

## Annual Report 1999

### 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.

William N. Brooks, Jr., a Salem County vegetable grower, was elected president and Peter V. Demarest, a Bergen County fruit grower, was named vice president of the State Board of Agriculture in July 1998. Two new Board members, Douglas Zee, Gloucester County, and Thomas A. Brodhecker, Sussex County, representing New Jersey's fruit and grain/forage industries, respectively, took their seats on the Board. Other Board members were Roger J. Ruske, Cumberland County; Bix L. DiMeo, Monmouth County; Abbott W. Lee, Burlington County; and Steven R. Jany, Mercer County.



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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Chief of Staff  
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Agricultural Leadership  
Development Program  
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FY99 was an exciting, productive, yet challenging, year for the long-term viability of the Garden State's agriculture industry, in terms of both goals achieved and ground work laid for continuing programs designed to keep the industry productive and profitable. The department's efforts reflected a thorough analysis of the agriculture industry which generated an action agenda for its future.

The department offered numerous educational, informational and outreach programs that touched the lives of virtually every citizen during the year, such as year-round breakfast and lunch programs for school children and other at-risk populations, livestock and plant health testing and certification programs, soil and water conservation efforts and many others outlined in this report. Throughout the year the department continued its efforts to make New Jerseyans aware of agriculture's economic and aesthetic benefits, not only through its own public information program but through cooperation with other state and federal agencies and agricultural organizations.

Among the year's highlights were the long-awaited establishment of a stable source of funding for the next decade of acquisitions under the state Farmland Preservation Program and national awards for marketing excellence presented to the Jersey Fresh agricultural commodity promotion program.

### **FUTURE FARMLAND PRESERVATION EFFORTS FUNDED**

The year started on a positive note with Governor Christie Whitman's announcement of her determination to preserve at least one million acres of open space, including 500,000 acres of farmland, in the next decade. She proposed that the acquisitions be paid for by the dedication of \$98 million a year from general revenues which would underwrite bond sales to fund the actual acquisition of development easements.

Thanks to her vigorous leadership, in November voters overwhelmingly approved public question number one, authorizing the amendment of New Jersey's constitution to fund the Garden State Open Space Initiative. In addition to funding farmland preservation, the measure also provided for Green Acres acquisitions and restoration of properties of historic importance.

During the course of the campaign for this stable funding source, the Governor joined other state and local officials to celebrate the preservation of the 50,000th acre of farmland by the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC), which administers the Farmland Preservation Program. This historic milestone in the program's history involved the Mason Farm in Readington Township, Hunterdon County.

### **BOLSTERING THE RIGHT TO FARM**

In addition to leading the effort to develop a stable funding mechanism for farmland and open space preservation, Governor Whitman signed legislation amending New Jersey's Right to Farm Act. The amendments strengthened the law's protections for responsible farming practices, established a conflict resolution mechanism beginning at the county level, authorized the SADC to establish acceptable agricultural management practices, and required preparation of agriculture impact statements when state agencies propose regulations.

### **WORKING TO STRENGTHEN THE STATE'S DAIRY INDUSTRY**

Last fiscal year was a difficult one for the Garden State's dairy farmers during which the department established a temporary emergency order setting a six-month minimum price for Class 1 milk and lobbied strenuously in both the State Legislature and in Congress to insure New Jersey's ability to join an expanded Northeast Interstate Dairy Compact. This latter action could not be considered in Congress until the New Jersey Legislature approved the action and legislators in the State of New York had approved their state's entry into the Compact as well.

Therefore, in FY99 the department became an active participant in the States Ratification Committee, a multi-state group that met biweekly throughout the year, not only to keep the issue of Compact membership at the top of the Congressional agenda but also to convince that body to extend the life of the Northeast Dairy Compact beyond the October 1999 deadline stipulated in the federal Farm Bill of 1996. Both houses of Congress were expected to release bills supporting the membership of states not originally party to various dairy compacts, not only in the Northeast but in the central and southern parts of the nation as well.

Even as these critical legislative measures were being debated, the basic formula price (BFP) announced by USDA climbed steeply to a record high of \$17.34 per hundredweight in December only to plummet by 37 percent between January and March, dropping the hundredweight price to a near-record low.

At the same time, the USDA issued its final decision on federal milk marketing order reform, thereby initiating the final phase of the federal order reform process mandated by the 1996 Farm Bill. The proposed restructuring reflected a general trend toward a market-oriented dairy sector. Following Congressional review, USDA planned to conduct referendums among producers in each of the newly consolidated orders with order changes, if approved, taking effect in October 1999.

The end of FY99 brought no resolution to either the dairy compact membership issue or the federal milk marketing order reforms. In fact, 168 Congressmen introduced a measure to overturn USDA's market order reform recommendation and replace it with a totally different pricing plan. There was also widespread disagreement about whether dairy compacts would bring needed stability and equity to the fluid milk industry with processors and consumer groups generally opposing compacts while producers tended to favor them.

Throughout the often contentious debate on these issues in the Northeast and in Washington, NJDA served as a knowledgeable and vocal advocate for New Jersey's dairy farmers.

### **FUNDING CRITICAL AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION EFFORTS**

Agricultural producers submitted more than 1,200 applications for \$15 million worth of conservation

projects in response to a new \$2 million state conservation cost-sharing program for installation of water quality improvement practices. Of the \$2 million, \$1.6 million will be used for direct financial assistance with the remainder slated for technical assistance. An additional \$650,000 in federal funds from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program will also be available for these projects.

In addition, the State Soil Conservation Committee, in conjunction with local conservation districts and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), finalized plans for the implementation of the \$1.3 million Watershed Management Demonstration Project for DEP watershed planning areas 17 and 18 in Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem Counties.

The Upper Cohansey River, Oldmans Creek, Raccoon Creek and Upper Salem River areas are targeted for installation of best management practices which will result in water quality protection or improvement. About 60 percent of the funding will be used to improve livestock management practices with such projects eligible for grants of up to 90 percent of actual cost. Other practices, such as nutrient management and erosion control, will be funded at 75 percent of cost.

### **FEEDING THE HUNGRY WITH 'RESCUED' PRODUCE**

During FY99, its third 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. Produce collected directly from farms totaled 597,000 pounds, including 277,000 pounds of potatoes given to other food recovery programs in the region for distribution. FAH's corps of volunteers continued to grow, as did the number of participating farms, which reached 41 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. Funding is provided 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.

### **SEEING AGRICULTURE UP CLOSE**

The New Jersey Agricultural Society's annual Farm Tour for Legislators highlighted Gloucester County this year. The tour focused on how New Jersey agriculture is positioning itself to compete in the global economy, the future of the industry and the young people who are committed to farming in New Jersey, new technology used in farming and the capital investment required to remain competitive. This year's event was co-sponsored by NJDA, the New Jersey Agricultural Society and the Gloucester County Board of Freeholders.

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Central Services  
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Fiscal Services  
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Human Resources  
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### ADMINISTRATION

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Division Director  
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Information  
Technology  
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### HUMAN RESOURCES

The Human Resources office maintained programs essential to support the department's personnel objectives, such as workforce planning, classification, compensation, recruitment, salary and benefit administration, awards programs, employee relations and contract administration, performance assessment reviews, personnel policy and procedures, development and training coordination.

As of June 30, 1999, the department employed 342 people including 244 full-time employees and 98 seasonal employees.

### FISCAL SERVICES

The department's FY 1999 adjusted budget for direct state services was \$9,296,000 with grants-in-aid funding of \$2,499,000. State aid for the year amounted to \$7,004,000 while \$156,000 in capital funding enabled the department to upgrade the HVAC system at the Philip Alampi Beneficial Insect Laboratory in Ewing.

Dedicated funding showed a small decrease from the previous fiscal year while federal funding showed a modest increase due to increases in program support.

The fiscal section continued to monitor compliance with all applicable state statutes and regulations and insured that financial transactions were accurate and reasonable and that sufficient internal controls were in place throughout the department.

### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

During FY99 the information technology section undertook a number of projects designed to help the department keep pace with the rapidly changing nature of information processing technology. Key among these were the completion of remediation efforts associated with making the department's major information systems Y2K compliant.

In addition, a new Geographic Information System server was installed along with related peripherals to provide greater program and analytical capabilities for the department's soil and water conservation and farmland preservation programs.

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 managers deliver essential programs and services to the state's agriculture industry and to the non-farm constituency the department serves.

