

# NEWS FROM THE NJDA

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## Important Dates for your Calendar:

**April is Lawn and Garden Month.**

**Apr. 14** - National Pecan Day

**Apr. 19** - National Garlic Day

**Apr. 22** - State Board of Agriculture Mtg, EcoComplex, Bordentown, NJ

**Apr. 29** - Greenery Day

**May 7-10** - Jersey Fresh International Three Day Equine Event, Horse Park of NJ

## From the Secretary's Desk



*NJ Secretary of Agriculture, Douglas H. Fisher*

At the 100<sup>th</sup> State Agricultural Convention, it was great to see so many families and friends from the farm community. We had some great sessions, covered a lot of ground and still had time to just enjoy each other's company and share information.

I applaud our State Board members for their dedication and hard work, not only at the convention, but all year long. We all know that agriculture is constantly changing and meeting these challenges head-on helps ensure a viable future for the ag industry.

To everyone who attended the convention, we thank you for your insights and suggestions. The New Jersey Department of Agriculture, as always, is at your service.

I'd also like to mention my thanks to everyone who attended and participated in the FSMA conference held at the Rutgers EcoComplex a few weeks ago in cooperation with the Delaware Department of Agriculture and sponsored by the Northeast Association of State Departments of Agriculture. I think everyone has a fuller understanding of the process and next steps. It was great that Delaware Secretary of Agriculture, Ed Kee could join us as well as Connecticut Commissioner of Agriculture, Steven Revczky. It's always better when we can work collectively on an issue of such importance.

Here's hoping you have a prosperous Spring season!

## From the State Board President



*State Board of Agriculture President, Rich Norz*

Members of the State Board are hard at work this time of year on their farms and in Trenton. Following the State Agricultural Convention, the Board assembled a special committee to review draft points identified by the SADC concerning Soil Disturbance on Preserved Farms. The Committee was charged with developing a response to these draft points so that the Board could provide a proper response/alternative to the SADC on this issue. The first Committee meeting was held on March 18 and was an excellent first meeting of the group. The Committee met again on April 1 and will keep the agricultural community informed.

The delegates to the Ag Convention elected Shirley Todd Kline (Vegetable industry) and Angelo Trapani (Beekeeping industry) for terms beginning July 2015 and expiring June 2019. The delegates at the Convention also elected Erick Doyle to fill the vacancy due to the passing of State Board member David Klemm. Also, the nominations for the Fish and Game Council have been re-filed, including farmer members: George Conover for Central Jersey; Phillip Brodhecker for North Jersey and Jeffrey Link for South Jersey. All candidates are subject to the advice and consent of the State Senate.

At the Convention, the Board presented both John J. Kupcho of West Caldwell, retired Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) Essex County Agricultural Agent, and Richard VanVranken of Mays Landing, RCE of Atlantic County, with the Distinguished Service to New Jersey Agriculture Award. Henry R. Byma, a third-generation dairy, hay and grain farmer from Wantage was named the 2015 Outstanding Young Farmer. Roger Kumpel, of Southampton Township, Burlington County, a third-generation family farmer, growing hay, long straw, grain and vegetables was named the Grower of the Year. Start considering nominations for the 2016 Distinguished Service to New Jersey Award, information will be available shortly.

The next meeting of the State Board will be April 22 beginning at 6:00 pm at the Eco Complex, Bordentown.

Looking forward to another great season!

## **POULTRY DISEASE ALERT - AVIAN INFLUENZA/"BIRD FLU"**

Since December 2014, a dangerous new strain of Avian Influenza, also known as "bird flu," has been found in domestic poultry, captive falcons and wild, migratory waterfowl. All poultry owners need to be on the lookout for signs of illness in their poultry and use good biosecurity practices to protect their birds.

This avian influenza strain is deadly to birds but poses no immediate public health concern for humans.

### **WHERE DOES AVIAN INFLUENZA COME FROM?**

Avian influenza is a viral disease of poultry that can be of low pathogenicity (LPAI), causing mild disease with or without clinical signs, or of high pathogenicity (HPAI), causing severe disease and death loss. Wild birds, especially migratory waterfowl (ducks and geese) are passive carriers of the flu virus, meaning they can pass the disease along without becoming seriously ill. Avian Influenza viruses can enter the body by inhalation, ingestion or through other mucous membranes such as the conjunctiva. Feces, saliva and respiratory secretions from infected birds contain large amounts of the virus. Once introduced into a flock, the virus can spread rapidly (within hours).

The HPAI viruses currently in the US are the result of re-assortment of an Asian H5N8 virus with North American avian influenza strains. These novel viruses (H5N8, H5N2, and H5N1) are spreading along wild bird migratory pathways. As of April 1, 2015, HPAI has been found in the Pacific, Central and Mississippi migratory bird flyways in the states of OR, WA, CA, ID, NV, UT, AR, MN, MO, KS and SD. As migratory bird flyways overlap, future findings of HPAI in the Atlantic flyway are expected. The New Jersey Department of Agriculture and USDA APHIS Veterinary Services conduct surveillance on commercial operations, on backyard and hobby flocks, in poultry auctions and in the live bird marketing system. To date, HPAI has not been detected in New Jersey.

