

2000 Annual Report

STATE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

(609) 633-7794

The State Board of Agriculture is New Jersey's highest official agricultural body and is responsible for establishing policies within the framework of agricultural laws for the New Jersey Department of Agriculture. As part of that role, the eight-member Board approves rules and regulations, sets program priorities and approves budget requests.

The policies set by this Board affect the state's agricultural community and, therefore, state law mandates that the members of the Board must be people who are involved in producing farm crops or livestock products. In carrying out its responsibilities during the year, the Board held special public meetings and participated in other farm and agriculture-related activities to become fully aware of the issues facing agriculture.

State Board committees focused on challenges facing agriculture during the year, especially wildlife damage and control; Farm Service Agency program benefits; additional risk management tools to help New Jersey farmers weather market and crop losses; and the critical need for water availability at all times for the state's agriculture industry.

Roger J. Ruske, a Cumberland County nurseryman, was elected president and Bix L. DiMeo, a Monmouth County horse breeder, was named vice-president of the State Board of Agriculture in July 1999. Two new Board members, David J. Kanach, Somerset County, and Russell J. Marino, Gloucester County, representing New Jersey's dairy/grain/forage and vegetable industries, respectively, took their seats on the Board. Other Board members were Abbott W. Lee, Burlington County, and Douglas Zee, Gloucester County, fruit industry; Steven R. Jany, Mercer County, and Thomas A. Brodhecker, Sussex County, grain/forage.

All Board members are elected at the State Agricultural Convention, nominated by the Governor and confirmed by the New Jersey Senate.

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Farmers Against
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Throughout FY00, NJDA found itself blazing new trails to serve its many and varied constituencies. From the exhilaration of implementing the long-awaited stable source of funding for the state Farmland Preservation Program to the challenge of supporting the agriculture industry through the worst drought in nearly four decades, NJDA continued its efforts to maintain production agriculture's positive economic momentum.

NJDA's agenda included working with federal, state and private partners to ensure greater financial stability for New Jersey growers by enabling them to participate in a national risk management pilot program even as efforts continued to find better ways to protect those crops from the economic losses caused by marauding wildlife. At the same time, the department worked with equine owners and stone fruit growers to protect those industries from the ravages of animal and plant diseases never before seen in the Garden State.

In addition, NJDA worked to give our younger citizens a better start for their workday by providing school breakfasts to more children throughout the state under Governor Christie Whitman's new state funding initiative for the school breakfast program.

Always cognizant of consumer concerns about the safety of the food they purchase, NJDA seized the opportunity to work with a major nationwide food chain to develop a third-party farm-to-plate food safety audit procedure that may well become a national model.

Throughout FY00, the Office of the Secretary of Agriculture maintained its numerous educational, informational and outreach programs to keep all New Jerseyans abreast of the department's many initiatives for its constituent groups and the contributions of the agriculture industry to the economic and aesthetic well-being of the Garden State.

Garden State Preservation Trust Fund

At the start of the fiscal year, Governor Christie Whitman signed legislation to implement the Garden State Trust Fund for the preservation of open space and farmland, putting in place a long-term stable funding source for farmland preservation. The legislation also established a process to determine the value of farmland in the Pinelands as an inducement to permanently preserve farms in that area.

Under the Garden State Trust Fund, an average of \$98 million will be dedicated annually from sales taxes to fund purchases of farmland preservation easements and other open space for the next ten years. Thanks to the stable funding provided by the Trust, the SADC funded two preservation rounds in the same calendar year. Through them, the SADC authorized the permanent preservation of 227 farms totaling 19,272 acres.

During FY00, 76 farms on 11,262 acres were preserved, bringing program totals to 432 farms covering 64,738 acres permanently protected since the program's establishment in 1983.

The Drought Of 1999

As July 1999 drew to a close, it was obvious that rainfall levels were significantly below "normal" years and the state's agriculture industry was clearly in the grip of a severe drought. Early in August, Governor Whitman declared a drought emergency and New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) established mandatory restrictions and water use guidelines.

NJDA worked with New Jersey Farm Bureau, Rutgers Cooperative Extension and the New Jersey Nursery and Landscape Association to obtain modifications in the restrictions related to the nursery and sod industry so that producers and marketers could maintain plant growth and health in accordance with industry standards and water conservation plans.

In mid-August Governor Whitman authorized NJDA to set up a toll-free hot-line number for farmers who needed information about programs and services to help them deal with the now devastating effects of the drought. NJDA personnel staffing the hot-line offered callers information about how to register crop losses with USDA's Farm Service Agency to begin the process to qualify for the low-interest loans available under a USDA disaster declaration issued at the beginning of August.

Callers were also told how to get grain and field corn tested at no cost for nitrates and mycotoxins to ensure that it would be safe to feed to livestock; how to obtain emergency supplies of water for livestock; advised of sources of financial advice and assistance in restructuring existing farm debt to weather the current crisis; given details on an emergency program established for those interested in selling farmland development rights to the state Farmland Preservation Program to help with cashflow problems; given names and phone numbers of resources such as agriculture extension agents, regional Farm Service Agency offices, local Soil Conservation District offices, regional First Pioneer Farm Credit offices and local stress management counselors to support farm families in crisis.

As time went by, virtually every sector of the agriculture industry felt the impact of the dry weather as irrigation ponds dried up and the lack of rain made soil difficult to till.

Vegetable growers were stretched to the limit, battling low prices because of competition from other states as well as low production resulting from the drought and heat. Production costs soared as irrigation pumps ran almost round the clock and crews worked to salvage rapidly ripening product from the intense heat in the fields.

Grain growers were also hard hit, with those who also produced livestock or ran dairy herds feeling the drought's effects even more intensely. Few grain growers were able to harvest much for sale, but those involved in livestock and dairy cattle were also forced to find alternative feed sources for their

animals as the hay, grain and pasture they raised for their own animals succumbed to the weather.

Sod growers were reluctant to deliver sod to customers who would be unable to keep the sod alive under current water restrictions, meaning that growers would have to replace it at their own cost.

Routine summer nursery inspections showed major drought damage to nursery stock, both trees and shrubs, throughout the state and especially in Hunterdon County. Pine, spruce, dogwood and maple seemed hardest hit as were new landscape plantings around the state.

Beekeepers began reporting honey crop losses of between 30 to 70 percent due to the drought. They began to fear that the lack of rain would severely impact the fall honey flow, requiring many beekeepers to feed the hives heavily to get the bees ready to overwinter.

Throughout August and September NJDA continued its efforts to coordinate and disseminate information about sources of free and low-cost hay, grain and transportation services. A hay directory was compiled, detailing all available information, and mailed to more than 1,000 dairy, livestock and equine producers. It was also posted to NJDA's website, along with links to sources in several other states.

Because drought-stressed grain and ensilage can contain toxins potentially dangerous to animals that ingest it, NJDA assisted livestock producers with nitrate and mycotoxin testing of field corn and grain and assessed the existence of toxins in the crops. NJDA coordinated the program with Cook College and Rutgers Cooperative Extension to let growers take samples to county extension offices for preliminary nitrate screening and, if needed, further testing by NJDA's contract laboratory.

The FY00 Legislators' Tour highlighted Somerset County agriculture, home to some of the state's hardest hit grain fields. About 100 of the state's top policymakers got a first-hand look at a variety of agricultural operations and the effect of the drought on each farm.

At the end of the tour, legislative leaders announced their intention to propose legislation in the upcoming session to provide millions of dollars in state drought relief to farmers.

Talk of a drought relief package turned rapidly to a far-reaching disaster relief package when the fourth worst drought of the century came to a dramatic and, in some areas, equally devastating end in mid-September. The remains of Hurricane Floyd hit New Jersey hard, dropping in most cases a foot or more of water in just a few hours. The torrential downpours cut a swath across the northeastern and north-central portions of the state, leaving drought-decimated fields under several feet of water and causing several hundred million dollars in flood-related damage in the region.

By the end of October, the Legislature passed and Governor Whitman signed the Emergency Disaster Relief Act of 1999. The bill appropriated \$80 million in state funds, \$60 million for disaster relief for victims of Hurricane Floyd and \$20 million for the drought of 1999.

The \$20 million was earmarked for NJDA grants, zero- and low-interest loans and other financial assistance to farmers who experienced agricultural damage or loss due to the 1999 drought. To streamline the state grant program process for eligible farmers, NJDA worked with the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) which administered a separate federal disaster assistance program for which many New Jersey growers were also eligible.

Thanks to the state drought relief program, more than 1,100 grain growers, livestock producers, dairymen and other farmers statewide received grants averaging \$22,500 under the state program while 117 livestock/dairy farmers shared almost \$400,000 in reimbursement for hay that had to be purchased for feed.

Agricultural Conservation Cost-Share Program Helps Growers

FY00 was the second year of the agricultural Conservation Cost-Share Program (CCSP), which provides technical and financial assistance to implement agricultural conservation projects that enhance water quality. The state's \$2 million in CCSP funding, together with the \$680,000 federal Environmental Quality Incentives Program, funded 93 projects, 25 involving livestock management and 68 covering soil and water management.

West Nile Virus Comes To New Jersey

Even as the weather took its toll on the state's livestock health and feed sources, equine owners and breeders in the New York metropolitan area were faced with the arrival of the mosquito-borne West Nile Virus (WNV) in the Western Hemisphere for the first time. Although the disease claimed several equine victims in New York State, no New Jersey horses evidenced any symptoms of WNV infection in 1999, possibly because the drought that gripped the state kept mosquito levels low.

However, with no vaccine or drug treatment available, and with evidence in New York of overwintering of WNV in mosquitoes, prevention of the disease during the approaching 2000 mosquito season became a priority. Working with the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's State Mosquito Control Commission and Rutgers Cooperative Extension, NJDA helped to develop a comprehensive plan outlining preventive, control and diagnostic measures, including testing of mosquitoes, sentinel flocks, wild birds and mammals. Testing commenced on May 1, 2000, and would continue until mosquito populations decreased significantly in the fall.

