

# NEWS FROM THE NJDA

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## Important Dates for your Calendar:

**June is the Month of the Horse**

**June 21** - Father's Day

**June 21** - 1st Day of Summer

**June 24** - State Board of Agriculture Mtg, Norz Hill Farm

**June 28** - Stars & Stripes Livestock Show

**July 4** - Independence Day

**July 6-11** - Cumberland County Cooperative Fair

**July 7-12** - Freedom Fest

**July 8-12** - Ocean Cty. Fair

## From the Secretary's Desk



*NJ Secretary of Agriculture, Douglas H. Fisher*

The farming season is well underway and this time of year always sparks our appreciation for what our growers and producers can provide for us -- an endless variety of grains, fruits and vegetables for our table as well as plants to beautify our surroundings, all complemented with such fare as nearby raised poultry, eggs and meats. Right now is the time when you can have it all being New Jersey produced. So, whether you buy at the farm stand, farmers market or supermarket, show your support for New Jersey farmers by treating your family to the bounty of the Garden State.

If you are on social media, you can help promote New Jersey products by using #JerseyFreshLove when posting pictures of everything Jersey Fresh. We posted some pictures on Facebook and Instagram with that hashtag from my visit to Donaldson Farms in Warren County to pick strawberries on June 3.

Get up and Plant Something. I visited Concorso's Garden Center in Morris County on May 4 to highlight the NJ Nursery and Landscape Association's campaign asking people to visit our New Jersey nurseries and garden centers and plant something to beautify your homes and gardens.

Finally, June is the Month of the Horse in New Jersey, so get out and take in a race at one of the state's racetracks, go on a pleasure ride or go to a horse show.

Enjoy what the Garden State has to offer!

## From the State Board President



*State Board of Agriculture President, Rich Norz*

As my term on the Board comes to a close, I would like to thank the members of the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture for their time, dedication and strong support and especially Robert Swanekamp Sr. who has served on the Board with me for the last four years. I would also like to thank the many people in the NJDA who not only support all of NJ Agriculture, but always go above and beyond the call of duty to make NJ Agriculture great! In July, the Board will be joined by Angelo Trapani, Monmouth County, representing the Beekeeping Industry and Shirley Todd Kline, Cumberland County, representing the Vegetable Industry and Erick Doyle, Hunterdon County, representing the Livestock Industry.

The Board is now accepting applications for the 2016 Distinguished Service Awards, deadline for submission is September 30. Also, important to note are the dates for the 2016 State Agricultural Convention and the new location, February 9-11, 2016 at the Harrah's Resort and Waterfront Conference Center in Atlantic City.

## NJDA UNVEILS PROJECT IN CAPE MAY COUNTY TO EDUCATE ABOUT TREE-KILLING PESTS

The New Jersey Department of Agriculture recently unveiled a new exhibit at Cape May County Zoo in Cape May Court House designed to educate the public about invasive pests threatening trees in New Jersey. The NJDA is currently monitoring an infestation of emerald ash borer which made its appearance in the state last year. The invasive beetles have attacked and killed tens of millions of ash trees in the U.S. and Canada since 2002.

“With emerald ash borer now here in New Jersey, exhibits like this one at Cape May County Zoo are vital in educating the public so they can assist us in finding signs of the invasive insects,” said Joseph Zoltowski, Division of Plant Industry Director. “The display is part of the Department’s outreach efforts to stop the spread of tree killing pests.”

The display has giant pictures of an emerald ash borer and Asian longhorned beetle, with cutouts for children to put their faces into the scene. Along with the fun activity, there are signs explaining the threat the insects pose to state trees and how to contact the New Jersey Department of Agriculture in case people spot the bugs.

The concept and design for the display came from Paul Kurtz, Department entomologist and Forest Pest Outreach and Survey Program Manager. He worked with Cape May County Zoo as well as the World of Wings in Teaneck and Turtle Back Zoo in West Orange to locate displays at the facilities to reach a greater number of people. Each exhibit cost \$3,000, with funding coming from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Pest Outreach and Survey Program.

