

2007 Year in Review

All great things begin with an idea. With hard work and perseverance, those ideas can become reality. The hard work of many years resulted in ideas becoming reality for New Jersey agriculture in 2007. All school districts are serving healthier food in their cafeterias. And, the Department of Agriculture is certifying organic farms and processors.

In addition, hundreds of farmers received food safety training, emergency feeding agencies received much-needed equipment and food to feed more clients, and more farmland was permanently preserved.

While there was much progress, the state battled one of its worst gypsy moth outbreaks in many years and the bee population diminished due to an unknown disorder.



Still, the many achievements made 2007 a successful year for agriculture. Some major objectives accomplished were:

☑ School Nutrition Policy

After four years, all school districts have adopted and implemented the state's school nutrition policy, lowering fat and limiting sugar in school cafeterias throughout New Jersey. The policy was supported by Governor Corzine and the Legislature and in February, the Governor signed into law a bill that requires all public schools in the state and non-public schools that participate in Child Nutrition Programs to comply with the policy.

☑ Hunger Initiative

Almost 4 million pounds of additional food was donated to hungry New Jersey citizens under Governor Corzine's Hunger Initiative. Countless pieces of equipment, such as refrigerators and freezers, were given to local food pantries and soup kitchens with infrastructure funding from the initiative.

☑ Produce Safety

More than 800 New Jersey farmers received food safety training and training to prepare them for third party audits of their facilities and practices to ensure the highest quality in their products. A federal grant was applied for and awarded that will be used to develop a mock audit system to prepare growers to undergo third-party audit certification.

☑ **Organic Certification** The United States Department of Agriculture accredited the New Jersey Department of Agriculture to conduct organic certifications, allowing more oversight for the quality and integrity of organic products produced in the state. New Jersey received a federal grant to defray the costs of annual organic certification for growers.

☑ **Agritourism**

New Jersey's agritourism industry was shown to be coming on strong as a major economic force with the release of a new study. The study showed that agritourism generated \$57.5 million in revenue for the state's farmers in 2006.

☑ **Farmland Preservation**

New Jersey continued its commitment to preserving farmland, with 178 farms covering almost 11,000 acres newly preserved in 2007. By the end of the year, a total of 162,335 acres had been preserved statewide since the inception of the program.

☑ **New Markets**

Eight new community farmers markets opened in New Jersey in 2007. In total, more than 95 community farmers markets attended by approximately 265 farmers operating in nearly 83 municipalities, providing farmers throughout the state with direct marketing opportunities and consumers with access to fresh produce.

☑ **Building the Brands**

The Department continued to promote what is grown and harvested in the state with its *Jersey Fresh*, *Jersey Grown* and *Jersey Seafood* brands.

The outlook for the future of New Jersey agriculture is encouraging. New Jersey's agricultural operators saw their cash receipts rise for the third straight year in 2006, a 6 percent increase over 2005, from \$873,507,000 to \$923,933,000, according to National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) data released in 2007. In the same time, cash receipts dipped 1 percent nationwide and 3 percent in Northeastern states from Maine to Delaware. These upward economic trends, versus downturns elsewhere, bode well for the future of New Jersey's agricultural industry.

2007 Accomplishments

Goal 1: Preserve Farms

Permanently preserve and retain the maximum amount of New Jersey farmland to maintain a viable agriculture and food industry, and promote smart growth and a high quality of life for New Jersey citizens.

Farmland Preservation Totals -- A total of 178 farms covering 10,788 acres were newly preserved in 2007, including 42 farms covering 2,377 acres in the Highlands and 2 farms covering 626 acres in the Pinelands. By year's end, a grand total of 1,646 farms covering 162,335 acres had been preserved statewide since the inception of the program, including 321 farms covering 27,803 acres in the Highlands and 59 farms covering 8,833 acres in the Pinelands.

SADC Implements New Farmland Preservation Rules -- The SADC in 2007 acted to implement new and amended rules, adopted July 2nd, that streamline the Farmland Preservation Program. Key changes include establishment of a new County Planning Incentive Grant Program as an alternative to the traditional county grants program. The new County PIG Program encourages counties to undertake a more comprehensive planning approach to farmland preservation and rewards those that expeditiously complete acquisitions with the potential for additional funding. Fifteen counties opted to participate in the new County PIG Program in FY2009, and one county – Cumberland County – has applied to the traditional county grants program. The rules also establish minimum eligibility criteria for any of the SADC's permanent preservation programs.

The rules will simplify regulatory and administrative procedures, and improve the efficiency of the preservation process while retaining the same high level of public accountability.

Farmland Preservation Funding -- Governor Corzine in October ceremonially signed into law five bills that provide \$97.125 million for farmland preservation acquisitions in FY 2008, including \$45.15 million to assist counties in preserving farmland under the county grants program; \$15.375 million to help municipalities and counties preserve

Governor Corzine signs farmland preservation legislation at November 1 ceremony in Monroeville.



farms in project areas they identified under the municipal planning incentive grant program; \$6 million for grants to nonprofit organizations and \$30.6 million for the SADC to directly acquire farmland or the development rights to farms. The legislation also provided for \$782,734 for soil and water conservation grants to assist

landowners in undertaking soil and water conservation projects on farms enrolled in permanent or eight-year preservation programs.

The Governor also used the Gloucester County event to urge passage of a \$200 million bond referendum to continue funding for farmland, open space and historic preservation, and for the purchase of flood-prone properties through the Blue Acres Program. Voters in November approved the measure by a 54-46 percent margin. Of the \$200 million approved, \$73 million will be used to fund FY2009 farmland preservation efforts.

Equine Rules Proposed -- The SADC in July proposed three rules that would extend right-to-farm protection to equine service activities, such as boarding, keeping, rehabilitation and training of horses, as well as complementary equine activities that meet certain conditions; establish an agricultural management practice (AMP) for equine activities that sets the standards with which equine farms would need to comply to be eligible for right-to-farm protection; and clarify the equine activities that are permitted on preserved farms and the conditions under which those activities will be permissible. At the close of the year, the SADC was reviewing public comments in response to the proposal and expected to take action regarding adoption in early 2008.



Commercial Nonagricultural Uses on Preserved Farmland -- At year's end, the SADC was reviewing public comment in response to its proposed rule that would implement legislation providing for commercial nonagricultural activities and cellular towers on preserved farms under certain circumstances. The rule, proposed July 16th, sets forth the eligibility, information required, evaluation criteria, review process and conditions to obtain a special permit to erect a cell tower or conduct a commercial nonagricultural use on a preserved farm. The SADC expected to take action regarding adoption in early 2008.

Keeping Preserved Farmland Available for Farmers -- To advance the discussion of how to keep preserved farmland available and accessible to farmers, the SADC visited 15 counties to solicit ideas from county agriculture development boards, county boards of agriculture and other interested farmers. Among the ideas discussed was requiring that preserved farmland be kept in agricultural production, rather than available for agricultural production. SADC staff is summarizing feedback from these meetings and will make recommendations to the Committee on how to proceed.

Farmland Preservation Summit -- More than 150 people, representing the broad-based farmland partnership among all levels of government, nonprofits and other interested groups, attended a March farmland preservation summit organized by the SADC and Rutgers University's School of Environmental and Biological Sciences. Topics included discussions of the new farmland preservation rules and how the changes affect counties and municipalities; a federal tax incentive for conservation easement donations; monitoring and other post-preservation responsibilities; recent significant court decisions regarding right-to-farm; and municipal strategies to retain and strengthen agriculture.

Protecting the Environment Through TDR -- The State Transfer of Development Rights Bank and other co-sponsors hosted a conference in June on the use of transfer of development rights (TDR) as a planning tool for environmental protection. Approximately 100 municipal officials, professional planners, environmental commission members and other interests attended the day-long conference, which examined how TDR works, the requirements for implementing a TDR program, the role of various state agencies and how to design attractive, livable and efficient receiving areas to accommodate growth.

County Preservation Milestones --

Several counties celebrated farmland preservation milestones during 2007, including Morris County, which announced the preservation of its 100th farm in October and Middlesex County, which announced the preservation of its 50th farm later that same month. Two counties celebrated the preservation of 10,000 acres – Monmouth County in May and Gloucester County in November, while Hunterdon County announced the preservation of its 20,000th acre of farmland in April and Burlington County marked the preservation of its 25,000th acre in October.