### DEPARTMENT FUNDING

| Source of Funds            | Amount Appropriated<br>FY 1999 | Amount Appropriated<br>FY 1998 |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>General State Funds</b> |                                |                                |
| Direct State Services      | \$ 9,296,000                   | \$ 9,080,000                   |
| Grants-In-Aid              | 2,499,000                      | 1,543,000                      |
| State Aid                  | 7,004,000                      | 7,004,000                      |
| Capital Construction       | 156,000                        | 415,000                        |
| <b>Dedicated Funds</b>     |                                |                                |
| Commodity Distribution     | 1,513,000                      | 1,512,000                      |
| Commodity/Equine Promotion | 6,612,000                      | 7,230,000                      |
| Miscellaneous              | 1,657,000                      | 1,910,000                      |
| Federal Funds              | 194,177,000                    | 178,161,000                    |
| <b>TOTAL</b>               | <b>\$222,914,000</b>           | <b>\$206,855,000</b>           |

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Diagnostic Laboratory  
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Disease Control  
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### ANIMAL HEALTH

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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. As part of its regular operations throughout the year, the Division of Animal Health conducts epidemiological investigations of diseases and drug residues, operates an animal health diagnostic laboratory, manages a contagious equine metritis quarantine facility for imported horses, and supports a vigorous Johne's disease control effort.

### EASTERN EQUINE ENCEPHALITIS

1999 saw the decade's highest incidence of Eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) in the Garden State, brought about by the convergence of numerous factors - a mild winter, an early northward wild bird migration, a wet spring and a burgeoning mosquito population. The division worked closely with the veterinary community and horse and poultry owners to alert them to the prevalence of this insect-borne disease and the availability of vaccines which could prevent EEE fatalities in equine. By the time mosquito season had ended, EEE had claimed nine equine and infected several bird flocks around the state. The disease also killed more than a dozen emu in Cumberland County, as well as quail on an Atlantic County farm, pheasant on farms in Ocean and Warren Counties, and a racing pigeon in Middlesex County.

### EQUINE INFECTIOUS ANEMIA

Equine infectious anemia (EIA), a viral disease transmitted by biting insects and contaminated needles, debilitates the immune system and eventually causes death. With no vaccine to prevent EIA infection, the discovery of an EIA case this year was troubling. The division's investigation revealed that the infected horse had been brought in after purchase out of state. The division worked closely with veterinary officials in the state of origin to insure that the disease had not spread to other horses in the same shipment. Fortunately, the remainder of the imported horses proved to be free of the disease.

### CONTAGIOUS EQUINE METRITIS

New Jersey is one of 18 states approved by the USDA to quarantine and test stallions and mares imported from countries known to be endemic for contagious equine metritis, a serious equine venereal disease not found in the United States. This year the facility in Long Valley housed 31 mares and seven stallions during their required quarantine and testing period. Many of the horses come to the Garden State from Germany, the Netherlands, Ireland and Great Britain and will eventually be used for breeding. Importing these valuable horses safely into the United States improves the bloodlines of these breeds and frequently leads to the birth of outstanding equine athletes who stand out in both domestic and foreign competitions.

### EQUINE HERPES VIRUS

The last unusual equine health issue that faced NJDA this year required the Division of Animal Health to assist an equine veterinarian who was trying to determine the cause of a neurological disease in five horses at a stable in Bergen County. The symptoms exhibited, including lack of coordination and severe weakness of the hind limbs, could have had many causes. Ultimately, the animal health laboratory was able to diagnose the disease as equine herpes virus for which there is no effective vaccine. These were the only reported cases of the disease in the Garden State this year.

### **JOHNE'S DISEASE**

NJDA's three-year-old voluntary Johne's disease control program for New Jersey dairy farmers focused this year primarily on herd testing and identification of Johne's-positive animals using a blood test and a fecal culture, both of which are processed in the department's laboratory. More than 20 percent of the state's dairy herds have participated in the Johne's control program. Because the causative bacteria results in severe diarrhea, weight loss and eventual death, 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.

A secondary, but equally important, focus is the development of an individual herd plan for each participating dairy producer based on a farm walk-through by Rutgers Cooperative Extension and NJDA personnel. The walk-through can help pinpoint high-risk practices for Johne's transmission, such as inadequate manure management, and enable dairymen to incorporate improvements into the herd plan. Moreover, dairy producers participating in the NJDA program will have a head start on compliance with USDA's Johne's control program guidelines which are expected within the next few years. In addition, the positive herd management changes dairy farmers institute for Johne's control also help them control other important diseases such as E. coli and salmonella.

### **RABIES**

Although this region of the United States has been alert to the potential for more frequent cases of rabies in wild animals and domestic pets, the disease is not generally associated with livestock. However, the vulnerability of farm animals to the disease was underscored this year when the division's animal health laboratory was called upon by the New Jersey Department of Health & Senior Services to confirm a suspected case of rabies in a Holstein heifer yearling from Warren County. This was the only confirmed case of rabies documented in New Jersey's livestock herds this year.

### **AVIAN INFLUENZA**

Because of the devastation avian influenza (AI) virus can cause to the state's poultry industry, the division continued its annual monitoring visits to the live-kill poultry markets in the tri-state area to determine which strain of the AI virus is circulating in the bird population. This year, following USDA's official recognition of the markets as indicators, rather than sources, of AI, the Division of Animal Health brought together officials from Delaware, Pennsylvania and New York to begin the process of establishing uniform rules and procedures for live-kill poultry markets to minimize the occurrence of AI.

During the fall, the discovery of AI at a game poultry farm in Somerset County led to a more conservative, yet very effective, alternative to depopulation. The affected farm raised 60,000 pheasants and quail sold for slaughter. Since USDA indemnity funds for AI were scarce and the market for the expensive birds was unique, the Division of Animal Health devised a system to bring the birds out of quarantine. The process entailed placing sentinel birds free of the AI virus in strategic areas near the remaining game birds, with the assumption that, if the AI virus were still present, the sentinel birds would succumb and test positive. In this case, test results were negative. With the continuing shortage of federal indemnity funds to cover AI losses, the division's method of "testing" farms out of quarantine should prove to be an economical way to protect poultry farmers in the Garden State.

## 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.

Bovine practitioners in New Jersey rely on the laboratory for tests such as bovine viral diarrhea, parainfluenza, 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.

In FY99, the laboratory added a diagnostic test for leptospirosis, a bacterial disease of both large and small animals. The laboratory also successfully completed required certification testing administered by the National Veterinary Services Laboratories. Such regulatory test certifications included EIA, bluetongue and pseudorabies. Through these and other services, the laboratory supports New Jersey's livestock industry by providing private veterinarians with an in-state source of disease testing that provides fast, accurate, convenient and economical animal health testing services.

In addition to its regular programs to safeguard the health of New Jersey's livestock, the division also focused this year on a variety of serious livestock diseases with the potential for disastrous economic impact on the industry: Eastern equine encephalitis and equine infectious anemia, both spread by insects, and avian influenza, a recurring problem for the region. In addition, the division dealt with isolated cases of both rabies and equine herpes virus.

## OUTREACH EFFORTS

The Division of Animal Health played an important part in a variety of industry outreach efforts this year, including:

- founding a national organization, the Food Recovery and Recycling Association of North America, which will work to advance commercial food waste recycling for livestock consumption and help interested state, federal and private organizations and agencies address some areas of this multi-faceted issue;
- technical assistance that led to the start of construction in New Jersey of a factory to turn food waste into a pelletized pet food additive. This will be the first plant of its kind in the United States;
- participation in the Northeast Regional Dairy Quality Management Program at Cornell University where dairy industry stakeholders, veterinarians and extension specialists proposed a framework for a uniform dairy quality management program in the Northeast. Such a uniform program would help to standardize milk production practices throughout the region. Uniform management practices would center around over-all biosecurity measures and practices to prevent common diseases of dairy cattle, including, but not limited to, Johne's disease, mastitis, viral diseases, and E. coli;
- collaboration with the New Jersey Association of Equine Practitioners to provide New Jersey horse owners and horse clubs with a biannual newsletter on current health and regulatory issues affecting the horse industry;
- a cooperative effort with the New Jersey Department of Health & Senior Services to establish and implement a statewide bioterrorism emergency plan.

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Dairy Enforcement  
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Dairy Licensing and Bonding  
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Milk Pricing Regulations  
(609) 292-5648

Agricultural Chemistry  
(609) 984-2222

DAIRY  
AND  
COMMODITY  
REGULATION

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Division Director  
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Commodity Inspection  
and Grading  
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Commodity Licensing  
and Bonding  
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Fruit and Vegetable  
Grading  
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Jersey Fresh Quality  
Grading Program  
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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 oversees the Jersey Fresh Quality Grading Program and the commodity inspection and grading programs to help insure 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 division. In FY99, the state's 186 commercial and six institutional dairy farms produced just over 256 million pounds of milk valued at \$43.3 million. New Jersey dairy farmers also produced heifers, cull cows, calves, grain, hay and other agricultural items, including breeding supplies such as calf 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. To improve both the short- and long-term viability of this important segment of the agriculture industry, the division continued to offer a variety of programs aimed at whole herd health and management, including Johne's disease and mastitis control, financial management training, nutrient and crop management, and waste management.