During early summer 2000, NJDA representatives participated in daily teleconferences involving officials in New York and other surrounding states and the national Center for Disease Control concerning the unfolding West Nile Virus epidemic. The department also alerted all large animal veterinarians in New Jersey to the anticipated occurrence of the disease within New Jersey, urging them to encourage their clients and others to carefully monitor areas surrounding stables and horse barns for mosquito breeding grounds.

NJDA's animal health laboratory contracted with the State Mosquito Control Commission to test blood drawn from sentinel chickens at locations around the state. In addition, laboratory personnel worked closely with the National Veterinary Services Laboratory in Ames, IA, to develop a three-tiered testing protocol on any equine blood and tissue samples forwarded by veterinarians as suspected West Nile cases.

Plum Pox Virus Found In Pennsylvania

Plum pox, a serious virus disease previously found only outside the United States, was detected mid-year in a commercial fruit orchard in Adams County, PA, close to areas where New Jersey fruit growers purchase propagative material. The strain of plum pox detected can only be spread through infected plants, including budwood and rootstock, and is easily transmitted by aphids that feed on infected trees.

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture quickly established a quarantine to prohibit the movement of stone fruit trees and budwood within and out of the quarantined area. USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Plant Protection and Quarantine section began working immediately with NJDA staff, New Jersey stone fruit growers and the Rutgers Cooperative Extension to discuss recommendations for eradication, possible quarantine action, and survey plans for the months ahead.

Adjusted Gross Revenue Insurance Pilot Program

During FY00, the State Board of Agriculture convened a broad-based agricultural group to explore the expansion of USDA/Risk Management Program's pilot crop revenue insurance program, Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR), to New Jersey. The group consisted of representatives from NJDA, Cook College, New Jersey Farm Bureau, New Jersey Agricultural Statistics Service (NJASS), USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) staff and the farm community. The AGR program allows farmers to ensure gross farm revenue for multiple agricultural commodities.

The group held a number of sessions to educate farmers about the program, directed the research of crop data, submitted an application for the program expansion and coordinated a week-long visit by personnel from the USDA's Risk Management Program to see first-hand the various farming operations in New Jersey. The group drafted a risk assessment of the various agricultural commodities to be covered by the pilot program and submitted it to the USDA for consideration. The pilot program is expected to be approved by USDA in the fall and include separate pilot project areas for northern and southern New Jersey.

Curbing Deer And Wildlife Damage

For several years, the economic impact of wildlife has been a key concern of the farm community, NJDA and the State Board of Agriculture. This year, the Board established a special committee consisting of farmers and representatives from NJDA, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), New Jersey Farm Bureau, and Cook College. The group worked closely with the New Jersey Fish and Game Council, NJDEP's Division of Fish and Wildlife and legislative leaders to strengthen the state's wildlife management policy.

In consultation with the Division of Fish and Wildlife, the committee completed The 1999 Governor's Report on Deer Management in New Jersey which indicated the need for new tools and approaches to deal with the state's over-abundance of deer. The committee successfully sought legislation for \$200,000 which was used to fund research and education at the Cook/NJAES Center for Wildlife Damage Control; create special community-based deer management programs; and make the venison donation program permanent for hunters who wished to participate. The committee also supported the Fish and Game Council's effort to establish a black bear hunt for the 2000-2001 season along with other needed Game Code changes to control wildlife. The committee continues to work with USDA's Wildlife Services to control the state's geese populations.

Jersey Fresh Still The Standard

FY00's \$1.16 million Jersey Fresh promotional and advertising program helped to maintain local consumer awareness and preference for Jersey Fresh farm products. Three new seasonal 30-second television commercials were produced and aired on major network and cable stations in the tri-state region. Together with print and radio ads, the program reached well over 100 million consumers.

'Food For Thought' Encourages School Breakfast

Governor Whitman's FY00 budget appropriated almost \$2 million for an aggressive campaign called "Food for Thought" that underscored the importance of a good breakfast for every student in the Garden State. Under the new campaign, NJDA used brochures, television and radio commercials, advertisements in newspapers and educational magazines, billboards and panels on the sides of public buses to raise public awareness of the program.

New Jersey is one of just three states in the nation that provide a state subsidy for school breakfasts for all children. NJDA's five-year goal is to increase breakfast participation to 40 percent of those

students who currently participate in the school lunch program on a daily basis.

Third-Party Food Safety Inspection Process Established

With food safety concerns increasingly on the minds of American consumers, more wholesale and retail buyers are asking farmers to submit to costly third-party audits that can determine whether they are growing, harvesting, packing and handling their products in a safe and sanitary manner.

To provide Garden State growers with an effective, economical alternative to this process, NJDA launched a new initiative in FY00 in partnership with Safeway, a nationwide supermarket chain, to establish a third-party audit program for growers and shippers of fresh produce. As a result, NJDA became the first state agriculture department in the nation to receive private sector approval to carry out third-party audits.

NJDA staff worked with the staff at Rutgers Cooperative Extension to hold training sessions for farmers and produce inspectors. The program will be available to New Jersey growers under our fee-for-service inspection program.

Farmers Against Hunger Continues To Grow

During FY00, its fourth full year of operation, Farmers Against Hunger (FAH) rescued almost 1.2 million pounds of produce. The fresh fruits and vegetables were distributed to more than 100,000 people statewide through a network of churches, shelters, senior and day care centers, as well as all of the state's food banks. More than 426,000 pounds of produce were collected directly from farms in FY00. FAH's corps of volunteers continued to grow, as did the number of participating farms, which reached 44 this year. Due to the enormous success of the program, FAH has gained a national reputation for spearheading produce recovery from packing houses, farm markets and produce distributors, as well as through gleanings from farm fields.

FAH is a collaborative effort between NJDA, the New Jersey Agricultural Society, the New Jersey Farm Bureau and Rutgers Cooperative Extension. Additional funding was provided in FY00 by a number of private and non-profits groups, as well as a USDA Fund for Rural America grant, and a New Jersey Department of Community Affairs block nutrition grant.

At the height of the 1999 drought, legislators surveyed what should have been a lush soybean field in Somerset County but was instead hard-packed soil sparsely dotted with dead or dying plants.

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Central Services
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Fiscal Services
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Human Resources
(609) 292-5517

ADMINISTRATION

John J. Gallagher
Division Director
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**Information
Technology**
(609) 292-0956

Purchasing
(609) 292-7725

The Division of Administration provides a wide range of support services to the department's operating units, including fiscal and general administrative services, employee services and management, and information technology services. The division's primary mission is to help the NJDA's managers deliver essential programs and services to the state's agriculture industry and to the many and varied non-farm constituencies the department serves.

Human Resources

The Human Resources Office oversees a number of programs essential to support the department's personnel objectives, including workforce planning, classification, compensation, recruitment, salary and benefit administration, award programs, employee relations and contract administration, performance assessment reviews, personnel policy and procedures development and training coordination.

As of June 30, 2000, the department had 358 employees including 254 full-time employees and 104 seasonal employees. The slight increase in staff over FY99 reflected the increased responsibilities shouldered by the State Agriculture Development Committee as a result of Governor Christie Whitman's initiative to preserve one million acres of open space and farmland.

Staff development and training was a special focus this year. In response to Governor Whitman's Executive Order #49 declaring a "zero tolerance" policy for workplace violence, managers and supervisors attended a two-day training course while all other department employees attended a one-day course designed to raise employee awareness of workplace violence and make them aware of established policies and procedures on the subject.

In addition, following the introduction of new standardized computer software, all employees attended training in a variety of software applications aimed at improving NJDA's ability to serve and communicate with its clients.

Fiscal Services

NJDA's FY00 adjusted budget for direct state services was \$10,167,000 with grants-in-aid funding of \$22,629,000, \$20 million of which was for the emergency drought relief program. State aid for the year amounted to \$8,867,000. Capital funding of \$1,153,000 permitted the department to make needed repairs at the Phillip Alampi Beneficial Insect Laboratory in Ewing, Mercer County, and begin construction of a covered work area at the Horse Park of New Jersey at Stone Tavern, Monmouth County.

Dedicated state funds amounting to \$9,967,000 included \$1,514,000 in fees charged to agencies receiving federally-donated commodities; \$6,605,000 from equine and commodity promotion programs; and \$1.5 million for administration of the state Farmland Preservation Program.

In addition, NJDA received \$206,964,000 in federal funds, including \$205,301,000 for child nutrition programs; \$1.4 million for federal commodity distribution programs; \$160,000 for plant and animal disease control; and \$103,000 for commodity inspection services.

Information Technology Services

During FY00 the Information Technology Unit took on several critical efforts to build a solid foundation for NJDA's telecommunications future.

Key to this was the smooth transition to the new millennium with no disruption in client services or loss of data relevant to department programs.

As the new year progressed, NJDA installed a new office automation server, enabling the department to abandon the technically outdated systems it had depended upon for the previous five years.

The change offered NJDA greater capability, computing power and speed and will result in considerable savings in operational and maintenance costs in the years ahead.

Department Funding

Source of Funds	Amount Appropriated FY 1999	Amount Appropriated FY 2000
General State Funds		
Direct State Services	\$ 9,296,000	\$ 10,167,000
Grants-In-Aid	2,499,000	22,629,000
State Aid	7,004,000	8,867,000
Capital Construction	156,000	1,153,000
Dedicated Funds		
Commodity	1,513,000	1,514,000
Distribution	6,612,000	6,605,000
Commodity Promotion	1,657,000	1,848,000
Miscellaneous		
Federal Funds	194,177,000	206,964,000
TOTAL	\$222,914,000	\$259,747,000

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Diagnostic Laboratory
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Disease Control
(609) 292-3965

ANIMAL HEALTH

Ernest Zirkle, DVM
Division Director
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Interstate Shipment
of Livestock
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The Division of Animal Health maintains disease control programs to protect the health and well being of livestock in New Jersey. The division tracks information about emerging diseases around the world that may impact the Garden State, conducts epidemiological investigations of livestock diseases and drug residues, operates an animal health diagnostic laboratory, manages a contagious equine metritis quarantine facility in Long Valley for imported horses and supports an aggressive Johne's disease control program.