Secretary Kuperus joins Monmouth County Freeholder Deputy Director Lillian G. Burry and Upper Freehold Township Mayor Stephen Fleischacker in announcing the preservation of the county's 10,000th acre at the Ernst Farm.

Goal 2: Protect and Conserve Natural and Agricultural Resources

Encourage and support stewardship of agricultural and urban open land and other natural resources to protect and enhance fertile soils, clean water, and productive and healthy animal and plant resources.

Gypsy Moth Problem Intensifies -- In 2007, New Jersey saw some of the heaviest damage from gypsy moth caterpillars in nearly two decades. Aerial surveys showed that

Aerial photo of gypsy moth defoliation in Jackson Township, Ocean County in 2007.



320,610 acres of residential and forested areas had been defoliated by the caterpillars. This was the largest outbreak since 1990, when 431,200 acres were defoliated. More than 14,000 acres of trees were killed in 2007 due to consecutive defoliation by gypsy moth caterpillars. Thirty-four municipalities and five agencies in 11 counties participated in the 2007 aerial spray program. A total of 62,500 acres were treated in those areas with the insecticide *Bacillus*

thuringiensis, or Bt. Bt is a non-chemical, “minimal risk” insecticide that only kills caterpillars. It does not harm other insects, animals or humans. It lasts only five to seven days before being broken down by natural forces. Indications are that the 2008 infestation will be worse. Egg mass surveys throughout the fall showed that a heavier population of the caterpillars will be present in the spring. The Department is proposing treatments on 112,259 acres of land in 17 counties in 2008, with 87,000 acres requiring second treatments. Information on gypsy moth can be found at www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/pi/prog/gypsymoth.html.

Asian Longhorned Beetle -- In October of 2002, the Asian longhorned beetle was discovered in Jersey City. Five years later, final surveys are being completed to remove the quarantine placed on the area and declare the beetle eradicated. There were 113 infested trees discovered in Jersey City, requiring the city and Hoboken to be quarantined, restricting the movement of firewood, tree trimmings and nursery products. Those 113 trees were removed and destroyed, along with 348 high-risk host trees. The New Jersey Community Forest Program of the state Forest Service replanted 433 of those trees with funds from the United States Forest Service. In 2004, a separate infestation, not related to the Jersey City infestation, was discovered in Carteret, Middlesex County. The infestation involved 616 trees and required the quarantine of an area encompassing seven municipalities: Clark, Roselle Borough, the City of Elizabeth, Linden, Rahway, Carteret and Woodbridge. In addition to the 616 infested trees, 20,903 at-risk host trees were removed. Again, working with the Department of Environmental Protection and

U.S. Forest Service, 4,977 trees were replanted. Surveys in the Middlesex/Union County quarantine zone are continuing. No infested trees have been discovered since April of 2006.

Disaster Declaration -- Drought, high temperatures and a hail storm with high winds during the summer growing season caused the United States Department of Agriculture to designate nine counties in the state as primary natural disaster areas, making farmers in those counties and contiguous counties eligible for low interest loans from the USDA's Farm Service Agency. Hail and high winds on August 17 damaged crops in Hunterdon County. Farmers in Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Ocean and Salem counties experienced crop loss due to hot, dry weather beginning in June and throughout the season. In addition to the emergency loans, FSA also offers a variety of programs, in addition to the emergency loan program, to help eligible farmers recover from adversity. The disaster declaration gives farmers until July of 2008 to apply for relief.

Audubon Mini Loan Program Grant -

- The New Jersey Department of Agriculture partnered with the New Jersey Audubon Society (NJAS) to encourage farmers to undertake conservation projects to protect soil and water resources and increase productivity and profitability on their farms. The Department awarded NJAS with a \$50,000 grant for its mini-loan program that provides farmers in the state with funding to assist them in



Fencing being installed at Howling Wolf Farm in Hope.

initiating implementation of conservation practices. The Revolving Resource Fund – Mini-Loan Program aids farmers interested in enrolling in existing government-sponsored conservation programs that fund projects that promote agricultural sustainability. Those programs include: Conservation Reserve Program (CRP); Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP); and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP). Farmers must repay their loans with 1 percent interest when they receive USDA reimbursement. Those monies are then put back into the loan fund for use by other farmers. Since NJ Audubon started working more closely with the farming community, NJAS has helped secured approximately \$570,000 of federal and/or state conservation incentive program payments for farmers.

Equine Encephalitis and West Nile Virus -- Three New Jersey horses contracted the mosquito-borne illnesses Eastern Equine Encephalitis or West Nile Virus in 2007. Two horses, one from Ocean County and one from Morris County, were diagnosed with West Nile Virus. The 21 year old Ocean County mare was euthanized, while the 13 year old Morris County gelding recovered from the illness. A six-year-old Atlantic County gelding was euthanized after becoming ill from Eastern Equine Encephalitis. The horse had been vaccinated for the mosquito-borne infection in April. In recent years there has been a decline in the two illnesses. There was one case of West Nile Virus (WNV) in

horses and one case of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) in horses last year. In 2005, there were no cases of WNV in horses and four cases of EEE. That compares with 2003, when there were 150 cases of WNV and eight cases of EEE. Eastern Equine Encephalitis is a rare but serious disease that causes inflammation of the brain tissue and has a significantly higher risk of death than West Nile Virus infection, which affects horses' neurological systems.

Avian Influenza -- The Division of Animal Health continued surveillance for, and preparations to deal with, avian influenza, including participation in multiple drills designed to test the readiness of various agencies and industries to respond to an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza.

Animal Disease Testing -- The Division of Animal Health's Diagnostic Laboratory developed tests for Equine Herpes Virus-1 and Strangles, two common equine diseases that were previously sent to other laboratories for testing. Additionally, the Laboratory has expanded its capabilities to include diseases routinely tested for in household pets. Fees collected from these tests will be used to further improve the laboratory facility.

Animal Disaster Trailers -- After equipping five county offices of emergency

Holly Chmil, the Department's Emergency Management Coordinator gives Ken Mandoli, Hunterdon County CART Director, keys to animal disaster trailer.



management around the state with animal disaster trailers at the end of 2006, the Department of Agriculture in September delivered its sixth trailer to Hunterdon County. The animal disaster response trailer was filled with everything needed to quickly set up a temporary animal shelter during disasters. The six trailers were purchased and stocked using a United States Department of Homeland Security grant given to the Department through the state Office of Homeland

Security and Preparedness. The trailers fulfill a state strategy of having animal disaster resources placed around the state that can be mobilized quickly in emergencies. The five other trailers were given to the Offices of Emergency Management in Burlington, Camden, Hudson, Ocean and Sussex Counties in December, enabling each county's animal response team to respond and provide care for animals in disasters or emergencies. If the need arises, these animal disaster response trailers can be moved throughout the state to provide assistance.

Animal Emergency Working Group Symposium -- Dozens of emergency response personnel donned protective suits, learned how to test birds for avian influenza and were told how to decontaminate themselves and their vehicles after visiting poultry farms during the 10th annual Animal Emergency Working Group (AEWG) Symposium in February in Freehold Township. The symposium focused on preparing for livestock disasters and avian influenza surveillance. The AEWG oversees state and county animal response teams that work in the field during disasters and emergencies. The AEWG

operates under the New Jersey Department of Agriculture's Division of Animal Health and the New Jersey State Police Office of Emergency Management.

Humane Standards of Care -- Despite the Superior Court decision to uphold the rule promulgated by the Division of Animal Health for the humane treatment of livestock and poultry, the New Jersey Supreme Court has granted the appellants request for a review of the lower court decision. The arguments are expected to be heard by the high court this year. Meanwhile, the Division has taken steps, with assistance from its Deputy Attorney General to require that New Jersey and county SPCA's as well as animal control investigators properly inform the Division about all reports of alleged animal cruelty. The Division continues to provide training throughout the state so that all concerned partners and constituents understand what the regulation provides for and requires.

Deer Fence Program -- In its third year, the Department of Agriculture's Deer Fence Program is assisting 36 farmers by supplying them with up to 5,000 linear feet of exclusionary fencing and related materials, designed to keep deer and other damaging animals off of their farms. Out of the 36 recipients, 8 farms qualified as new or beginning farms, a category that was added to the program this year. This enabled farms established since 2000 with farmland assessment and documented proof of \$5,000 in sales of agricultural commodities produced by the applicant on a New Jersey farm to be able to participate in the deer fence program. In the first two years, fence, accompanying wire and posts were distributed to 150 farmers throughout the state.