In FY99, in addition to administering the over-order premium, the department provided staff support and a \$100,000 grant to the New Jersey Farm Bureau for the Dairy Self-Help Program for milk producers. The effort is a continuation of the Garden State Milk Quality Initiative begun in 1995 as a joint effort with Rutgers Cooperative Extension to help dairy farmers improve milk production and quality.

By the third quarter of FY99, 54 dairy farmers, approximately 28 percent of New Jersey's dairy producers, and four regional dairy cooperatives - National Farmers Organization, DairyLea, Land O'Lakes and Dairy Farmers of America - were enrolled in the Garden State Milk Quality Program. In addition, six milk processing plants and nine milk haulers were cooperating with participating producers.

Under the program, bulk tank samples from participating farms were collected and cultured. Average somatic cell counts (SCC), indicators of milk quality and herd productivity, were taken for each herd since high SCC suggests less than optimum quality and herd productivity. Results that suggest a herd health problem were followed up with samples from each cow.

Since the program's inception, average SCC among herds in the program has continued to drop. Milk quality information is being provided to nine veterinarians within the state while two veterinary consultants in Maryland and Pennsylvania also receive monthly management reports pertaining to their clients in New Jersey.

Under this year's Dairy Self-Help Program, 10 producers enrolled, joining the 18 producers who completed in-depth analyses of net worth, cost of production and cash flow. Several producers used the data to obtain new financing for herd expansion and capital improvements such as new barns, milking parlors and machinery. The program will be expanded during 1999-2000.

## **Dairy Licensing, Bonding and Enforcement**

In keeping with the mandate to maintain competition among New Jersey milk marketers, the division licensed 9,529 milk dealers, milk processing plants and retail stores and collected \$368,884 in fees and penalties during FY99. Penalties collected from stores and dealers for a variety of infractions totaled \$11,049 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 2,500 retail outlets to insure that they were licensed and adhering to the milk control laws and regulations, especially with regard to false or misleading advertisements.

## **Data Collection and Information Dissemination**

In order to assess activities in the marketplace and to provide information for program and performance analysis, the department collects, processes and disseminates information on prices received by dairy farmers, milk production, milk sales, supermarket milk prices and other pertinent market data.

## **Dairy Organizations and Activities**

The department continued to provide administrative support for the Garden State Milk Council and the Dairy of Distinction Program. Division employees helped assess candidates for the "Dairy of Distinction" award, assisted in preparation of the Council's publication, staffed the Council at dairy industry meetings, and served as guest speakers at schools around the state to acquaint New Jersey youngsters with the state's dairy industry.

## **Dairy of Distinction Honors Awarded**

Lazy Dairy Farms, operated by George Armbrecht and Laura Riley, received the Garden State Milk Council's Dairy of Distinction Award this year. The farm is located in Blairstown, Warren County. The Dairy of Distinction award is given annually to those dairy operations that are deemed the best representatives of the industry by virtue of general farm maintenance, farm efficiency, creativity, dedication and achievement in a rapidly changing marketplace.

## **COMMODITY REGULATION**

Through NJDA's inspection and grading programs, growers obtain the certificates they need to sell produce and plants to other states and nations. The Jersey Fresh Quality Grading Program and the commodity inspection and grading programs are among those offered by the Division of Dairy and Commodity Regulation to help insure a constant supply of high quality, properly labeled fruits, vegetables, eggs, poultry, red meat, fish and seafood products for consumers, in New Jersey, throughout the nation and around the world.

## **Jersey Fresh Quality Grading Program**

The Jersey Fresh Quality Grading Program is a voluntary program designed to increase the sales of New Jersey's more than 70 agricultural products, including fruits, vegetables, salad mixes, fresh herbs, shell eggs and cut flowers. 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. The use of the Jersey Fresh logo in any manner requires a license from the Quality Grading Program.

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. In addition, the Jersey Fresh Quality Grading Program helps Garden State growers stand out in an increasingly competitive regional and national marketplace.

In FY99 224 growers enjoyed the economic benefits of joining the program, packing nearly 132 million pounds of product under the Quality Grading Program, a two percent increase over last year.

## **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 a time of shrinking state resources, this kind of self-sustaining program is particularly important. In FY99, the program collected over \$1.7 million in fees for services rendered.

Inspections performed for the poultry industry certified 1,167,456 cases of shell eggs as Grade A while 32,127,406 pounds of poultry also met specified standards. Over 442 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 supplied graders for voluntary grading and

inspection of an additional 5,472 thirty-dozen cases of shell eggs and 2,811,982 pounds of poultry.

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 39,024,500 pounds of produce, including most fruits and vegetables grown commercially in New Jersey, to insure that it met specific standards. Terminal market inspections were also performed on 64,943,200 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables received from other growing areas.

Inspections and certifications at two packing sheds enabled growers to ship over 2.4 million pounds of blueberries to Canada, a \$1.6 million addition to New Jersey's agricultural economy. Tomato processing facilities also contracted with the department for grading of nearly 38,651,780 pounds of tomatoes to insure 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, including plant sanitation surveys, product quality grading and export certification. During FY99, 10,637,747 million pounds of fresh, frozen and canned fish were certified and inspected at the wholesale level.

The Bureau of Commodity Inspection and Grading continued to maintain contact with the state Office of Consumer Protection and the Office of the Regional Director for the federal Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act in order to aid in providing timely and proper responses to misbranding complaints.

### **Commodity Licensing and Bonding**

Under the commodity licensing and bonding program, the department 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 122 produce dealers; 23 hay, grain and straw dealers; 14 shell egg dealers; and two live poultry dealers. Bonds totaling \$4,140,707 were received and posted by the division.

### **Agricultural Chemistry**

It is estimated that 452,971 tons of animal feed, over 229,033 tons of fertilizers and 196,570 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, 824 feed, fertilizer and lime manufacturers and distributors registered with the division. Field inspections covered 4,383 lots of feeds, fertilizers and liming materials to determine compliance with labeled guarantees. Of the 310 feed samples and 427 fertilizer samples collected for laboratory analysis, just over two percent of the feed samples and 10 percent of the fertilizer samples failed to meet the minimum nutrient levels stated on their labels. Of the 30 liming materials sampled, three failed to meet the nutrient 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 \$81,120 in registration fees and \$106,546 in tonnage inspection fees was collected. In addition, penalties totaling \$6,054 were assessed for fertilizer content violations, of which \$1,522 was refunded to farmers and \$4,532 was transmitted to the State Treasury.

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Child Nutrition  
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Equine Programs  
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Export Market  
Development  
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Fairs and Shows  
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### MARKETS

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

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.

### MARKET DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION

Getting consumers in the Garden State and elsewhere along the Eastern Seaboard from Virginia to Canada to buy the many products produced on New Jersey farms is the goal of the nationally-known Jersey Fresh advertising and promotional program. With FY99's \$1.16 million budget, the Jersey Fresh message was carried on radio, on cable and network television and in consumer, business and trade publications that reached more than 46 million listeners, viewers and readers.

From April through October, three 30-second seasonal Jersey Fresh television commercials and 10 commodity-specific infomercials for dairy products, nursery/greenhouse products, spring greens, blueberries, sweet corn, peppers, herbs, peaches, tomatoes and squash. The ads featured Governor Christie Whitman and Secretary Art Brown proclaiming "Jersey Fresh and You, Perfect Together."

At more than 500 of their favorite markets throughout the tri-state area, consumers could identify Jersey Fresh farm products through price cards, banners, bin wrap, stickers and posters. In addition to these traditional, colorful point-of-purchase items, produce buyers for major retail chains also received a variety of advertising materials to support Jersey Fresh promotions in their stores throughout the growing season, including, for the second year, the popular graphics packages on CD for use in print ads. The innovative CDs gave retailers a choice of several configurations of the Jersey Fresh logo, as well as product pictures, retail information, and recipe suggestions.

In addition, the Jersey Fresh program sponsored weekend traffic reports for the shore areas of New Jersey. On-air announcers reminded listeners of Jersey Fresh products in season and encouraged them to stop at farm markets on the way home from the shore to stock up on fresh, locally-grown fruits and vegetables.

Seventy New Jersey agricultural organizations shared \$150,000 in Jersey Fresh matching grants that enabled the organizations to tailor the existing Jersey Fresh program to meet their specific marketing needs. Combined with a dollar for dollar match, this program pumped well over \$300,000 additional dollars into the Jersey Fresh effort.



Special events played an important role in presenting Jersey Fresh to consumers in different and interesting ways, ranging from the 15th annual Vineland Jersey Fresh Festival in Cumberland County to regional festivals, county fairs, wine tastings and food shows around the state.