### **CLINICAL SIGNS OF AVIAN INFLUENZA**

LPAI in chickens and turkeys resembles any other mild respiratory disease. With HPAI, birds may die suddenly without any signs of disease. Signs of HPAI may include:

- Sudden increase in bird deaths
- Sneezing, gasping for air, coughing and nasal discharge (runny nose)
- Watery and/or green diarrhea
- Lack of energy and poor appetite
- Drop in egg production or soft- or thin-shelled misshapen eggs
- Swelling around the eyes, neck and head
- Purple discoloration of the wattles, combs and legs



## **POULTRY DISEASE ALERT - AVIAN INFLUENZA/"BIRD FLU"** (continued from pg. 2)

### **POULTRY GROWERS - PROTECT YOUR FLOCK WITH GOOD BIOSECURITY**

Avian influenza spreads from bird to bird, from manure and from contaminated vehicles, equipment, egg flats and poultry transport crates. The virus can be transported through bird droppings on clothes or boots into poultry houses and bird pens. Help protect your birds by following these practices:

- Minimize your flock's exposure to wild waterfowl
- Keep poultry away from water which wild waterfowl use
- Don't use surface water (such as pond water) as a drinking source for your poultry
- Always use dedicated foot wear or use disinfectant footbaths prior to entering your bird pens
- Clean up outside feed spills
- Only allow essential workers and vehicles to enter your farm; clean and disinfect vehicle wheels before letting them drive onto your farm
- Don't lend or borrow equipment from other farms
- Avoid visiting other poultry farms and auctions. If you do, change clothes and footwear before working with your own birds

### **REPORT SICK BIRDS OR UNEXPLAINED DEATH LOSS IMMEDIATELY**

All poultry owners, whether commercial producers or backyard enthusiasts, need to report sick or unexplained bird deaths to State/Federal officials immediately. For small flocks, this can include deaths of one bird per day for two days in a row.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REPORT SICK OR DEAD POULTRY CONTACT:**

New Jersey Department of Agriculture, Division of Animal Health  
609-671-6400 or [state.veterinarian@ag.state.nj.us](mailto:state.veterinarian@ag.state.nj.us)

-OR-

USDA APHIS Veterinary Services NJ Area Office  
609-259-5260

Additional information on biosecurity for backyard flocks (including handouts on avian influenza and on biosecurity) can be found at [www.healthybirds.aphis.usda.gov](http://www.healthybirds.aphis.usda.gov). For updated information on HPAI visit: [www.state.nj.us/agriculture/divisions/ah/diseases/](http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/divisions/ah/diseases/).



## ***NJ Land Link Website Will Make It Easier to Find Land and Other Farming Opportunities***

Farmers soon will be able to take advantage of a new interactive website that will make it easier for them to connect with New Jersey landowners who have farmland available for lease or sale and to find other farming opportunities.

The website, called NJ Land Link, is an Internet-based tool that will enable farmers to search and sort farmland and other farming opportunities available by a whole host of pertinent criteria, including county, municipality, farm size, type of production, preservation status of the land, and type of opportunity (e.g., land for lease, land for sale, or employment/partnership opportunities).

The website was previewed last month at a State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) meeting. The SADC and the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Jersey (NOFA-NJ) developed the website under a USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program grant. The Rutgers Office of Research Analytics collaborated on the project by designing the attractive, easy-to-use website.

Farmers interested in land or other farming opportunities, as well as farmland owners wanting to advertise land or opportunities that they have available, will be able to register online with the website. Once registered, users will be able to create and independently manage their own listings.

Farmers seeking access to farmland will be able to view a wide range of property-specific details, including information related to soils, water resources, housing, buildings and equipment available, and lease or sale terms. Each listing will also include a map view that enables users to toggle between street map, satellite and hybrid views of the property.

NJ Land Link is expected to be operational this summer and will be widely promoted. For more information, contact the SADC at [sadc@ag.state.nj.us](mailto:sadc@ag.state.nj.us) or (609) 984-2504.

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## **FORMER STATE BOARD MEMBER DAVID KLEMM HONORED WITH FIRST COURAGE IN SERVICE TO AGRICULTURE AWARD**



NJ State Board of Agriculture President Rich Norz (left) and NJ Secretary of Agriculture Doug Fisher presented Bradley Klemm with the Courage in Service To Agriculture Award in memory of his father, David Klemm, who served on the State Board while battling cancer.