Farmland Preservation Program -- Eligible farms in the Permanent and Eight Year farmland preservation programs may apply for cost share funding of up to 50 percent of the cost of implementing certain soil and water conservation practices. Through the New Jersey Department of Agriculture and in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Districts implement conservation cost share programs to assist the agricultural community address natural resource conservation needs. In 2007, the State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC) approved, and the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) funded, nearly \$600,000 in projects which, when completed, will ensure that nutrient rich soil remains on New Jersey farmland, does not erode or run off into the streams and rivers of our state. During 2007, almost \$460,000 was reimbursed to farmers who completed conservation practices including low-pressure, low-volume and trickle irrigation systems, underground drainage practices, permanent open drainage projects, water impoundment reservoirs and land grading.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program -- CREP establishes up to 15-year contracts on farms to establish stream buffers designed to reduce sediment, fertilizers and animal waste in agricultural water run-off and thereby improve water quality. This federal/state partnership program would retire cropland for the contract period and plant

it in protective vegetation to enhance water quality. Buffers planted along stream banks and rivers are designed to filter phosphorus, nitrogen and sediments from waterways and reduce biological impairments to the Atlantic Ocean. During 2007, 40 applications were approved for 90 acres of filter strips, 32 acres of grassed waterways, 36 acres of riparian buffers and 2,230 feet of lined waterways. In addition, 20 previously approved projects were completed. These implemented practices included 101 acres of filter strips, 15 acres of grassed waterway, 1.2 acres of riparian buffers and 82 feet of lined waterway.

Conservation Cost Share Program -- CCSP is a state and federal jointly funded program that established long term contracts with farmers from 1999 to 2001 to install a wide variety of conservation practices. The program provided technical and financial assistance. Eligible farmers received cost-share funds to address soil, water and related natural resource concerns and implement environmental enhancements on farmland in an environmentally beneficial and cost effective manner. The program includes structural, vegetative and land management practices. Although the state CCSP program is not currently funded, during 2007 of the state share, obligations were paid to reimburse farmers for implementing projects including filter strips, grassed waterways, critical area stabilization and also resulted in 89 acres of irrigation water management practices, 87 acres of integrated crop management, a pesticide containment facility and an animal waste storage facility.

Farm Conservation Plans -- The NJDA has been working to encourage the DEP to initiate a permit-by-rule approach in their regulations for agricultural activities and uses, whereby the natural resource concerns outlined in a specific regulation be addressed through the development and implementation of a Farm Conservation Plan.

Farm Conservation Plans are site-specific plans that prescribe land treatment and related conservation and natural resource management measures determined to be practical and reasonable for the conservation, protection and development of natural resources, the maintenance and enhancement of agricultural or horticultural productivity, and the control and prevention of non-point source pollution.

Plans can be written to address the National and State Resource Concerns and Quality Criteria outlined in Section 3 of the Natural Resources Conservation Service - Field Office Technical Guide (NRCS-FOTG) that address all natural resource concerns – soil, water, air, plants and animals, including endangered and threatened species. Once the resource concerns are identified, Section 4 of the FOTG identifies over 200 conservation practices that can be implemented to address each concern. We believe that these plans can be used in a proactive way to protect the natural resources on our farms.

Agricultural Recycling -- After expanding the 2007 plastic pesticide container recycling program to two collection sites – in Salem and Cumberland Counties – participation in the program almost doubled from the 2006 program and tonnage collected may have more than doubled. Program participation expanded beyond farmers and included landscapers, golf course groundskeepers and commercial pesticide applicators.



New Jersey Farm Receives Recycling Award -- Johnson Farms, a 2,000-acre nursery and sod farm in Deerfield, Cumberland County, was honored by the state Department of Environmental Protection in October for its aggressive steps to recycle plastic, starting with plastic film. Johnson Farms was one of two businesses in the state to receive an Annual Recycling Leadership award this year. In 2006, Johnson Farms initiated a program to recycle plastic nursery pots and plastic netting.



Dennis DeMatte Jr., Cumberland County Recycling Coordinator and Karen Kritz, NJDA, with Keith McIndoe of Johnson Farms (center).

Beneficial Insect Lab Booklet -- To better highlight the work of the Division of Plant Industry's Phillip Alampi Beneficial Insect Laboratory, a booklet was developed describing the lab's mission. The publication details the long-term benefits of biological control, such as crop protection and protection of natural resources, and the cost savings associated with the program. The booklet can be found at www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/pi/pdf/NJBioControl07.pdf.

Ensuring Disease and Pest-Free Plants -- In 2007, the nursery inspection staff inspected over 18,860 acres in 865 nurseries to certify freedom from dangerous insects and diseases. The list of certified nurseries and plant dealers is posted on the Division's web site www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/pi/pdf/NJWEBDIR.pdf and is updated monthly. The Division's inspectors issued 229 state and 73 federal phytosanitary certificates enabling export of plants and plant material to other states or countries.

Goal 3: Protect Producers and Consumers by Ensuring Safe, High-Quality Agricultural Products and Services

Administer fair and effective regulatory, inspection, grading and other quality assurance programs for food agricultural products and agricultural inputs.

Produce Safety -- Food safety training for fruit and vegetable growers was implemented



in 2007, as the Produce Safety Task Force continued its work to prepare New Jersey growers for changes in safety requirements emanating from the 2006 outbreak of E. coli in West Coast spinach. More than 800 growers were given basic food safety training in a joint effort between the Department and Rutgers Cooperative Research and Extension. In addition, the Department used an \$85,000 Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program grant to develop a “mock audit” system that

will prepare growers to undergo third-party audit certification. Additionally, the Department continued working with the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, New Jersey Restaurant Association and New Jersey Food Council on food safety issues, and provided testimony at a Food and Drug Administration hearing in April in which the Task Force called for national safety standards instead of a patchwork of regional or state-by-state regulations that could make transporting food from one state to another impractical. Near the end of 2007, the Department served as co-hosts, along with United Fresh Produce, of a food safety meeting of growers and brokers at the Philadelphia Produce Terminal, updating participants on the status of retail stores’ requirements for safe produce and the prospects for further tightening of standards. Information on produce safety can be found at:

www.nj.gov/agriculture/news/hottopics/approved/topics070319.html.

Dairy Program -- Recommendations from a series of hearings into dairy pricing in 2006 were implemented in 2007, most notably the fuel adjustment add-on payment to help producers with skyrocketing fuel costs. Begun in February, the premium was paid by processors to dairy farmers based on the cost of diesel fuel. To date, the fuel-adjustment add-on has resulted in an average \$325 monthly additional payment to dairy farmers. The Department in late-November began hearings into the effects of the fuel adjustment add-on to determine if it should stay in place. Those hearings are set to conclude in mid-February 2008 and a decision rendered by the end of that month. While a worldwide shortage of milk led to on-farm prices rebounding from the 25-year lows seen in 2006 to near-record highs in late-2007, increases in the costs of fuel, feed and fertilizer detracted from those healthier payments to farmers, creating continued pressure on producers’ bottom lines.

Organic Certification -- New Jersey became the 17th state in the nation to gain accreditation by the United States Department of Agriculture to offer in-state certification services to farmers and processors who want to enter the organic market in the Garden State. The Department was directed to establish an organic certification program through legislation signed into law in September of 2003. The law required the establishment of certification procedures for “certified organic” and “transitional sustainable” and the designing of a label to be affixed to agricultural products that receive certification. The Department had to endure a rigorous process to receive its accreditation, which allows the Department to certify crops, wild crops, livestock and handling operations to the National Organic Standards. The Department has received 60 farm applications with 2,444 acres of organic production reported, from intensive vegetable growing operations to egg production. It is expected that, in 2008, New Jersey will certify its first organic dairy operation. The Department has received applications from 23 handlers. Products certified include: bread, coffee, drinks, fruit and nuts, gelato, sorbetto, grape tomatoes, gums, herbs, hummos, manicotti, meatballs, milk and heavy cream, pitas/wraps, produce, roast beef, storage, syrup, tea and vegetables.



Matt Conner, owner of Cherry Grove Organic Farm in Lawrence Township, gives Secretary Kuperus a tour of his fields.