The department also worked closely with community organizations in the state's urban areas to further the development of 40 farmers' markets. Held several times a week, the markets attracted farmers who welcomed the additional marketing opportunities and enthusiastic customers who appreciated the friendly, informal outlets for locally-grown produce in their towns.

Many of the vendors at the urban farmers' markets joined their counterparts around the state in the fourth year of the WIC/Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP). A joint venture between NJDA, the state Department of Health and Senior Services and USDA, the FMNP distributed \$300,000 worth of FMNP checks to over 10,000 Head Start Children, pregnant or nursing women residing in the Governor's nine targeted cities. These checks were redeemed for fresh fruits and vegetables at more than 100 authorized roadside markets and 30 farmers' markets throughout the state. This important program offers another venue for the sale of farm products while giving thousands of nutritionally at-risk children and women a convenient, affordable way to add fresh fruits and vegetables in their diets.

The Departments of Agriculture and Health and Senior Services also continued their partnership with the state 5-A-Day Coalition. Made up from representatives of both departments as well as individuals from the health field and retail industry, this coalition participates in a variety of events to underscore for New Jersey residents the important nutritional benefits of eating more fruits and vegetables.



### **Export Development**

The department's successful international trade development program continued to support the export and promotion of New Jersey's agricultural products and processed foods in many nations around the world. Through a multi-tiered export education and resource support network, NJDA helps companies with every facet of their export experience, from their first export contact to foreign sales maintenance.

Participation in both domestic and international trade shows is key to the development and maintenance of any company's successful export program. Accordingly, NJDA works closely with state, federal and regional export development agencies to encourage and underwrite exhibits at such

venues for New Jersey food companies and agricultural producers.

With over \$25 million worth of fruits and vegetables shipped from Garden State farms to Canada every year, our northern neighbor ranks as the single largest export market for New Jersey farm products. In an effort to maintain and expand that significant market, this year NJDA sponsored a Jersey Fresh exhibit at the Canadian Produce Marketing Association show in Quebec City. Visits to Canada's wholesale and retail produce industry promoted New Jersey's many fruits and vegetables during the growing season.

NJDA helped 16 New Jersey companies exhibit at the 1999 U.S. Food Export Showcase in Chicago, Illinois, in the spring. The show is the country's largest supermarket trade exposition as well as America's largest international trade show for food and agricultural products. More than 30,000 domestic supermarket buyers and 6,000 foreign buyers visited companies in the New Jersey pavilion during the three-day event.

In addition, NJDA coordinated the participation of 10 food processors and distributors in the ANUGA trade show in Cologne, Germany, this year. ANUGA is the world's largest international food show where 6,000 exhibitors attracted more than 200,000 international buyers.

As a member state of the Eastern United States Agricultural and Food Export Council, NJDA distributed \$584,900 in federal Market Access Program (MAP) export development grants to 16 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 over the last two years have reported an average increase of over \$800,000 per company in international sales.

### **Market News**

The Market News Service, a federal-state cooperative venture, provides a readily accessible source of unbiased and reliable agricultural market information for the state's growers and buyers. Because access to more and better marketing information helps New Jersey growers to be more competitive, the Market News Service collects price and supply information from the Vineland Produce Auction by laptop computer. This data is then transmitted to the Bridgeton Market News Office. From there, the information goes out to New Jersey growers, farm marketers and county agents via fax, e-mail and telephone. These reports, along with 700 other USDA market news reports, are also available at [www.ams.usda.gov/marketnews.htm](http://www.ams.usda.gov/marketnews.htm). Reports cover local, regional, national and even international markets for fruits, vegetables, grain, livestock, poultry, eggs, dairy, tobacco, cotton and specialty crops.

### **Fairs and Shows**

The 21 agricultural fairs, certified as such by the NJDA, hosted over 1.5 million visitors in FY99. Residents of the Garden State and tourists from around the country always enjoy the variety of competitions, food, amusements and countless agricultural displays offered. Agriculture, agribusiness and agriculture education play an important part in each fair. NJDA continues to offer organizers technical assistance as well as special exhibits and promotional materials.

## **EQUINE PROGRAMS**

### **Horse Breeding and Development**



The Horse Breeding and Development Program and the New Jersey Equine Advisory Board (EAB) supports the state's ever-popular pleasure horse industry through a variety of programs. The EAB, a unit of NJDA, is composed of 64 members

representing 29 different breed group organizations plus additional agricultural interests. Among the activities sponsored during the year are breeder incentive awards, youth programs, educational clinics, Girl and Boy Scout badge programs, and a variety of other events designed to enhance the growth of the entire equine industry.

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 1999, \$118,500 was distributed to owners and breeders of pleasure horses in the Garden State through the program.

The EAB is cooperating with numerous other state, national and international organizations in the preparations for the World Singles Driving Championships in Gladstone in October of 2000. During this five-day international event, the Board will present the largest educational endeavor it has ever undertaken in "Scouting Around the World." At least 25 countries are expected to participate in the event. The youth program developed by NJDA and the EAB will include information about horses, agriculture and scouting programs in each country.

### **Horse Park of New Jersey**

The 147-acre Horse Park of New Jersey at Stone Tavern in Monmouth County is the result of years of cooperative effort involving the horse industry, state government and private not-for-profit organizations. The Horse Park of New Jersey, Inc., is a not-for-profit entity which operates the Horse Park under contract with NJDA.

In FY99, the Park marked its eleventh year of operation with 78 days of equine activities beginning in mid-March and continuing through November. In its short history, the Park has hosted 1.4 million visitors and competitors and developed into one of the area's most important economic assets.

Future plans include the continued development of the outside hunt course, the event course, and the carriage dressage fields. The construction of a covered work area, as outlined in the master plan, is also part of the plans for 1999-2000.

### **New Jersey Sire Stakes**

New Jersey sired Standardbreds continued to shine during the 1998 and 1999 racing seasons with top performers racing all over the world. New Jersey sired performers were prominent in nearly every division of the U.S. Trotting Association's (USTA) Horse of the Year balloting. The total value of the New Jersey Sire Stakes and related programs was \$9,420,116, a decline of five percent from the previous year.

MUSCLES YANKEE won the million-dollar Hambletonian Stake at The Meadowlands, becoming the third New Jersey bred in a row to capture the most prestigious trotting event in the world. He went on to win nine of 12 starts, earned over \$1.2 million for the year and was named USTA "Three-Year-Old Trotter of the Year." He is now standing at stud at Perretti Farms in Cream Ridge.

Another top three-year-old on the pacing side was ARTISCAPE who won 13 of 18 starts and \$973,960 for the year and was named "Three-Year-Old Pacer of the Year," edging out SHADY CHARACTER, another Jersey bred who won two legs of the pacing Triple Crown. ARTISCAPE is also standing at stud at Perretti Farms in Cream Ridge.

Other New Jersey bred stars were RUM BOOGIE, "Two-Year-Old Filly Trotter of the Year"; MATTERONI, "Two-Year-Old Filly Pacer of the Year"; and GALLERIA, "Three-Year-Old Filly Pacer of the Year." RUM BOOGIE is a daughter of VALLEY VICTORY who also sired MUSCLES YANKEE. MATTERONI was sired by MATTS SCOOTER who stands at Perretti Farms and GALLERIA was sired by ARTSPPLACE.

The number of mares bred to New Jersey stallions rebounded in 1998 after showing steady declines in recent years which mirrored national trends. The number of mares bred to New Jersey stallions went from 1,854 in 1997 to 2,144 in 1998. Mares bred through intrastate semen transportation also showed an increase, going from 566 in 1997 to 658 in 1998.

New Jersey sired yearlings were still highly sought after at the fall yearling sales with 893 individuals selling for a total of \$21,550,700, and averaging \$24,133. As in past years, the trotter VALLEY VICTORY led the way with 30 yearlings averaging \$108,467 each. ARTSPLACE was the top pacing sire with 85 yearlings averaging \$52,018 each.

A total of 31 yearlings sold for \$150,000 or more at public auction and 17 of those were New Jersey sired including the VALLEY VICTORY colt BERNDT HANOVER who brought \$400,000. The top pacing yearling of 1998 was also a New Jersey bred, the ARTSPLACE colt THISOLDARTOFMINE who sold for \$300,000. Twenty other New Jersey sired yearlings sold for \$100,000 or more.

### **FOOD DISTRIBUTION PROGRAMS**

NJDA administers the federally-sponsored donated commodity distribution program, through which a variety of donated foods reach over 700 eligible school districts, summer feeding programs, institutions, and needy populations each month. NJDA took full advantage of all available foods by accepting New Jersey's fair-share entitlement, plus substantial volumes of bonus foods offered, once again exceeding its acceptance goals for all program categories serviced.