Cape May Zoo gets 500,000 visitors each year. Jean Whalen, assistant parks director, said they agreed to locate the display at the zoo because they share the love of the forests and wish to help protect them by raising awareness. She said the display has been a big hit. “The response has been amazing,” said Whalen. “Almost every family that walks through the zoo cannot pass without stopping to get a photo of their smiling child’s face in the eye-catching display.”

The Department of Agriculture works to suppress and eradicate harmful insects that kill trees in New Jersey. Currently, the Department is tracking infestations of emerald ash borer in Mercer, Burlington and Somerset counties. Asian longhorned beetle was successfully eradicated in the state by the Department, USDA and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection last year.

Most invasive insect discoveries in the United States have been made by private citizens. In both the New Jersey emerald ash borer and Asian longhorned beetle infestations, members of the public alerted authorities.

To learn more about emerald ash borer, visit [www.emeraldashborer.nj.gov](http://www.emeraldashborer.nj.gov) or the USDA’s site at <http://bit.ly/1sXM3CW>. For Asian longhorned beetle information, go to <http://asianlonghornedbeetle.com>.

Report signs of these beetles to the Department of Agriculture at 609-406-6939.



left to right: Cape May County Freeholder Marie Hayes, NJDA Dir. of Division of Plant Industry Joseph Zoltowski, NJDA Entomologist Paul Kurtz, USDA APHIS Acting State Plant Health Director Tapos Mondal and Assemblyman Bob Andrezcjak help celebrate the unveiling of the new display.

## ***NJDA Announces Schools Participating in 2015-16 Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program***

As part of the State's continuing efforts to provide improved nutritional opportunities for school children, New Jersey Secretary of Agriculture Douglas H. Fisher recently announced 151 New Jersey schools will participate in the 2015-2016 school year's Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP).

The United States Department of Agriculture has allocated \$4,172,474 for New Jersey for next school year's Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program to provide fresh produce to more than 76,400 students in 14 counties during the school day. The students also will receive nutrition education. The goal of the program is to expose children to healthy foods, increase their fruit and vegetable consumption and set them on the road to improved lifelong dietary habits.

"Thousands of New Jersey school children will be eating Jersey Fresh produce when in season next school year thanks to the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program," said Secretary Fisher. "The program also teaches students about the food we grow in the Garden State and helps our local farmers."

The Department of Agriculture will provide additional funds to schools for connecting their FFVP with the Farm to School Program. The schools must provide Jersey Fresh produce a minimum of two days each month from September to November and from April to June and must verify where the produce was grown. Seventy percent of the 151 schools have agreed to participate.

Some of the criteria used in selecting the schools to participate included: Elementary schools with 50 percent or more of their students eligible for free or reduced price meals; schools that planned to purchase locally grown fruits and vegetables as much as possible; the program would be well-publicized and all students would have access to the produce offered; and plans to partner with outside organizations to enhance nutrition education.

Visit [www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/fn/pdf/15-16FFVPschools.pdf](http://www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/fn/pdf/15-16FFVPschools.pdf) for the schools that will participate in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program for the 2015-2016 school year.



## ***2015 FSA County Committee Nominations Being Accepted Now***

Farm Service Agency Administrator Val Dolcini has an important message for farmers and ranchers. If you know someone interested in serving on a local FSA County Committee, now is the time to submit that person's name as a nominee for the 2015 County Committee Elections.

From June 15 through August 3, you can nominate a candidate for your local FSA county committee. And almost anyone participating or cooperating in an FSA program - and of legal voting age - can be nominated.

FSA county committees are a vital link between the farm community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Through the county committee system, farmers and ranchers have a voice and their opinions and ideas are heard. So make a difference by nominating a fellow farmer.

Download the nomination form from our website at [www.fsa.usda.gov/elections](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections) or pick one up at your local office. Remember, forms must be postmarked or delivered back to the county office by the August 3 deadline. Voting will take place this fall.