Organic Certification Grant -- New Jersey was among 15 states named to share \$1 million in USDA grant money to defray the costs of annual organic certifications, money that is particularly important to smaller farms, such as New Jersey’s, to meet the voluntary uniform standards set by the National Organic Program in order for the farms’ products to be labeled “100-percent organic,” “organic,” or “made with organic ingredients.” The Agricultural Management Assistance Program will allocate funds to the states based on the proportion of organic producers in each state. The states will in turn reimburse each eligible producer for up to 75 percent of its organic certification costs, not to exceed \$500 each.

Farm Safety -- The Department launched a web page providing helpful links to websites and publications to assist farmers in increasing safety on their farms. Farming can be a

dangerous occupation. According to the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), there are 600 farm-related fatalities and 200,000 farm-related injuries in the United States annually. Children are at special risk from farm-related accidents. Many of the more than 100 annual deaths among those 20 and younger on farms result from being innocent bystanders or passengers on farm



Secretary Kuperus gets a tractor safety demonstration from FFA member Adam Wainwright during a visit to N. Burlington County Regional H.S. in March.

equipment. Most of the deaths and injuries could have been prevented by practicing proper safety procedures while using equipment and working on the farm. Agricultural Education programs throughout New Jersey teach young people the proper way to operate what can be dangerous machinery. Farm safety training and awareness can prevent injuries and even save lives. The Farm Safety web page can be found at: www.nj.gov/agriculture/home/farmers/farmsafety.html.

Farm Certification Program (Third-Party Audits) -- In 2007, 32 New Jersey packers/producers successfully completed the USDA - NJDA Good Agricultural Practices/Good Handling Practices Third Party Audits. This voluntary program, operated in conjunction with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), allows growers, packers and shippers of fresh produce to verify to buyers that they are growing, harvesting, packing, and shipping their product in a safe and sanitary manner.

Jersey Fresh Quality Grading Program -- The Jersey Fresh Quality Grading Program had 289 participants for the 2007 growing season. Division staff visited supermarkets in the South Jersey area to encourage produce managers to buy Jersey Fresh whenever possible and to promote Jersey Fresh produce in their stores. The Jersey Fresh Quality Grading Program licenses growers to use the Jersey Fresh logo on their packages. The logo indicates that the contents have been inspected and meet the highest quality standards.



Produce Business Marketing Excellence Award -- The Department received the Produce Business Marketing Excellence Award for its efforts in September and October 2006 to restore consumer confidence in New Jersey-grown spinach after E. coli outbreaks traced to West Coast spinach sparked an FDA call for people to stop eating fresh, bagged spinach and salad containing spinach. The FDA warning came just as New Jersey spinach growers were beginning their fall harvest, and until the FDA clarified its warning, East Coast growers were impacted just as much as the West Coast farms to which the outbreaks were traced. The Department launched a multi-media campaign – both through regular news sources and advertising in newspapers and on radio – to assure consumers that New Jersey spinach was never suspected as a source of the contamination and was safe to eat. This helped growers sell their New Jersey-grown spinach. Produce Business is a national publication covering all facets of the produce industry.

Agricultural Chemistry Program -- These programs are administered to protect farmers and consumers by determining the manufacturer's compliance with the guaranteed content of feed, fertilizer and liming materials and to reduce the amount of misbranded and deficient products offered for sale, thereby ensuring the quality and quantity of these materials and promoting crop yield. The Department collected and analyzed 699 random samples. In cases of deficient product, warnings or penalties were issued. Penalties received for deficient fertilizers are returned to farmers to offset losses that may have been caused by lower-quality product. During the last fiscal year, \$6,429 was refunded to farmers and \$9,268 was transmitted to the state treasury.

Goal 4: Support and Expand Profitable, Innovative Agricultural and Food Industry Development

Foster agricultural economic growth, profitability and a positive business climate through technical and financial assistance, market development, and effective product and industry promotion.

Agritourism Adds Millions to State's Economy -- Agritourism generated \$57.5 million

in revenue for the state's farmers last year, according to a Rutgers University study funded by the Department of Agriculture and Rutgers Food Policy Institute. Agritourism is broadly defined as the business of establishing farms as travel destinations for educational and recreational purposes. Activities include



Hayride to pick apples at Johnson's Corner Farm in Medford.

hayrides, corn mazes, pick-your-own produce, farm stands, school tours, farm festivals, and winery tours. The study was based on a statewide survey conducted by the New Jersey Agricultural Statistics Service. It follows a study released in October 2006 which found agritourism is critical to ensuring the current and future viability of agriculture and that many farms in the state have turned to agritourism as a way to increase revenue. The 2007 study found that more than one-fifth of New Jersey farms offered some form of agritourism, with 43 percent of New Jersey's total farmland associated with farm operations engaged in agritourism. In addition to revenues for farmers, the Rutgers study team found that for every dollar in agritourism sales generated on a New Jersey farm, 58 cents of additional sales is generated in a wide range of other allied businesses, such as restaurants, construction companies and insurance providers. Therefore, agritourism created an additional \$33.3 million in revenue in other non-farm businesses in 2006. That, together with the on-farm revenue, brought the revenue impact of agritourism to the state to almost \$91 million last year.

Farm Gate Receipts and Net Profits -- New Jersey's agricultural operators saw their cash receipts rise for the third straight year in 2006, a 6 percent increase over 2005, from \$873,507,000 to \$923,933,000, according to National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) data released in 2007. Combined with an increase in net farm income over the same period, the data show an improving trend for the Garden State's farmers. New Jersey's cash receipts increases from 2005 to 2006 cut across several categories, and included a 51 percent increase for blueberries, 56 percent increase for sweet corn and 36 percent increase for peppers. However, the state also saw a 21-percent decrease for

tomatoes and a 20-percent decrease for dairy products. In the period from 2003-06, New Jersey's overall farm cash receipts increased by 9 percent, signaling a growth in the prices being paid to farmers. Ornamental horticulture remained the state's leading agricultural sector during that time, followed by vegetables and fruits, equine operations and field crops such as hay. The rise in farm gate receipts compared favorably to a slight downward trend nationally. Nationwide, cash receipts dipped about 1 percentage point, from \$240.7 billion in 2005 to \$239.3 billion in 2006. Regionally, New Jersey's trends also ran counter to those in most neighboring Northeastern states. The member states of the Northeastern Association of State Departments of Agriculture, which covers the eastern seaboard from Maine to Delaware, reported a collective 3 percent decline in cash receipts from 2004-06, according to NASS statistics.

Joe Myers, NJDA Aquaculture Specialist shows retailers how a clam rake is used to harvest clams.



Day at the Dock -- To highlight the state's robust seafood industry, the Department of Agriculture hosted a group of 60 supermarket officials from A & P, Foodtown, Pathmark, Whole Foods, Food Circus and Wakefern/Shop-Rite at Viking Village, a busy fishing dock in Barnegat Light at the northern tip of Long Beach Island, in May for a short course on the state's commercial fishing and aquaculture industries and to see what each has to offer them. New Jersey has 182 licensed aquatic farmers, growing mainly clams, oysters and tilapia – a white-fleshed finfish. During their day at the dock, the supermarket people sampled Cape May Salt Oysters from Atlantic Cape Fisheries and farm-raised Baymen's Pride clams; learned that scallops are a major catch for fishermen; watched as tilefish were unloaded from a fishing boat; and got tips on how to better market the seafood in their counters.

Breeders Cup -- The New Jersey equine industry was honored this year, as Monmouth Park in Oceanport, Monmouth County, hosted the prestigious Breeders Cup World Championship in October. The Breeders Cup is Thoroughbred racing's premier event. Governor Corzine and Secretary Kuperus attended the races, and Jersey Seafood was highlighted during the Breeders Cup Winners Party following the final race.