NJDA accepted over 27 million pounds of USDA foods with a commercial value of almost \$16 million for use in a variety of feeding programs other than The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). These commodities were particularly important to the school lunch program, which provided monthly allocations of frozen, canned and dry foods to more than 2,200 schools throughout New Jersey feeding over 500,000 students daily.

The department also worked with more than 28 commercial food processors to process over four million pounds of the total foods offered and accepted 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 raw commodities and help local school districts reduce preparation time and purchase costs.

The commercial conversion of these donated federal foods was also enhanced through the department's Processor Selection System, which allowed recipient school districts to select commodities to be processed into oven-ready products before the start of the new school year, thus enabling both processors and schools to better utilize donated commodities and at the same time encouraging competitive pricing and improving delivery time while better insuring product consistency.

#### **The Emergency Food Assistance Program**

During FY99, TEFAP benefited from federal program budget increases, receiving more than 8.5 million pounds of foods, an increase of nearly 12 percent over last year. These foods reached food banks, hot meal sites, and pantry feeding sites, which served more than 225,000 of the state's neediest citizens. Typical of the 40 different federally-donated foods were canned fruits and vegetables, peanut butter, rice, instant dry milk, pasta, cereal, fruit juice and frozen beef.

In addition, for the fourth consecutive year, NJDA participated in a \$400,000 fresh fruit and vegetable purchase through the federal Department of Defense. The produce, much of which was locally grown by New Jersey farmers, was used in New Jersey's School Lunch Program.

## Child Nutrition Programs

The first state agriculture department in the nation to house child nutrition programs, NJDA administered more than \$189 million in federal and state funds to the various Bureau of Child Nutrition (BCN) programs. Over 155 million meals and supplements were served by participating sponsors statewide in FY99.

BCN operates six child nutrition programs in 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. These six programs are the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Special Milk Program, Child and Adult Care Feeding Program, the Summer Food Service Program and the After School Snack Program.

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## Annual Report 1999

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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. Through its detection, inspection, eradication and control programs, the division helps to insure that farmers and others who buy and sell plants and plant products enjoy high quality, pest-free products.

The division's programs certify plant stock for interstate and international shipments, protect forested communities from defoliation and tree loss caused by the gypsy moth, inspect honeybees for harmful bee diseases and pests, regulate the quality of plant seeds, and produce and release beneficial insects to reduce crop and environmental damage and decrease dependence on chemical pesticides.

### BIOLOGICAL PEST CONTROL

Under the department's biological control program, exotic and native beneficial insects are raised for release into the field to control pests of forests, fruits, vegetables, ornamental plants, field and forage crops. The release of beneficial insects reduces the need for pesticides, thereby minimizing the amount of pesticide residue in the environment and delaying pest resistance to costly pesticides. Fewer pesticide applications in the field also allows the native population of beneficial insects to increase, putting more pressure on the pest population.

This year, the division conducted eight biological control programs, including gypsy moth parasite evaluations, alfalfa weevil parasite evaluations, and an ongoing hemlock woolly adelgid impact study in New Jersey's forests.

Four of these programs 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.

The four programs which released laboratory-raised beneficial insects included beneficial wasps that attack the Mexican bean beetle, a pest which feeds on soybean and snap bean foliage; a new predatory beetle which feeds on the hemlock woolly adelgid, a pest that is devastating native hemlocks in the state; a predatory beetle and two parasitoids which feed on euonymus scale, a pest of many varieties of the ornamental euonymus shrub; and two beetles which feed on purple loosestrife, an aggressive wetland plant which is displacing native plants.

During the 1998 growing season, 133,000 acres of soybeans were produced by New Jersey farmers. Approximately 106,400 of those acres (80 percent) are susceptible to feeding by the Mexican bean beetle. Small beneficial wasps which cannot withstand New Jersey winters are raised in the laboratory and released into the field each summer to kill the Mexican bean beetle larvae.

The pest population has been so significantly reduced by the parasite release program that no pesticide applications were required on any soybean acreage to control the Mexican bean beetle in 1998. This resulted in estimated savings to growers of \$452,200. No grower participating in NJDA's biological control program has had to spray for the Mexican bean beetle since 1985.

Since 1988, the division has been involved with an impact study of the hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA), a devastating pest that has heavily infested almost half of the 26,000 acres of natural hemlock stands in the state. Some study sites show mortality rates of more than 80 percent. While chemical control of the pest is relatively easy in small trees found in ornamental plantings and nurseries, it is impossible to treat most native hemlock stands due to site inaccessibility and the dense vegetation canopy over the trees.

After many years of research by NJDA and foreign exploration by USDA's Forest Service for beneficial insects that prey on this Asian pest, a biological control program focusing on three ladybug species from Japan and China is under evaluation at several locations in the Northeast. In FY99 in cooperation with USDA, NJDA continued an HWA biological control program that started three years ago with the establishment of a laboratory colony of one of the potential predators, *P. tsugae*. Observations at many of New Jersey's release sites have verified field colonization and host feeding by the beetles. The beetle has proven its ability to overwinter in the Garden State and to travel as far as 300 feet from a release tree.

As part of the agreement with USDA, the division supplied beetles for field release and as laboratory starter colonies to Massachusetts, New York, Rhode Island, Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and North Carolina.

An exotic freshwater wetland plant, purple loosestrife, is displacing the native flora of marshes around the country and threatening many animals which depend on those native plants for food and shelter. Large stands of this plant can reduce groundwater recharge, decrease water storage capacity of a wetland, reduce a marsh's ability to attenuate floods, reduce open water space and species diversity, and jeopardize the health and vitality of the ecosystem. Until recently the only methods of control were expensive and temporary and impacted non-target species.

USDA research of the plant's native European habitat have found four predatory insect species - two leaf-feeding beetles, a root-mining weevil and a flower weevil - which have been released in several states. As part of a cooperative program with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Fish and Wildlife, NJDA raised the two leaf feeders and released more than 91,000 this fiscal year at 13 sites. The beetles appeared to have overwintered at most of the sites.

Euonymus scale is a serious pest of ornamental plants in New Jersey and has been the subject of study for several years. One type of ladybug, introduced during the mid 1980s, is established and can be observed on infested euonymus plants throughout the state, but its ability to control the pest seems to be limited to large bushes, trees and hedges. Three additional beneficial insects, two parasitic wasps and a tiny predatory beetle, are currently being laboratory-reared for release against euonymus scale in the landscape. The wasps have been released at 31 sites in 11 counties since 1993 with only one recovery. Work is under way to better understand why the parasites have not become established. The beetle was released in 12 counties this year and observations at many of the release sites have verified its ability to colonize on both small and large euonymus plants and reduce scale populations. Dispersal of the beetles from established colonies in those counties to new sites has been documented. The beetle was released in 50 additional sites in FY99.

## PEST SURVEYS

## Nursery Inspection

All nursery stock sold in New Jersey or exported to other states or countries must be free of injurious pests to insure that ornamental plants purchased by consumers are healthy and do not contain pests that could spread to other plants. To meet this standard, in FY99 NJDA's nursery inspection staff inspected 14,597 acres in 944 nurseries to certify them free from dangerous insects and diseases. The 672 active pest infestations found by inspectors were treated. Among the most frequently observed pests were bagworm, calico scale, juniper scale, pine tip/shoot moth, azalea and rhododendron lacebug, Cooley spruce gall adelgid, and wax scale.

In addition, a total of 762 garden centers and landscape firms were certified as plant dealers for 1999, an increase of more than five percent over last year.

The division's inspectors also issued 530 state and 58 federal phytosanitary certificates enabling export of plants and plant material to other states or countries. This 2.6 percent increase over last year was directly related to internet marketing.

## Vegetable Transplant Inspection

Division staff inspected approximately 9.15 million vegetable transplants shipped into the state for use by New Jersey farmers in the spring of 1999, a 25 percent increase over the number of transplants inspected in FY98. The predominant crops inspected were pepper, leek, escarole and endive transplants but cabbage, lettuce and Swiss chard transplants were done as well. Because plant quality was very good, no lots were rejected for disease or insect problems. These inspections insure compliance with state regulations which require that only vegetable plants that are certified to be free of plant pests be permitted entry into New Jersey.

## CAPS Program

The department remained an active participant in the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) Program, a joint effort involving USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Plant Protection and Quarantine (APHIS/PPQ), state universities and state departments of agriculture throughout the nation. Included under the program are the European spruce bark beetle, the Asian long-horned beetle and the brown garden snail.

The European spruce bark beetle, a serious pest of spruce and pine in Europe, was found by APHIS/PPQ officers in crates at an importer's facility in the northeastern part of the state in FY97. These bark beetles are frequently intercepted in dunnage and wood crating associated with shipments of steel and other materials from European countries arriving at seaports in the Northeast. However, the division has found no evidence of this or other foreign bark beetles in survey traps since the initial finding.

