

RESOLUTION # 20

FARMER MEMBERS ON THE STATE AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

1 **WHEREAS**, the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) oversees the
2 Farmland Preservation and Right to Farm programs in New Jersey under the Agriculture
3 Retention and Development Act (ARDA); and

4 **WHEREAS**, the SADC includes among its members, by law, four people “actively
5 engaged in farming” in New Jersey as farmers, who provide invaluable knowledge and
6 expertise on farming to the SADC’s deliberations on various issues; and

7 **WHEREAS**, the importance of the contributions of the SADC’s farmer members to
8 discussions of the Committee regarding agricultural issues has been recognized previously
9 by the addition of “alternate” farmer members to take the place of farmer members who
10 cannot attend a particular meeting, so that the input of farming expertise to the conversation
11 is not lost; and

12 **WHEREAS**, the SADC’s Supplemental Code of Ethics was recently interpreted to
13 call for farmer members to recuse themselves from discussions at the SADC level if they
14 also have been involved in discussions and/or votes on the same topic as a member of the
15 CADB at the county level; and

16 **WHEREAS**, that provision in the Code of Ethics recently resulted in all four farmer
17 members of the SADC having to recuse themselves from discussion and voting on the issue
18 of recommendations to the Legislature regarding Special Occasion Events on preserved
19 farms because they had been involved in discussions at the CADB level regarding those
20 recommendations; and

21 **WHEREAS**, the resulting lack of any farmer voice in those discussions at the SADC
22 level, on this or any other issue, could lead to the agricultural industry’s viewpoint on the
23 matter being greatly diluted.

24 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 106th State
25 Agricultural Convention, assembled through a virtual platform hosted in Trenton, New

26 Jersey, in accordance with COVID-19 pandemic recommendations, on February 17, 2021,
27 do hereby strongly urge the State Agriculture Development Committee to amend its Code of
28 Ethics to make it clear that the SADC's farmer members should recuse themselves from
29 discussing and/or voting upon specific matters at the SADC level in cases where the
30 member has a direct personal interest, or if they have voted upon matters as a member of
31 their County Agriculture Development Board, but not if those issues are general issues such
32 as policy, legislative or regulatory matters.