

2001 New Jersey Agriculture Annual Report

STATE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

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

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

State Board committees focused on challenges facing agriculture during the year, especially wildlife damage and control; additional risk management tools to help New Jersey farmers weather market and crop losses; water management issues; establishment of an ethanol production facility in New Jersey; and encouraging participation of Pinelands farmers in the state Farmland Preservation Program.

Steven R. Jany, a Mercer County grain/forage grower, was elected president and Abbott W. Lee, a Burlington County fruit grower, was named vice-president of the State Board of Agriculture in July 2000. Two new Board members, George Dean, Gloucester County, and Stephen P. Dey, II, DVM, Monmouth County, representing New Jersey's nursery and equine industries, respectively, took their seats on the Board. Other Board members were Douglas Zee, Gloucester County, fruit industry; Thomas A. Brodhecker, Sussex County, grain/forage; David J. Kanach, Somerset County, dairy; and Russell J. Marino, Gloucester County, fruit industry.

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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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Throughout FY01 the New Jersey Department of Agriculture developed and supported a variety of programs, some aimed at strengthening the Garden State's diverse agriculture industry and others designed to improve the daily lives of hundreds of thousands of the state's urban and suburban residents.

New Jersey's dynamic Farmland Preservation Program maintained its record pace on the way to preserving hundreds of thousands of acres of productive farmland for the future while the recently strengthened Right to Farm law withstood an important court challenge and new agricultural sales and use tax regulations were implemented.

NJDA offered agricultural producers the critical support they've come to rely on when selling their products through the nationally-known Jersey Fresh marketing and promotional program. This grower-oriented program was complemented by export programs as well as trade show support at home and abroad designed to showcase the state's food processors, food retailers, and commercial fishing and aquaculture industries.



Throughout the year, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture sustained and enhanced many other efforts in support of the Garden State's agriculture industry, such as quality assurance programs for a variety of commodities and livestock and plant health testing and certification services. NJDA also continued its vigilance for plant and animal pests and diseases and stepped up efforts to protect equine, livestock and stone fruit producers from exotic diseases as well. The emergence of foot-and-mouth disease in the United Kingdom and other European countries, combined with New Jersey's heightened risk of disease entry through air and seaports, forced the department to take action to prepare for a possible incursion of this devastating livestock disease for the first time in more than seven decades.

In addition, NJDA administered many other programs unrelated to production agriculture. Every day

these programs touch the lives of hundreds of thousands of people, both young and old alike, in cities and towns across the state. Included among these are the school breakfast and lunch programs; special feeding and food distribution programs; soil and water conservation programs; the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program for participants in the federal WIC program; foreign trade development programs for small food companies; and many others described in the following pages.

The department also extended its outreach to non-farming citizens around the state through a number of educational and public information efforts, including the annual Farm Tour for Legislators and the Outstanding Young Farmer program.

In FY01, the state's 9,600 farms generated cash receipts totaling \$812.2 million. The nursery/greenhouse/sod industry remained the leading commodity group with cash receipts of \$297.4 million. Cash receipts for vegetables totaled nearly \$193 million followed by equine at \$116 million and fruit at \$82.6 million. Field crops brought in \$46.3 million while the dairy industry generated \$33.4 million. Sales of poultry and eggs were valued at \$27.2 million.

FARMLAND PRESERVATION

Thanks to the increased funding for farmland and open space preservation under the Garden State Preservation Trust Act, the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) permanently preserved a record number of farms in FY01. The year's total of 126 farms on 14,006 acres exceed FY00's record pace, resulting in a grand total of 582 farms covering 80,381 acres permanently preserved since the program's inception in 1983.

With the establishment in Bergen County of the requisite county agriculture development board, the Farmland Preservation Program was successfully launched in the state's most urbanized northeastern region. From Mahwah to Vineland and East Brunswick to Manalapan, increased funding is helping to meet the unprecedented demand for farmland preservation from landowners and communities in some of the most populous areas of New Jersey.

The program's farmland preservation planning incentive grants continued to be popular with municipalities and counties that wanted to preserve large, contiguous blocks of farmland through one streamlined process. This year the SADC granted preliminary approval to 25 such preservation applications representing 463 farms and 24,359 acres.

During FY01 questions surfaced concerning the Farmland Preservation Program's (FPP) operational guidelines, particularly at the county level. However, an in-depth review of the FPP by the state Office of the Inspector General (OIG) found that "the Farmland Preservation Program is well operated and contains substantial checks and controls." The report underscored the integrity of the state program and noted that it deserves the strong public support it has received to date.

RIGHT TO FARM

In April the State Superior Court, Appellate Division, issued a decision reaffirming that the amended Right to Farm Act pre-empts municipal land use jurisdiction over commercial farms. The decision came as a result of a case in which Franklin Township, Hunterdon County, took action against Garden State Growers claiming they had violated several municipal ordinances. At issue were site plans, impervious coverage limitations and other matters, including the charge that Garden State Growers was violating the SADC deed of easement and creating a nuisance that adversely affected the health, safety and welfare of the residents of the Township.

The Court concluded that primary jurisdiction to regulate agricultural management practices rests with the County Agriculture Development Boards (CADBs) or the SADC. The Court stated that both the CADBs and SADC must consider the impact of such practices on municipalities and, in so doing, consider the limitations imposed by local land use and zoning ordinances. Under the decision, the CADBs or SADC must determine if the activity in question falls within the purview of agricultural

management practices. If the CADBs or SADC determines that the activity falls outside the scope of agricultural management practices, jurisdiction then resides with the municipality.



SALES AND USE TAX ACT

Thanks to close cooperation between NJDA and the state Department of Treasury, new rules concerning exemptions from state sales and use taxes took effect in FY01 that provided a significant economic benefit for farmers. Under the revised regulations, farmers will be able to claim exemptions when purchasing various pieces of farming equipment that will be permanently affixed to a building. Production services, such as tilling, spreading lime and applying pesticides, are tax-exempt, provided the services are used directly and primarily for an exempt use. In addition, containers used on the farm, including pallets, are not subject to sales tax, nor are materials purchased to construct greenhouses, grain bins, silos and manure-handling facilities. At Treasury's request, NJDA staff prepared a pamphlet explaining the changes and made it available to farmers and other interested parties in hard copy and on the internet.

FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE

In February and March 2001, the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) in the United Kingdom, Europe and South America galvanized American livestock producers into nationwide action. FMD is considered one of the most highly contagious viral diseases affecting cloven-hoofed livestock in the world and affects roughly two-thirds of the countries around the globe. Outbreaks in FMD-free countries have devastated livestock industries in the past, and the 2001 epidemic seemed likely to mirror that experience.

NJDA closely monitored the spread of foot-and-mouth disease in the United Kingdom and the European Union and, in collaboration with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service/Veterinary Services, compiled pertinent data on the virus and distributed it to all accredited veterinarians and livestock producers in the Garden State. In addition, because swine are considered to be exceptionally efficient transmitters of this virus and feeding uncooked garbage to swine has been implicated as the source of infection in several outbreaks of FMD around the world, field staff from NJDA and USDA periodically visited all garbage-feeding swine producers in the state to provide them with the same information.

NJDA worked with USDA to educate the public about the particular risk of FMD infection posed to New Jersey because of its position as a corridor state. As part of an interagency team of experts, NJDA's State Veterinarian visited several import and quarantine sites along the East Coast to provide recommendations for additional precautions that should be taken to keep FMD out of the United States.

In addition, NJDA established a special interagency FMD task force involving representatives from over two dozen federal, state and local organizations, all of which may have a part to play in the

control and eradication of FMD should a case be diagnosed in New Jersey. Included among task force members were representatives from USDA, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, the New Jersey Department of Transportation, the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, the New Jersey State Police, the Attorney General's Office, the Governor's Office, New Jersey Farm Bureau, Rutgers Cooperative Extension and the Animal Emergency Preparedness and Response Committee.

The group worked quickly to put in place as part of the State Emergency Operations Plan the many regulatory and operational mechanisms that will be necessary to cope with this virulent animal disease, as well as any others that might find their way into the United States in the months and years ahead. Additional work on the Plan, as well as further educational and outreach efforts, will take place through the foreseeable future to help keep New Jersey's livestock industry safe from foreign animal diseases.

PLUM POX

Following last year's discovery in Pennsylvania of plum pox, a foreign disease of peaches, plum and nectarines, in FY01 NJDA's Division of Plant Industry began phase two of its multi-year surveys for the disease in orchards throughout New Jersey. With financial support from USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service/Plant Protection and Quarantine Program, NJDA personnel collected thousands of leaf samples from stone fruit nurseries, orchards where budwood is collected, and high-risk stone fruit orchards, with all samples testing negative for plum pox.

NJDA continued its cooperative efforts with other plant regulatory agencies in the tri-state area to ensure a safe supply of stone fruit nursery stock for area growers. As a result, NJDA was able to survey and test for plum pox in Pennsylvania orchards which were potential budwood sources for growers. This plum pox-free budwood will also be used to help re-start the stone fruit nursery business of Pennsylvania's Adams County Nursery, which relocated its production fields outside the quarantine area. Adams County Nursery has long been a major supplier of peach, nectarine and plum trees to many New Jersey growers.

NEW JERSEY AGRICULTURAL INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

NJDA spearheaded the establishment of the New Jersey Agricultural Invasive Species Council this year as part of a growing national trend to stem the loss of biodiversity and deal with the agricultural ramifications of invasive species. The 12-member Council includes representatives of the State Board of Agriculture; the New Jersey Farm Bureau; and the nursery, fruit, grain and forage, turfgrass, vegetable, aquaculture, livestock and organic farming industries. Advisory members appointed to the Council represent NJDA, the New Jersey Department of Transportation, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service/Plant Protection and Quarantine, and Rutgers University.

The group's immediate focus is identification of the invasive plant species that are already established in the state, especially those used as ornamental plants, followed by an assessment of the exotic species which are becoming established in the state. In addition, the Council began to develop an agricultural invasive species management plan for the Garden State.

