

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Announces Ed Wengryn as New Jersey Secretary of Agriculture

03/22/2024

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy announced that Edward D. Wengryn will serve as the New Jersey Secretary of Agriculture, following his appointment by the State Board of Agriculture today. The State Board of Agriculture today unanimously confirmed Ed Wengryn at their meeting, and the Governor approved the appointment. Since July 1, 2023, Assistant Secretary Joe Atchison III has directed the Department of Agriculture, assuming the responsibilities of Secretary, after the retirement of Secretary Douglas Fisher. Incoming Secretary Wengryn will begin on Monday, March 25, 2024.

"I am proud to announce the appointment of Ed Wengryn to serve as New Jersey's Secretary of Agriculture," **said Governor Murphy**. "As the Garden State, agriculture is one of the most important facets of our state's identity and heritage. Ed comes from a farming family and is a passionate advocate for our agricultural community. I am confident that his experience and leadership will benefit the many residents who depend on the Department's programs and services, including for access to healthy, locally grown food. Ed will help to ensure that the agricultural community remains top of mind as we continue to expand economic opportunities for businesses across our state."

"I also want to thank Assistant Secretary Joe Atchison for this exemplary leadership following the retirement of the state's longtime Secretary of Agriculture, Douglas Fisher," **continued Governor Murphy**. "Joe has led with dedication and commitment, and his reliable and steady leadership has served as an asset to the Department."

"I want to thank the State Board of Agriculture for the nomination and the opportunity to serve the agriculture industry in New Jersey as Secretary. I also want to thank Governor Murphy for his support and approval of my nomination. As the grandson of Ukrainian immigrants who settled here in New Jersey as farmers, I am humbled and honored to be able to lead an agency that has been critical to the success of not only my family, but all the farming families in New Jersey. I look forward to ensuring the Department succeeds in its multifaceted missions and to serving the citizens of our great Garden State," **said Ed Wengryn, incoming New Jersey Secretary of Agriculture**.

"The Board enthusiastically endorses Mr. Edward D. Wengryn to be the next, and only eighth overall since 1916, Secretary of Agriculture for New Jersey. In our modern age, farmers are asked to help devise solutions to address challenges facing our nation and world. Whether it's climate change, food insecurity, animal health and welfare, or the increase in invasive species from worldwide trade, agriculture as an industry must be a key player in adapting methods of production and distribution to fit our changing world. We're also seeing incredible growth in opportunities farmers can find to market their fresh agricultural products and services like agri-tourism to residents of New Jersey and beyond," **said Holly Sytsema, President of the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture**. "Both the obstacles farmers face and the opportunities they can find are often rooted in legislation and regulation. With Ed's background of decades influencing agricultural policy on a state and federal level, he is in a unique position to know the history of, and the most current thinking on, agricultural legislative and administrative issues. The Board is confident that Ed will effectively lead both the Department and the agriculture industry in an age where the knowledge and skill set he brings to the table will be invaluable."

New Jersey's Secretary of Agriculture is the Department's executive officer, Chair of the State Agriculture Development Committee, and a member of the Governor's cabinet. The Office of the Secretary supports programs relating to the economic development of production agriculture; the marketing of agricultural products through the Jersey Fresh program; conservation and development of natural and renewable resources; distribution of surplus federal commodities to soup kitchens, food pantries, schools, State hospitals, and institutions; and the health and well-being of the state's greenhouse/nursery and livestock industries as well as other programs related to these areas.

Since 1998, Ed Wengryn served with the New Jersey Farm Bureau, where he worked closely with farming communities. His field work included the direct marketing of farm products as well as oversight on issues such as sales taxes. Ed's work at the Farm Bureau spanned ornamental horticulture, land use, forestry, and equine and other livestock issues. From 2002 through 2004, he served as Confidential Assistant to Charles Kuperus, the Secretary of Agriculture for the State of New Jersey, where he coordinated the development of industry-specific action plans to improve the economic viability of New Jersey's varied agriculture sectors. Since 2009, Ed has represented the private agriculture sector on the New Jersey Industry Advisory Council at the State Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, ensuring concerns of the agricultural community are considered in State emergency response plans. This work was critical for keeping agricultural businesses open and running during the recent COVID-19 public health emergency.

