



**NEWS RELEASE**

**January 21, 2016**

**For Immediate Release**

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Members of the media may contact Jeannette Rea-Keywood, Rutgers 4-H Youth Development by phone at 609-898-0928, ext. 11 or by email at [reakeywood@njaes.rutgers.edu](mailto:reakeywood@njaes.rutgers.edu)

**NEW JERSEY 4-H MEMBERS ATTEND NATIONAL AGRI-SCIENCE SUMMIT**

Six New Jersey 4-H members representing four counties (Essex, Hudson, Passaic and Warren) attended the National Agri-Science Youth Summit held January 15-18 at the National 4-H Youth Conference Center located in Chevy Chase, Maryland. The purpose of the conference was provide youth with an opportunity to learn about and develop an understanding of the critical role of agricultural science innovation in addressing the world's most pressing issues.

The New Jersey 4-H'ers joined 85 youth and adults representing 15 states at the National Agri-Science Youth Summit. New Jersey delegates attending the conference included: Susan Asali of Belleville, Victoria Bruno from Belleville, Rebecca Byrne of West Milford, Trevor Hettrick from Montclair, Isa Perkins of Newark and Brittany Smith from Oxford.

Today, many young people are generationally and geographically removed from farming and agriculture. Yet, it is vital that these young leaders and future decision makers understand the critical role agriculture plays in our society. Currently, it is estimated that there will be 54,400 annual job openings for those with agricultural college degrees. While the percentage of these opportunities in production agriculture (farming) has declined, 27% of these jobs will be in science and engineering and 47% will be in management and business. A shortfall of graduates for these science and business positions is projected, especially for the anticipated demand in animal and plant biotechnology. These emerging areas of agriculture are addressing some of the world's most pressing issues related to food security, nutrition, energy, and sustainability.

During the summit, participants attended workshops; engaged in hands-on activities; listened to guest speakers; and interacted with agricultural researchers and advocates who helped them to gain knowledge and skills in agri-science related to the production of food, feed, fuel, and fiber as well as learn about career opportunities.

"The summit provided the New Jersey delegates to the National Agri-Science Youth Summit with an excellent opportunity to learn about the challenges facing agriculture, including global food security and sustainability, and they can play a role in addressing these challenges today and in their future" says Jeannette Rea-Keywood, State 4-H Agent, Department of 4-H Youth Development.

The 4-H Youth Development Program is part of Rutgers, New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station - Cooperative Extension. 4-H educational programs are offered to all youth, grades K-13(one year out of high school), on an age-appropriate basis, without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, atypical hereditary cellular or blood trait, marital status, domestic partnership status, military service, veteran status and any other category protected by law.

For more information about the New Jersey 4-H Program visit the website at: <http://nj4h.rutgers.edu/>.

###