WEST NILE VIRUS

The first full-blown season of the foreign equine disease West Nile virus (WNV) hit New Jersey at the end of the summer, ultimately claiming the lives of eight horses. Because not all horses that contract WNV become ill, NJDA's Division of Animal Health collected samples from stablemates of the 28 animals diagnosed with the disease to derive a better picture of the extent and biological impact of WNV infection in New Jersey horses. NJDA veterinarians also collected information from each affected stable in an effort to discern any patterns of risk that could be used to provide additional recommendations for protective measures horse owners can take to safeguard their animals.

Since horses can only become infected with WNV when infected mosquitoes bite them, and with a vaccine still in development, preventive measures become critical. In cooperation with the state Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Health and Senior Services and USDA, NJDA launched a proactive campaign to educate horse owners about the precautions they must take to decrease mosquito habitat, virtually the only way horse owners can minimize the chance of an animal being stricken with WNV. Information was also posted on websites maintained by state and federal agencies.

New Jersey received a Presidential emergency declaration because of WNV, marking the first time the Federal Emergency Management Agency has incorporated a medical emergency situation into the disaster/emergency declaration process. Most of the \$5 million approved for New Jersey was channeled into efforts to control the mosquito population.

OUTSTANDING YOUNG FARMER

New Jersey's Outstanding Young Farmer (OYF) Robert C. Von Thun, Jr., a fourth generation vegetable/small fruit/flower grower from Monmouth Junction, Middlesex County, was one of four winners at the 2001 National OYF Awards Congress in Omaha, Nebraska, this year. Twenty-five young farmers from across the nation competed for the honor. The three other 2001 national winners, all dairy farmers, represented Vermont, Wisconsin and Maryland. This is the third National OYF Award won by a New Jerseyan since the first award was presented in 1955.

FARM TOUR FOR LEGISLATORS

More than 30 legislators and legislative aides joined the annual Farm Tour for Legislators, this year in Sussex County, co-sponsored by the New Jersey Agricultural Society and Sussex County's Board of Freeholders and Board of Agriculture. The July tour included stops at an organic farm, a wholesale nursery, a dairy farm, a grain and livestock operation, a retail vegetable farm and an equestrian facility. Legislators got hands-on experience at the dairy farm through a milking contest and were able to discuss a wide range of topics, including farm conservation practices, water quality and marketing strategies, with agricultural producers and other industry representatives.

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ADMINISTRATION

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.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The Human Resources Office oversees a number of programs essential to support the department's personnel objectives. Among these are workforce planning, classification, compensation, recruitment, salary and benefit administration.

In addition, the division is responsible for the department's award programs, employee relations and contract administration, performance assessment reviews, personnel policy and procedures development, and training coordination.

As of June 30, 2001, the department had 382 employees including 260 full-time employees and 122 seasonal employees. The slight (six percent) increase in staff over FY00 reflected the increased responsibilities of the State Agriculture Development Committee and new departmental program initiatives.

Special attention was given to salary account monitoring, departmental organizational structure and staffing analysis resulting in the upgrade of 20 positions. Increased turnover and the addition of new positions resulted in active recruitment to fill 21 positions.

Human Resources policies and procedures relating to time and leave issues were updated to reflect changes in state and federal regulations, including the introduction of the School Volunteer Leave Policy.

EMPLOYEE AWARDS

Awards that recognize the outstanding contributions of employees play an important part in any organization's human resources programs and NJDA is no exception. This year three individuals and one division were recognized for their contributions to NJDA's accomplishments.

The Division of Animal Health received a Team/Partnership Award for their cohesive efforts to detect and control diseases which can endanger New Jersey's animal agriculture industry. Although specifically cited for their team effort on the emerging equine and human threat of West Nile virus, the group has also mobilized to meet the additional threats of foot-and-mouth disease and agricultural bioterrorism.

Sandy Braun received the Co-Worker Recognition Award for her interest and leadership in the

coordination of a variety of intradepartmental events, such as "Take Your Child To Work Day" and the cultural cook-off through which NJDA observed "One Family, Many Faces Week." In addition, Braun organized NJDA's participation in Angel Wings, a program that assists AIDS babies, and other charitable outreach efforts.

William Conlon received the Longevity Award for 37 years of valued service to NJDA and its constituents as a horticulturist in the Division of Plant Industry.

Susan Butch was honored with the Customer Service Excellence Award for her dedication to NJDA's mission and goals. An administrative assistant in the Division of Rural Resources, Butch has demonstrated a consistent willingness to tackle the difficult assignments, including NJDA's efforts to assist farmers stricken by the 1999 drought.

FISCAL SERVICES

NJDA's adjusted budget for direct state services was \$10,998,000 with grants-in-aid funding of \$3,334,000. State aid for the year amounted to \$9,092,000. Capital funding of \$600,000 allowed for upgrade of data and telecommunications wiring and information technology switching gear as well as the completion of needed repairs at NJDA's Beneficial Insect Laboratory in Ewing, Mercer County. Dedicated funds, those restricted to a particular purpose or program, amounted to \$7,997,000. In addition, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture received \$234,800,000 in federal funds.

The division's fiscal section successfully implemented two statewide systems, the E-Z Pass prepaid toll payment and the P-Card for purchase of necessary supplies. These systems significantly reduce paperwork and provide better accountability in-house while permitting more efficient delivery of services to constituents and prompter payment to vendors.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

During FY01 the Information Processing Unit undertook a variety of initiatives designed to improve the computer capability and data storage capacity of NJDA's operating units. Among these enhancements were new, faster Local and Wide Area Networks with fiber optics that significantly increase the speed and reliability of data transmissions.

Department Funding

| Source of Funds | Amount Appropriated FY 2000 | Amount Appropriated FY 2001 |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| General State Funds | \$ 10,167,000 | \$ 10,998,000 |
| Direct State Services | 22,629,000 | 3,334,000 |
| Grants-In-Aid | 8,867,000 | 9,092,000 |
| State Aid | 1,153,000 | 600,000 |
| Capital Construction | | |
| Dedicated Funds | 9,967,000 | 7,997,000 |
| Federal Funds | 206,964,000 | 234,800,000 |
| TOTAL | \$259,747,000 | \$266,821,000 |

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ANIMAL HEALTH

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



FOREIGN ANIMAL DISEASES

Foreign animal diseases, and their potential impact on the livestock industry in New Jersey and surrounding states, required an unprecedented level of attention from NJDA this year. The European outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease had the greatest potential for devastation to the industry and disruption of human lives and commerce, but the spectre of bovine spongiform encephalopathy ("mad cow" disease), the spread of West Nile virus and protection against contagious equine metritis were critical issues for animal producers.

Foot-and-Mouth Disease

Despite its eradication from the United States in 1929, foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) remains a constant in livestock production worldwide except in North America and Australia. The highly contagious viral disease frequently causes death in cattle, swine, sheep and other susceptible species but surviving animals continue to pass the virus along to new herdmates and show economically-significant reduction in milks and meat production. The only true control for the disease is destruction of infected animals and immediate carcass disposal.

For several months, beginning this winter, graphic daily media reports underscored the plight of animal producers in Great Britain and in several other European countries where an outbreak of FMD not only impacted livestock herds but also reduced tourism to a trickle and resulted in restrictions on routine commerce. Investigation of the capability of the United States and each individual state to prevent entry of the virus, or to rapidly identify and contain an outbreak, became a priority for USDA and each state's department of agriculture.

Early in the epidemic, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service declared New Jersey a "high risk" state for the introduction of FMD because of the volume of travelers and cargo arriving at sea and airports in

and around the state. In response, NJDA became intensively involved in statewide, regional and national activities to mitigate the potential impact of FMD on New Jersey and the nation.

NJDA's four-pronged approach included leadership on the state's FMD taskforce; enhanced surveillance in the field; intensive educational and outreach efforts; and leadership on national committees charged with identifying vulnerable areas in the nation's animal health defenses.

In March, NJDA formed a multi-agency emergency task force to begin assessing the FMD threat and needs for potential response. The task force, comprised of representatives of state and federal agencies, volunteer organizations and the private sector, was charged with the responsibility of producing an FMD Appendix to the New Jersey Emergency Operations Plan and enhancing the state's ability to deal effectively and without delay should a case of FMD be diagnosed.

In coordination with USDA/Veterinary Services, NJDA upgraded existing inspection programs for licensed swine producers, slaughterhouses, livestock auctions and markets. Facility inspections included an in-person update for producers about the basic disease characteristics of FMD and specific guidelines to follow to prevent and/or report the disease.

Further outreach efforts included regional meetings for the state's agriculture community with county extension agents, animal disease experts and division representatives. At these meetings, detailed biosecurity guidelines were distributed for use by producers and livestock owners on and off their farms. Links to USDA, foreign agricultural agencies, and all information available through NJDA were posted to the department's website.

West Nile Virus

West Nile virus (WNV), a foreign mosquito-borne equine disease that can be fatal to many species, including both humans and horses, first surfaced in the Northeast in FY00, with 63 clinical cases of equine WNV reported from seven Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic states from mid-August through October. Of these, 23 died or were euthanized, a very high mortality rate.

In FY01, NJDA continued its participation with the New Jersey Departments of Environmental Protection and Health and Senior Services on the state's WNV task force. In addition to developing a plan for equine testing and reporting for 2001, NJDA veterinarians traveled the state speaking to a variety of audiences to help educate the public and government agencies about concerns specific to the equine industry.

The department also expanded its outreach efforts to help veterinarians and equine owners minimize mosquito breeding areas and enhanced its animal health laboratory testing capabilities to better protect the Garden State's equine population.

Key to the outreach effort was a cooperative project with Rutgers/Cook College and the state's 4-H program. Trained students acted as NJDA's "ambassadors" to provide information to their fellow horsemen about ways to minimize the chance of WNV infection on farms and at competitions. They also distributed educational materials at county fairs and livestock shows.

NJDA's veterinarians worked closely with USDA to expedite the field safety trial required prior to release under conditional licensure of a newly-developed WNV vaccine. The drug was expected to be released in August 2001. As part of the WNV task force, NJDA implemented a plan developed in the spring of 2000 to help identify and diagnose the virus in horses.

During the year, staff veterinarians consulted with private veterinarians in more than 100 cases resulting in over 330 laboratory tests in 81 cases and provided field support in 28 case investigations. In addition, NJDA veterinarians retrieved over 1,000 blood samples from nearly 800 horses on 65 farms in an effort to begin identifying risk factors that might be mitigated in the years ahead to provide better protection against WNV infection.

