

ASSEMBLY AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 1578

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 14, 2021

The Assembly Agriculture Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 1578.

This bill would designate the third week of March as "New Jersey Agricultural Literacy Week."

The bill requires the Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with the Department of Education, to establish a "New Jersey Agricultural Literacy Week" and a "New Jersey Agricultural Literacy Program."

The bill provides that the "New Jersey Agricultural Literacy Week" would be celebrated by designating a children's book and developing activities that highlight how agricultural products provide the necessary ingredients for meals. The name of the designated children's book and the recommended classroom activities would be provided to teachers in kindergarten, first, and second grade.

The bill provides that "New Jersey Agricultural Literacy Program" would be established in conjunction with the current "New Jersey Farm to School Program." In addition to the provisions of rules and regulations established for the New Jersey Farm to School Program, the bill would require the Department of Agriculture to adopt, in conjunction and cooperation with the Department of Education, rules and regulations that:

- 1) provide for the incorporation and coordination of school curricula with information about the crops and animals in New Jersey that provide the necessary ingredients for meals;

- 2) designate a children's book each year, targeted for children in kindergarten, first, and second grade, that shows how agricultural products provide the necessary ingredients for meals;

- 3) encourage teachers in kindergarten, first, and second grade to read the designated book during classroom instruction during "New Jersey Agricultural Literacy Week"; and

- 4) encourage additional classroom activities during "New Jersey Agricultural Literacy Week", which may include, but need not be limited to, personal stories from volunteers which may include farmers.

The bill also would allow the Secretary of Agriculture to solicit and accept contributions from private and public sources for the purpose of providing support to help fund the "New Jersey Agricultural Literacy Program."

This bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2020-2021 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.