how to learn more about becoming a volunteer. Additionally, an article discussing CART and its need for volunteers will be featured in the July NJ Veterinary Medical Association newsletter.

General Permit for Wastewater Discharges – After meeting over time with NJDA staff and a small working group of farmers, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection developed a draft general permit for wastewater discharges for single or adjoining parcels under common ownership with multiple systems, looking to add an additional system. The draft is under internal review and has an expedient timeline for adoption.