Johne's Disease

The department continued to offer a voluntary Johne's disease control program for New Jersey dairy farmers in an effort to control this debilitating, bacterial gastrointestinal disease. It is estimated that farmers with Johne's-infected herds could lose up to \$200 per cow every year due to decreased milk production and early culling losses.

In the three years the program has been offered, 36 herds have been enrolled. The cooperative effort among NJDA personnel, Rutgers Cooperative Extension agents, and dairy producers focuses on herd testing and identification of Johne's-positive animals using blood test and fecal cultures, both of which are processed in the NJDA laboratory.

A secondary focus of the program is the development of an individualized herd plan for each producer. The plan helps identify and remedy high-risk areas for Johne's transmission to calves and young stock. NJDA's Johne's control program gives participating dairy producers a head start on compliance with USDA's upcoming Johne's control guidelines.

West Nile Virus

New Jersey's equine owners and racing interests were alarmed in August and September 1999 when the mosquito-borne West Nile Virus (WNV) was recognized in the Western Hemisphere for the first

time.

Although the disease caused an unprecedented die-off of crows in New York State; an epidemic of human encephalitis and aseptic meningitis in the New York City metropolitan area; and an epidemic of equine encephalitis on Long Island, there were no confirmed WNV cases in horses this year in the Garden State.

Although infected crows were found in many New Jersey counties, the virus was isolated in only two mosquito pools in Hudson County during the 1999 outbreak in New York. In New Jersey, 45 percent of the dead crows collected in September and October tested positive for WNV, but blood samples from 100 horses statewide showed no evidence of WNV infection.

Experts theorized that the lack of infection resulted from the drought that gripped the state and kept mosquito populations low.

However, with no vaccine or drug treatment available, prevention of the disease during the 2000 mosquito season became a priority. To that end, NJDA worked with the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's State Mosquito Control Commission and Rutgers Cooperative Extension to develop a comprehensive plan outlining preventive, control and diagnostic measures for the coming year.

The plan included testing of mosquitoes, sentinel flocks, wild birds, and mammals as well as specific recommendations to decrease the exposure of susceptible species to mosquitoes. Testing commenced on May 1, 2000, and continued into the fall.



Contagious Equine Metritis Quarantine Facility

New Jersey tested more than 100 horses in its contagious equine metritis facility during FY00. The first facility of its kind in the state, the site has been of special value to New Jersey breeders and equestrians bringing valuable Warmblood horses into the United States from countries such as Germany, the Netherlands, Ireland, and Great Britain for eventual use in breeding programs or equine competitions.

Avian Influenza

Last year, USDA recognized poultry markets that process birds on site as indicators, rather than sources, of avian influenza (AI), a disease which could be devastating to the state's poultry industry. NJDA brought together officials from Delaware, New York and Pennsylvania to establish uniform rules and procedures for markets to minimize the occurrence of AI. NJDA also continued its annual monitoring visits to these markets throughout the tri-state area to determine which strain of the AI

virus is circulating in the bird population.

This year, meetings of the Mid-Atlantic Cooperative Extension, the Northeast United States Animal Health Association and the Live Bird Market Working Group focused on the routine recurrence of low-pathogen AI at specific markets in New Jersey and New York. During the annual testing of the markets in New Jersey, 40 percent of them tested positive for the low-pathogen strain of this virus. The positive markets were cleaned and disinfected. NJDA also requested USDA to do a thorough epidemiological investigation of the disease in the New Jersey-New York markets so that effective measures can be implemented to stop the spread of this disease.

Pseudorabies Virus

Pseudorabies virus (PRV) is a swine disease that also affects cattle, horses, sheep and goats. It is very contagious and causes production losses, reproductive problems and death in breeding and finishing hogs. In 1989, USDA established a PRV eradication program and recently accelerated the program to support eradication efforts. New Jersey had acquired Stage IV status, two steps from being declared PRV-free. Despite outbreaks of the disease this year on seven farms in Gloucester and Cumberland Counties, thanks to immediate intervention by NJDA and help from USDA, New Jersey was able to maintain its Stage IV status in all but those two counties, which reverted to Stage III. Continuous testing and eradication on the affected farms, followed by cleaning, disinfection and additional testing, will proceed as mandated by USDA protocol.

Laboratory Services

NJDA's animal health laboratory conducts a wide variety of tests to support domestic livestock disease control programs, including veterinary bacteriology, virology, serology, pathology and histology.

Equine veterinarians in New Jersey rely on the laboratory for required Coggins tests for equine infectious anemia (EIA) as well as tests for Eastern equine encephalitis, equine influenza, Lyme disease, Potomac horse fever, herpes virus, and equine viral arteritis.

New Jersey's bovine practitioners depend on the laboratory for tests such as bovine viral diarrhea, para-influenza, infectious bovine rhinotracheitis, brucellosis, and Johne's, among others.

In addition, the laboratory prepares specimens and coordinates testing for some foreign animal diseases and zoonotic diseases.

This year, the diagnostic laboratory successfully completed the most recent round of certification testing administered by the National Veterinary Services Laboratories for EIA and Johne's as required for all government labs doing regulatory tests including EIA, bluetongue and pseudorabies. Through these and other services, the laboratory supports New Jersey's livestock industry, providing private veterinarians with fast, accurate, convenient and economical animal health testing services.

Constituent Outreach

The Division of Animal Health provides critical services to the state's livestock producers. To carry out this mission, division staff must stay well informed on legislative, legal and animal health issues at the national and international levels. To this end, staff participates as working members of a number of animal health organizations, including the New Jersey Veterinary Medicine Association, the New Jersey Association of Equine Practitioners and the United States Animal Health Association.

Staff also meets regularly with a number of other professional boards and associations, such as the State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners; the Veterinary Advisory Committee to the Racing

Commission; the New Jersey Domestic Preparedness Planning/Coordinating Group and the Animal Emergency Preparedness and Response Committee; the Bioterrorism Surveillance Advisory Group and others.

This year, through legislative mandate, NJDA undertook development of rules establishing minimum standards for the raising, breeding, care, and marketing of livestock in New Jersey. The effort is the first attempt to codify accepted livestock management practices for New Jersey producers.

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Dairy Data and Analysis
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DAIRY AND COMMODITY REGULATION

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and Grading
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Dairy Enforcement
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Division Director
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Commodity Licensing
and Bonding
(609) 292-5577

Dairy Licensing and
Bonding
(609) 292-5646

Fruit and Vegetable
Grading
(856) 453-3870

Milk Pricing
Regulations
(609) 292-5648

Jersey Fresh Quality
Grading Program
(609) 292-5577

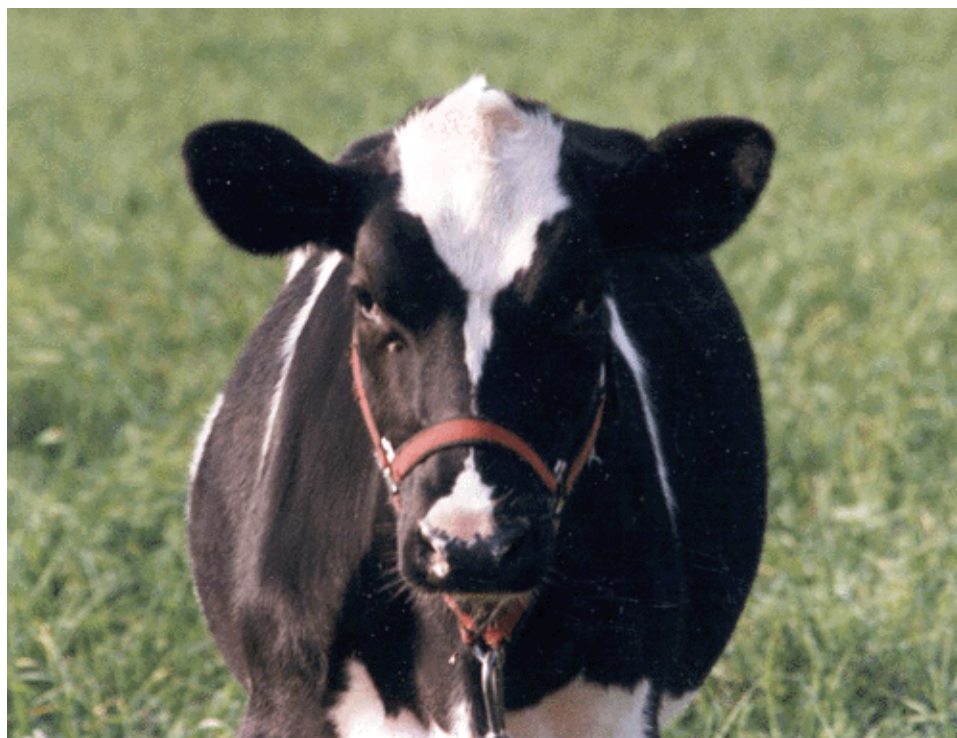
Agricultural Chemistry
(609) 984-2222

The Division of Dairy and Commodity Regulation serves many facets of the agriculture industry. One of its primary goals is to help retain a healthy economic environment for a viable, competitive dairy industry where consumers are assured of adequate supplies of milk at reasonable prices.

In other activities, the division administers the Jersey Fresh Quality Grading Program and other commodity inspection and grading programs to help ensure a constant supply of high quality, properly labeled fruits, vegetables, eggs, poultry, fish and seafood products for consumers in New Jersey and elsewhere. Certificates issued through the inspection and grading programs make it possible for Garden State farmers and agribusinesses to sell the inspected commodities in national and international markets.

In addition, the division provides services to New Jersey farmers, consumers and the food industry related to the production, storage, packing, marketing and sale of high quality agricultural products and works to protect against unfair, illegal and improper trade practices.

The Dairy Industry



New Jersey's dairy industry is an important segment of its agricultural economy. The industry includes dairy farmers, animal breeders, dairy cooperatives, milk handlers, processors, distributors and retail stores, all of which are served by the department. The state's 154 commercial and six institutional dairy farms produced just over 240 million pounds of milk valued at \$36 million in FY00. New Jersey dairy farmers also produced heifers, cull cows, calves, grain, hay and other agricultural items, including breeding supplies such as embryos and semen.