New Jersey Seafood Challenge -- Peter J. Fischbach, the executive chef and Food Service Director for Gourmet Dining Services at the New Jersey Institute of Technology in Newark, won the 2008 Jersey Seafood Challenge, announced in November, and will represent New Jersey at the Great American Seafood Cook-Off in New Orleans in August. The day-long competition was held at the Academy of Culinary Arts at Atlantic Cape Community College in Mays Landing. Fischbach competed against 10 other professional chefs and the winner of a student competition at the Academy of Culinary Arts in the cook-off sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Agriculture. His winning dishes were his

Winning dish, Nona's Friday Night Fish Feast with clams, lobster and scallops.



signature recipe, pan seared local black bass in a citrus-ginger sauce with sweet potato puree and a sauté of seasonal local produce and his “Down the Shore” platter, which is easy for home cooks to prepare, Nona’s Friday Night Fish Feast. The first runner-up in Jersey Seafood Challenge was Jahvin Carlough of JP Prime Steakhouse in Wildwood, a graduate of the Academy of Culinary Arts. Third place went to the student competition winner, Michael Inferrera, who also is a chef at Caesars-Atlantic City.

Partnership with New Jersey Restaurants and Chefs -- Diners in 2007 were treated to more Jersey Fresh and Jersey Seafood products in restaurants. More than 350 restaurants displayed signs that said, “This restaurant is proud to serve New Jersey produced and harvested products when in season.” The Department helped the chefs from the South Jersey Independent Restaurant Association launch “Farm to Fork Week” in July. Approximately 40 independent South Jersey restaurants participated in Farm to Fork Week, in which each restaurant offered a four-course dinner featuring a unique four-course menu, with each individual dish highlighting a specific locally grown product. Farmers were available at various restaurants during the week to educate diners on the benefits of using locally grown products and provide information on how these products are grown and harvested. Participating restaurants reported that sales tripled during the specialty week compared to the same week in the previous year.

Farm Vehicle Web Page -- To assist the agriculture industry on the various issues surrounding farm vehicles, a new web page was launched in December on the New Jersey Department of Agriculture web site. “Motor Vehicle Laws and Regulations Impacting Farmers” can be found at:

www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/md/prog/farmermotorvehicles.html.

Topics covered on the web page include: farmer plates, farm use and tractor plates and tractor registration exemption, farmer and farm use regulations, commercial drivers licenses, reciprocity agreements, International Registration Plan, Unified Carrier Registration, and International Fuel Tax Agreement.



Live Seafood Directory -- To aid consumers in finding markets and restaurants from



Maine to Virginia that sell their seafood live, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture compiled a directory, “Live Seafood: The Best Test of Quality.” The multi-lingual consumer directory is designed to facilitate sales by helping people find places where they can make live seafood purchases. The directory is the result of a two-year-long survey of consumers, producers, wholesalers and buyers in the Northeast about consumption of live fish, shellfish and other seafood products. The study was conducted by

the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with Rutgers University and

the University of Delaware, and paid for with a \$56,500 matching grant from the United States Department of Agriculture's Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP). The grant's purpose was to help promote the production and consumption of locally grown live seafood products. The consumer directory is available online at: www.jerseyseafood.nj.gov/Ethnic%20Live%20Seafood%20Directory%20web.htm.

In addition, the Department worked with the Sea Grant and College of Marine Science at the University of Delaware to compile and publish a list of producers of live seafood products, both commercial fishermen and aquaculturists, which was produced to make buyers aware of the diversity of domestic production in the Northeast. The Business Network Directory of Live Seafood focuses on, but is not limited to, the Northeast. This guide is available online at: www.jerseyseafood.nj.gov/BusinessNetworkDirectory.htm.

Economic Development -- In an effort to improve the economic return to New Jersey's farmers in the produce, horticulture, seafood, dairy, field crop, livestock, poultry, organic, equine, wine, and the agri-tourism agricultural sectors, 113 out of 121 of the Department's 2007 Economic Development Strategies have been completed or are making progress toward completion. The 2007 Strategies are on the web at: www.nj.gov/agriculture/conventions/2007/strategies.html.

Community Farmers Markets Visits -- Almost 100 community farmers markets were

in operation in New Jersey during the 2007 growing season and Secretary Kuperus and Division of Marketing and Development staff made periodic visits to several markets to stress the importance of buying locally grown foods. To assist with this message, New Jersey celebrated National and State Farmers Market Week in August with Kate Houston, Deputy Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services, United States



Secretary Kuperus and Deputy Under Secretary Houston at the Toms River Farmers Market

Department of Agriculture (USDA) at the Toms River Farmers Market. Over the course of the season, two of the eight new markets, New Providence and Woodbridge, and established markets in Hackensack, Ocean City and Jersey City's Newport Pavonia market were visited. In addition, Secretary Kuperus visited a youth farmstand in Glassboro. The stand, organized by Rutgers Cooperative Extension and funded through a United States Department of Agriculture grant, gives special needs high school students practical business training through operation of the stand, which sells produce purchased from local farmers.

Promotion of New Jersey's Agricultural Sectors:

Christmas Trees -- A new television commercial was launched in late November promoting Jersey Grown Christmas trees. The ad, featuring an illustration of families at a Christmas tree farm after a snowfall, was shown during prime family viewing hours on

Secretary Kuperus cuts a Christmas Tree at Wyckoff's Tree Farm in Belvidere.



such cable stations as Family Channel, Nickelodeon, TNT and TBS. In addition, Secretary Kuperus made his annual visit to the champion of the New Jersey Christmas Tree Growers annual contest, Wyckoff's Tree Farm in Belvidere to cut down a Christmas tree to herald the start of the choose and cut Christmas tree season in the state. He was assisted by Senator Leonard Lance.

Agriculture Tours -- Secretary Kuperus, Assistant Secretary Murray and staff members toured four farms in Cumberland County on June 7. They visited Sheppard Farms' 30 organic acres in Newport, where they were accompanied by Assemblyman Douglas Fisher, Chairman of the Assembly Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee. In addition, they visited Andy's Countryside Farm Market and greenhouses in Millville; Dave Monteleone Farms, a 35-acre farm in Vineland specializing in herbs; and Ploch Farms, a diverse wholesale produce and herb farm in Vineland. Assembly Speaker Joseph Roberts and several other legislators toured Monmouth County farms in July along with the Department and the New Jersey Agricultural Society, which sponsored the tour. They made stops at the Horse Park of New Jersey; Perretti Farms, a standardbred breeding facility in Cream Ridge; Battleview Orchards in Freehold; and Four Seasons Nursery and Landscape in Englishtown. Finally, in August, Secretary Kuperus visited peach farms in Gloucester County – A.L. Gaventa and Sons Farms in Repaupo and Sun Valley Orchards in Swedesboro.



Secretary Kuperus, Assemblyman Doug Fisher and Michele Sheppard at her organic farm.

Dairy Month -- Third and fourth graders at Upper Freehold Regional Elementary School in Allentown celebrated Dairy Month in New Jersey in June by making ice cream by putting milk, vanilla, ice and other ingredients in a bag and shaking it along with Secretary Kuperus, who stressed the nutritional value of dairy while helping about 50 students make the soft-serve vanilla ice cream.



Secretary Kuperus assists students in making ice cream on Dairy Day.

Supermarket Visits -- Visits were made to Foodtown supermarkets celebrating Jersey Fresh with events featuring large displays of local produce, tastings and special guests. Secretary Kuperus visited the Foodtown of Smithville and the Toms River Super Foodtown in August.



Jersey Fresh at the Super Foodtown of Toms River.

Produce Retailers -- Al Murray, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, Secretary Kuperus

and Division of Marketing and Development staff visited major retailers to encourage them to purchase and sell Jersey Fresh products during the growing season. The Department arranged a Jersey Fresh breakfast for the retailers with Governor Corzine at the Governor's mansion, Drumthwacket, in Princeton to further promote branded New Jersey agricultural products. Point-of-purchase materials were distributed and produce managers were encouraged to promote Jersey

Governor Corzine and Secretary Kuperus speak with food industry officials at the Jersey Fresh Breakfast.



Fresh produce in their stores. Weekly Jersey Fresh forecasts and availability reports were distributed throughout the season. Bi-weekly Jersey Seafood availability reports are being issued year-round.

Winery Visit -- With more than 25 wineries in the state, some of which are producing

wines that are gaining state, national and international recognition, Secretary Kuperus visited Amalthea Cellars in Atco in October, proclaiming New Jersey an up and coming wine region that could someday be as well known as Sonoma and Napa in California. During his visit to Amalthea, a winery that has been producing wines with its own grapes and those of other local growers for a quarter of a century, owner Louis Caracciolo demonstrated how his grapes are crushed on their way to becoming wine. Kuperus also noted the importance of the state's wineries to the agritourism industry.