In New Jersey this season, 28 horses in 11 counties developed clinical signs of infection while an additional 15 horses on the affected farms and five horses from control farms developed antibodies to the virus without showing any sign of illness. Eight of the 28 horses with clinical signs did not survive the infection.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

For over a decade, NJDA has contracted with the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to conduct tissue tests for violations of drug residue regulations in meat animals. Building upon that relationship, this year the FDA contracted with the department to conduct inspections of feed mills, renderers, and protein blenders in the state to ensure that these operations are aware of and in compliance with the federal bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) mammalian protein feeding ban rule enacted in 1997. The rule listed certain proteins or tissues acquired from slaughtered ruminants that must not be incorporated into feedstuffs destined for cattle, sheep, goats or other ruminants.

Contagious Equine Metritis

Contagious equine metritis (CEM), a highly contagious disease of the reproductive system of horses, has not yet made its way into the United States and NJDA works to keep the disease at bay through its CEM quarantine facility in Long Valley. All horses entering the country for breeding purposes must enter a quarantine facility before traveling in the United States and the NJDA center is the first of its kind in New Jersey.

The animal health laboratory, in partnership with the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station and supported by a grant from the New Jersey Equine Association, has been working to improve the speed and accuracy of testing methods for the detection of the CEM organism. New Jersey breeders and equestrians bringing valuable Warmblood horses into the United States from countries such as Germany, the Netherlands, Ireland, and Great Britain for eventual use in breeding programs or equine competitions find the Long Valley location convenient and NJDA's services cost-effective and accurate. New Jersey tested 78 horses in its facility during FY01.

DOMESTIC DISEASES



Laboratory Services

In addition to preparing specimens and coordinating testing for some foreign animal diseases, NJDA's animal health laboratory conducts a wide variety of tests to support domestic livestock disease control programs, including veterinary bacteriology, virology, serology, gross post mortem exams, 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 and western equine encephalitis, West Nile virus, equine influenza, Lyme disease, Potomac horse fever, herpes virus, and equine viral arteritis.

New Jersey's bovine practitioners depend on the laboratory to test for diseases such as bovine viral diarrhea, parainfluenza, infectious bovine rhinotracheitis, brucellosis, and Johne's, among others.

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

Johne's Disease

NJDA continued its participation in a voluntary Johne's disease control program for New Jersey dairy farmers in an effort to control this debilitating, bacterial gastrointestinal disease. Control of Johne's disease can boost producer profits by an estimated \$200 per cow every year through increased, better quality milk production and fewer early culling losses.

The cooperative effort among NJDA, Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE), and dairy producers focuses on herd testing and identification of Johne's-positive animals using blood test and fecal cultures, both of which are processed in the NJDA laboratory. In the four years the program has been offered, over one-third of the state's 140 dairy herds have been enrolled.

A secondary focus of the program is the development of an individualized herd plan for each producer. The plan helps identify and remedy high-risk areas for Johnne's transmission to calves and young stock.

Avian Influenza

Avian influenza (AI) viruses have been studied for years and the devastating impact of the highly pathogenic forms of this virus on both poultry and human health has been documented around the world. Recently, the low pathogenic forms of AI, routinely present in New Jersey's live bird markets, have been targeted by USDA and the poultry industry because of emerging evidence that these strains can mutate to the more virulent forms at any time.

NJDA has had regulations in place for decades to address AI. However, the threat of conversion to more virulent forms has necessitated increased surveillance and controls. As part of this effort, NJDA has been part of a task force, the Live Bird Market Working Group, examining with the producers and bird dealers possible ways to eliminate the low pathogenic forms in New Jersey markets. The group includes members representing USDA, state agriculture agencies, and the industry in New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware.

Pseudorabies Virus

Pseudorabies virus (PRV) is a very contagious swine disease that can also affect cattle, sheep, goats, and, in rare instances, horses. It causes production losses, reproductive problems in breeding and finishing hogs and death in piglets. In 1989, USDA established a PRV eradication program and recently accelerated the program to support eradication efforts.

In 1998 New Jersey was nearing a federal declaration of PRV-free status, but outbreaks of the disease on farms in Gloucester and Cumberland Counties presented a set-back. Thanks to immediate intervention by NJDA and help from USDA, New Jersey successfully eradicated the virus from affected premises. Through required continuous testing, NJDA will soon be able to give USDA the needed information to support the declaration of PRV-free status for the Garden State.

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DAIRY & COMMODITY REGULATION

The Division of Dairy and Commodity Regulation serves many facets of the agriculture industry.

One of its primary goals is to help retain a healthy economic environment for a viable, competitive dairy industry where consumers are assured of adequate supplies of milk at reasonable prices.

In other activities, the division administers the Jersey Fresh Quality Grading Program and the commodity inspection and grading programs to help ensure a constant supply of high quality, properly labeled fruits, vegetables, eggs, poultry, red meat, 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.

Under the commodity licensing and bonding programs, the division offers economic protection for New Jersey farmers who sell milk, fresh fruits and vegetables, live poultry, hay, grain and straw to dealers and brokers on a credit basis. 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.

Through inspection, sampling and laboratory analysis of animal feed, fertilizers and liming material, the agricultural chemistry program protects crop yields and promotes animal growth.



THE DAIRY INDUSTRY

New Jersey's dairy industry includes dairy farmers, animal breeders, dairy cooperatives, milk handlers, processors, distributors and retail stores, all of which are served by the department. The state's 143 commercial and six institutional dairy farms produced just over 240 million pounds of milk

valued at \$36 million in FY01. New Jersey dairy farmers also produced heifers, cull cows, calves, grain, hay and other agricultural items, including breeding supplies such as embryos and semen.

Maintaining the Viability of Dairy Farms in the Garden State

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

In FY01 the department provided a \$150,000 grant and staff support for the New Jersey Dairy Self-Help Program. The effort is a continuation of the Garden State Milk Quality Initiative begun in 1996 as a joint effort with Rutgers Cooperative Extension to help dairy farmers improve milk production and quality. This program, recommended by the New Jersey Dairy Task Force in FY97, works with 65 (approximately 46 percent) of New Jersey's dairy producers around the state, as well as four regional dairy cooperatives, six milk processing plants, 13 milk haulers and 14 veterinarians.

A key component of the program is collection of bulk tank samples that indicate milk quality and herd productivity. On farms where results suggest a herd health problem, samples are taken from each cow. The quality of milk produced by herds in the program has continued to increase since the program's inception.

The financial management program, launched in the winter of 1998, has helped 20 producers complete in-depth analyses of net worth, cost of production, and cash flow. Several of the participants have used their data to obtain new financing for herd expansion and capital improvements such as new barns, milk parlors and machinery.

Dairy Licensing, Bonding and Enforcement

In keeping with the statutory mandate to maintain competition among New Jersey milk marketers, the department licensed 9,890 milk dealers, milk processing plants and retail stores. The department collected \$75,330 in fees and \$7,719 in penalties during FY01.

Among the services provided by the department, NJDA licenses and bonds milk dealers to assure payments to producers, disseminates information needed by the milk industry and mediates disputes within the milk processing and distribution industry. Field investigators conducted inspections of 1,700 retail outlets to ensure that they were licensed and adhering to the milk control laws and regulations, especially with regard to false or misleading advertisements.

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.

In administering the New Jersey School Milk Purchase Law, NJDA monitors transactions between the state's public schools and school milk dealers. Approximately 10,000 copies of the school milk price report are distributed to schools and milk dealers each year. The report contains milk price information that allows each school district to track changes in monthly milk prices and reconcile their milk purchase bills and payments. This process helps minimize milk price disputes between schools and milk dealers.

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 ensure 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 more than 80 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 US No. 1. The use of the Jersey Fresh logo on wholesale and consumer packages requires a license from the Quality Grading Program. This fiscal year 228 growers enrolled in the Quality Grading Program and more than 157 million pounds of product were packed under its guidelines.

This inspection standard adds quality assurance 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 with high quality products stand out in an increasingly competitive regional and national marketplace.

As part of NJDA's continuing effort to increase the commodities that are marketable under this program, this year Jersey Fresh maple syrup was being evaluated through a pilot program. Also being evaluated under a pilot program was the ability of packing facilities located outside of the state to properly segregate and pack New Jersey-grown potatoes and tomatoes.

Third-Party Food Safety Audits

NJDA's recently-developed third-party audit program is available to growers and shippers of fresh produce who are required to show buyers that they are growing, harvesting, packing and handling their products in a safe and sanitary manner. Division staff are also certified to perform inspections under national Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point guidelines for those producers who need these inspections to market their products.

Over the past year, division staff have been working with the USDA/Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) and the Association of Fruit and Vegetable Inspection and Standardization Agencies to develop a national third-party audit program. The national program is largely based on the New Jersey program and is expected to be in operation as early as October 2001.

New Jersey State Organic Program

In anticipation of implementation of the New Jersey State Organic Program, and in compliance with the National Organic Program rules, the division has been working with the Northeast Organic Farming Association-New Jersey (NOFA-NJ) to assure that the state's current organic farmers and others can participate in this program if they so choose.

The NOFA-NJ Certification Committee, which includes NJDA representatives, meets regularly to review organic farm and organic processor inspection reports. After review, eligible organic operations are certified as organic and may market under the NOFA-NJ seal.

At the beginning of this fiscal year, NJDA entered into a cooperative agreement with USDA/AMS for

the allocation of organic certification cost-share funds. This federal program will make funds available for reimbursement to production operations inspected and certified and/or inspected and receiving renewal of certification through October 2002. Each production operation is eligible for a reimbursement of up to 70 percent of its certification costs, not to exceed \$500.



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 FY01, the program collected over \$1.2 million in fees for services rendered.

Inspections performed for the poultry industry certified 1,051,247 cases of shell eggs as Grade A while 36,562,115 pounds of poultry also met specified standards. Over 303 million pounds of liquid or frozen egg products and more than six million pounds of dried egg product were processed under departmental inspection supervision.

