RESOLUTION # 21

DICKEYA

WHEREAS, *Dickeya dianthicola* is a bacterial disease that is relatively new to the potato crops of the United States, is highly aggressive, and has caused severe damage to white potato crops; and

WHEREAS, Dickeya thrives in warmer temperatures, making crops grown in southern states and the Mid-Atlantic states (including New Jersey) more susceptible, and has resulted in many cases of severe crop loss; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey's potato growers could be devastated by widespread Dickeya if preventive measures are not established quickly; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey farmers harvested 2,300 acres of white potatoes in 2015, but the acreage in 2016 and 2017 was not reported via NASS under its provisions to protect the information that is provided by only a sole producer (meaning it was likely that only one producer reported growing potatoes to NASS); and

WHEREAS, Department personnel and a State Board member attended a multi-state meeting in Maine in 2017 to determine if steps could be taken to reduce or eliminate the instances of Dickeya-infected seed coming from that state in order to reduce the risk of Dickeya being further spread to Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic states, which primarily source seed potatoes from Maine; and

WHEREAS, the result of the discussions in that meeting was an understanding that trying to prevent infected seed from leaving a state would be nearly impossible, as potatoes can be infected with Dickey but not show signs of the infection; and

WHEREAS, that meant developing methods, protocols, or best management practices for farmers to more effectively manage Dickeya once it appeared in their potatoes was a more viable way of stemming the spread of Dickeya; and

WHEREAS, the potential for Dickeya spreading beyond potato crops and into other types of crops in New Jersey is not yet determined.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the delegates to the 103rd State Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on February 7-8, 2018, do hereby urge that the Department and Rutgers NJAES to establish a joint program for testing potato seed for Dickeya.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Department and Rutgers to establish protocols for eliminating Dickeya from contaminated fields.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Department and Rutgers to develop best management practices for avoiding, controlling and eliminating Dickeya and to determine the risk to other crops from Dickeya introduced into an area via potatoes, including best management practices for minimizing such risks.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge all appropriate agencies and farm advocacy groups to investigate potential sources of funding to carry out the necessary research, testing and support programs on Dickeya, including but not limited to food processors, other segments of the food industry, pesticide companies and others with an interest in keeping Dickeya from becoming further established in New Jersey.