The Asian long-horned beetle, a foreign cerambycid beetle discovered in New York state in 1996 and in Chicago in 1998, poses a threat to the forests of the northern United States. A survey of 318 sites in New Jersey was conducted in cooperation with APHIS/PPQ and showed no signs of infestation. However, this year wood crating received in shipments from China at a New Brunswick warehouse was found to be infested with live, wood-boring cerambycid beetles of a different variety. The warehouse was fumigated under USDA supervision.

Further investigation by APHIS/PPQ resulted in detections of live larval stages of the second variety of beetle in wood crating in warehouses in Camden, Mahwah, Plumstead and Secaucus as well as live larval stages of the Asian long-horned beetle in Linden. The USDA destroyed all of the beetle infestations by burning the infested wood crating. As a further follow-up, the division placed a variety of insect traps near warehouses in New Brunswick, Trenton, Linden, Edison, Plumstead, Cream Ridge, Secaucus and Camden to determine if an infestation has developed outside the warehouse. No foreign species were detected during FY99.

The brown garden snail, a serious plant pest that feeds on a wide variety of plant hosts, was found for the first time in New Jersey last year in Margate. Although New Jersey does not have a quarantine on the introduction and/or distribution of live plant-feeding snails, as many other states do, the Garden State will not authorize the shipment or raising of live plant-feeding snails under USDA permit. A survey and control program for brown garden snail continued this year on the infested Margate properties, including informational brochures distributed to landscapers, homeowners and APHIS/PPQ inspectors, describing the biology and recommended control practices for this agricultural pest.

### **Blueberry Maggot**

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (Agriculture Canada) published new import requirements for the movement of fresh blueberry fruit into and throughout Canada. The program is based on implementing an approved blueberry maggot control program on the farm, grower self-inspection of fruit for blueberry maggot, and auditing by the division. The division worked with specialists from the Rutgers Agricultural Experiment Station and Rutgers Cooperative Extension, representatives of the New Jersey blueberry industry and Canadian Food Inspection Agency and USDA APHIS/PPQ Export Certification staff to develop the new certification program.

Because growers must be enrolled in the program in order to ship fresh blueberry fruit to markets in Toronto and Montreal, Rutgers Cooperative Extension and the division co-sponsored three training sessions for blueberry growers at the Rutgers Blueberry Cranberry Research Center in Chatsworth. Topics included blueberry maggot biology and control, the blueberry maggot control program requirements, and a demonstration on the process required to test fruit for maggot larvae. A total of 28 blueberry growers were approved by the division for participation in the program.

### **SEED CERTIFICATION AND CONTROL**

The seed certification and control program protects farmers, vegetable plant growers, the turf industry and the general public 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 the introduction of noxious weeds in sod or on golf course fairways, higher farm production costs, costly weed removal, increased food costs, and decreased farm income.

Of 646 seed samples tested in the division's seed laboratory, 411 were analyzed to determine seed quality and germination standards as established by the New Jersey Seed Law. Violations in the required labeling and quality standards, especially seed unfit for planting and seed contaminated with noxious weed seed, occurred in five percent of these samples.

Of the 411 samples analyzed, 35 percent (145 samples) were vegetable, turfgrass and field crop seed received from farmers, golf courses and wholesalers. Of these, 60, representing 541,336 pounds of agricultural seed, were inspected and sampled for quality control testing with only eight percent found to contain prohibited and restricted noxious weed seed. This seed was removed from the marketplace in New Jersey and administrative penalties were assessed.

Eighty-five lots of vegetable seed sold to New Jersey vegetable growers were inspected and found to be of good quality although vigor testing of several different kinds of vegetables found that stressful conditions could result in lower germination. This service provided valuable information to growers trying to set planting schedules.



New Jersey golf courses purchase large quantities of turfgrass seed each year through direct sales. In FY99, 31 samples of turfgrass seed, representing 15,475 pounds, were inspected and sampled for quality. Laboratory analysis found 11 lots representing 7,500 pounds in violation because they contained prohibited and restricted noxious weed seeds not listed on the label. A fine was levied against the seed company involved.

Twenty-one turf seed samples were taken from lots of certified turf seed shipped to New Jersey from other states. These samples were tested to determine eligibility for the interagency certified seed program which made 94,550 pounds of high quality turf seed, mixed under strict supervision by the division, available to sod growers.

Conservation plant material developed by USDA for use primarily for coastal soil stabilization continues to play an important role in preventing beach erosion. Plant growers entered 31 acres of conservation plant material in the certification program. Thirty samples of several different kinds of soil conservation plants were tested for the Cape May Plant Materials Center for distribution to growers in New Jersey and throughout the Northeast.

### **GYPSY MOTH SUPPRESSION**

The gypsy moth is New Jersey's most serious insect pest of shade and forest trees. However, after nearly 30 years and three major cycles of the pest, there are now signs that major biological control factors are reducing the ravages of this pest. This reduction is the result of the division's aerial gypsy moth suppression program using the biological insecticide, *Bacillus thuringiensis* (B.t.), the raising and distribution of imported parasites and predators and the natural widespread distribution of a fungal disease deadly to the gypsy moth.

In partnership with the USDA's Forest Service, the division continues to offer municipalities the opportunity to participate in its annual gypsy moth suppression program. Through the 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 federal reimbursement of 50 percent of the treatment costs; and supervises aerial treatments each spring using B.t.

In the spring of 1999, nearly 1,400 acres in six municipalities in Salem and Burlington Counties were treated under the program. Although this was almost double the previous year's program when 760 acres were treated in two municipalities and one county park, total treatment costs remained at less than \$12 per acre with almost \$6 per acre reimbursed to the participating municipalities.

Overall, gypsy moth defoliation of the state's forest and shade trees decreased from 1,995 acres in 1998 to 1,380 acres in 1999 with heaviest damage in Burlington and Salem Counties.

### **APIARY INSPECTION**

During the winter of 1999 New Jersey beekeepers lost about five to 10 percent of their domestic bees due to the Varroa mite, tracheal mite and winter loss, a loss considered normal in the industry. Improved bee management practices and a mild winter were credited with low loss rate. Mite levels for 1999 were moderate and, using proper treatments, beekeepers were able to maintain strong colonies going into late summer.

Although overall hive health was significantly improved during FY99, inspection of approximately 6,200 New Jersey colonies indicated a 1.45 percent incidence of American foulbrood, a bacterial disease of bees. This represented a 100 percent increase in the disease's incidence from 1998.



Reports suggest that the number of feral colonies is still extremely low, despite short-lived increases between Varroa mite infestations. These colonies are still substantially lower than they were before Varroa mite populations exploded statewide in 1995 and 1996.

More than 8,100 colonies entered New Jersey from other states for commercial pollination of fruit crops, blueberries and cranberries. All were inspected to validate the sanitary certificates issued from the shipping state with no significant parasitic mite infestations detected among the out-of-state colonies.

The Beekeeping Advisory Board continued to work closely with the department to advise the Secretary of Agriculture of the direction the apiary program should go and those areas which most concern the beekeeping and related grower communities. In FY99 the introduction of the small hive beetle (SHB) was of great concern to the Board, requiring the department to request EPA approval for the use of Coumaphos to treat the hives.

On the advice of the Advisory Board, the department implemented regulations requiring that colonies coming from states and counties with SHB infestations be treated with Coumaphos within seven days of entering the Garden State. The regulations stipulated that incoming SHB-infested colonies would be quarantined in a single location, with the beekeeper required to treat the soil near those colonies with Guardstar but having the option of treating the colonies with Coumaphos. Moreover, regulations required that colonies infested with SHB larva be destroyed and only those colonies treated with Coumaphos and found free of SHB be released from quarantine.

In all, 43 colonies that contained SHB which were ultimately quarantined in one location for research purposes. In 1999 the department joined USDA in research on the SHB in a quarantined yard in southern New Jersey. This research will continue into FY 2000.

### **PLANT LABORATORY SERVICES**

The plant laboratory services unit provides technical support for the regulatory programs of the Division of Plant Industry including the seed and apiary programs.

One of the laboratory's primary responsibilities is to monitor the quality of seed sold by seed companies directly to consumers, especially to farmers and golf courses, the two largest consumers of expensive seed. Germination tests as well as analysis for troublesome or noxious weeds were conducted on the samples submitted to the laboratory. The results of this work indicated that the general quality of seed sold in the state directly to purchasers is of high quality and is accurately labeled.

Laboratory tests were conducted on certified wheat seeds grown in New Jersey this year. All had germination percentages above the specified standard of 90 percent and were free of weed seeds.