Ed has been recognized for his service to the Equine Industry by receiving the NJ Horse Person of the Year award in 2021 and currently serves as Co-Chair of the Rutgers University Board for Equine Advancement (RUBEA).

Ed grew up in the Neshanic Station section of Branchburg Township, and his interest in agriculture and horticulture began when he was helping on the Wengryn Family farm, a dairy and field crop operation in Hillsborough, New Jersey. As a youth, he worked with his father, Myron, growing and selling pumpkins and pick-your-own strawberries, as well as growing and selling tomatoes to area delis in the summer.

Ed is a 1986 graduate of Delaware Valley College of Science and Agriculture Doylestown with a Bachelor of Science in Ornamental Horticulture. He is a resident of Trenton, New Jersey, residing in the Mill Hill Historic District.

For a photo of Ed, please click [here \(https://d31hzhk6di2h5.cloudfront.net/20240322/94/9d/93/16/8c7effef7e052bca19f241b0/Ed-1.jpg\)](https://d31hzhk6di2h5.cloudfront.net/20240322/94/9d/93/16/8c7effef7e052bca19f241b0/Ed-1.jpg).

Governor Phil Murphy

[Home \(/governor/\)](/governor/)

 Back to top

Administration

[Governor Phil Murphy \(/governor/admin/about/\)](/governor/admin/about/)
[Lt. Governor Tahesha Way \(/governor/admin/lt/\)](/governor/admin/lt/)
[In memoriam of Lt. Governor Sheila Y. Oliver \(/governor/admin/lt-sheila-y-oliver/\)](/governor/admin/lt-sheila-y-oliver/)
[Senior Staff \(/governor/admin/staff/\)](/governor/admin/staff/)
[Cabinet \(/governor/admin/cabinet/\)](/governor/admin/cabinet/)
[Office of Climate Action and the Green Economy \(/governor/climateaction/\)](/governor/climateaction/)
[Office of Equity \(/governor/admin/equity/\)](/governor/admin/equity/)
[Office of Health Care Affordability and Transparency \(/governor/admin/affordablehealthcare/index.shtml\)](/governor/admin/affordablehealthcare/index.shtml)
[Boards, Commissions & Authorities \(/governor/admin/bca/\)](/governor/admin/bca/)
[New Jersey Puerto Rico Commission \(https://www.nj.gov/puertoricocommission/\)](https://www.nj.gov/puertoricocommission/)
[Internship Opportunities \(/governor/admin/internship.shtml\)](/governor/admin/internship.shtml)
[Governor's Fellows Program \(/governor/admin/fellows/\)](/governor/admin/fellows/)
[Governor's Residence - Drumthwacket \(http://drumthwacket.org/\)](http://drumthwacket.org/)

Key Initiatives

[Economy & Jobs \(/governor/initiatives/#Economy\)](/governor/initiatives/#Economy)
[Education \(/governor/initiatives/#Education\)](/governor/initiatives/#Education)
[Environment \(/governor/initiatives/#Environment\)](/governor/initiatives/#Environment)
[Health \(/governor/initiatives/#Health\)](/governor/initiatives/#Health)
[Law & Justice \(/governor/initiatives/#Justice\)](/governor/initiatives/#Justice)
[Transportation \(/governor/initiatives/#Transportation\)](/governor/initiatives/#Transportation)

News & Events

[Press Releases \(/governor/news/news/562024/approved/news_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/news/562024/approved/news_archive.shtml)
[Photos \(https://www.flickr.com/photos/govmurphy\)](https://www.flickr.com/photos/govmurphy)
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[Administrative Orders \(/governor/news/ao/approved/ao_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/ao/approved/ao_archive.shtml)
[Direct Appointments \(/governor/news/appointments\)](/governor/news/appointments/)
[Advice and Consent Appointments \(/governor/news/acappointments\)](/governor/news/acappointments/)
[Statements on Legislation \(/governor/news/statements/approved/statements_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/statements/approved/statements_archive.shtml)
[Administration Reports \(/governor/news/adminreports/approved/archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/adminreports/approved/archive.shtml)
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[Press Kits \(/governor/news/press\)](/governor/news/press/)

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