## ***Agricultural Legislation Update***

The Senate Judiciary Committee recently voted to approve the nomination of Erick Doyle, Shirley Kline and Angelo Trapani for membership on the State Board of Agriculture. George Conover was also voted to serve as a member of the Fish & Game Council. The votes by the Senate Judiciary Committee are part of the "advice and consent" that the Senate has with the Governor's nominees. The next step for these individuals is a vote by the full Senate. Once that vote takes place they will be sworn into their new positions.

The Senate Transportation Committee voted in support of the 16 year old driver's license bills A-535 and S-2547. Reestablishes certain historic driving privileges afforded holders of agricultural driver's licenses in operating farm equipment and vehicles. This bill requires that a person seeking to obtain an agricultural license successfully complete an approved minimum six-hour behind-the-wheel driver training course. The bill further provides that the holder of an agricultural license is exempt from the requirement that a driver under the age of 17 be in the company and under the supervision of a licensed driver over the age of 21 while operating a motor vehicle. The exemption only applies when the agricultural licensee is operating a registered farm vehicle for farm-related purposes. Finally, the bill clarifies that the holder of an agricultural license is required to display the reflectorized decals that are required under current law to be displayed by all drivers under the age of 21. The next step would be a vote by the full Senate, should it pass that house it would then go to the Governor for his action.

## ***NJDA Adopts Sensible and Measured Precautions to Protect Against Avian Bird Flu***

The New Jersey State Board of Agriculture has adopted amendments to the state's livestock and poultry importation rule designed to help protect the state's poultry industry and its consumers from the introduction of the highly pathogenic strain of avian influenza (HPAI) currently affecting states in the West and Midwest.

Full details can be found here: [www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/ah/pdf/HPAIemergencyrule.pdf](http://www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/ah/pdf/HPAIemergencyrule.pdf)

## *Northeastern States Tackle Issues of Mutual Concern in New Haven*

The Food Safety Modernization Act, the future role of Land Grant universities and the importance of trade with Canada were among the hot topics discussed at the annual meeting of the Northeastern Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NEASDA), held at The Study at Yale hotel and conference center in New Haven, Conn., June 7-9.

Secretary Fisher and Policy Advisor Jeff Beach were the NJDA representatives at the meeting of the 10 states, from Maine through Delaware, which make up the Northeastern contingent of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA).

Near the top of almost everyone's list of priorities was hearing from federal Food and Drug Administration officials about the prospects for funding the mandates included in the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), which will incorporate farms into a food-safety inspection system for the first time, as well as bring higher levels of safety requirements to food manufacturers, including those that produce animal feed.

FDA officials could offer no assurances as to the future of FSMA funding, although they have worked with NASDA on some early funding opportunities to help states prepare farmers and food processors for the reality of FSMA. The law's first rules, including the Produce Safety Rule, the one expected to bring the most concern to the farm, are scheduled to begin implementation in late-2015 and early-2016. Most recently, NJDA and the Delaware Department of Agriculture teamed up to host a NEASDA-funded session for farmers in March to stress the need to be prepared for the new law.

On the issue of Land Grant universities, Secretary Fisher led a panel on June 9 that examined how these universities (Rutgers University and the New Jersey Institute of Technology are New Jersey's Land Grant institutions) can continue a mutually beneficial relationship with their states' agricultural communities. NJDA, with the help of Eagleton Fellow Jared Sussman, has been studying ways to strengthen Rutgers' connection to our state's ag community.

"This was an issue we brought to NASDA's attention last year and we have seen that it is a concern to many parts of the country," Secretary Fisher said. "The answers and approaches vary from region to region, but it is clear we can build even stronger relationships between the Land Grant schools and the agricultural community."

The NEASDA members also heard from Canadian Consul Vikkas Shamra, who highlighted the strong trade connection between Canada and the United States, especially the Northeastern states. Shamra appealed to the members to revisit the Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) program, which he said is viewed in Canada as being harmful to that nation's food producers.