New Jersey Wine Week – The fourth annual New Jersey Wine Week took place November 12-18. Division staff promoted New Jersey wines through social media photo contests, and participated in a Wine Week event at Beneduce Vineyards in Hunterdon County. The week ended on a high note, with Governor Murphy handing out this year’s Governor’s Cup Awards (awarded to the best white, red and dessert wines) alongside Garden State Wine Growers Association Executive Director Tom Cosentino at Drumthwacket (the Governor’s mansion) on Friday, November 16.

Pathology Testing – The Pathology Laboratory Section for the months of August and September 2018 completed a total of 310 and 419 tests and/or procedures, respectively. Tests and/or procedures involved gross necropsy examination, histopathologic (microscopic), cytologic and parasitologic preparation and evaluation. Species submitted for testing in the month of October 2018 included horse, sheep, goat, alpaca, pig, dog, cat, pigeon, domestic poultry (chicken, turkey, duck), wildlife (deer, raccoon, dolphin, songbirds) and zoo/exotic (pheasant, emu, iguana, parrot) species. Cases for these months generated additional diagnostic tests for other laboratory sections (e.g. bacteriology, virology and molecular). Results from these case submissions help to support practicing veterinarians (large, mixed and small animal), private food and companion animal owners, NJ State Agencies, racetrack, wildlife, zoo and nonprofit animal facilities.

National Association of Ag Educators (NAAE) Conference – Nancy Trivette is attending the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) VISION/NAAE Conference in San Antonio this week. In addition to her attendance as State Program Leader for Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Education in New Jersey, she is representing ACTE as President-Elect. New Jersey is being represented by several agriculture teachers attending because of specific training opportunities, NAAE business meetings, NAAE/ACTE award recognition and professional development.

Forest Pest Outreach – Forest pest outreach staff attended five events during the previous month at the Forest Resource Education Centers (FREC) 24th Annual Fall Forestry Festival in Jackson, Ocean County; the Sussex County Honey and Garlic Festival in Augusta, Sussex County; the New Jersey Shade Tree Federation Annual Conference in Cherry Hill, Camden County; the Harvest Food Truck and Wine Festival in Phillipsburg, Warren County and Hardwick Day in Hardwick Township, Warren County.

Preschool Development Grant – The New Jersey Department of Education was one of 18 states selected to receive a Preschool Development Grant of up to $17.5 million a year, to be renewed annually for up to four years. This could lead to an increase in the NJDA’s program participation. The Child and Adult Food Care Program (CACFP) and the School Nutrition unit met on November 1 to discuss how to prepare for the influx of school-based pre-school programs requiring information about the CACFP.

Christmas Tree Marketing – The Division has been working alongside the Christmas Tree Growers Association on a campaign to encourage consumers to visit one of New Jersey’s choose-and-cut Christmas tree operations. The campaign includes radio and billboard ads timed to coincide with what are typically the two biggest weekends of the year for Christmas tree sales. Secretary Fisher also led two Christmas tree cutting events, one in Hunterdon County and another one in Gloucester County, to promote the choose and cut season.
Red Knot-Aquaculture Consultation – The aquaculture-red knot Agency Workgroup (AWG) met with the Stakeholder Committee in Mid-November to discuss proposed changes to Conservation Measures (CMs). The CMs are conditions placed on aquaculture activities within the Action Area of the Cape May Peninsula to minimize any impacts from aquaculture on the listed red knot. Measures are reviewed annually to determine if new science calls for any adjustments - either more restrictive to afford greater protections for the listed species, or less restrictive due to no/little impact from the select activity. A final decision on whether to change any CMs lies with the AWG and is not expected until after the new year.

School Nutrition Program – A survey was sent to all school food authorities (SFAs) using the Electronic Contract Approval System (ECAS) to gather feedback about their first-time experience submitting contracts electronically. The feedback received was very positive and the unit looks forward to continuing to provide efficient service to our participants. A survey was also sent to SFAs with Fixed Price Contracts to gather feedback about their first time utilizing this contract type.

Gypsy Moth Surveys – To date, 12 municipalities have been surveyed for infestations of Gypsy Moth at the request of the affected municipalities. So far there have been no areas recommended for treatment during the spring of 2019. A total of 11 surveys remain to be completed by staff before the end of the year to ensure that surveys of all affected municipalities have been completed.

Live Bird Marketing Inspections – In October, animal health technicians (AHTs) conducted unannounced inspections at 17 registered NJ live bird markets and sampled 10 markets for avian influenza by sampling poultry. Additional activity during the month of October included: 1) The quarterly closure of 23 live bird markets. Quarterly closures consist of cleaning and disinfecting the entire market followed by a minimum 24 hours of “downtime”. Following the “downtime”, environmental samples are taken at the market for testing; 2) The inspection of six poultry distributors. Records were reviewed as well as ensuring compliance with 2:9-4.2(c), reviewing vehicle cleaning and disinfection logbooks; 3) Avian influenza testing of six poultry distributors. This includes any poultry being delivered to live bird markets at the time of inspection; 4) Avian influenza testing of 37 backyard flocks throughout New Jersey.