

RESOLUTION # 17

NEW JERSEY AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION

1 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey's agricultural community is faced with a multitude of
2 challenges that threaten its viability and sustainability, including: Right to Farm conflicts;
3 taxation issues; wildlife damage; labor supply shortages; land use and environmental
4 regulation; rising production costs; and water-quality concerns; and

5 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey agriculture's viability and sustainability are also
6 impacted by untapped market opportunities and limited access to innovations that would
7 enhance prosperity, stewardship potential and compatibility with other land uses; and

8 **WHEREAS**, given the economic impacts and public benefits of the agricultural
9 and food complex, not only in rural areas but also in the state's urban and suburban
10 communities, the constraints on the industry impinge upon the assurance of food
11 security, nutrition and health, water quality and supply, environmental sustainability,
12 economic development, and the quality of life for all residents of the Garden State; and

13 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey's status as the nation's most densely populated state
14 means its environmental pressures exceed those of other states, and thus have raised
15 the environment to become a key quality-of-life issue; and

16 **WHEREAS**, this requires new policies and technologies that are effective in
17 maintaining the delicate balance between environmental quality and economic growth;
18 and

19 **WHEREAS**, the Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES)
20 provides a diverse range of research, extension, and education programs that serve the
21 people and businesses of New Jersey and the urban, suburban, and rural communities
22 in which they live and work, and provides the expertise and information needed to

23 develop the policies and technologies that strike the balance between environmental
24 quality and economic growth; and

25 **WHEREAS**, the budget constraints faced by NJAES, including large budget cuts
26 or flat budgets over the last decade, and the need to continue meeting operational costs,
27 have meant that less funding is available for its personnel, research and outreach
28 programs; and

29 **WHEREAS**, exacerbating the funding cuts has been a threat that the federal
30 formula funding for state agricultural experiment stations could be replaced with
31 competitive grant funding only; and

32 **WHEREAS**, the circumstances detailed above have strained the ability of NJAES
33 to continue to provide its traditional high-level of service to all its stakeholder groups; and

34 **WHEREAS**, further continued decreases in funding will negatively impact the
35 delivery of crucial agricultural programs across the state; and

36 **WHEREAS**, the Board of Managers appreciates the inclusiveness with which
37 NJAES/School of Environmental and Biological Sciences has approached forming
38 search committees to fill vital faculty and staff positions over the past year; and

39 **WHEREAS**, while both agricultural extension agents and specialists have
40 traditionally had multiple roles – including outreach, farm visits to production agriculture
41 operators and research, in the case of extension agents, and outreach, in-class
42 instruction and research, in the case of specialists – it is important to maintain the proper
43 balance of these duties, especially in light of decreased budgets meaning that both
44 positions are being asked to do more with less; and

45 **WHEREAS**, the state’s agricultural community is concerned about maintaining
46 appropriate resources in order to retain extension agents and specialists as some
47 become eligible for retirement; and

48 **WHEREAS**, NJAES, unlike other facets of the university system, cannot make up
49 for lost budget dollars with tuition increases, as it does not receive tuition revenues.

50 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 101st
51 State Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey on February 10-
52 11, 2016, do hereby declare that support for production agriculture and NJAES must be
53 improved and maintained if solutions to the critical issues that production agriculture
54 faces are to be achieved, ensuring the viability of the state’s agricultural and food
55 system.

56 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we call upon the Executive Dean of the
57 School of Environmental and Biological Sciences and the Executive Director of the New
58 Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES), in cooperation with its Board of
59 Managers, County Boards of Agriculture, the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture,
60 agricultural commodity groups and the Rutgers Cooperative Extension staff to continue
61 their efforts to develop the necessary funding strategies to support the staffing and
62 programming that will enable the continued delivery of quality programming to
63 production agriculture and all NJAES constituent groups and to develop new programs
64 as identified by stakeholders in agriculture and natural resources that catalyze economic
65 development in a sustainable manner.

66 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we call upon the Executive Dean of the
67 School of Environmental and Biological Sciences and the Executive Director of the New
68 Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, the Board of Managers, County Boards of
69 Agriculture, the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture and Rutgers Cooperative
70 Extension staff to maintain timely communications among these groups on key issues.

71 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we strongly urge the New Jersey State Board
72 of Agriculture, the NJAES Board of Managers and the New Jersey Farm Bureau to work
73 with the Governor, the Legislature and the County Boards of Chosen Freeholders to

74 restore adequate state funding for the NJAES and agricultural research, including core
75 funding to the Rutgers Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Upper Deerfield;
76 the Philip E. Marucci Center for Blueberry and Cranberry Research; the Snyder
77 Research and Extension Farm; the Rutgers Food Innovation Center; the Rutgers Equine
78 Science Center; the Fruit and Ornamental Research and Extension Center at Cream
79 Ridge; Adelpia Plant Science Research and Extension Center; the Rutgers
80 EcoComplex, the Aquaculture Innovation Center, and the Haskins Shellfish Research
81 Laboratory to compliment the extramural grants, contracts and bequests secured by
82 NJAES staff in the past fiscal years. In addition, the agricultural community is strongly
83 encouraged to support the initiative to have the state legislators add \$1 million in
84 program support funds for production agriculture in the FY2017 state budget.

85 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the NJAES/SEBS leadership to
86 initiate search processes to replace retiring agricultural agents and specialists as soon
87 as a retirement is announced, provided that the funding to hire a replacement is
88 available, thus reducing the amount of time it takes to fill the retiree's position.

89 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we also urge the USDA to provide a stable
90 source of funding for the Land Grant University and Extension programs.