MAINTAINING THE VIABILITY OF DAIRY FARMS IN THE GARDEN STATE

The last decade has been an era of extreme economic distress for the dairy industry, nationwide and in New Jersey. The department continues to offer a variety of projects aimed at improving both the short- and long-term viability of this important segment of the agriculture industry. Whole herd health and management programs, including Johne's disease and mastitis control, financial management training, nutrient and crop management, and waste management improvement projects are all part of this comprehensive effort on behalf of the state's dairy industry.

In FY00 the department provided staff support and \$75,000 for a Dairy Self-Help Program, a continuation of the Garden State Milk Quality Initiative begun in 1996 as a joint effort with Rutgers Cooperative Extension to help dairy farmers improve milk production and quality.

An important part of this program involves monitoring average somatic cell counts (SCC), indicators of milk quality and herd productivity. The program works with 13 milk haulers and 14 veterinarians to collect and culture bulk tank samples for participating farms to test for milk quality. Where results suggest a health problem in a herd, follow-up samples were collected from each cow. Average SCC among herds in the program has continued to drop each year.

At the end of FY00, 54 dairy farms, approximately 28 percent of the state's dairy producers, were enrolled in the Garden State Milk Quality Program. Nearly 6,600 bulk tank milk samples and over 2,700 individual samples had been collected and analyzed. Four regional dairy cooperatives were also active participants in the milk quality program along with six milk processing plants and nine milk haulers whose employees collected samples weekly. Milk quality information was provided regularly to

nine veterinarians in the Garden State with monthly management reports going to two out-of-state veterinary consultants for their New Jersey clients.

The financial management program launched in 1998 has helped 28 producers complete in-depth analyses of net worth, cost of production, and cash flow. Several producers used their data to obtain new financing for herd expansion and capital improvement such as new barns, milk parlors, and machinery. Because of the program's success, it has been expanded to cover producers throughout the state.

DAIRY LICENSING, BONDING AND ENFORCEMENT

In keeping with the mandate to maintain competition among New Jersey milk marketers, the department licensed 10,107 milk dealers, milk processing plants and retail stores. The department collected \$367,972 in fees and penalties during FY00. Penalties collected from stores and dealers for a variety of infractions totaled \$11,439 for the fiscal year.

Among the services provided by the department to New Jersey's dairy industry were the licensing and bonding of milk dealers to assure payments to producers, the dissemination of information needed by the milk industry and the mediation of disputes within the milk processing and distribution industry. Field investigators conducted inspections of 1,800 retail outlets to ensure that they were licensed and adhering to the milk control laws and regulations, especially with regard to false or misleading advertisements.

The department also collects and disseminates information on prices received by dairy farmers, milk production, milk sales, supermarket milk prices and other pertinent market data.

Commodity Regulation

Through NJDA's Jersey Fresh Quality Grading Program and other inspection and grading programs, growers obtain the certificates they need to sell produce and plants to other states and nations.

JERSEY FRESH QUALITY GRADING PROGRAM

The Jersey Fresh Quality Grading Program is a voluntary program designed to increase the sale of more than 70 of New Jersey's agricultural products, including fruits, vegetables, salad mixes, fresh herbs, shell eggs and cut flowers. This inspection standard adds a quality assurance note to the overall Jersey Fresh marketing program that is welcomed by wholesale produce buyers and consumers who want high quality products uniformly sized and packed.

After registering with the Quality Grading Program, growers are permitted to use the Jersey Fresh logo on their packages, indicating that the contents have been inspected and meet quality standards equal to or better than U.S. No. 1. Any use of the Jersey Fresh Quality Grading logo requires a license from the Quality Grading Program.

In FY00, 225 growers enrolled in the program and more than 138.4 million pounds of product were packed under the Quality Grading Program.

THIRD-PARTY FARM-TO-PLATE FOOD SAFETY AUDITS

A new initiative developed this year in conjunction with a nationwide supermarket chain resulted in a third-party audit program that NJDA offers to growers and shippers of fresh produce who are required

to show buyers that they are growing, harvesting, packing and handling their product in a safe and sanitary manner. NJDA became the first state agriculture department in the nation to receive private sector approval to carry out third-party audits. Department staff involved in the project received classroom and hands-on training and certification in auditing procedures and Hazard Analyses Critical Control Points (HACCP) inspections.

COMMODITY INSPECTION AND GRADING

With food safety and quality uppermost in consumers' minds, the commodity inspection and grading service offered by the department is particularly important. Most inspection services provided by the department are paid for by those for whom the grading and inspections are done. In FY00, the program collected over \$1.7 million in fees for services rendered.

Inspections performed for the poultry industry certified over 1.2 million cases of shell eggs as Grade A while more than 32 million pounds of poultry also met specified grade standards. Over 413 million pounds of liquid or frozen egg products and more than nine million pounds of dried egg product were processed under departmental inspection supervision.

The division's inspection and grading unit also worked with growers, shippers, receivers and processors of fresh produce marketed through inter- or intrastate commerce. Inspections were made at shipping point on over 41.6 million pounds of produce, including most fruits and vegetables grown commercially in New Jersey, in order to ensure that they met specific standards. Terminal market inspections were also performed on over 67.6 million pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables received from other growing areas. Tomato processing facilities contracted with the department for grading of more than 38.6 million pounds of tomatoes to ensure that they met grower-processor contract specifications.

Even the youngest consumers in the state benefited from the department's inspection efforts as inspectors at several plants certified 372,600 pounds of diced chicken under USDA specifications for use in the federal school lunch program.

The fish and fisheries products inspection program, begun in 1986 and operated in cooperation with the United States Department of Commerce, enables the department to provide a broad range of inspection and grading services to New Jersey's commercial fishing industry. These include plant sanitation surveys, product quality grading and export certification. During FY00, over 10.6 million pounds of fresh, frozen and canned fish were certified and inspected at the wholesale level.

AGRICULTURAL CHEMISTRY

It is estimated that 476,326 tons of animal feed, over 243,524 tons of fertilizers and 224,819 tons of liming material were sold in New Jersey last year. Through inspection, sampling and laboratory analysis of these products, coupled with enforcement actions against producers of mislabeled or substandard products, the department protects crop yields and promotes animal growth.

This year, 936 feed, fertilizer and lime manufacturers and distributors registered with the division. Field inspections covered 6,837 lots of feeds, fertilizers and liming materials to determine compliance with labeled guarantees. Of the 475 feed samples and 502 fertilizer samples collected for laboratory analysis, just over two percent of the feed samples and 15 percent of the fertilizer samples failed to meet the minimum nutrient levels stated on their labels. Of the 25 liming materials sampled, four failed to meet the nutrient content for which they were labeled. Label or registration violations found during field inspections resulted in those items being removed from sale.

Through the agricultural chemistry program, a total of \$90,375 in registration fees and \$111,512 in tonnage inspection fees were collected. In addition, penalties totaling \$13,500 were assessed for

fertilizer, feed and lime content violations, of which \$9,326 was refunded to farmers and \$4,174 was transmitted to the State Treasury.

COMMODITY LICENSING AND BONDING

Under the commodity licensing and bonding program, NJDA offers economic protection for New Jersey farmers who sell perishable agricultural commodities or hay, grain and straw to dealers and brokers on a credit basis. Licenses were issued to 106 produce dealers; 21 hay, grain and straw dealers; 12 shell egg dealers and one live-poultry dealer. Bonds totaling \$3,789,153 were received and posted by the division.

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MARKETS

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Division Director
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Jersey Fresh
(609) 292-8853

Export Market Development
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Market News
(856) 453-3870

Fairs and Shows
(609) 292-5536

Sire Stakes
(609) 292-8830

Farm Markets and Pick-Your-Own Farms
(609) 292-8853

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)
(609) 292-0337

Federally-Donated Food Distribution
(609) 292-5068

The Division of Markets plays a critical role in the marketing and promotion of New Jersey farm products and the development and expansion of markets both here and abroad. The division also promotes New Jersey's racing and pleasure horse industry and coordinates the distribution of federally-donated foods to public feeding sites, schools, hospitals and other institutions.

Jersey Fresh

While locally-produced farm products are always popular with Garden State consumers, New Jersey farm products are just as sought after elsewhere along the Eastern Seaboard, in eastern Canada, and increasingly in foreign markets.

The \$1.16 million Jersey Fresh promotional and advertising budget for FY00 helped to maintain local consumer awareness and preference for Jersey Fresh farm products and fund projects to increase domestic and international marketing opportunities for the state's agricultural producers.

Three new seasonal 30-second television commercials were produced and aired on major network and cable stations in the Philadelphia-to-New York area. The previous series of commercials had highlighted the producers of the state's Jersey Fresh bounty but this year's version focused on the consumer's viewpoint with the slogan, "Pick the Best - Jersey Fresh," as the message. With Governor Christie Whitman and Agriculture Secretary Art Brown as spokespersons, each commercial tracked the seasonal products from the point of harvest through retail outlets to the consumer's home.



Print advertisements in major tri-state area daily newspapers and magazines, as well as in national trade papers, kept the message in front of consumers and produce industry buyers during the height of the growing season

Colorful Jersey Fresh point of sale materials C price cards, bin wrap, aprons, hats, stickers and posters C distributed to over 775 tri-state retail locations and many farm markets reinforced the televised and printed messages and enabled consumers to identify Jersey Fresh produce while shopping in their favorite markets. Chain store produce managers also received regular updates on crop conditions and availability throughout the growing season.

Once again this year, weekend travelers heard shore traffic reports sponsored by NJDA. Along with important information about travel tie-ups to and from seaside destinations, listeners were reminded that Jersey Fresh fruits and vegetables were available at farm markets along most of the popular shore routes.

The popular Jersey Fresh matched funds program provided 82 agricultural organizations with grants totaling \$250,000. The groups matched the grants at least dollar-for-dollar to incorporate the Jersey Fresh identity into marketing efforts tailored to meet their specific needs. These funds supported a wide range of promotional efforts including festivals, advertisements, websites, market days, brochures, and children's programs.