Assemblyman Fisher and Secretary Kuperus learn about wine-making at Amalthea.

*Jersey Fresh Three-Day -- The 5th Annual Jersey Fresh CCI**/CCI*** was held May 30 - June 3 at the Horse Park of New Jersey, hosting more than 140 horses from eight countries. The estimated economic impact for the event was more than \$8 million dollars.*



Rider competes in dressage at the Three-Day at the Horse Park of New Jersey.

Goal 5: Provide Access to Fresh and Nutritious Foods for Children, the Needy and Other New Jersey Citizens

Implement food and nutrition assistance programs to maximize participation by eligible New Jersey citizens, and strengthen agriculture's relationship with the food industry.

Final Implementation of New Jersey School Nutrition Policy -- By October of 2007, all public schools in New Jersey had implemented the Model School Nutrition Policy, which began in 2003 as part of

the Healthy Choices, Healthy Kids Campaign to combat childhood obesity. The cooperative program with the Departments of Education and Health and Senior Services was meant to encourage children to develop healthy habits - such as eating nutritious foods and engaging in regular physical activity. The nutrition policy was phased in over two years, with great enthusiasm from the school districts – 57 percent implemented the policy at least 10 months ahead of the September 2007 deadline. The policy was supported by Governor Corzine and the Legislature and, in February, Governor Corzine signed into law a bill that requires all public schools in the state and non-public schools that participate in Child Nutrition Programs to comply with the policy. The Model School Nutrition Policy is the most comprehensive in the nation, covering pre-kindergarten through 12th grade students, and limits fat and sugar content in foods offered in a la carte lines, snack bars and vending machines, school stores and as part of on-campus fund-raisers.



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Governor's Hunger Initiative Expands -- In the first year of Governor Corzine's

Senator Joe Kyrillos, Susan Kelly of the Food Bank of Monmouth and Ocean Counties w/ Secretary Kuperus giving out needed equipment to local food pantries.



Hunger Initiative, the State Food Purchase Program was responsible for 3.9 million pounds of food being distributed to those in need around the state. That food fed an average 69,110 recipients each month. The State Food Purchase Program (SFPP) began in 2006 with a \$3 million allocation for nutrient-dense food purchases to feed more hungry New Jersey citizens. The SFPP requires food purchases to focus on locally grown or produced items first, then regionally and finally outside of the area.

The program also included \$1 million for infrastructure improvements for local food pantries, homeless shelters and soup kitchens, which was used to buy items such as refrigerators and freezers. The Governor and Legislature authorized a second year of the program for Fiscal Year 2008, which began July 1, with \$4 million entirely for food purchases. So far, \$1,903,673 has been distributed to the six emergency feeding operations which serve a network of 660 food pantries, soup kitchens and homeless shelters around the state. The final two fiscal year payments are scheduled for January and April of 2008.

Produce Co-op Pilot -- Emergency Feeding Operations (EFO) throughout the state provided fresh fruits and vegetables purchased from New Jersey farmers to their network of food pantries, homeless shelters and soup kitchens during the 2007 growing season as part of a pilot project in the State Food Purchase Program. The New Jersey Grown Fresh Produce Pilot allowed EFOs to purchase wholesale, fresh fruits and vegetables from July 1 to November 30 using State Food Purchase Program funds directly from New Jersey farmers via farmers' co-op markets. The markets participating were Tri-County Cooperative Auction Market in Hightstown and the Landisville Fruit Growers Co-op in Landisville.



Gleaning Operations -- Grants for gleaning operations around the state were announced by the Department in December. Proposals were being accepted from these organizations to qualify for a portion of \$100,000 from the State Food Purchase Program to pay for expenses directly related to the collection and distribution of locally grown produce, including transportation and salary costs. Established entities which have operated a food rescue/gleaning program for a minimum of two years and are currently working with New Jersey farms by collecting surplus, locally grown products and distributing them to food pantries, shelters and kitchens in the state were eligible to apply for the funding. The entity's program also must have a component that educates recipients on the value of nutrition which includes a diet of fresh fruits and vegetables.

Providing Food for the Hungry -- In 2007, the Department of Agriculture received 8,139,793 pounds of USDA donated commodities. The Emergency Food Assistance Program provided the food to its seven contracted emergency feeding operations, which then redistributed the donated commodities to its network of 660 local pantries, soup kitchens and homeless shelters.

New York Jets Eat Right Move More Program Continues -- The Department and the New York Jets kicked off the second year of the *Eat Right, Move More* program in November at one of the six winning schools -- Port Reading School #9 in Woodbridge.

Arleen Ramos-Szatmary of the NJDA and Secretary Kuperus join NY Jets players Ferguson and Clark at Port Reading School for the Eat Right Move More Kick-off.



That day, Secretary Kuperus, Mayor John McCormac and Jets players D'Brickashaw Ferguson and Adrien Clark visited the school and rallied the students to continue to eat the healthy offerings in their school cafeteria. Four other schools will receive player visits in the spring: Rittenberg Middle School in Egg Harbor City; Northfield Elementary School in Northfield; Cecil S. Collins Elementary School in Barnegat Township and Halsted Middle School in Newton. Hunterdon Central Regional High School in Flemington was honored on the field during the

December 9 Jets/Cleveland Browns game at Giants Stadium. Five students, the school's food service director, food service company president and district Business Administrator attended the game. The school was randomly selected to receive the prize from among the six winning schools.

Childhood Obesity Tour -- Three cabinet members took the message of the problem of childhood obesity on the road in the fall of 2007. Agriculture Secretary Kuperus joined Health and Senior Services Commissioner Fred Jacobs on visits to three schools, the State Board of Education and the New Jersey School Nutrition Association as part of an education campaign on the health effects of childhood obesity and what the state is doing to combat the problem. Governor Corzine and Education Commissioner Lucille Davy joined Kuperus and Jacobs for a large rally of high school students in Toms River in November.



Secretary Kuperus joins Commissioner Davy, Commissioner Jacobs and Governor Corzine for an assembly for Toms River High School students.

WIC and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program -- Almost 200 farmer vendors were certified to participate in the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) & Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition Program in 2007. The program makes available locally grown fresh fruits, vegetables, and herbs to nutritionally at-risk pregnant, breast-feeding, or post-partum women; children two to five years old; and eligible seniors age 65 and older. Eligible participants receive four \$5 vouchers valid from June 1 to November 30 to purchase locally grown produce from certified farmer vendors. In 2007, 154,594 WIC vouchers totaling \$772,970 were redeemed – a 71 percent redemption rate. For seniors, 129,978 vouchers totaling \$649,890 were redeemed – a 97 percent redemption rate. More than \$1.7 million was available in both federal and state funding for the program.

Goal 6: Promote Agricultural Education, Awareness and Involvement

Ensure the sustainability of New Jersey's agricultural industry through agricultural education, youth development, training opportunities, and successful communication with the agricultural community, general public and all levels of government.

Training Programs -- For the first time, the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development presented a Farmers Workforce Productivity Grant to Rutgers University for training programs designed to assist farmers and workers. The cooperative venture utilized \$59,000 in 2007 to provide 2,400 hours of instruction in 28 different marketed courses. More than 400 farmers took advantage of these opportunities. This included a series of entrepreneurial training seminars. Between 35 and 65 individuals participated in each of five workshops in September, October and November designed to assist producers with assessing the market potential of new crops, new products and new business models. The five customized training seminars were an interagency initiative with the Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, the Department of Agriculture and the New Jersey Department of Labor. The sessions included: Trends in the Marketplace, Competitors and Competition, Distributors and Distribution, Product Development Process, and Business Marketing Plans. The 23 participants who attended at least four of the entrepreneurial training seminars received a Certificate of Farmer Entrepreneurship.



Produce expert Jim Prevor speaks to agriculture industry representatives during Competitors and Competition at Rutgers EcoComplex.

In addition to the courses offered as a result of the grant, the Department works cooperatively with Rutgers to provide an annual course, Bee-ginning Beekeepers. In 2007, the course attracted 100 people to its two sections.