Requests by farmers for vigor testing of sweet corn and pepper seed increased this year. Vigor testing, unlike germination testing, can be used to differentiate seed lots from each other on the basis of physiology. A seed lot with a good germination percentage might not be physiologically fit to survive or flourish in less than optimal growing conditions. While the division's surveys of seed germination assured farmers that seed would perform at the germination percentages specified on the seed labels under ideal conditions, vigor test results enabled farmers to modify planting times as well as growing and storage conditions.

The laboratory also supported the apiary inspection program through the analysis of bees for Varroa and tracheal mites, and testing for American foulbrood. In FY99 the laboratory initiated a new test designed to determine if Varroa mites are resistant to the miticide, fluvalinate. To date, no resistant mites have been detected in New Jersey.

Liquid chromatography, a chemical separation technique, is being used for a number of applications

within the division's programs, including the identification of plant varieties, plant toxins, and fungi. DNA technology is also being incorporated into plant pest and disease identifications and gas chromatography is being used increasingly by both the Division of Plant Industry and the Division of Animal Health for insect and microbial identifications. Greater use of automated equipment enables the laboratory to perform more intricate tests without increasing staff.

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## Annual Report 1999

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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 FY99 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, land application of biosolids, recycling, 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, disaster relief coordination, agricultural tax assistance and other special production assistance 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 State FFA Association, a national organization for students enrolled in agriculture education in public high schools, NJDA worked throughout the year to support the organization's many programs and the more than 1,800 FFA members statewide. NJDA is the only department of agriculture in the country which administers the FFA.

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**

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 New Jersey through a partnership which includes the 16 soil conservation districts (SCDs), USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Rutgers Cooperative Extension Service (RCES). The SSCC establishes statewide policy and provides technical assistance and training, creates technical and administrative standards, administers non-point pollution control and agricultural cost-sharing programs, and establishes measures to assure 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. These standards are implemented at the local level by the SCDs.

### **State Conservation Cost Share Program**

One of the year's major accomplishments was the establishment of the Conservation Cost Share Program (CCSP), a \$2 million cost-sharing grant program that was fully integrated with the federal Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to streamline the delivery of funding and technical assistance. From the 1,200 applications received, 191 projects were selected based on their anticipated environmental benefits. The projects reflected the tremendous agricultural diversity in the Garden State with almost \$1 million allocated to projects related to livestock production.

### **Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Act**

The SSCC promulgated revisions and additions to the Standards for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control in New Jersey for use by the SCDs in certifying soil erosion, sediment and storm water controls on land development projects. These start-of-the-art technical standards include vegetative, engineering and storm water runoff treatment standards as well as scientific innovations and expanded design options which address the diverse topographic and soil conditions in New Jersey. They were developed by a subcommittee comprised of state, federal and municipal officials, engineering groups, construction industry groups and other stake holders. Training programs were conducted for conservation program personnel and engineering groups on the proposed changes to the standards.

The SCDs processed 3,827 applications for soil erosion and sediment control certification involving more than 23,000 acres of construction and mining related land disturbance activities in compliance with SSCC technical standards. More than 64,500 site inspections were performed to assure compliance with approved plans. In addition, the soil conservation districts and the SSCC issued storm water discharge authorizations for 680 construction and mining projects which are regulated and require New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) permits.

The SSCC provided engineering assistance and training to the SCDs on more than 300 complex development projects. In accord with SSCC rules, SCDs reviewed sediment control ordinances implemented independently by 28 municipalities to assure compliance with program standards.

### **Conservation Assistance to Agriculture**

Pursuant to the state Watershed Planning and Management Act, the SSCC established a non-point pollution control demonstration project for Watershed Planning areas 17 and 18 in Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem Counties. Funded by the DEP, the million-dollar effort offered landowners cost-sharing assistance for planning and installing non-point pollution control practices in areas of the watersheds where water quality impairment had been documented by DEP. Sixteen projects were approved for implementation, including 12 related to livestock production. The program is being implemented cooperatively with the SCDs, the NRCS and DEP.

Through continuing programs carried out in cooperation with the NRCS, conservation plans were developed for 32,176 acres of farmland. Land treatment practices installed on 6,405 farmland acres

prevented the loss of nearly 20,000 tons of productive soil. In addition, conservation tillage techniques were used on almost 12,000 acres of farmland to reduce soil loss from wind and water erosion. Nearly 24,000 acres of conservation buffers and grazing land management practices and 32 animal waste management systems were also installed.

At the request of delegates to the 1999 State Agricultural Convention, the division oversaw the establishment of an Agricultural Water Quality Steering Committee comprised of members of agricultural commodity and support groups. The Committee reviews programs and issues related to agricultural water quality and non-point source pollution control requirements.

### **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 issues such as the farm building code, appraisal methods used for taxing agricultural and greenhouse structures, agricultural recycling, farmland assessment procedures, farm sales tax requirements and other agricultural economic considerations, interstate trucking regulations for agriculture, and special court cases impacting agricultural operations.

#### **Greenhouse & Nursery Film Recycling**

For the third consecutive year, the division was instrumental in the implementation of a greenhouse and nursery film collection and recycling program. Three approved collection sites, a private recycling firm and two county solid waste utility authorities, were established in the southern half of the state where the bulk of the recyclable plastic is used. Using the internet, the division joined an on-line packaging discussion group to search out new markets for the recycled film, receiving responses from new markets as far away as China and Malaysia.

During FY99, the program passed the million-pound milestone in the collection of used film, making it one of the nation's most effective agricultural film recycling programs. The continuing success of New Jersey's greenhouse and nursery film recycling program generated interest in 13 states and brought inquiries from numerous out-of-state agricultural trade organizations and growers, and several plastic recycling firms.

#### **Agricultural Leasing of State-owned Lands**

As the agency authorized to oversee the lease of state-owned land to private sector farm operators, NJDA is also required to set the terms of such leases. To accomplish this goal, rules and regulations for the leasing of state-owned lands deemed suitable for agricultural production were proposed during the year followed by a public hearing on proposed rules. A number of interested individuals, including farmers who currently hold state leases, and representatives of agricultural and environmental organizations, offered comments on the proposal for consideration in preparing the final rule.

#### **State Plan Review**

NJDA was an active participant in the State Development and Redevelopment Plan's cross-acceptance process during FY99, placing particular emphasis on policies in the agricultural sections of the Plan to strengthen the wording and integrate concepts vital to the agricultural industry.

Following last year's comparison phase, during which county plans were prepared, this year's negotiation phase was a county-by-county review process during which disagreements or inconsistencies between the submitted county plans and the Preliminary State Plan were reconciled. As the county reports were received, the Office of State Planning framed the negotiation agenda into policy issues and mapping issues to be discussed with county representatives.

Negotiated policy changes and changes to the resource planning and management map were incorporated into the Interim Plan adopted by the State Planning Commission in March. The Interim Plan will undergo an independent impact assessment by Rutgers' Center for Urban Policy Research in early 2000, with the Final Plan tentatively slated for adoption by mid-year.

### **FISH AND SEAFOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

Although the Garden State is better known for its production agriculture, the commercial fishing industry remains an important part of the economic life of New Jersey, with almost 22,000 people working on boats, in processing plants and in the wholesale/retail sectors of the commercial fishing industry. Finite ocean resources can sustain only limited harvests while the global demand for quality fish and seafood continues to climb. Helping the New Jersey fish and seafood industry effectively address these challenges is the goal of the fish and seafood development program.

#### **Aquaculture**

To help the fledgling aquaculture industry become a successful part of the farming community and take full advantage of the state's proximity to major markets, the division is working to create a cohesive management plan that considers regulatory issues, environmental quality, water quality and quantity, production capacity, good business practices and marketing options. The division continues to work with the state, federal and private sectors to create an aquaculture industry development plan that will provide a solid cornerstone for the industry's growth and attract new aquaculture ventures to the Garden State. Throughout the preparation of this plan, NJDA has worked closely with the Aquaculture Training and Information Center at Cumberland County College which offers specialized, targeted industry training programs.

#### **Seafood Export and Domestic Marketing**

As part of the division's plan to more aggressively market and promote New Jersey as a producer of high quality, locally harvested and farmed seafood products, two television advertisements were developed and aired during periods of traditionally high fish and seafood consumption - the Lenten season, winter holidays and summer shore season. To supplement these efforts, supermarkets and independent retailers promoted the local harvest by distributing point-of-purchase materials and the division participated in local festivals and consumer events where the popular New Jersey Maritime Heritage cookbooklet and the "Catch the Taste of Seafood" brochure were available.

As Pacific Rim markets rebound from the recent economic downturn, New Jersey fish and seafood firms are in an excellent position to regain and expand market share there. The New Jersey Seafood Supplier Directory has been made available to USDA and U.S. Department of Commerce trade offices around the world and the division has established a weekly fax and e-mail system to provide trade leads to New Jersey exporters. These efforts complement the industry's presence at trade shows around the globe.