NJDA continued to offer promotional support to urban organizations interested in developing farmers' markets in their towns. Forty urban farmers' markets operated in FY00 offering those who live and work in the state's urban areas a chance to buy fresh, locally-grown fruits and vegetables several times a week.

In cooperation with the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, NJDA remained a key sponsor of the WIC/Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP). Under the program for FY00, approximately \$500,000 worth of FMNP checks were issued to over 10,000 Head Start Children, pregnant or nursing women in nine targeted cities and other qualifying locations. These checks were redeemed for fresh fruit and vegetables at more than 110 authorized roadside markets and 35 farmers' markets throughout the state. This important federal/state venture offers thousands of

nutritionally at-risk children and women an excellent opportunity to include fresh locally-grown produce in their diets.

To extend the reach of the Jersey Fresh program even further, NJDA opened booths at major national trade shows including the Produce Marketing Association Convention in California, the 2000 U.S. Food Export Showcase in Chicago and the Canadian Grocery Showcase in Toronto. NJDA also coordinated the participation of New Jersey processors and distributors in the SALIMA trade show in Prague, Czech Republic, the largest food show in Central Europe.

As a member of Food Export USA - Northeast, NJDA distributed \$856,000 in federal Market Access Program (MAP) export development grants to 23 New Jersey food companies. MAP, a matched funds foreign market development program, enables small companies to expand their sales in different international markets. New Jersey companies who participated in this program have reported an average increase of over \$800,000 per company in international sales.

NJDA also gave chain store produce buyers and produce brokers around the nation copies of The Jersey Fresh Buyers Guide, a compendium of all growers who participate in the related Jersey Fresh Quality Grading Program. These efforts offer New Jersey companies excellent opportunities to become involved in or expand export activities.



Market News

The Market News Service is a federal/state cooperative venture designed to provide a readily accessible source of reliable market information for the state's growers and shippers. Because access to more accurate and current marketing information helps New Jersey growers to be more competitive, the Market News Service collects price and supply information from the major blueberry, nectarine and peach growers and shippers in the Garden State. This information is faxed, emailed or phoned to growers, farm marketers and county agents and forwarded to all Market News offices around the nation.

Fairs And Shows

The 20 agricultural fairs certified by NJDA hosted nearly two million visitors in FY00. Residents of the Garden State and tourists from around the country always enjoy the variety of competitions, food, amusements and agricultural displays offered. Agriculture, agribusiness and agriculture education play an important part in each fair and the department offers organizers technical assistance as well as special exhibits and promotional materials concerning the agriculture industry and NJDA.

Equine Programs

HORSE BREEDING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

NJDA's Horse Breeding and Development Program, counseled by the New Jersey Equine Advisory Board, supports the state's popular pleasure horse industry through a variety of programs including breeder incentive awards, youth programs, educational clinics, Girl and Boy Scout badge programs, and a variety of other equine activities. The Horse Breeding and Development Program provides financial support for the pleasure horse industry through the New Jersey Bred All Breed Horse Show and the Non-Racing Breeder Awards program. In FY00 \$121,500 was distributed to owners and breeders of pleasure horses in the Garden State.

These services and events are held with the support of the New Jersey Equine Advisory Board, a unit of the NJDA, which is composed of 64 members representing 29 different breed organizations and agricultural interest groups.

NEW JERSEY SIRE STAKES PROGRAM

New Jersey-sired Standardbreds and New Jersey stallions have long been at the forefront of the industry. When yearly honors were announced by the United States Trotting Association (USTA) in conjunction with the United States Harness Writers Association (USHWA), the 1999 Three-Year-Old Trotting Colt of the Year was million-dollar Hambletonian winner Self Possessed. For the 1999 season Self Possessed won nine of 16 starts and earned just over \$1 million before beginning a new career as a stallion at Kentuckiana Farm in New Egypt.

Several other New Jersey-sired performers also earned USTA/USHWA notice. Two-year-old pacing filly Eternal Camnation (Cam Fella) won the Breeders Crown stakes along with 11 other wins to take top earnings honors in her division. Her four-year-old counterpart Galleria (Artsplace) captured the championship in her division with her year-end winnings total sending her lifetime earnings to over \$1.2 million.

Oolong (Armbro Goal) was the top three-year-old filly trotter on the continent, with wins in the Hambletonian Oaks, the Breeders Crown, and the New Jersey Sire Stakes Final at The Meadowlands

The New Jersey Sire Stakes Program and related programs were worth \$8,739,522 in 1999. Over \$5,800,000 in Sire Stakes purses were distributed at the pari-mutuel tracks, plus another \$507,654 in fair events. The remainder came from restricted overnight (non-stakes) races and breeders awards.

New Jersey-sired yearlings continued to bring top dollar at the fall yearling sales where 729 yearlings were sold for a total of \$22,440,550, averaging \$30,783 per yearling, well over the national average of \$17,470. Although they comprised only 17 percent of the yearlings sold, New Jersey-sired yearlings accounted for nearly 31 percent of all yearling sales in North America in 1999.

A total of 23 Standardbred yearlings sold for \$150,000 or more in 1999 were by New Jersey sires. These top yearlings were by stallions Artsplace (15), Valley Victory (6), Matts Scooter (1) and Donerail (1), all standing at farms in the Garden State.

HORSE PARK OF NEW JERSEY AT STONE TAVERN

The Horse Park of New Jersey at Stone Tavern occupies 147 acres in Monmouth County. It is the result of a unique partnership of state government and private not-for-profit organizations working together to develop a world-class facility for the exhibition of pleasure horses. The Horse Park is a not-for-profit entity that operates under contract with the NJDA.

In FY00, the Park marked its twelfth year of operation with 75 days of equine activities from March through November. Since it opened, the Park has hosted 1.8 million visitors and competitors and proven itself as one of the area's most important economic assets.

The highlight of this season was the groundbreaking for the covered exhibit area, a 150' x 300' clear span building that will give the users a sheltered exhibition facility during inclement weather. Future plans include the continued development of the outside hunt course, the event course, and the carriage dressage fields.

Food Distribution Programs

NJDA administers a variety of programs that distribute free or low-cost commodities provided by USDA. These donated federal foods reach over 700 eligible school districts, summer feeding programs, institutions, and needy populations each month. As in previous years, NJDA accepted not only New Jersey's fair-share entitlement but also a substantial amount of bonus donated foods, once again exceeding acceptance goals for all program categories.

CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS

The first state agriculture department in the nation to house all the federal child nutrition programs, NJDA administered more than \$225 million in federal and state funds allocated to the Bureau of Child Nutrition's (BCN) seven programs C the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Special Milk Program, After School Snack Program, Child and Adult Care Feeding Program, Family Day Care Feeding Program and the Summer Food Service Program.

In FY00 more than 175 million meals and supplements were served statewide by participating sponsors including public and private schools, residential and non-residential child care institutions, day care centers, adult day care centers, family day care homes, recreation centers and other agencies that qualify for federal and state child nutrition funds.

Governor Whitman's FY00 budget appropriated \$1.938 million for an aggressive campaign called "Food for Thought" that underscored the importance of a good breakfast for every student in the Garden State. Under the new campaign, NJDA used brochures, television and radio commercials, advertisements in newspapers and educational magazines, billboards and panels on the sides of 175 NJTRANSIT buses to raise public awareness of the program.

NJDA's five-year goal is to increase breakfast participation to 40 percent of those students who currently participate in the school lunch program on a daily basis.

THE EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

During FY00, The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) welcomed foods valued at \$5.4 million, an increase in allocated foods resulting from federal program budget increases. These additional foods were allocated under the category of bonus TEFAP commodities over and above New Jersey's entitlement to foods valued at \$2.3 million.

This enabled NJDA to distribute more than 8.3 million pounds of TEFAP foods through seven non-profit emergency feeding organizations (EFOs) to food banks, hot meal sites, and pantry feeding sites, serving over 246,000 of the state's neediest citizens. Typical of the 55 different items provided through the program were canned fruits and vegetables, peanut butter, rice, instant dry milk, pasta, cereal, fruit juice and frozen meat.

In addition, NJDA accepted over 20.5 million pounds of USDA foods worth more than \$15.7 million dollars for use in other programs. These commodities were particularly important to the school lunch program, which provided monthly allocations of frozen, canned, and dry foods to over 2,200 schools throughout New Jersey feeding more than 500,000 students daily.

NJDA worked with selected EFOs and Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) to establish "teaching pantries" which have since developed into an integral component of RCE's community-based nutritional outreach programs, making full use of USDA/TEFAP donated commodities serving eight New Jersey counties.

In addition, NJDA coordinated an innovative joint pilot program between the department, the Food Bank of Monmouth and Ocean Counties (FBMOC) and the culinary arts program at the Ocean County Vocational School (OCVS). As part of this initiative, 150 students at OCVS used various TEFAP commodities provided by FBMOC to prepare oven-ready foods for donation to eligible hot meal sites. The project became an important part of the OCVS curriculum for careers in food service and provided nutritious, appetizing, easily-prepared meals for thousands of New Jerseyans.

NJDA also worked with 29 commercial food processors to process more than four million pounds of food offered to and accepted by school districts into more easily used, cost-effective, oven-ready products such as hamburgers, sandwich steaks, pizza, and a variety of turkey and chicken products. The goal of this planned and monitored conversion of bulk foods is to increase the usefulness of federally-donated foods and help local school districts reduce preparation time and purchase costs. The availability of this program was highlighted in NJDA's first Processor Food Show where 26 approved processors presented their products to 135 school food service directors, food service management companies and school buying cooperatives. The show was enthusiastically reviewed by those who attended and orders for commercially-processed commodities for the 2000/2001 school year rose by 30 percent.

For the fifth year, NJDA worked with the U.S. Department of Defense's procurement program to buy \$400,000 worth of Jersey Fresh fruit and vegetables for use in the state's school lunch program.

All federally-donated commodities are handled through a commercial warehouse and trucking system that includes two separate warehousing operations and use local carriers to pick up and deliver the food. In FY00, NJDA supported this commercial distribution system through a user fee of not more than \$2.15 per case of food, a fee that has not increased in seven years. The revenue generated through this per case assessment supports all costs associated with the department's administration of the school lunch food distribution program.