Agricultural Education Pilot Program -- New Jersey Departments of Agriculture and Education are partnering in a national project, Curriculum of Agricultural Sciences Education (CASE), making New Jersey one of 12 pilot states in the project. Four New Jersey agriculture/horticultural instructors and a business and industry representative joined other pilot state teams in Indianapolis in September to begin writing the national curriculum targeted for college track agriculture students. The project is meant to facilitate efforts to offer students a rigorous agricultural science curriculum and support rigorous professional development for teachers. Once formulated, New Jersey teachers and schools will have early access to this advanced program for being a pilot state. Training students for careers in the science and technology of agriculture helps implement the Department's agriculture development initiative, supported at the 2007 State Agricultural Convention.

Department of Agriculture Honors College for Excellence in Agricultural Education

Secretary Kuperus, Professor Craig Tolley, Jan Marie Traynor, College V.P. Dominick Latorraca and Nancy Trivette, NJDA Ag Ed Program Leader.



-- For the first time, a college in New Jersey was selected as one of the best post-secondary agriculture programs in the country by the National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE). Secretary Kuperus went to the County College of Morris in October to commend Jan-Marie Traynor for her Landscape and Horticultural Technology program. The County College of Morris was judged against all schools in NAAE's Region VI, which includes all of

New England and the Mid-Atlantic – a total of 13 states – with 2-year postsecondary institutions and full-time young farmer and adult programs. In previous years, most award recipients were programs which focused on production agriculture or agricultural mechanics – more traditional agricultural education areas. The NAAE award was presented at the organization's convention in December.

Landscaping Services and New Jersey Sales Tax Guide -- An information guide on *Landscaping Services and New Jersey Sales Tax* was released in February. The document was prepared by the New Jersey Department of Agriculture in cooperation with and approved by the New Jersey Department of Treasury, Division of Taxation, with assistance from the New Jersey Nursery and Landscape Association. The uniqueness of the informational guide is that it goes a step further by providing examples of invoices with an explanation of whether the sale was subject to sales or use tax. During the development of the guide, Robert Bruch of the Division of Marketing and Development made a number of presentations to more than 700 landscape contractors, nursery producers, retailers and wholesalers on the new sales tax requirements that when into effect October 1, 2006. The Department of Agriculture has extended direct one-on-one informational assistance in matters of sales and use tax to New Jersey's landscape service industry. The informational guide is available at www.nj.gov/agriculture/pdf/InfoGuideLandscapingServices.pdf.

Junior Breeder Program Success -- With a goal of breeding a love of agriculture in the young people of the state, the New Jersey Junior Breeder Loan Program saw major success in 2007 in a 13-year-old Hunterdon County girl and the young cow she purchased through the program. Emily Sigle of Delaware Township won various county, state and national competitions with Bow Tie Jades Mystic. She plans to join FFA in high school and study agriculture. The purpose of the Junior Breeder program is to seek the interest of the youth in the state, aid in agricultural education efforts, and provide a dedicated funding program that will assist in sustaining



Emily Sigle showing Mystic in Louisville, KY.

the future of New Jersey agriculture. The program was established 76 years ago by a donation from Joseph S. Frelinghuysen, president of the State Board of Agriculture at the time and is a dedicated funding program that enables the agricultural youth of New Jersey to secure funds, purchase livestock, establish production projects and keep accurate records. The program is based on a promissory note system, with monies to be paid back to the fund with interest.

National Conservation Awards Poster Contest Winners from New Jersey -- All four New Jersey students entered in a national poster contest in 2007 designed to raise awareness of natural resources and related issues among young people earned top honors in the competition. Eugene Han of Mahwah placed first in the Grades 2-3 category; Jessica Chu of Livingston placed first in Grades 4-6; Angel Liu of Hackettstown placed first in Grades 7-9; and, Allen Lin of Holmdel, a past national poster contest winner, placed first in Grades 10-12. The competition is sponsored annually by the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) and the NACD Auxiliary in cooperation

with the Washington County Soil Conservation District in Maryland. Each student received a \$100 prize. The students' posters illustrated the theme of "Water Wise." One hundred and fifty-three posters from 33 states were entered in the 16th annual contest. Of the 15 winning posters chosen nationwide, New Jersey students produced four, all taking first place in their grade level categories. New Jersey's 15 soil conservation districts work to conserve and manage soil and water resources in the state.

Secretary Kuperus with national winners Angel Liu, Jessica Chu and Eugene Han.



America's Heartland Episodes -- New Jersey agriculture was featured in the nationally broadcast public television program, "America's Heartland." The Department assisted producers of the program for episodes focusing on New Jersey's farmland preservation efforts, the Jersey Fresh branding program, New Jersey's growing seafood industry and farmers' efforts to feed the hungry.

2007 Envirothon -- The 2007 winners of the New Jersey Envirothon, High Tech High School in Hudson County, placed 5th in the National 2007 Canon Envirothon, held this summer at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. Two hundred and sixty students from 45 U.S. teams and eight Canadian teams participated in North America's largest environmental education competition.



The High Tech High School Team receiving its honors.

Livestock Symposium -- About 200 students and other interested parties attended the Junior Breeders educational symposium aimed at 4-H youth, FFA students, breed association youth and their volunteer leaders and advisors in March. The program was held at Rutgers University's School of Environmental and Biological Sciences in New Brunswick, and covered feed, forage and poisonous plants, nutrition, livestock germs and diseases, animal identification, showing tips and specific animal issues for dairy, beef, equine, swine, goats, rabbits and poultry.

Giant Hogweed Brochure Award -- For a second year, the Documents Association of New Jersey recognized a product of the New Jersey Department of Agriculture. The Department received the Best Official New Jersey Publication award for its Giant Hogweed brochure. This award recognizes the department or agency publication that documents librarians feel is especially useful or informative. The award was presented to Floyd Yoder and Saul Vaiciunas of the Division of Plant Industry at the organization's annual conference in Princeton on November 2.

Saul Vaiciunas and Floyd Yoder accept the DANJ award from Deborah Mercer.



The Department received the Best Official New Jersey Publication award for its Giant Hogweed brochure. This award recognizes the department or agency publication that documents librarians feel is especially useful or informative. The award was presented to Floyd Yoder and Saul Vaiciunas of the Division of Plant Industry at the organization's annual conference in Princeton on November 2.

Public Information Efforts:

Web Sites -- Cards were produced highlighting the New Jersey agricultural brands' consumer web sites:

www.jerseyfresh.nj.gov, www.jerseyseafood.nj.gov, www.jerseygrown.nj.gov, and www.jerseyequine.nj.gov.



Supplies of the cards were distributed to travel kiosks around the state, Rutgers Cooperative Extension offices, and chambers of commerce.

The Jersey Fresh web site has averaged over 380,000 hits in the last three years. The Jersey Seafood site saw 161,192 hits in 2006, and increased to 198,101 hits in 2007.

Farm Bill Articles -- Five issue-specific articles about New Jersey and the Northeast's needs in the reauthorization of the federal Farm Bill were distributed to newspapers in the tri-state area and state and national trade publications. The articles covered: Conservation and Preservation Issues Central to 2007 Farm Bill; National Farm Policy Should Protect Health and Safety of Animals and Plants; Farm Bill Can Aid in International Promotion of U.S. Agricultural Products; 2007 Farm Bill: Investing in Agriculture's Future; and, 2007 Farm Bill Can Enhance Hunger and Nutrition Programs.

Goal 7: Guarantee the Delivery of Quality Services by a Well-Trained and Motivated Workforce

To administer the operations of the Department in a challenging budgetary environment through the use of effective recruitment and retainment of agency personnel, integration of improved and enhanced information technology, and promotion of administrative efficiencies to most effectively utilize budgetary resources in achieving the mission of the Department.

Efficiencies -- The Department continued in 2007 to seek ways to streamline operations in order to perform its duties in the most efficient manner possible. To accomplish this goal, there were targeted reductions in staff and resources while programs were restructured and job duties were combined and employees cross-trained to continue meeting the Department's critical missions of economic development in agricultural and food industries, preserving and protecting agricultural and natural resources, and ensuring the availability of high-quality, nutritious, abundant, safe and affordable locally grown food, especially to New Jersey's hungry and school students.