Other efforts have focused on the economic assessment of niche markets in North America and abroad for by-products of local processing operations. For example, New Jersey's major squid processing sector produces a variety of by-products - dried squid beaks, innards and squid ink - that could be sold in Asian markets as snack foods and flavoring.

Shipment of high quality live fish represents another opportunity for New Jersey harvesters and aquaculturists. These fish often command a sizable price differential in select markets. With the development of appropriate transportation technology and market accessibility, this sector can continue to grow, returning greater profits to the community.

Following one of the recommendations of the Governor's Oyster Industry Revitalization Task Force, the division has begun to develop an appropriate market identity for the Delaware Bay oyster. The process involves identifying new product forms and developing more lucrative marketing channels.

Similar efforts have been initiated for locally-farmed hard clams.

### **AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION/FFA**

"Tradition of Excellence," this year's FFA theme, set the tone for another very successful year for the national youth organization's New Jersey chapters. FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of its student members by developing their potential for leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.

Agricultural Education/FFA has three important components that provide a well rounded, practical approach to learning and helps schools meet the state's core curriculum content standards. The first component is the high school agricultural courses where topics such as plant and animal science, horticulture, agri-marketing and natural resources are taught. The second component allows students to apply knowledge and skills learned in the classroom to a supervised agricultural experience at home or in the workplace. The third component, the FFA organization, connecting the classroom and workplace experience through incentive awards and scholarships for excellence.

This year nearly 2,100 students were members of New Jersey's 40 FFA chapters. Seven new chapters were chartered: South Hunterdon High School, Lambertville; Bergen County Technical Schools, Teterboro; Eastside and John F. Kennedy High Schools, Paterson; Cape May Technical School, Cape May Court House; William Dickinson High School, Jersey City; and Somerset County Technical School, Bridgewater. These seven new FFA chapters are helping to diversify agricultural education in the Garden State and expanding the diversity of programs available to FFA members by incorporating programs on agricultural biotechnology, aquaculture, natural resource education, and landscaping.

Twenty schools conducting all three components of a quality agricultural education program were each given \$7,500 grants to upgrade computer technology in agricultural education classrooms through the purchase of hardware, software and internet service providers.

### **Reinventing Agricultural Education for 2020**

In partnership with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the New Jersey Department of Education, NJDA co-sponsored the Garden State's involvement in the national initiative, "Reinventing Agricultural Education for the Year 2020." The process was designed to empower state and local educators and agribusiness leaders to create a shared common vision of the preferred future for agricultural education programs, kindergarten through adult, around the state and to develop a strategic plan designed for long-term implementation.

Nearly 600 people participated in the initiative this year, creating agricultural education vision statements tailored to the unique needs of schools, students and agriculture-related industries in their own counties. In addition, the following statewide vision for New Jersey's agricultural education program was carefully articulated:

"Agriculture is a dynamic and vital aspect of New Jersey society with a foundation rooted in educational excellence and the practical application of knowledge and resources. Premier educational programs in food, agriculture and natural resources that provide career opportunities and a positive quality of life shall be recognized, supported and promoted as a foundation for agriculture's future."

### **NEW JERSEY AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE**

Agricultural statistics are essential for the orderly development of production and marketing decisions by farmers and agribusinesses. Agricultural data series are also used to monitor the 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, each year NJASS publishes 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.

The sample survey capabilities of NJASS allow it to meet special requests for rural environmental data and economic studies such as the deer damage survey conducted this year in cooperation with the New Jersey Farm Bureau, Rutgers University and the Division of Fish and Wildlife.

In 1997, responsibility for conducting the census of agriculture was transferred from the U.S. Department of Commerce to USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. Through its cooperative agreement with USDA, NJASS undertook the census of agriculture in New Jersey, sampling 1,600 producers of floriculture crops, nursery crops and specialty crops such as turfgrass sod, mushrooms, Christmas trees, greenhouse crops, vegetable transplants, and vegetable and flower seeds. In addition, NJASS did three follow-up specialty surveys for horticulture, aquaculture, and farm and ranch irrigation.

This year, the state's 9,600 farms generated cash receipts totaling nearly \$828.7 million. The nursery/greenhouse/sod industry remained the leading commodity group with cash receipts of \$299.4 million. Cash receipts for vegetables totaled over \$200.7 million, followed by fruit at \$101.1 million and equine at \$97 million. Field crops brought in \$65.5 million while the dairy industry generated \$44.9 million. Sales of poultry and eggs were valued at \$25.2 million.

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preservation. When these purchases are completed, New Jersey's protected farmland will total more than 73,000 acres on more than 500 farms.

All of the farmland preservation programs administered by the SADC are voluntary. Although the specifics of the programs vary, each protects farmland by imposing deed restrictions which prohibit non-agricultural development. The terms of those restrictions can be either permanent or for eight years.

Landowners who permanently deed restrict their farms against future non-agricultural development are compensated for the development value of the farmland and enjoy the same benefits that accrue to participants in the eight-year program. Future owners of those permanently preserved farms must comply with all deed restrictions as well.

Under the FPP, the SADC provides cost-sharing grants that cover from 60 to 80 percent of the purchase price for the majority of easement purchases. In FY98 the SADC provided an average of 70 percent of the purchase cost for development easements for a total of just over \$17.3 million. The remaining funding of \$25 million was contributed by the counties and, in some cases, municipalities. Farmland owners also can donate their development easements. In FY99, development rights on the 105-acre Schley Farm in Readington Township were donated to Hunterdon County.

The SADC can purchase farms outright from owners who no longer want to stay on the land and then auction these farms to private owners with deed restrictions that permanently preserve the properties for agricultural use. In FY99, the SADC purchased two farms in this way, the 125-acre Brandenburg Farm in Plumsted Township, Ocean County, and the historic 167-acre Cottage Farm in Chesterfield Township, Burlington County. Following resale of the properties to private owners, monies from the sales returned to the FPP to fund the preservation of other farms.

Farmland owners also can take part in an eight-year preservation program through which they agree to place development restrictions on their farmland for that time period. While landowners receive no payment for this, participation makes them eligible for a number of benefits, including cost-sharing grants for soil and water conservation projects. At the close of the fiscal year, the eight-year program included 345 farms covering 27,536 acres.

### **SOIL AND WATER COST-SHARING GRANTS**

During FY99, the SADC approved 91 cost-sharing grants for approximately \$918,000. In addition, \$524,000 was paid to landowners for completion of 72 approved projects. Over the past decade, the SADC has invested \$4.3 million in these types of conservation projects to assist farmers in increasing productivity and protecting valuable soil and water resources.

### **RIGHT TO FARM PROGRAM**

In July 1998, Governor Whitman signed amendments to the Right to Farm Act to provide eligible, responsible farm operations with greater protection from restrictive municipal ordinances and public and private nuisance actions. The FY99 state budget for the first time included an allocation of \$100,000 to help fund right to farm activities by county agriculture development boards.

In FY99, the SADC saw a substantial increase - 73 cases compared with 22 the year before - in right to farm cases referred to both the county and state levels of the program, largely as a result of efforts to educate farm owners about the amended Right to Farm Act. The SADC also reviewed rules proposed by state agencies that had the potential to impact agriculture; adopted new agricultural management practices for apiaries and poultry manure land applications; and developed proposals for two dozen additional agricultural management practices that will be considered during FY00.

### **FARM LINK PROGRAM**

The Farm Link program matches potential buyers with potential 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 insure that their land stays in agricultural production but have no family members who want to continue to farm. The program also serves as a clearinghouse for information on everything from the availability of preserved farms for sale to business contacts and resources. Both unrestricted and deed-restricted farmland enrolled in the FPP are tracked through Farm Link.

In FY99, the Farm Link database continued to be updated and made available at no charge to buyers and sellers. At the end of the fiscal year, more than 175 participants were enrolled in Farm Link. Among the connections made during the year were a young nurseryman and a nursery operation for sale in Washington Township, Mercer County. Farm Link also connected a certified organic farm in Morris County and a tenant farmer.

### **TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS BANK**

New Jersey's Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Bank is located in, but not of, the SADC, which provides staff to its Board of Directors. The Bank provides financial and other assistance to landowners and to municipalities that enact TDR ordinances. In May 1999, the TDR Bank Board awarded a \$10,000 planning assistance grant to Chesterfield Township, Burlington County.

The Bank also maintains a statewide registry of land protected through TDR. Added to the registry during the fiscal year were three properties totaling 560 acres that were preserved through the Lumberton Township, Burlington County, TDR program.

In addition, in April 1999 the Bank produced and adopted an appraisal handbook that will help the TDR Bank Board and appraisers determine the value of development potential.

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