The division's inspection and grading unit also worked with growers, shippers, receivers and processors of fresh produce marketed through inter- or intrastate commerce. Inspections were made at shipping point on 41,807,100 pounds of produce, including most fruits and vegetables grown commercially in New Jersey, in order to ensure that they met specific standards. Terminal market inspections were also performed on 66,689,000 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables received from other growing areas.

Tomato processing facilities contracted with the department for grading of nearly 43,593,720 pounds of tomatoes to ensure that they met grower-processor contract specifications.

Even the youngest consumers in the state benefited from NJDA's inspection efforts as inspectors at several plants certified 451,440 pounds of poultry under USDA specifications for use in the federal school lunch program.

The fish and fisheries products inspection program, operated in cooperation with the United States Department of Commerce, enables the department to provide a broad range of inspection and grading services to New Jersey's commercial fishing industry. These include plant sanitation surveys, product quality grading and export certification. During FY01, 11,357,030 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 live poultry, fresh fruits, vegetables, or hay, grain and straw to dealers and brokers on a credit basis. Commission merchants, dealers and brokers who purchase from New Jersey producers on a credit basis must be licensed and bonded under this program. The amount of security required is based on the value of their purchases and covers in part non-payment claims filed by New Jersey farmers. Licenses were issued to 107 produce dealers, 19 hay, grain and straw dealers, 14 shell egg dealers and three live poultry dealers. Bonds totaling \$4,071,397 were received and posted by the division.

Agricultural Chemistry

It is estimated that more than 67,100 tons of animal feed, over 280,500 tons of fertilizers and 340,000 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, 915 feed, fertilizer and lime manufacturers and distributors registered with NJDA. Field inspections covered 10,247 lots of feeds, fertilizers and liming materials to determine compliance with labeled guarantees. Of the 346 feed samples and 558 fertilizer samples collected for laboratory analysis, just over two percent of the feed samples and 15 percent of the fertilizer samples failed to meet the minimum nutrient levels stated on their labels. Of the 11 liming materials sampled, three failed to meet the nutrient content for which they were labeled. Label or registration violations found during field inspections resulted in those items being removed from sale.

Through the agricultural chemistry program, a total of \$84,856 in registration fees and \$115,228 in tonnage inspection fees were collected. In addition, penalties totaling \$17,139 were assessed for fertilizer, feed and lime content violations, of which \$2,734 was refunded to farmers and \$14,405 was transmitted to the State Treasury.

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2001 New Jersey Agriculture Annual Report

MARKETS

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. In addition, the division is home to the Bureau of Child Nutrition which oversees the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs as well as several other nutritional programs for New Jersey's school-age youngsters.



JERSEY FRESH

Creating consumer awareness of and preference for Jersey Fresh farm products and promoting domestic and international sale of the Garden State's agricultural products is an important part of NJDA's mission.

Fiscal year 2001 provided \$1.16 million for the Jersey Fresh advertising and promotional program. The funding helped to create a marketing environment that reinforced the Jersey Fresh image among New Jersey consumers, and expanded the message into the New England and Eastern Canadian markets, major buyers of the Garden State's agricultural products.

From early spring through late fall, more than 40 million households saw three new 30-second television commercials on network and cable stations in the tri-state region and New England. Departing from the farm/agricultural producer slant of the previous year, the new commercials presented the Jersey Fresh message from a consumer's point of view, stressing the theme "Pick the Best - Jersey Fresh." Each commercial followed seasonal products from harvest to market to the consumer's table.

Jersey Fresh also sponsored summer weekend traffic reports for the shore areas of New Jersey, encouraging travelers to stop at a local farm market on their way home from the shore.

Print advertisements ran in major newspapers and magazines serving the tri-state area to alert consumers to the produce in season throughout the summer. In addition, print ads ran in national trade papers to remind produce industry buyers of the New Jersey farm products available as the growing season progressed.

Consumers were more easily able to find Jersey Fresh produce in their favorite supermarkets, thanks to Jersey Fresh point-of-sale materials that were distributed to more than 775 retail locations in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and New York, and to many farm markets around the state. The colorful price cards, bin wrap, aprons, hats, stickers and posters helped shoppers zero in on locally-grown, freshly-picked fruits and vegetables throughout the long growing season.

Jersey Fresh booths were prominent fixtures at national and international marketing venues such as the Produce

Marketing Association convention, the Food Marketing Institute's annual convention in Chicago, Canadian Grocery Showcase 2000, and several regional chain store-sponsored trade shows. Those retail buyers who visited the New Jersey pavilion came away with the Jersey Fresh Buyers Guide, a booklet created specifically for these audiences that listed all growers who participate in the Jersey Fresh Quality Grading Program, a separate quality assurance effort administered by NJDA's Division of Dairy and Commodity Regulation.

An important companion to the primary marketing effort is the Jersey Fresh Matched Funds program which enables eligible agricultural organizations to apply for matching grants that can be used for additional localized promotions under the Jersey Fresh banner. This year, 89 New Jersey agricultural organizations shared \$250,000 in state matching grants that yielded well over \$500,000 worth of additional Jersey Fresh exposure.

Among the promotional events partially funded by the matching grant program were the 16th annual Vineland Jersey Fresh festival, the City of Margate's celebration of the New Jersey agricultural industry, a driving hazard for the annual National Driving Championships held in Gladstone as well as county fairs, wine tastings, and food show events throughout the season.

Another important outlet for Jersey Fresh products is farm markets. In addition to continued support for rural farm stands, NJDA partners with a variety of community organizations to support the resurgence of urban farmers' markets. These popular community markets provide additional sales opportunities for farmers and offer a welcome hub for municipal revitalization efforts. In 2000 there were 40 urban farmers' markets around the state.

Farmers' markets are a critical source of fresh fruits and vegetables for some of the state's nutritionally-at-risk populations. More than 110 roadside markets and 35 farmers' markets statewide have joined the WIC/Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP), a federally-sponsored program run jointly by NJDA and the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services. Under the program in FY01, approximately \$500,000 worth of FMNP checks were issued to over 10,000 Head Start children, pregnant or nursing women in nine targeted cities and other locations. The coupons were redeemable at participating farm stands and markets, providing these families with an excellent opportunity to include fresh fruits and vegetables in their diets.

EXPORT DEVELOPMENT

By providing training, trade leads, financing leads and marketing expertise, NJDA helps the state's food processing companies and farm producers make the most of international marketing opportunities.

One way to draw attention to New Jersey products is through participation in domestic and international trade shows visited by both foreign and domestic buyers. Year round, NJDA works closely with state, federal and regional export development agencies to encourage and underwrite exhibits and provide venues for small companies to reach international markets.

In FY01 NJDA sponsored exhibits in three major international venues: Grocery Innovations/Canada, a retail food and produce industry trade show in Toronto; SALIMA in Prague, Czech Republic, the largest food show in Central Europe; and US Food Export Showcase in Chicago, Illinois, the country's largest supermarket trade exposition and America's largest international trade show for food and agricultural products.

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

MARKET NEWS

NJDA's Market News Service is a federal-state cooperative venture designed to provide a readily accessible source of unbiased and reliable market information for the state's growers and shippers. Because access to accurate, current marketing information helps New Jersey growers to be more competitive, the Market News Service collects price and supply information from the major blueberry, nectarine and peach growers and shippers in New Jersey and distributes it to state growers, farm marketers and county agents via FAX, email and recorded phone messages. This data is also transmitted to USDA offices in Washington, DC, which relay it to all Market News offices in the United States.

Over 700 USDA Market News reports can be accessed through the internet at www.ams.usda.gov/marketnews. The site also features a 15-month archive of reports, enabling interested parties to research more than a year's worth of data in PDF format. These reports cover local, regional, national and international markets for fruits,

vegetables, grain, livestock, poultry, eggs, dairy products, tobacco, cotton and specialty crops.

FAIRS AND SHOWS

The 20 agricultural fairs certified by NJDA hosted over two million visitors in FY01. Agriculture, agribusiness and agricultural education play an important part in each fair and NJDA continues to offer organizers technical assistance as well as special exhibits and promotional materials.

NEW JERSEY JUNIOR BREEDER PROGRAM

The Junior Breeder Program is a revolving loan program created through private endowment in 1921 for the sole purpose of loaning students the funds they need to acquire livestock for educational projects. With the recent resurgence of interest in agricultural education, the program has been revitalized and once again serves as a source of capital for young New Jerseyans who are 4-H members, students in agricultural education classes or members of FFA. This year, the Junior Breeder Program hosted its first-ever Livestock and Equine Youth and Volunteer Symposium, drawing more than 300 participants to a day-long series of educational seminars.

EQUINE PROGRAMS

Horse Breeding and Development Program

NJDA's Horse Breeding and Development Program and the New Jersey Equine Advisory Board support the state's pleasure horse industry through a variety of programs, including breeder incentive awards, youth programs, educational clinics, Girl and Boy Scout badge programs and other events designed to promote the entire equine industry. The Equine Advisory Board is composed of 64 members representing 29 different breed organizations and agricultural interest groups.

In FY01, the Horse Breeding and Development Program also distributed \$118,500 to owners and breeders of pleasure horses in the Garden State through the New Jersey Bred All Breed Horse Show and the Non-Racing Breeder Awards program. Funding for this program comes from a portion of the pari-mutuel handle on horse races in New Jersey.

Horse Park of New Jersey at Stone Tavern

The Horse Park of New Jersey at Stone Tavern, a 147-acre exhibition, competition and educational venue in Monmouth County, is the result of a unique partnership between the New Jersey Departments of Agriculture and Environmental Protection and private not-for-profit organizations.

The Horse Park, operated under contract with NJDA by a not-for-profit corporation, has hosted nearly two million visitors and competitors in the past 13 years, proving to be one of the area's most important economic assets.

In FY01, the Park hosted 72 days of equine activities from late March through November. Highlighting the season was the completion of the 150' by 300' covered work area that will enable the Park to broaden the scope of its activities and extend its calendar with little concern for inclement weather.

New Jersey Sire Stakes

Since its inception in 1971, the New Jersey Sire Stakes Program has encouraged the breeding of Standardbred horses, the trotters and pacers familiar to harness-racing fans. To be eligible to the New Jersey Sire Stakes program, an owner must purchase or breed a foal sired by a New Jersey registered stallion. That stallion must have been registered with the Standardbred Breeders & Owners Association of New Jersey and must conform to the rules of the New Jersey Sire Stakes.