- Since 2005, the Department has reduced its workforce from 271 to 241 full-time employees, largely through attrition, while taking on new missions. Throughout the Department, work functions have been consolidated, with many employees performing what used to be two or more jobs after proper cross-training.
- Internally, the Division of Marketing and Development is partnering with the Division of Food and Nutrition to ensure that Emergency Feeding Operations can find reliable local sources of foods consistent with federal dietary guidelines for purchase with money from the Governor's Hunger Initiative.
- The Division of Agricultural and Natural Resources is collaborating with the State Agriculture Development Committee to administer financial cost-share assistance to farmers for soil and water conservation projects that prevent or control non-point source pollution.
- The Department has partnered with the Office of Information Technology on several initiatives that will allow for e-commerce and e-grants, saving significant dollars in our federal programs and allowing for the redeployment of our federal positions.
- The Department has continued maintenance on fleet cars, replacing them only when necessary.
- The Department has curtailed travel expenditures over the past two years in an effort to reallocate dollars to other program needs.

Key Personnel Moves:

Murray Named Assistant Secretary of Agriculture -- Alfred W. Murray, a 23-year veteran of the Department and the Director of the Division of Marketing and Development since 2000 was named Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for New Jersey in February. Murray joined the Department in 1983 and helped develop the Jersey Fresh marketing campaign. In his new role, he has worked with farmers on produce safety and dairy pricing. He also provides a daily radio report on agricultural news and a listing of prices for New Jersey agricultural products for WSNJ-AM in South Jersey.



Davis-Kovacs Takes Over Lead at Division of Food and Nutrition -- After serving as Acting Director for eight months, Emma Davis-Kovacs was named Director of the Division of Food and Nutrition in April. Since taking on the role, Davis-Kovacs has led her division to final and full implementation of the school nutrition policy, expanded the Governor's hunger initiative and initiated a new computer-based system to streamline school nutrition programs. Davis-Kovacs has been with the State for 27 years, serving in the Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, first in the New Jersey Department of Education, then in the Department of Agriculture since 1999. Davis-Kovacs has served as Director of the Child and Adult Care Food Program and Summer Food Service Program, Coordinator of the Day Care Food Program, and most recently, Coordinator of School Nutrition Programs.



Schuler Named as New State Apiarist -- A 21-year veteran of the Department of Agriculture took over as the new State Apiarist in August. Since then, Tim Schuler has been busy aiding New Jersey's beekeeping industry by inspecting hives for signs of disease or parasites, ensuring that colonies being brought into New Jersey from other state for pollination work on farms do not bring disease or parasites into the state and working with educational institutions to encourage more people to get involved in beekeeping. Schuler has developed a fact sheet on American Foulbrood and an inspection sticker to place on hives certified by the Department. He is continuing to monitor and work with other states to combat Colony Collapse Disorder, the mysterious dying off of colonies for no apparent reason that has struck the industry over the past few



years. In 2005, there were 12,000 honey-producing bee colonies in New Jersey, producing 384,000 pounds of honey with a value of \$453,000.

Dorsey Named Lab Director -- The Phillip Alampi Beneficial Insect Rearing Lab got a new director in 2007 in Thomas Dorsey. Dorsey took the helm of the lab located in West Trenton following the retirement of Robert Chianese. As the new director, Dorsey has had to face a major challenge – restoring the lab following a fire in late 2006. The 21,000 square-foot state-of-the-art beneficial insect rearing laboratory was constructed in 1985. Designed for biological pest control the facility allows state entomologists to develop insect rearing techniques and mass produce beneficial insects to be used to help reduce insect and



weed populations below economic levels.

Vilayanur Named Chief Information Officer -- In its consolidation of IT units throughout the Department, the NJDA named Jayanthi Vilayanur as its new CIO for the Department. Ms. Vilayanur was given responsibility in this area in March, 2007 and has been instrumental in the cross utilization of existing IT staff throughout the Department and identifying the major IT goals over the next three to five years. Trained in Bombay, India and employed by Forbes 200 companies in New York City, Ms. Vilayanur brings experience from the private sector to the NJDA information technology environment.



Staff Training -- During the 2007 calendar year, the Department engaged in general training in areas of management and communication for its senior staff. In addition, ethics training was conducted for all supervisors, directors and executive staff. Investment of resources were made to these sessions to provide for a more informed and educated management team which, in turn, will lead to reduced union issues and better clarity on ethical issues.

In addition, the Department has worked through its federal partners to provide training in areas of proficiency for its inspectors, veterinarians and agents that allow them up to date information in protecting our New Jersey aquacultural and agricultural products from plant and animal diseases and general food safety.

Grants Process – The Fiscal Office implemented a grant tracking system whereby grants are recorded and monitored for compliance and reporting, providing additional controls to our grant system. The Department is undertaking a cost of fit analysis of SAGE (System for Administering Grants Efficiently) to better strengthen its accounting controls. 2007 was the first year in which the Department fully engaged its Grants Review system, allowing for all grants to be reviewed by the State Board of Agriculture before final approval and disbursement.

Investment and Upgrades in Computer Technology:

For the first time ever, NJDA's Information Technology (IT) unit was re-organized to operate in a consolidated environment. The re-organized NJDA IT unit reports to a CIO (Chief Information Officer), who in turn reports to Chief of Operations for the Department. The re-organized NJDA IT unit comprises the following components:



- *Engineering Services* -- This unit will comprise the network administrator, systems administrator and database administrator. This unit will provide operational support, such as email support, network support, file and print services support etc.
- *Application Services* -- This unit will consist of web, database and GIS application developers.

This unit will provide application development services and maintain current applications within the Department.

- *Geographic Information Services* -- This unit manages the Department's GIS applications and data.

The consolidation of the IT unit has resulted in two key positions for the Department – Database Administrator and a Geographic Information Coordinator. The database administrator plays a key role in administering the Department's data and monitors the data access privileges for the different individuals through out the Department. The Geographic Information Coordinator has taken ownership of the entire Department's GIS data to ensure against data duplication. Both of these roles were filled with existing staff.

The Department has filed an updated IT Strategic Plan with OIT (Office of Information Technology), which lists all the funded IT projects for 2008-2010.

The Department consolidated its Oracle database on OIT's database servers in summer 2007. This has resulted in an annual savings of approximately \$40,000 in software and hardware maintenance costs and a one time cost of approximately \$300,000 in purchasing new servers.

The Department is getting ready to move into an Electronic Cost and Timekeeping System starting March 2008. This system will replace the current paper-based timesheets

and enable all employees to enter their timesheets online. This system will also track the employees time spent working on different programs, thus providing the Department with an accurate cost accounting structure.

The School Districts are now able to submit their annual re-application package online via the School Nutrition Electronic Application and Reimbursement System (SNEARS) application. Since the packets are being submitted online, they are now being approved within 15 to 20 business days versus 3 months when the applications were mailed in.

IT staff is currently working with the Commodity Distribution staff to develop a website for the Commodity Distribution System. This website will be used by the school districts to receive commodities from USDA.

An IT help desk has been set up to answer all technical calls for the SNEARS application. As we move into the 21st century with providing more online services, IT will set up a full time help desk for customer support.

The Department's GIS software has been updated to transition from a file based system to a personal Geo-database environment.

Financial Accounting Manual for NJ Soil Conservation Districts -- The State Soil Conservation Committee in September adopted the updated Financial Accounting Manual for New Jersey's 15 Soil Conservation Districts. The manual contains extensive internal controls, establishes a standard accounting system, standard chart of accounts, budget reporting forms, audit format, sample independent auditors report and other standards including deadlines for initiating and filing the annual financial audit with the State Soil Conservation Committee. Conservation Districts are special purpose subdivisions of the state and required by statute to develop an annual audit, with the State Committee overseeing District operations. Conservation Districts are not state, county or municipal agencies and are funded almost entirely from developer fees. The Manual also incorporates fiscal accounting requirements as prescribed by the State of New Jersey and the federal government. Further the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission (COSO) recommendations for internal control systems and risk assessment is incorporated. The Committee will review District compliance and conformance during the next year.

Meet the 2008 New Jersey State Board of Agriculture...



William V. Griffin
President
Middlesex County
Nursery Industry



Milton "Woody" Eachus
Board Vice President
Salem County
Dairy Industry



Noble F. McNaughton
Board Member
Burlington County
Nursery Industry



Robert "Matty" Matarazzo
Board Member
Warren County
Fruit Industry



Roger R. Kumpel
Board Member
Burlington County
Hay/Grain Industry



William S. Randolph
Board Member
Somerset County
Floriculture Industry



Ann Dorsett
Board Member
Gloucester County
Equine Industry



W. Scott Ellis
Board Member
Mercer County
Vegetable Industry