## NJDA HIGHLIGHTS CHILD AND ADULT FEEDING PROGRAM

New Jersey Department of Agriculture Division of Food and Nutrition Director Rose Tricario commemorated Child and Adult Care Food Program Week on Wednesday, March 18, with a visit to HomeFront, a homeless shelter in Ewing Township. Tricario and Child and Adult Care Food Program Coordinator Tanya Johnson served about 50 children who reside at the shelter a dinner of roasted chicken, mashed potatoes, steamed broccoli, whole wheat bread, tropical fruit salad and milk. The meal was part of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

“The Child and Adult Care Food Program assures parents seeking emergency shelter that their children are receiving nutritious meals,” said Director Tricario. “We encourage emergency shelters as well as adult or child day care centers to participate in this essential program.”

The CACFP provides children living in public or private homeless shelters with up to three meals a day through age 18. The CACFP also may be utilized in day care centers, family day care centers, after-school care programs and adult day care centers. There are currently 85,000 eligible participants at 782 different facilities. The program is federally funded and administered by the New Jersey Department of Agriculture.

HomeFront began participating in CACFP in July of 2003. About 100 children are served breakfast, dinner and evening snack each day.

“The CACFP helps us empower parents to start making better choices for their families at meal times while under our care,” said Sheila Addison, Family Preservation Center Director. “This helps prepare them to continue healthy family meal-time traditions after they move into affordable housing.”



Governor Christie proclaimed March 15-21 as Child and Adult Care Food Program Week in New Jersey, based on National CACFP Week, a national education and information campaign sponsored annually by the National CACFP Sponsors Association. The campaign is designed to raise awareness of how the Child and Adult Care Food Program works to combat hunger and bring healthy foods to the table for adults in day care and children in child care homes, centers, and in afterschool feeding programs across the country.

To learn more about New Jersey’s Child and Adult Care Food Program, visit <http://bit.ly/1FwqWwB> or call **609-984-1250**.

Serving meals at a HomeFront in Ewing Twp. are (from left) Tanya Johnson, NJ Dept. of Agriculture Child and Adult Care Food Program Coordinator; Traichelle Davis, HomeFront Family Preservation Center Kitchen Service Technician; Rose Tricario, NJDA Division of Food and Nutrition Director.

## FOOD SAFETY MODERNIZATION ACT IS FOCUS OF SESSION FOR NORTHEASTERN-STATE FARMERS

More than 50 farmers, retailers, educators and regulatory officials who are part of New Jersey and Delaware's produce industry gathered at the Rutgers EcoComplex to discuss the impending implementation of the federal Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) on Monday, March 23.

FSMA was passed by Congress in 2010 and signed into law by the President in 2011, following a series of foodborne illnesses linked to fresh produce, everything from spinach to peppers to cantaloupe. It expanded the federal Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) regulatory authority in the world of food beyond processed and prepared foods to include raw produce on the farm as well.

The session, sponsored by the Northeast Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NEASDA) and presented by the New Jersey and Delaware Departments of Agriculture, was aimed at further spreading the word to farmers about the looming FSMA mileposts. The first four FDA rules to implement the law – including the Produce Safety regulation, the one most likely to affect farmers – are expected to be finalized in October 2015 and then move quickly to an implementation phase.

After that, farmers, depending upon the size of their farm, will have several years to reach full compliance. Some very small farms may be able to exempt themselves from the law, if they sell a majority of their produce direct-to-the-public. But those who depend upon sales to retail buyers may lose markets if they do not comply.

"For those of you selling less direct-to-the-public and further into the wholesale and retail chain, your adherence to FSMA and that of the wholesalers and retailers you sell to, is vital," said New Jersey Secretary of Agriculture Douglas H. Fisher, himself a former supermarket owner with 30 years' experience in the business.

Representatives from both the Ahold USA and Kings Supermarkets chains underscored that sentiment, saying their buying decisions already are influenced by a grower's adherence to private food-safety auditing firms like Primus Labs. FSMA will bring the force of federal law to bear on those decisions, they said.

Delaware Secretary of Agriculture Ed Kee said he began hauling produce in 1968 and "this is without a doubt the single biggest change I've seen to the industry in all that time. The more we work together, the better off we're going to be."

To which Connecticut Agriculture Commissioner Steve Reviczky, the current NEASDA President, added, "For all of us in farming and agriculture, FSMA is a game-changer, and it is absolutely necessary we get this right."

"I'd say the most important thing you could do as a farmer is to get together with another farmer who has already done it," said Chris Wilson, who oversees food safety for the Sorbello and Wheeler Farms in Gloucester County. "Go out to their farm, have them walk you through it, see the things they did. You **can** do this."

For more information on the Food Safety Modernization Act, please visit: <http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/FSMA/>

*Delaware Secretary of Agriculture Edward Kee; New Jersey Secretary of Agriculture Douglas Fisher; and Connecticut Agriculture Commissioner Steven Reviczky who also is President of NEASDA, met recently at the Rutgers EcoComplex in Bordentown to discuss the Food Safety Modernization Act and how it may affect their states' farmers.*