During the 2000 racing season, the program revamped its racing program, replacing the former Fair racing program with a Green Acres program. The aim of the Green Acres series is to offer a racing venue to the New Jersey-sired trotters and pacers who may not be the caliber required to compete in the Pari-Mutuel series.

In its inaugural season, the Green Acres program enjoyed tremendous success and popularity among horsemen, racetracks and fans. The Green Acres program offered 49 events that were contested at Freehold Raceway and Garden State Park and awarded \$810,847 in total purse money, an increase of \$302,838 over total purses paid in

the last year of the Fair program.

The racetracks hosting these races welcomed the Green Acres events as they provided the tracks with very competitive races, which were mostly carded on the wagering program. With the great success enjoyed in 2000, an additional leg of Green Acres races is planned for next racing season at the Meadowlands.

The New Jersey Sire Stakes and related programs had a total value of \$9,151,895 in FY01. In addition to the \$810,847 in Green Acres events, over \$5.7 million in Sire Stakes purses was distributed at the pari-mutuel racetracks. The remaining \$2,568,247 was awarded in New Jersey restricted overnight (non-stakes) races.

New Jersey-sired Standardbreds consistently win harness racing's highest annual honors and the 2000 racing season proved to be no exception. **Bettors Delight**, sired by **Cams Card Shark**, was voted Two-Year-Old Pacing Colt Champion of the Year. Among his victories were the prestigious Breeders Crown for his class and the Governor's Cup.

Day For Night, a three-year-old trotting filly, also earned the national championship in her class. Sired by **Donerail**, **Day For Night** was victorious in the Matron Stakes, the Simcoe Stakes, the Bluegrass Stakes, the New Jersey Sire Stakes Championship Final and in elimination races of the Hambletonian Oaks and Breeders Crown.

New Jersey-sired yearlings continued to bring top dollar at the fall yearling sales. In 2000, a total of 863 New Jersey-sired yearlings were sold at public auction for a total of \$33,230,700, a per-yearling average of over \$38,500, nearly twice the national average. Of the New Jersey-sired yearlings sold at public auction, 82 brought more than \$100,000 each, with ten of them selling for more than \$200,000 each. The top public sale price paid for a yearling in 2000 was \$450,000 for a colt sired by **Malabar Man** who stood his 2000 season at Perretti Farms in Cream Ridge.

CHILD NUTRITION FUNDING PROGRAMS

NJDA's Bureau of Child Nutrition (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 programs are the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Special Milk Program, After School Snack Program, Child and Adult Care Feeding Program, Family Day Care Feeding Program and the Summer Food Service Program.

Together these programs administered more than \$235 million in federal and state funds and served more than 182 million meals and supplements through participating sponsors statewide in FY01.

In addition, with \$2.38 million appropriated in the FY01 budget, BCN continued its aggressive campaign, "Food for Thought," to encourage all school districts to participate in the School Breakfast Program. This campaign included bus panels, billboards, television and radio commercials as well as advertisements in all major newspapers and educational magazines serving New Jersey.



New Jersey is one of only three states in the nation to provide a state subsidy for school breakfast. In FY01, 56 new schools joined the program making over 40 percent of the state's schools full participants in the breakfast effort.

In cooperation with Rutgers University, BCN also received a two-year \$200,000 Team Nutrition Training Grant from USDA to implement three specific projects:

- √ to improve the nutritional quality of meals served to school children throughout the state;
- √ to initiate classroom nutrition education activities in targeted schools; and
- √ to build a statewide infrastructure of agencies and organizations to sustain child health and nutrition promotional activities in the state.

BULK FOOD DISTRIBUTION PROGRAMS

NJDA's Food Distribution Bureau administers programs to distribute federally-donated commodities. These foods reach over 700 eligible school districts, summer feeding programs, institutions, and needy populations each month. For the past several years, NJDA has taken full advantage of all available foods by accepting New Jersey's fair-share entitlement, plus a substantial amount of bonus donated foods, and once again exceeded its acceptance goals for all program categories in FY01.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program

During FY01, The Emergency Food Assistance Program's (TEFAP) donated food program was bolstered by additional food as a result of federal budget increases for the USDA. These additional foods were allocated over and above New Jersey's \$2.1 million entitlement. With all bonus and reallocated foods tallied, New Jersey's entitlement reached \$7.4 million, providing nearly 12 million pounds of TEFAP foods, an increase of 3.6 million pounds over FY00.

Included among the 80 different TEFAP foods distributed were canned fruits, peanut butter, rice, instant dry milk, pasta, cereal, fruit juice, frozen meats and canned vegetables. Distribution is coordinated through seven non-profit emergency feeding organizations that serve the state's food bank and pantry systems. These foods helped these congregate feeding sites serve more than 250,000 of the state's neediest citizens.

In addition to canned, frozen and dried foods, an increased amount of fresh fruits and vegetables were included in TEFAP commodities. To ensure that these nutritious products were properly stored and handled, NJDA worked with the New Jersey Department of Corrections and the national Produce Marketing Association to develop workshops for food bank personnel. Workshop topics included factors affecting the shelf life of fresh produce and how to evaluate product quality.

Institutional Feeding Programs

NJDA also received over 26 million pounds of USDA foods worth over \$19 million for use in other programs, including the school lunch program, which provided monthly allocations of frozen, canned and dry foods to more than 2,200 schools feeding over 500,000 students daily around the state.

To facilitate the use of these products, NJDA worked with 31 commercial food processors to process approximately five million pounds of food into more easily used, cost-effective and oven-ready products such as hamburgers, sandwich steaks, pizza, and a variety of turkey and chicken products. The school districts select foods to be processed into oven-ready products before the start of the new school year which encourages competitive pricing among processors and improves both delivery time and product consistency. The 30 percent increase in this program compared to last year is a direct result of the tremendous savings in preparation times and purchase costs local school districts enjoy through the project.

To showcase this valuable program NJDA sponsored the second annual Processed Food Show this year. More than 285 district food service directors, food service management companies and school buying cooperatives were able to meet with 28 approved processors to discuss their products and discover how the processing service would benefit their school foodservice operations.

The school lunch program was further enriched by NJDA's participation for the sixth consecutive year in a fresh fruit and vegetable purchase through the US Department of Defense. More than \$400,000 worth of fresh produce, much of it locally grown and Jersey Fresh, was procured for student lunches.

All of the federally-donated foods NJDA receives, warehouses and distributes move through a commercial warehouse and trucking system that includes two separate warehousing operations and a variety of local carriers to pick up and deliver the commodities. NJDA supported this commercial distribution system through a user fee/per case charge. In FY01, this fee was increased for the first time in more than eight years from \$2.15 per case to \$2.35 per case. In addition, a per-case charge of \$1.45 was reinstated for schools and other institutions

who purchase foods processed through this program. The revenue generated through these fees paid all costs associated with the department's administration of the school lunch food distribution program.

Because of its excellent track record, NJDA was one of 13 food distribution agencies in the nation selected to participate in the USDA's National Commodity Re-engineering Pilot Project aimed at improving the national commodity distribution program. Through the pilot, NJDA will evaluate and implement a series of chicken processing and distribution concepts for federally-donated foods used in the National School Lunch Program. This project will evaluate such issues as standard product yields, use of commercial labels, and internet-based distribution/school ordering systems.

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PLANT INDUSTRY

The Division of Plant Industry's goal is to safeguard New Jersey's plant resources from injurious insect and disease pests, a goal made more challenging by the globalization of the world economy. Through its detection, inspection, eradication and control programs, the division helps to ensure that farmers and others who buy and sell plants and plant products enjoy high quality, pest-free products.

The division oversees programs that certify that plant stock for interstate and international shipments is free of plant pests, conducts surveys for new plant pests, protects forested communities from defoliation and tree loss caused by the gypsy moth, inspects honeybees for harmful bee diseases and pests, regulates the quality of plant seeds, and produces and releases beneficial insects to reduce crop and environmental damage and decrease dependence on chemical pesticides.



BIOLOGICAL PEST CONTROL

Under the Division of Plant Industry's biological control program, exotic and native beneficial insects are raised for release into the field to control invasive agricultural, forest and environmental pests. Many of these pests have come in from other states or nations and have no natural enemies to control their numbers. The biological control program identifies nature's own defenses and helps to establish them to control these insect and disease pests. Biological control of insect and weed pests reduces the need for chemical controls and minimizes pest resistance to existing pesticides while protecting crops, forests and valuable environmental habitats. Biological controls also allow native populations of beneficial insects to increase, putting more pressure on the pest population.

This year, the Division of Plant Industry conducted five biological control programs which required laboratory rearing of beneficial insects for release into the field. The goal was to reduce specific pest populations below economically significant levels and to establish new beneficial insect species in the state. The beneficial insects are released into the environment only after thorough review to ensure that their release will not be detrimental to the environment. The four major continuing insect-raising programs were:

- √ beneficial wasps that attack the Mexican bean beetle (MBB), a pest which feeds on soybean, lima bean and snap bean foliage and cannot overwinter in New Jersey's climate. Since 1985, the program has so dramatically reduced the MBB population that no pesticide

applications have been required on any of the state's soybean acreage. This translates into a savings to growers of approximately \$272,000 for FY01. Without this program, chemical treatment costs for control of MBB across the state could total over \$1 million within a few years.

√ two leaf-feeding beetles to combat purple loosestrife, an exotic, aggressive freshwater wetlands plant which is displacing native plants in the state's marshes and threatening animals that depend on those native plants for food and shelter. Large stands of purple loosestrife can reduce groundwater recharge, decrease water storage capacity of a wetland, and jeopardize the health and vitality of the ecosystem. During the spring of 2001 beetles were recovered at all but one of the 53 previous release sites, proving that they could survive through New Jersey's winter weather. Dramatic reductions in the pest weed were noted at several locations where native plants are once again reclaiming territory. The division also sold the beetles to other entities for use in similar efforts around the state.