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Bee Inspection
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PLANT INDUSTRY

Pest Detection
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Laboratory**
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**Plant Laboratory
Services**
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**Gypsy Moth
Suppression**
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**Seed Certification and
Control**
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Nursery Inspection
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The Division of Plant Industry's goal is to safeguard New Jersey's plant resources from injurious insect and disease pests. Achieving this goal becomes increasingly important as the globalization of the world economy creates new pathways through which foreign plant pests and diseases can enter the Garden State.

Through its detection, inspection, eradication and control programs, NJDA helps to ensure that farmers and others who buy and sell plants and plant products enjoy high quality, pest-free products. The Division of Plant Industry operates programs which certify that plant stock for interstate and international shipments is free of plant pests; conducts surveys for new plant pests; protects forested communities from defoliation and tree loss caused by the gypsy moth; inspects honeybees for harmful bee diseases and pests; regulates the quality of plant seeds; and produces and releases beneficial insects to reduce crop and environmental damage and decrease dependence on chemical pest and weed controls.

Plant Pest Surveys

The department's participation in the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) Program took on greater significance this year in the face of continuing threats from beyond our borders against New Jersey's agricultural crops and ornamental trees. CAPS, a cooperative effort between the USDA's Animal Plant Health Inspection Service's Plant Protection and Quarantine Program (APHIS/PPQ), state universities and state departments of agriculture throughout the nation, became a keystone in NJDA's efforts to protect our agricultural and natural resources.

FOREIGN PLANT PESTS

One of the most forbidding foreign pests is the **Asian long-horned beetle**, a foreign cerambycid beetle discovered in Brooklyn and Amityville, NY, in 1996 and in Chicago, IL, in 1998, for which there is currently no known chemical control. Because of the serious threat the beetle poses to the forests of the northern United States, NJDA and APHIS/PPQ cooperated in a survey of 300 sites in 11

counties in northern New Jersey. No signs of infestation or establishment of the beetle were found.

However, during the search for this insect, adult and larval stages of the cerambycid beetle **Hesperophanes campestris**, a relative of the Asian long-horned beetle, were found in Middlesex County in 1998 in crating material from China. Following an immediate eradication program at the site by APHIS/PPQ, monitoring continued at warehouse sites around the state where wooden packaging from China might be stored. Through the end of FY00 trap results were negative.

A third wood-borer, the **Japanese cedar long-horned beetle**, was first detected in the eastern United States in North Carolina in 1997 and in Connecticut in 1998, leading to surveys for the pest at 10 sites in New Jersey in 2000. Traps were set in six counties with the beetle detected in five them. Because it appears that this pest may be widespread, NJDA alerted growers and shippers of nursery stock and increased surveillance of susceptible nursery and retail sites.

FOREIGN PLANT DISEASE

A potentially serious threat to the Garden State's peach and other stone fruit producers surfaced when **plum pox** virus was found in orchards in Adams County, PA, one of New Jersey's prime sources for stone fruit trees and budwood. The disease, previously found only in the Mediterranean, the Middle East and Chile, results in unmarketable fruit and tree mortality.

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture quickly established a quarantine to prohibit the movement of stone fruit trees and budwood within and out of the quarantined area. USDA issued a Declaration of Emergency empowering APHIS/PPQ to conduct a control and eradication program for the disease wherever it was found in the United States to prevent the spread of plum pox from known infested areas.

As part of APHIS/PPQ's national plum pox surveillance program, NJDA collected foliage samples from stone fruit nurseries, orchards that supply budwood to stone fruit nurseries, and orchards that have received Prunus material from the infected area of Pennsylvania. During spring and summer 2000, NJDA laboratory staff analyzed over 10,000 leaf samples for the plum pox virus and found no sign of the disease.



NURSERY INSPECTION

All nursery stock sold in New Jersey or exported to other states or countries is required to be free of injurious pests so that ornamental plants purchased by consumers do not spread pests to other plants. This year more than 15,400 acres in over 900 nurseries were inspected and certified free of dangerous insects and diseases. Infested stock was treated or destroyed to ensure that only pest-free

stock was offered for sale. In addition, NJDA issued 371 state and 113 federal phytosanitary certificates enabling export of plants and plant material to other states or countries. NJDA inspectors also certified 769 garden centers and landscapers as plant dealers for 2000.

VEGETABLE TRANSPLANT INSPECTION

During the second half of FY00, division staff inspected nearly eight million vegetable transplants, primarily leek, escarole and endive, cabbage, collard and Swiss chard that were shipped into the state for use by New Jersey farmers. The vegetable transplant inspection program helps ensure that New Jersey vegetable growers are supplied with high quality transplants that are free from plant diseases or insect pests.

Biological Pest Control

Under the Division of Plant Industry's biological control program, exotic and native beneficial insects are raised for release into the field to control invasive plant pests of agricultural crops, forests, and sensitive ecological environments. Biological controls reduce the amount of pesticide residue in the environment and minimize pest resistance to existing pesticides while protecting crops, forests and valuable environmental habitats.

This year, the Division of Plant Industry conducted eight biological control programs, four of which required laboratory rearing of beneficial insects for release into the field. The goal was to reduce specific pest populations below economically significant levels and to establish new beneficial insect species in the state. These four programs included:

- ✔ rearing and releasing wasps that attack the Mexican bean beetle (MBB), a pest which feeds on soybean, lima bean and snap bean foliage and cannot overwinter in New Jersey's climate. Since 1985, the program has so dramatically reduced the MBB population that no pesticide applications have been required on any of the state's soybean acreage.
- ✔ release of a beetle which feeds on the hemlock woolly adelgid, a pest that has devastated thousands of acres of native hemlocks in the state. Chemical controls are not easily applied to native hemlock stands because they are often located in inaccessible terrain and contain a dense foliage canopy that limits the effectiveness of aerial application. Observations at many of New Jersey's release sites have verified the establishment and effectiveness of the beetles against the adelgid population.
- ✔ release of a predatory beetle and two parasitoids which feed on euonymus scale which plagues many varieties of ornamental plants in New Jersey. The three new insects have been introduced because an established ladybug has shown limited ability to control the scale. The new beetle shows promise but work continues with the parasitic wasps.
- ✔ the establishment of two leaf-feeding beetles to combat purple loosestrife, an exotic, aggressive freshwater wetlands plant which is displacing native plants in the state's marshes and threatening animals that depend on those native plants for food and shelter. Large stands of purple loosestrife can reduce ground water recharge, decrease water storage capacity of a wetland, and jeopardize the health and vitality of the ecosystem. Until recently the only methods of loosestrife control were expensive, temporary and adversely affected non-target species. The beetles have overwintered at previous release sites and dramatically reduced purple loosestrife, enabling native

plants to reclaim the areas.

Gypsy Moth Suppression

The gypsy moth is New Jersey's most damaging insect pest of shade and forest trees. In FY00, after nearly 30 years and three major cycles of the pest, there were signs that major biological control factors are dampening the ravages of this pest. This is primarily due to NJDA's annual aerial gypsy moth suppression program using the biological insecticide, *Bacillus thuringiensis* (B.t.), the rearing and distribution of imported parasites and predators and the natural widespread distribution of a gypsy moth fungal disease.

In partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, this year the Division of Plant Industry again offered eligible municipalities the opportunity to participate in the Gypsy Moth Cooperative Suppression Program. Through the annual program, the division locates gypsy moth-infested residential areas using aerial and ground survey techniques, prepares an environmental impact statement which enables participating municipalities to qualify for 50 percent federal reimbursement of treatment costs, and supervises aerial B.t. treatments each spring.

In spring 2000, only 385 acres in three municipalities in Salem and Burlington Counties were treated under the program, the smallest suppression program ever conducted in the state against this insect.

Apiary Programs

NJDA worked closely with the Beekeeping Advisory Group to address areas of concern to beekeepers and related grower communities, such as the potential for the introduction of the small hive beetle (SHB) by imported colonies during FY00. The group helped NJDA generate guidelines for handling this recently-discovered pest, leading ultimately to amendment of the SHB quarantine to restrict the importation of colonies infested with SHB larvae only.

No significant parasitic mite infestations were detected in the 9,790 out-of-state colonies shipped into New Jersey for commercial pollination of millions of dollars worth of fruit crops, blueberries and cranberries.

The New Jersey Legislature appropriated \$130,000 to NJDA for honeybee inspection and research through passage of A1078, known as the "Bee Bill" NJDA immediately sought proposals for research on overwintering of bees, mite

Management and hive nutrition before selecting Rutgers University to begin a three-year research program on bees. Research results will have a major impact on the state's beekeeping industry.



Seed Certification And Control

The Seed Certification and Control program protects farmers, vegetable plant growers, the turf industry and other consumers from purchasing contaminated, mislabeled, and inferior seed products that result in lower crop production and economic loss. Unfair trade practices and untruthful seed labeling can result in costly weed removal efforts on sod farms and golf courses and higher farm production costs for many agricultural products.

This year only seven percent of the 162 samples of vegetable, turfgrass and field crop seed tested for farmers, golf courses and wholesalers had to be placed under stop-sale orders by NJDA inspectors and removed from the marketplace.

During FY00, 69 samples representing 601,852 pounds of agricultural seed and 25 samples of turfgrass seed representing 22,400 pounds were inspected and sampled for quality control testing. All lots tested were in compliance with the seed law.

A total of 73 lots of vegetable seed sold to New Jersey vegetable growers were inspected and sampled for quality control. Laboratory analysis found this seed to be of good quality but vigor testing of several different kinds of vegetable seed found that less than ideal conditions could result in lower germination. This service provided valuable information to growers who had to decide which lots of seed to plant early in the growing season.

Turf seed samples were taken from 21 lots of certified turf seed shipped to New Jersey from other states. These samples were tested to determine eligibility for use in the interagency certified seed program which attests to high standards of genetic identity and purity. Under strict supervision by the division, seed wholesalers mixed a total of 60,950 pounds of high quality turf seed for use by sod growers.

