RESOLUTION # 31
HUMANE TREATMENT OF LIVESTOCK

WHEREAS, the Department, working with industry representatives, New Jersey Farm Bureau, veterinarians, Rutgers University, and the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, wrote and adopted N.J.A.C. 2:8, which became the first regulations of their kind in the country to address the humane care and keeping of domestic livestock; and

WHEREAS, the Department has adopted the regulation with amendments, as prescribed by the New Jersey Supreme Court on July 30, 2008, following a challenge by the New Jersey Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, among others, in which the Standards were largely upheld; and

WHEREAS, concerns from stakeholders about the inconsistent application of animal cruelty statutes to the owners of livestock and poultry in New Jersey have not changed since the adoption of the statute, despite the development of rules to guide the investigation of complaints -- namely that state and county SPCAs enforce animal cruelty statutes based on factors other than science-based regulations; and

WHEREAS, the Standards, as they currently exist, must be filed for re-adoption by December 30, 2018, but also can be amended through the rule-making process before then; and

WHEREAS, animal agriculture increasingly finds itself a point of contention with the consuming public through the activism of those who either oppose animal agriculture altogether or object to certain practices deemed to be consistent with N.J.A.C. 2:8, as evidenced in recent attempts to legislatively prohibit the use of sow gestation crates in New Jersey; and
WHEREAS, both of those attempts at legislation to prohibit gestation crates in New Jersey were vetoed by the Governor, who cited in successive veto messages that decisions regarding the humane treatment of livestock are most appropriately left to the Department of Agriculture and to the State Board of Agriculture as the Department’s policy-making body, and New Jersey’s farm community is in support of those vetoes.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the delegates to the 101st State Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on February 10-11, 2016, urge that New Jersey’s agricultural community, represented by the New Jersey Farm Bureau, Rutgers University, the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, the New Jersey Veterinary Medical Association, the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture and Department of Agriculture reconvene to evaluate the implementation of N.J.A.C. 2:8, Humane Treatment of Domestic Livestock.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Department and the State Board of Agriculture, in that evaluation, to consider all changes in scientific approaches brought forward by the appropriate veterinary bodies, both state and national, in determining if the Standards should be amended, and to present a report to the 2018 State Agricultural Convention on any recommended changes to the Standards so that they can be discussed by the delegates in advance of the filing for readoption by December 30, 2018.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we encourage the Legislature to appropriate a minimum of $350,000 in the FY2017 budget to adequately fund the operations required for implementation and defense of N.J.A.C. 2:8, Humane Treatment of Domestic Livestock.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the New Jersey State Attorney General to require that all law enforcement personnel authorized to respond to animal cruelty complaints comply with N.J.A.C. 2:8 and enforce those standards upheld by the
Supreme Court, as well as ensure that the notification requirements to the Department of Agriculture are also upheld.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that we recognize the increased interest and concern within the state and country about livestock handling and welfare and therefore support the expansion of services provided by the Division of Animal Health in order to maintain pace with the significant increase in requests for field investigations of alleged violations.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** the we urge the NJSPCA to avail itself of increased and more frequent training regarding the Humane Standards, which the Division of Animal Health has made a commitment to provide, in an effort to have NJSPCA enforcement more accurately reflect the provisions of the Standards.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that we support appropriate funding levels and resources to provide science-based factual information to educate citizens of the state, especially the agricultural community, and properly comply with the Legislature’s mandate that the Department continually review and update standards to ensure the humane care of livestock and poultry.