√ a beetle that feeds on the hemlock woolly adelgid, a pest that has devastated thousands of acres of native hemlocks in the state. Chemical controls are not easily applied to native hemlock stands because they are often located in inaccessible terrain and contain a dense foliage canopy that limits the effectiveness of aerial application. Observations at many of New Jersey's release sites have verified the establishment and effectiveness of the beetles against the adelgid population. As part of a cooperative agreement with the USDA's Forest Service, NJDA supplied beetles to other cooperating northeastern states for inoculation of field sites and as laboratory starter colonies.

√ a predatory beetle and two parasitic wasps that feed on euonymus scale which plagues many varieties of ornamental plants in New Jersey. The three new insects have been introduced because an established ladybug has shown limited ability to control the scale. The new beetle shows promise but work continues with the parasitic wasps.

The fifth major effort is a pilot program involving production of a parasitic insect to control tarnished plant bug (TPB), a pest that feeds on a broad range of plant species including forage crops and fruit. A strong laboratory colony of the TPB parasite has been established and the focus now shifts to establishing the species in central and southern New Jersey.

Additional programs included gypsy moth parasite evaluations and field production of a fly that feeds on Canada thistle, a weed pest of cultivated crops and pasture.

PLANT PEST SURVEYS

NJDA's continued participation in the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey Program, a cooperative effort between USDA/Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service/Plant Protection and Quarantine Program (APHIS/PPQ), state universities and state departments of agriculture throughout the nation, grows more critical every year. In FY01, surveys were conducted to detect chrysanthemum white rust and the Brown garden snail, both of which seem to be under control in the Garden State, as well as the potentially economically-devastating foreign pests, Asian long-horned beetle and plum pox.

The **Asian long-horned beetle**, a foreign cerambycid beetle discovered in North America in New York in 1996 and in Chicago in 1998, poses a threat to the forests of the northern United States. Live larval stages of the Asian-long-horned beetle, were found in wood crating in a warehouse in Linden, resulting in placement of insect traps in and around warehouses in New Brunswick, Hackensack, Moonachie, Carlstadt, Plumstead, Cream Ridge, Allentown, Englishtown, Imlaystown, Kearny and Cedar Grove. These are sites where other types of exotic adult beetles were found or which receive high-risk cargo. Trap results for Asian long-horned beetle were negative.

Although live adult and larval stages of other foreign cerambycid beetles have been found and eradicated in packing materials shipped from China and offloaded in New Jersey warehouses, there is no evidence that they have spread to other locations.

Plum pox virus affects stone fruits (peaches, nectarines, plums). Previously known to occur only in the Mediterranean, the Middle East and Chile, it was recently found in stone fruit orchards in Pennsylvania and Canada. This viral disease could have serious repercussions for New Jersey's stone fruit industry since infected trees produce unmarketable fruit and decline in vigor.

As a result of the Pennsylvania discovery in 1999, APHIS/PPQ initiated a national Plum Pox Surveillance Program and allocated \$74,000 for the program in New Jersey in 2001. Department inspectors collected foliage samples from stone fruit nurseries, and from orchards that purchased budwood from nurseries served by the affected Pennsylvanian and Canadian growers.

Field collections were made throughout the state yielding 23,499 samples representing 3,503 acres from 44 stone fruit growers, one stone fruit nursery and two ornamental nurseries. The department's Plant Laboratory used ELISA tests to analyze the samples all of which were negative for the virus. The Plum Pox Surveillance Program will continue in 2002.

GYPSY MOTH SUPPRESSION

The gypsy moth is New Jersey's most serious insect pest of shade and forest trees. Over the past 30 years there have been three major cycles of the pest and there are signs that gypsy moth infestations are on the rise, threatening vast areas of northern New Jersey with heavy defoliation and potential tree losses. As a result, NJDA has increased its control efforts to reduce the pest's impact in forested residential areas and recreational forests.

The voluntary gypsy moth suppression program is conducted in partnership with the USDA's Forest Service and municipal governments. NJDA uses aerial and ground survey techniques to locate gypsy moth-infested residential areas; prepares an environmental impact statement that enables participating municipalities to qualify for federal reimbursement of 50 percent of the treatment costs; and supervises aerial treatments each spring using the non-chemical insecticide, *Bacillus thuringiensis* (B.t.).

In the spring of 2001, 8,500 acres in 23 municipalities throughout the state were treated, a 95 percent increase in treated acres compared to the previous year. Treatment costs averaged less than \$16 per acre.

Gypsy moth defoliation rose by about six percent from 132,762 acres in 2000 to 140,838 acres in 2001. More than 90 percent of the damage was in Bergen, Hunterdon, Monmouth, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex and Warren Counties.

INSPECTION SERVICES

Nursery Inspection

All nursery stock sold in New Jersey or exported to other states or countries is required to be free of injurious pests, ensuring that ornamental plants purchased by consumers are healthy and do not contain pests that could spread to other plants. To this end, in FY01 nursery inspection staff inspected more than 16,100 acres in 858 nurseries to certify



freedom from dangerous insects and diseases and certified 598 garden centers and landscape firms as plant dealers.

In addition, NJDA inspectors issued 369 state and 112 federal phytosanitary certificates enabling export of plants and plant material to other states or countries.

Vegetable Transplant Inspection

During the spring of 2001, division staff inspected approximately nine million vegetable transplants -- primarily leek, escarole and endive as well as cabbage, collard and Swiss chard -- that were shipped into the state from Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and Pennsylvania for use by New Jersey farmers. The quality of plants shipped was good and no lots were rejected. Thanks to this program, the state's vegetable growers receive high quality transplants that are free from plant diseases or insect pests.

Apiary Inspection

With hundreds of millions of dollars worth of crops dependent on pollination by bees and other insects, out-of-state bee colonies are imported to augment the work of native colonies each spring. In FY01, NJDA inspectors reviewed more than 10,000 imported colonies to validate the sanitary certificates issued by the shipping states.

New Jersey's domestic honeybees were hard hit during the winter of 2000-2001 with losses of about 60 percent in domestic colonies. Dry weather during the summer and fall months yielded a poor honey crop in the fall of 2000, resulting in inadequate food reserves and limited production of young bees to survive through the winter.

SEED CERTIFICATION AND CONTROL

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

A total of 454 samples of vegetable, turf grass and field crop seed were tested in NJDA's plant laboratory in FY01. These samples included 147 lots of agricultural, vegetable and turf grass seed

analyzed to determine seed quality and germination standards as established by the New Jersey Seed Law. Approximately five percent of the samples collected from seed dealers or growers contained violations involving noxious weed seed that was not noted on the label, germination rates that were below label claims, or incorrect labeling as to variety. Penalties were levied against these seed companies.

Farmers and others requested vigor testing on another 294 samples in order to make planting decisions. This service provides valuable information to growers who must decide which seed lots would perform well if planted early and which would not. Reports from farmers using the testing service indicate that the vigor test results reliably predicted germination percentages observed in the field.

In addition, samples were taken from 13 lots of certified turf seed representing almost 60,000 pounds of seed shipped to New Jersey from other states. These samples were tested to determine eligibility for use in the interagency certified seed program. Seed sold under this program is certified to meet high standards of genetic identity and purity. Under strict supervision by the Division of Plant Industry, seed wholesalers mixed a total of 36,000 pounds of high quality turf seed for use by sod growers.

Conservation plant material developed by USDA continues to play an important role in preventing beach erosion through coastal soil stabilization. New Jersey plant growers entered 30 acres of conservation plant material in the certification program. A variety of soil conservation plants were inspected at the Cape May Plant Materials Center for distribution to growers in New Jersey and throughout the Northeast.

PLANT LABORATORY SERVICES

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

In FY01 plant laboratory staff continued to monitor the quality of seed sold by seed companies directly to farmers and golf courses, the state's two largest purchasers of expensive seed. Germination tests as well as analysis for troublesome or noxious weeds were conducted on the samples submitted to the laboratory with results indicating that generally high quality, accurately labeled seed is sold directly to purchasers.

The laboratory also filled nearly 50 requests from farmers for vigor testing of sweet corn and pepper seed. Vigor testing can be used to differentiate seed lots from each other on the basis of their ability to survive or flourish in less optimal growing conditions. The vigor testing information provided to farmers helps them to better manage planting times as well as growing and seed storage conditions.

The laboratory supported the apiary inspection program through the analysis of bees for Varroa and tracheal mites and testing for American foulbrood, a bacterial disease of bees. This year laboratory staff initiated a new type of test that determines whether Varroa mites have become resistant to fluvalinate, the pesticide widely used by beekeepers to control the pest. To date, no resistant mites have been detected in New Jersey hives. In a similar vein, laboratory staff are investigating ways to screen Bacillus larvae, the bacterium that causes American foulbrood, for resistance to terramycin, a popular control for the disease.

In addition, the laboratory continued testing for aflatoxin, fumonisin, vomitoxin, zearalenone, and T-2, mycotoxins that contaminate livestock feed and can be lethal to farm animals. Because each species of farm animal has a different threshold of tolerance for a particular mycotoxin, test results were quantified in parts per billion or parts per million and reported to the county agricultural agents who then helped farmers develop feed mixtures that mitigated the effects of the mycotoxins.

NEW JERSEY AGRICULTURAL INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

In FY01 the New Jersey Agricultural Invasive Species Council began its work with 12 members representing the State Board of Agriculture, the New Jersey Farm Bureau, and the nursery, fruit, grain and forage, turfgrass, vegetable, aquaculture, livestock and organic farming industries. In addition, advisory members were appointed representing NJDA, the New Jersey Department of Transportation, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA/APHIS/PPQ, and Rutgers University research and extension programs. The Council immediately began development of an agricultural invasive species management plan for the Garden State.

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RURAL RESOURCES

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 FY01 the division administered policies and programs to conserve and develop the state's soil, water and related natural resources and to establish close interdepartmental cooperation on issues including non-point source pollution control, waste management and water resources.

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

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

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

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



NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

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

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

State Agricultural Conservation Cost-Share Program

FY01 was the third year of the Agricultural Conservation Cost-Share Program (CCSP), which provides technical and financial assistance to implement agricultural conservation projects that enhance water quality. The state's \$2 million in CCSP funding was a companion to the \$660,000 federal Environmental Quality Incentives Program .

Of the 244 project applications submitted for more than \$5 million worth of projects, 64 projects with the greatest anticipated environmental benefits were selected. Of these, 20 applications representing \$1.1 million in livestock management projects were funded along with 44 soil and water management projects representing \$729,000 worth of improvements.