Conservation plant material developed by USDA and used primarily for coastal soil stabilization continued to play an important role in preventing beach erosion. Plant growers entered 36 acres of conservation plant material in the certification program. Several different kinds of soil conservation plants were inspected at the Cape May Plant Materials Center for distribution to growers in New Jersey and throughout the Northeast.

Plant Laboratory Services

The plant laboratory services unit provides technical support for the regulatory programs of the Division of Plant Industry with primary testing emphasis on seed, apiary, and plant protection programs.

In FY00 the expertise of the laboratory staff was of critical importance to livestock producers around the state as the drought of 1999 raised the possibility of nitrate and mycotoxin poisoning of livestock through feed contamination. Because of the drought, field corn plants absorbed nitrates from the fertilized soil but could not metabolize them properly, leading to the potential for nitrate poisoning if drought-stressed corn silage was fed to animals. NJDA's laboratory staff prepared nitrate test kits for use by Rutgers Cooperative Extension agents either in the field or at their offices.

When drought-stunted corn plants dried and cracked, they also became prime targets for fungi which produce potent toxins that could be just as lethal to farm animals as the concentrated nitrates. NJDA lab staff offered mycotoxin tests on feed so that county agents could help producers develop safe feed mixtures for each species of livestock.

In addition to these emergency services, the lab continued the full panel of testing programs and services the agriculture industry has come to rely on throughout the year, such as analysis for troublesome or noxious weeds, and germination and vigor testing. Vigor testing information helps growers better manage planting times and establish optimal growing and seed storage conditions while germination testing establishes the percentage of seed that will germinate under specific conditions.

For the apiary inspection program, the laboratory analyzed bees for Varroa and tracheal mites and tested for American foulbrood, a bacterial disease of bees. Thanks to a new test, the laboratory can not only find Varroa mites but also determine if they are resistant to the widely used pesticide fluvalinate. Work is proceeding on ways to screen the bacterium, *Bacillus larvae*, which causes American foulbrood, for resistance to terramycin, a popular foulbrood control.



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Ag Land Use
(609) 633-8097

**Agricultural Economic
Development Programs**
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**Aquaculture, Fish and
Seafood Development**
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**New Jersey Agricultural
Statistics Service**
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RURAL RESOURCES

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Division Director
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**Soil and Water
Conservation
Erosion and Sediment
Control**
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**State Development and
Redevelopment Plan
(SDRP)**
(609) 633-8097

**Technical Assistance on
Farm Building Codes,
Farm Tax Programs and**

Regulatory Compliance
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(609) 984-2506

The Division of Rural Resources is responsible for a variety of services and programs that maintain and enhance the viability of New Jersey agriculture and related agribusinesses.

In FY00 the division administered policies and programs to conserve and develop the state's soil, water and related natural resources and to establish close interdepartmental cooperation on issues including non-point source pollution control, waste management and water resources.

The division also offered a wide range of services to the agriculture industry to promote greater economic development, including regulatory mediation and mitigation and conservation grant programs.

In addition, the division continued its work with New Jersey's commercial fishing and aquaculture industries to help them gain a larger share of both national and international markets for their products.

As the home of New Jersey's Office of Agricultural Education, NJDA supported the further professional development of agricultural education instructors and the strengthening of their programs around the state. NJDA remains the only department of agriculture in the country which administers the State FFA Association, an organization for students enrolled in agriculture education in public high schools.

The New Jersey Agricultural Statistics Service, a joint federal-state program, collected and distributed agricultural production data and conducted special surveys of the industry throughout the year.



Natural Resources Conservation Programs

The State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC) is responsible for coordinating programs related to the conservation and development of soil, water and related natural resources in the state through the New Jersey Conservation Partnership, which includes the 16 soil conservation districts (SCDs), USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Rutgers Cooperative Extension Service.

The SSCC establishes statewide policy and standards on a variety of conservation issues and provides technical assistance and training, creates technical and administrative standards, administers non-point pollution control and agricultural cost-sharing programs and assures program accountability at the state and district levels. The SSCC also establishes standards for soil and water management practices on construction, mining and other land disturbance activities associated with development to protect water quality and avoid damage from storm water runoff.

AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION COST-SHARE PROGRAM

FY00 was the second year of the Agricultural Conservation Cost-Share Program (CCSP), which provides technical and financial assistance to implement agricultural conservation projects that enhance water quality. The state's \$2 million in CCSP funding was a companion effort with the \$680,000 federal Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Of the 496 project applications submitted, 93 projects with the greatest anticipated environmental benefits were selected. Of these, 25 projects worth approximately \$1.5 million were approved for livestock management projects and 68 soil and water management projects were allotted \$706,000. This program is expected to yield significant water quality benefits. The majority of the remaining funding underwrote technical assistance through cooperative agreements with NRCS and three conservation districts.

SOIL EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL ACT

The SSCC worked with the New Jersey Association of Conservation Districts to publish revisions to the Standards for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control manual, which outlines erosion control structures and practices for construction sites and provides the technical basis for certification of soil erosion and sediment control plans for virtually all land development projects. Training on the information presented in the manual was provided to all SCD personnel and interested professionals.

During the year, SCDs processed over 4,000 new applications for soil erosion and sediment control measures covering 34,000 acres of land under development. In addition to plan certification, district staff also conducted nearly 70,000 site inspections to assure compliance with plan requirements. In addition, using a general permit developed in cooperation with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), the SSCC and SCDs processed over 700 applications to permit storm water discharge from construction sites involving disturbance of five or more acres of land.

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLANNING

The SSCC coordinated efforts by the Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cumberland, Gloucester, Hunterdon, Mercer and Monmouth County SCDs to develop a variety of watershed-based regional storm water management plans. These efforts were partially funded by \$2.5 million worth of grants from NJDEP and involved data gathering, computer modeling and GIS analyses. In addition, the SSCC approved 14 soil erosion, sediment, nutrient and livestock management demonstration projects in the Cumberland-Gloucester-Salem County watershed management area as part of a continuing series of non-point pollution control demonstration projects.

AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION PLANS DEVELOPED

Land treatment practices installed on more than 9,500 acres of land prevented the loss of 31,000 tons of productive soil. In addition, conservation tillage techniques were used on almost 9,000 acres of farmland to reduce soil loss from wind and water erosion.

URBAN AREA CONSERVATION

Through the Urban Conservation Action Partnership, a federal/state/local pilot program serving Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Morris, Passaic and Union Counties, \$300,000 worth of complex natural resource management projects in urban communities were begun or completed in FY00. Projects included installation of riparian buffers, public access, stream bank stabilization and public education and outreach in Cranford, Dover, Morristown, Newark, Rahway and Westfield.

AGRICULTURAL WATER USE ASSISTANCE

In coordination with the State Drought Emergency Task Force, NJDA provided emergency assistance to farmers faced with critical water supply and irrigation needs during the 1999 drought.

Fish And Seafood Development Program

AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT

NJDA continued its efforts to expand the aquaculture industry in the Garden State by creating a business-friendly and environmentally-sound policy framework for the fledgling industry.

Major components of that framework will include a streamlined license application process, an aquatic organism health management plan, a quality assurance program, and appropriate agricultural management practices.

In addition, a step-by-step manual, *A Guide to Developing Aquaculture Facilities in New Jersey*, was prepared to assist those interested in establishing aquaculture ventures in the state.

DOMESTIC FISH AND SEAFOOD MARKETING

To support and promote the state's fishing industry special seasonal television commercials highlighting the availability, freshness, health benefits and ease of preparation of Jersey Shore fish and seafood were prepared. The ads ran on targeted cooking and lifestyle programs during the summer and winter holidays, prime seafood harvest time for the New Jersey fleet. More than 1,200 consumers called the toll-free number or visited the department's website to request the free Jersey Shore seafood cookbooklet mentioned in the advertisements.

EXPORTING JERSEY SHORE FISH AND SEAFOOD PRODUCTS

The Jersey Shore fish and seafood export marketing program received a \$50,000 grant from the New Jersey Commerce and Economic Growth Commission for additional marketing efforts along the Pacific Rim, especially in the rapidly emerging Chinese market. New Jersey seafood exporters participated in trade shows in Beijing, Hong Kong and Singapore which led three New Jersey companies to develop products tailor-made for those markets. In addition, program staff met with Japanese and Chinese trade missions to develop business opportunities, such as joint ventures and technology transfer in aquaculture, for New Jersey entrepreneurs.

Rural Development Services

The division's rural development program provides services, programs, and special projects that promote the economic growth and vitality of New Jersey agriculture and agribusiness, including technical assistance on construction codes and taxation, agricultural recycling, animal damage control and many other issues.

NURSERY & GREENHOUSE FILM RECYCLING

The fourth year of the department's nursery and greenhouse film recycling program pulled more than 331,000 tons of used film out of the state's solid waste stream, a 15 percent increase over the FY99 program. Since the implementation of the film recycling program in 1996, over a million pounds of used film has been kept out of the state's landfills.

SALES TAX CHANGES

FY00 amendments to the Sales Tax Act significantly affected farmers and businesses that sell goods and services to farmers. Among the major changes created by the amendments are a variety of new farm-related exemptions. For example, farming equipment permanently affixed to a building and used directly and primarily in agricultural production is exempt from sales tax as are manure handling equipment and materials used to construct greenhouses, grain bins or silos.

State Development And Redevelopment Plan

NJDA was an active participant in all aspects of the state planning process including the final stages of the negotiation phase of the cross-acceptance process. Six key indicators will be included in the draft Final Plan covering five areas - economic, environmental, infrastructure, community life and intergovernmental coordination - along with 20 supplemental indicators. The amount of farmland in active production and acres of farmland preserved will continue to be key indicators for the agriculture industry in addition to a new supplemental indicator, final agricultural sector output, a dollar value that reflects the gross value of the agricultural commodities and services produced during a year.