The majority of the remaining funding underwrote technical assistance through cooperative agreements with NRCS and three conservation districts serving as regional agricultural service centers.

Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Act

Based on the latest edition of the Standards for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control, an intensive two-day training program was conducted for professionals who work with site development and erosion control. The training addressed techniques and procedures outlined in the Standards for control of stormwater and erosion to prevent non-point source pollution on new construction sites. Seven of the 42 standards provide for post-construction water quality enhancement. These are the technical core of a statewide multi-agency water quality best management practice (BMP) manual currently being developed. When published the BMP manual will be the technical guide for a statewide stormwater management program.

During the year, SCDs processed over 4,000 applications for soil erosion and sediment control measures on 35,000 acres of land under development. District staff also conducted nearly 72,000 site inspections to assure compliance with plan requirements. In conjunction with this program, 500 applications for stormwater discharge permits for construction activities involving disturbances of five or more acres of land were processed.

Watershed Management Planning

The SSCC coordinated a \$2.5 million grant, initiated in 2000 and targeted to three locations in six central and southern New Jersey soil conservation districts. In the Burlington, Camden, Gloucester and Cape-Atlantic Districts, the SSCC initiated a multi-watershed study to examine many aspects of management and planning including water quality, best management practices, stormwater planning for future development and model stormwater management ordinances for municipalities. Sophisticated hydrologic and hydraulic engineering models are among the products of the study which covered 125 square miles (80,000 acres).

An agricultural non-point source pollution control project was undertaken in cooperation with a Cumberland County container nursery producer. The project included installation of several permanent and temporary water quality monitoring stations along the Upper Cohansey River to document the water quality benefits of an irrigation water recovery system installed at the nursery. The study will showcase the ability of this system to recycle irrigation water that carries fertilizers and pest control materials to the nursery stock.

The SSCC also coordinated with the Freehold SCD on a watershed management study of the Parker's Creek section of the heavily-developed Shrewsbury River Watershed. The study will examine various best management practices for improving water quality there.

Non-Point Pollution Control Demonstration Project

In Watershed Management Areas 17 & 18, encompassing Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem Counties, the SSCC approved 14 non-point pollution control demonstration projects. Of these, 10 are livestock management efforts and four are soil erosion and nutrient management projects. Funding for this demonstration project was provided by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The projects were prioritized according to anticipated environmental benefits and are being implemented cooperatively by the SCDs, NRCS and DEP.

Agricultural Conservation Plans

Through continuing programs carried out in cooperation with NRCS, conservation plans were developed for nearly 25,000 acres of farmland. Land treatment practices installed on more than 3,000 acres of land prevented the loss of 24,000 tons of productive soil. In addition, conservation tillage techniques were used on almost 3,500 acres of farmland to reduce soil loss from wind and water erosion. Nearly 450 acres of conservation buffers and grazing land management practices and 18 animal waste management systems were installed.

Urban Area Conservation

Through the Urban Conservation Action Partnership, a federal-state pilot program serving Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Morris, Passaic and Union Counties, \$80,000 worth of complex natural resource management projects in urban communities got under way and others were completed. Implemented jointly by the SCDs for those counties, the SSCC and NRCS projects included installation of riparian buffers, public access, stream bank stabilization and public education and outreach in Cranford, Dover, Morristown, Newark, Rahway and Westfield.

FISH AND SEAFOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The focus of the Fish and Seafood Development Program is to ensure that the Garden State's commercial fishermen and aquaculturists are prepared to take advantage of the increasing demand for fish and seafood products at home and abroad. Program staff worked throughout FY01 to expand local and global markets for New Jersey products and to create a business-friendly, environmentally-sound foundation for the fledgling aquaculture industry.

Aquaculture Development

FY01 saw great progress in the development of aquaculture industry regulations that are coordinated and streamlined for the industry's easy implementation while at the same time maintaining the integrity of the environment.

Key to this effort is the development of an aquatic organism health management plan to prepare for possible disease outbreaks and establish a reporting protocol for potential health issues. The plan is designed to mesh with a nationwide quality assurance program and statewide agricultural

management practices for aquaculture that are now being developed.

Agriculture departments in Maryland and Pennsylvania have joined New Jersey to develop an aquaculture market newsletter. Information such as data on prices, product size and form, volume and points of origin of farm-raised products will be collected on a bi-weekly basis from Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey and Washington, DC, to provide an accurate picture of the demand for farmed products. Modeled after the market news services for traditional agriculture products, it is hoped that the aquaculture market newsletter will provide an incentive for production as well as a record for business plans and financial transactions.

Domestic Marketing and Promotion

Throughout the year, department staff participated in a variety of events and promotions to help consumers gain a familiarity with fish and seafood products especially those that are harvested in the Garden State, and demand for the Jersey Shore Cookbooklet remained high. Jersey Shore seafood television advertisements aired seasonally on food and lifestyles shows such as "Martha Stewart Living" and "Emeril Live."

In addition, over 1,000 consumers took advantage of a series of dock tours at Viking Village on Long Beach Island. The tours gave consumers the chance to learn more about American fisheries, how those fisheries fit into the overall global food supply and the steps that are being taken to help ensure that fisheries are sustainable and resources are available for generations to come.

A major component of this year's outreach/education program was a series of programs aimed at the foodservice community. Designed to broaden domestic markets and generate a greater appreciation for locally-harvested and farmed fish and seafood products, the programs were conducted at venues such as the New York Restaurant Show, the Mid-Atlantic Foodservice Expo and the Northeastern Chapter Meeting of the American Culinary Federation. The Seafood Suppliers Directory was distributed at each event and more than 1,000 restaurant professionals participated in a survey to measure attitudes toward farm-raised fish and seafood. This research is an important tool for local wholesalers trying to develop marketing plans.

Export Marketing

While export markets for fish and seafood products continue to grow, market demand has shifted. From 1999 to 2000, sales to NAFTA countries decreased by over 46 percent while sales to Pacific Rim and other Asian countries skyrocketed by over 6,500 percent and sales to Eastern Europe and the former Soviet republics grew by over 790 percent.

To help position New Jersey companies to take advantage of these dramatic market shifts, NJDA has worked closely with trade missions and buyers from around the world and cooperated with the New Jersey Commerce and Economic Growth Commission to make sure New Jersey's fish and seafood industry was represented at variety of major overseas trade shows, particularly in China and other Asian nations. As a direct result of these export promotion activities, participating New Jersey fish and seafood exporters gained more than \$1.3 million in sales. In addition, over two-thirds of the trade leads provided to the commercial fishing industry resulted in sales while more than one-quarter indicated that they have opened new markets and/or developed new products as a direct result of participation in trade shows or through other linkages facilitated by NJDA.



RURAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

The division's agriculture and rural development program provides services, programs and special projects that promote the economic growth and vitality of New Jersey agriculture and agribusiness. The services include 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, and interstate trucking regulations for agriculture.

State Sales Tax Changes

As part of a multi-year effort, NJDA continued to work with the state Department of Treasury's Division of Taxation and the New Jersey Legislature to bring about changes that have an economic benefit to the agriculture industry. This year sales tax exemptions were achieved for farm production services used directly and primarily in producing an agricultural commodity, such as tilling, spreading lime and applying pesticides. In addition, containers used on the farm, including pallets, are not subject to sales tax nor are materials used to construct greenhouses, grain bins, manure-handling facilities and silos.

Nursery and Greenhouse Film Recycling

For the fifth consecutive year, NJDA facilitated the collection, bundling and recycling of used nursery and greenhouse film generated by Garden State farmers. Three county recycling facilities and one private recycling firm participated in the collection efforts. Together, the four sites were able to recycle almost 168 tons of used film, maintaining New Jersey's status as a national leader in recycling used agricultural film. Since the program was first implemented in 1996, more than one million pounds of used film has been kept out of state landfills.

Agricultural Education/FFA

NJDA's Office of Agricultural Education continued to implement the vision and goals outlined in the strategic plan for agricultural education through the national "Reinventing Agriculture Education for the Year 2020" initiative. Classroom/laboratory instruction, supervised agricultural experience (work-based learning) and the FFA experience are required components of quality agricultural instruction programs, providing a well-rounded, practical approach to learning while helping schools meet the state's core curriculum content standards.

Through classroom instruction students in secondary high school agricultural courses study topics such as plant and animal science, horticulture, agri-marketing, and natural resources for further

career development or science graduation credit. Supervised agricultural work experiences enable students to apply classroom training in a vocational setting. The FFA gives its members local, state and national opportunities to develop career and leadership skills, connecting the classroom and workplace experiences through incentive awards and scholarships for excellence.

During the 2000-01 school year, FFA membership held steady at over 2,000 students in 38 chapters statewide. Once again, more than one-quarter of them participated in the four leadership development conferences sponsored by NJDA. The conferences encourage development of leadership skills and include training in teamwork, goal setting, communication and leadership.

Nearly two-thirds of the state's FFA members participated in two dozen career/skill development events as well, testing their knowledge and abilities in areas such as agricultural mechanics, sales, business management, dairy cattle, equine, floriculture, forestry, natural resources and the environment, nursery/landscape, poultry and turf management. These events help prepare students not only to meet the state's core curriculum content standards and cross-content workplace readiness standards but also for careers in their areas of interest.

State Plan

NJDA continued to be active in the state planning process throughout the year. The Rutgers Center for Urban Policy Research conducted an impact assessment on the Interim State Plan and issued a report indicating that, with or without a State Plan, New Jersey could expect 908,000 additional people, 802,500 new jobs (not including self-employment or agricultural jobs) and 462,500 new households over the next several years. However, with the Plan it is anticipated that the state will save billions of dollars in road and sewer costs and 122,000 acres of land, including 68,000 acres of farmland.

Each Cabinet-level agency represented on the State Planning Commission designated a State Plan implementation team to coordinate state agency decision-making with the State Plan. The mission of NJDA's team is to increase awareness of agriculture as an industry; to ensure the economic viability and equity protection of agricultural operations in New Jersey; to serve as a coordinated agricultural information resource to the industry and other agencies; and to identify opportunities for agricultural economic development through the implementation of the State Plan's goals and objectives.

Throughout the final review phase of the cross-acceptance procedure, NJDA staff has focused on the importance of agricultural policies and the implementation of innovative planning techniques in the rural and environmentally-sensitive areas of the state.

NEW JERSEY AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

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

The New Jersey Agricultural Statistics Service (NJASS), a cooperative program between NJDA and USDA, is the primary source of statistical information on the agriculture sector in New Jersey. This year approximately 160 statistical surveys were conducted to provide estimates of crops, livestock including poultry and dairy, commodity prices, labor, chemical usage, and related economic farm characteristics.

In addition, NJASS published estimates for 10 field crops, 17 vegetable crops, five fruit and berry crops, and eight 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. Several publications, available to the public, are prepared each year summarizing the latest information including New Jersey Weekly Digest, Farm Facts, Fruit and

Vegetable Crops, Cranberry Statistics, and Blueberry Statistics.

In addition to the continuous estimation program, NJASS makes its survey and processing capabilities available to meet the special needs of the agriculture community. This service is particularly critical when accurate and timely data must be gathered for the administration of disaster relief programs at both the state and county level.

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State Agriculture Development Committee

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



FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM

As the result of increased funding under the Garden State Preservation Trust Act, the SADC expanded farmland preservation efforts into new urban and suburban areas of the state. A record-setting 126 farms covering 14,006 acres were permanently preserved under the Farmland Preservation Program in FY01, surpassing the previous record of 82 farms covering 11,648 acres set the year before. As of June 30, 2001, a total of 582 farms covering 80,381 acres had been permanently preserved.

Most farms are preserved through purchase of development easements from landowners. Although they sell the easements, and thereby give up the right to use the land for anything other than agricultural purposes, they continue to own and pay taxes on the land. Traditionally, most landowners have sold their easements to their counties which, in turn, apply to the SADC for grants covering 60-80 percent of the cost of the development easements.

In September 2000, the SADC approved the preservation of 40 farms totaling 3,306 acres in the second of two county funding rounds held in that calendar year. In June 2001, the SADC approved grants to counties to help preserve an additional 98 farms totaling 8,475 acres, including the 218-acre Sun Valley Farm in Mahwah Township, the first Bergen County farm approved under the Farmland Preservation Program.

The Garden State Preservation Trust Act authorized the SADC to establish a number of new

programs, which were fully implemented in FY01. Newly enabled to purchase development easements directly from landowners, the SADC approved the purchase of development rights on 25 farms totaling 2,097 acres in September 2000.

Responding to a continued high demand for the new direct easement purchase program, the SADC subsequently approved the direct purchase of development easements on 132 farms covering approximately 12,700 acres statewide.

The Garden State Preservation Trust Act also authorized the SADC to award up to 50 percent cost-sharing grants to non-profit organizations that preserve farmland. As a result, the SADC approved grants to assist five non-profit organizations in the preservation of 13 farms totaling 1,735 acres.

Municipalities and counties seeking to preserve large, contiguous blocks of farmland are turning increasingly to another new program, the planning incentive grant program. This program helps towns and counties preserve farmland in designated project areas.

In May 2001, the SADC awarded the first grant under this program to Monmouth County to assist in the preservation of 240 acres of farmland in Roosevelt Borough and Millstone Township. The SADC granted preliminary approval to another 25 applications in FY01, representing 463 farms and 24,359 acres. In the two years since the establishment of the planning incentive grant program, counties and municipalities have submitted a total of 43 applications to preserve up to 856 farms totaling more than 50,000 acres. At the close of the fiscal year, planning incentive grants were active in 25 municipalities and seven counties.

Purchasing farms outright --rather than buying only the development easements --is another important way the SADC can preserve farmland. Through direct purchase from willing owners, the SADC saves those farms in the most imminent danger of being sold for development. Once the SADC purchases a farm, it deed-restricts the land to ensure that it will always be available for farming, then re-sells the preserved farmland through public auction back into private ownership. The SADC directly purchased six farms totaling more than 730 acres during FY01.

The 276-acre Strang Farm in Alloway and Mannington Townships, Salem County, purchased directly by the SADC in FY00, was auctioned to private owners in FY01. The property includes a house circa 1864 named by Preservation New Jersey as one of the ten most endangered historic sites in the state. In a landmark "first" for the Farmland Preservation Program, the property was auctioned with deed restrictions that preserve both the agricultural and historic value of the farm.

A total of 1,653 acres of state-owned lands were permanently preserved through the conveyance of development rights to the SADC in FY01. The 571-acre Jamesburg Farm in Monroe Township, Middlesex County, and the 1,082-acre Bayside State Prison lands in Maurice River Township, Cumberland County, were entered into the Farmland Preservation Program as a result of these transfers.

EIGHT-YEAR PRESERVATION PROGRAM

Farmland owners may choose to restrict development on their land for a period of eight years. Although they do not receive any compensation for this temporary restriction, participation in the eight-year program makes them eligible for certain regulatory benefits and enables them to apply for cost-sharing grants for up to 50 percent of the cost of soil and water conservation projects on farms.

In FY01, the SADC approved 27 new farms totaling 1,435 acres for entry into the eight-year program and six farms totaling 273 acres for renewals. At year's end, a total of 394 farms covering 30,425 acres were protected through the eight-year preservation program.

PRESERVATION FUNDING

The Garden State Preservation Trust Act, which was signed into law in 1999, dramatically increased funding for farmland preservation. In FY01, for the second consecutive year the Garden State Preservation Trust approved \$80 million in new funding for farmland preservation projects.

In June the SADC also received a \$765,600 federal grant to assist New Jersey in its farmland preservation efforts. The grant from the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service was the third highest in the nation and was the fourth grant awarded to New Jersey through the USDA's Farmland Protection Program. Previous federal grants to New Jersey totaled \$2.6 million.

SOIL AND WATER COST-SHARING GRANTS

Landowners in the permanent and eight-year preservation programs may apply to the SADC for 50 percent cost-sharing grants to fund approved soil and water conservation projects. These projects, including irrigation, drainage, erosion control and water control systems, help protect soil and water resources while increasing farm productivity and profitability. In FY01, the SADC approved \$977,655 million in grants to help fund 81 soil and water conservation projects.

FARMLAND STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

To help ensure that permanently preserved farmland remains productive, the SADC began development of a Farmland Stewardship Program that will assist farmers in maintaining the viability of their preserved farms. The pilot program will provide 50 percent cost-sharing grants and technical assistance to landowners to help promote and ensure the economic success of preserved farmland.

The SADC will provide grants for projects designed to enhance farm profitability as recommended by a team of agricultural and financial experts on a farm-by-farm basis. Typical of expected projects are conversion from one type of production to another, improvements to production efficiency and diversification of marketing opportunities.

RIGHT TO FARM PROGRAM

In agricultural areas where development is increasing, new residents or local governments may be unfamiliar with responsible farming practices that are essential to a vital agricultural industry. The Right to Farm Act provides eligible farmers who operate responsibly with protection from restrictive municipal ordinances and public and private nuisance actions. A critical aspect in obtaining right to farm protection is adherence to agricultural management practices (AMPs) that have been adopted by the SADC. In FY01, AMPs concerning on-farm composting and fencing for wildlife control were developed.

The Right to Farm Act gives jurisdiction in resolving complaints against agricultural operations to county agriculture development boards and, ultimately, to the SADC if the decisions of the county boards are appealed. Two decisions by the Superior Court's Appellate Division in FY01 -- one involving a Franklin Township, Hunterdon County, greenhouse grower and the other a farm market operator in Holmdel Township, Monmouth County -- supported this key provision.

In FY01, 80 right to farm cases were referred to the county or state levels of the Right to Farm Program, up from 71 the year before. Three of these cases were referred to the SADC's new mediation program which is designed to help farm operators settle farm and credit issues while avoiding time-consuming and costly legal proceedings. The SADC adopted rules for the mediation program in March 2001 and the first case under the new program, a dispute between neighboring farmers, was successfully mediated in May 2001.

TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS BANK

New Jersey's Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Bank is located in, but not of, the SADC, which

serves as staff to the TDR Board of Directors. The Bank provides financial and other assistance to landowners and to municipalities that enact TDR ordinances. TDR programs are designed to encourage a shift in growth away from agricultural, environmentally-sensitive or open space regions of a municipality to more appropriate areas. Landowners in areas where land use is restricted are able to sell their development rights or development "credits." Purchasers of these credits may use them to build elsewhere in a designated growth area at a higher density than normally allowed in a town's zoning ordinance.

The TDR Bank maintains a statewide registry of land protected through the transfer of development rights. In FY01, approximately 650 acres were preserved or approved for preservation through the Chesterfield Township, Burlington County, TDR program. Previously, 563 acres had been preserved through the Lumberton Township, Burlington County, TDR program.

FARM LINK PROGRAM

The SADC's Farm Link Program matches potential buyers and sellers of farmland. The program is useful for those who want to expand their operations or start farming, and also for farmers or landowners who would like to ensure that their land stays in agricultural production but have no family members who want to continue to farm. At the end of FY01, more than 300 participants were enrolled in Farm Link with most of them interested in purchasing farms.

The program also serves as a clearinghouse for a variety of information, including availability of preserved farms for sale and business resources and contacts. Both preserved and unpreserved farms are tracked through Farm Link. In addition, the program helps non-profit organizations, municipalities and counties to find buyers for farms that they have preserved and are seeking to resell with permanent deed restrictions.

In FY01, the Farm Link Program joined the Growing New Farmers Consortium Project, which brings together service providers to new farmers in 12 Northeastern states.

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- [Cash Receipts, 1995-2000](#)
- [Average Prices Received by Farmers, Monthly, 1995-2000](#)
- [Value Added to the U.S. Economy by the Agriculture Sector Via the Production of Goods and Services, 1995-2000](#)
- [Value Export Shares of Agricultural Commodities, Fiscal Year, 1996-2000](#)

Certified Nurseries

- [Number of Certified Nurseries and Acres in Nursery Stock, 1996-1999](#)

Farms and Land-in-Farms

- [Number of Farms, Land in Farms and Average Size of Farms, 1953-2000](#)

Mixed Fertilizers

- [Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2001](#)

Seafood

- [Seafood Top Ten, Caught, 1996-2000](#)

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