Agricultural Education/FFA

This year NJDA continued to implement the vision and goals for agricultural education which were outlined in the benchmark report "Reinventing Agriculture Education for the Year 2020." One of the key report goals accomplished was the expansion of the State FFA Office to become the Office of Agricultural Education/FFA. Under its revised scope, the office will provide leadership, resources and services to help educators to meet state standards for high quality food, agriculture and environmental science education programs. The office will emphasize classroom/laboratory instruction in high school agricultural courses such as plant and animal science, horticulture, agri-marketing, and natural resources for further career development or science graduation credit.

NJDA supported classroom agricultural education instruction again this year with \$150,000 worth of technology grants which enabled 18 schools to purchase state-of-the-art computers and related technology for agricultural education classrooms. Over the last two years, 38 local agricultural education instruction programs have benefited from this grant program. As a registered professional development provider with the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), NJDA's Office of Agricultural Education/FFA also conducted six in-service training workshops for 83 teachers.

Membership in New Jersey FFA, part of the national organization of students enrolled in agricultural education who are preparing for careers in agriculture, reached an all-time high of 2,152 members statewide. More than 800 FFA members participated in 20 leadership events conducted by NJDA while State FFA officers participated in a variety of leadership development and training activities sponsored by the State FFA Alumni Association and the State FFA Foundation. In addition, five New Jersey students qualified for the American FFA Degree, the highest degree a member can attain.

The state officer team took great pride in presenting Governor Whitman with the Honorary American FFA Degree to mark her support for the agriculture industry, agricultural education and FFA. The team was honored to lead the pledge of allegiance preceding Governor Whitman's State of the State Address, the first time an FFA contingent had been invited to do so.

New Jersey Agricultural Statistics Service

Agricultural statistics are essential for the orderly development of production and marketing decisions by farmers and agribusinesses. The data is used to monitor changes within the agriculture industry and to develop farm policy related to legislative initiatives, agricultural research, rural development and related activities.

The New Jersey Agricultural Statistics Service (NJASS), a cooperative program between NJDA and USDA, is the primary source of statistical information on the agriculture sector in New Jersey. This year approximately 170 statistical surveys were conducted to provide estimates of crops, livestock including poultry and dairy, commodity prices, labor, chemical usage, and related economic farm characteristics. In addition, NJASS published estimates for 10 field crops, 17 vegetable crops, five

fruit and berry crops, and nine livestock animals. As part of a joint federal-state cooperative agreement, these estimates are used in combination with other state estimates to provide official USDA agricultural statistics at the national level.

In FY00, the state's 9,600 farms generated cash receipts totaling \$721.3 million. The nursery/greenhouse/sod industry remained the leading commodity group with cash receipts of \$286.3 million. Other leading categories included vegetables which totaled over \$121.8 million followed by equine at \$108 million and fruit at \$82.4 million. Field crops brought in nearly \$43 million while the dairy industry generated \$42.1 million. Sales of poultry and eggs were valued at \$26.8 million.

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Matching Grants**
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The State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC), chaired by the Secretary of Agriculture, administers New Jersey's Farmland Preservation Program and promotes innovative approaches to maintaining the viability of agriculture. It administers the Right-to-Farm Program, staffs the Transfer of Development Rights Bank and operates the Farm Link Program.

In June 1999, Governor Christie Whitman signed into law the Garden State Preservation Trust Act (GSPTA), which provides the framework for achieving the goal of preserving 500,000 acres of farmland and 500,000 acres of open space over the next decade. The Act established the first stable source of funding for farmland preservation, making \$80 million available for farmland preservation in FY00, a five-fold increase compared to most other years of the program.



Farmland Preservation Program

Farmland is permanently preserved through the sale or donation of development easements. When landowners sell or donate their development easements, they still own their land but give up the right to use it for anything other than agricultural pursuits.

Most farms have entered the Farmland Preservation Program through annual county purchases of development rights, with the SADC providing grants to reimburse counties for 60 to 80 percent of the costs. In calendar year 2000 the SADC was able to hold two county funding rounds for the first time in its history. Thanks to the stable funding provided by the Trust, the SADC funded two preservation rounds in the same calendar year. Through them, the SADC authorized the permanent preservation of 227 farms totaling 19,272 acres.

By the close of FY00, the Farmland Preservation Program permanently preserved 76 farms covering 11,262 acres. This raised program totals of permanently preserved properties to 432 farms covering 64,738 acres since the program's establishment in 1983.

The SADC also purchases farms outright through its fee simple program. The properties then are permanently deed-restricted for agricultural use and resold at auction to private owners. The single largest preservation project in the history of the Farmland Preservation Program - the two-phase acquisition of 1,076 acres of farmland in Gloucester and Salem Counties in late 1999 and early 2000 - took place through the fee simple program. The farmland, located mainly in Elk and Franklin Townships, was purchased by the SADC with cost-sharing assistance from Gloucester County.

The 1,800 acres represented by this property and five others preserved through fee simple purchases were resold in spring 2000 in the largest public offering of preserved farmland in the program's history. Prior to this, the fee simple program had purchased and resold a total of about 3,100 acres since the first such purchase in 1987.

Another unusual acquisition this year was the 276-acre Strang Farm in Alloway and Mannington Townships, Salem County, which includes an historic brick house circa 1864. The public auction of this property in fall 2000 will mark the first time the SADC has sold property with two easements - one that will preserve the land for agriculture and another that will ensure protection of the historic structure on the farm.

New Preservation Opportunities

In addition to providing the first ever stable funding source for farmland preservation, the GSPTA enables the SADC to purchase development easements directly from landowners and provide grants to non-profit organizations to fund up to 50 percent of the costs of farmland preservation projects. Legislation enacted after the creation of the GSPTA allows the program to offer planning incentive grants to encourage counties and municipalities to preserve large blocks of farmland.

Initially, the new direct easement purchase program gave priority to those farms adversely affected by 1999's devastating drought. However, using this new tool, the SADC may also purchase directly from the landowner development easements on superior quality farmland that is likely to be developed or has regional or statewide importance. The SADC's first direct purchase of development easements came mid-year with the acquisition of the development rights on a 237-acre farm in Allamuchy, Warren County.

The inclusion of non-profit organizations as partners in the farmland preservation process was an important aspect of the GSPTA. Just as with other farms preserved under the Farmland Preservation Program, those on which development easements are purchased by non-profit organizations must continue to be maintained for agricultural use. The SADC expected to award its first non-profit grant in early FY01.

The third important new preservation opportunity involved offering planning incentive grants to encourage counties and municipalities to preserve large blocks of farmland through a project area application process. Under this program, rather than applying to preserve farms one by one, towns and counties can identify project areas consisting of multiple farms. The program also encourages the use of innovative funding techniques, such as installment purchases, that enable state and local governments to lock in farmland purchases at current prices while spreading out payments to landowners over a period of several years. The SADC still provides cost-sharing grants of 60 to 80 percent to help fund the purchase of development rights on farms within these project areas.

Eight-Year Retention Programs

Under another program, farmland owners may choose to restrict development for a period of eight years. Although landowners do not receive any funds for doing so, their participation does make them eligible to apply for certain benefits of the permanent program, including cost-sharing grants for up to 50 percent of the cost of soil and water conservation projects on the farms.

In FY00, the SADC approved 37 new farms totaling 2,585 acres for entry into the eight-year program and nine farms totaling 539 acres for renewals. At year's end, a total of 370 farms covering 29,163 acres were protected through eight-year retention commitments.

Soil and Water Cost-Sharing Grants

Landowners in the permanent and eight-year preservation programs are eligible to apply to the SADC for 50 percent cost-sharing grants to fund approved soil and water conservation projects. These projects not only protect soil and water resources, but increase productivity and profitability for the farmer. In FY00, the SADC approved a record \$1.6 million in grants to help fund 135 soil and water conservation projects.



Right-to-Farm Program

The Right to Farm Act was amended in 1998 to provide eligible, responsible farm operations with greater protection from restrictive municipal ordinances and public and private nuisance actions.

This year, 71 right-to-farm cases were referred to the county or state levels of the program. To help county agriculture development boards carry out their responsibilities under the law, the SADC held three workshops to train board members to conduct public hearings on right-to-farm issues.

Farmers who adhere to the SADC's agricultural management practices are entitled to greater protection under the Right to Farm Act. This year the SADC continued its efforts to provide those guidelines with the adoption of new agricultural management practices for land application of food processing by-products; commercial vegetable and tree fruit production; and natural resource conservation. Proposals also were developed for amendments to the commercial vegetable and tree fruit production agricultural management practices.

With a \$70,000 grant from USDA's Farm Service Agency, the SADC initiated an agricultural mediation service, administered through the Right-to-Farm Program, to assist farm operators in settling right-to-farm and credit issues while avoiding time-consuming and costly legal proceedings. The SADC sponsored mediation training for approximately 30 potential mediators and the first case under the new program was successfully mediated in June.

Transfer of Development Rights Bank

New Jersey's Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Bank is located in, but not of, the SADC, which acts as staff to the TDR Board of Directors. The Bank provides financial and other assistance to landowners and to municipalities that enact TDR ordinances. Rules establishing TDR Bank operating procedures - including those for the purchase of development credits - were adopted by the Board of Directors at the end of FY99.

TDR programs are designed to encourage a shift in growth away from agricultural, environmentally-

sensitive or open space regions of a municipality to areas designated to accommodate the growth. Landowners in areas where the land is intended to be kept open received "credits" and are able to sell those credits. Purchasers of these credits may use them to build elsewhere in a designated growth area.

The TDR Bank maintains a statewide registry of land protected through the transfer of development rights. As of June 30, 2000, four properties totaling 563 acres had been preserved through the Lumberton Township, Burlington County, TDR program.

The owners of these properties preserved them by enrolling their development credits with the Township. Developers purchased all of these credits and by the end of the fiscal year had used all but a handful credits to build at higher densities in the Township's designated growth area.

Farm Link Program

The SADC's Farm Link Program matches potential buyers and sellers of farmland. The program is useful for those who want to expand their farms or start farming, and also for retiring farmers or landowners who would like to ensure that their land stays in agricultural production but have no family members who want to continue to farm.

The program also assists non-profit organizations, municipalities and counties in finding buyers for farms that they have preserved and want to resell with permanent deed restrictions. It also serves as a clearinghouse for other types of information, including business contacts and resources.

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