

## RESOLUTION # 29

### FARMING ON PUBLIC LANDS

1           **WHEREAS**, throughout New Jersey, there exists publicly owned land that is actively  
2 farmed under lease agreements between farmers and governmental entities of the state,  
3 county or local level; and

4           **WHEREAS**, these lands remain a critical component of the available agricultural land  
5 base in the state; and

6           **WHEREAS**, farmers have expressed some concerns about the terms of these lease  
7 agreements; and

8           **WHEREAS**, these concerns include questions about certain restrictions or  
9 encumbrances imposed upon farmers that, in some instances, hinder agricultural production;  
10 and

11           **WHEREAS**, there has traditionally been no uniform, statewide model for renting  
12 these lands for agricultural purposes, increasing the risk of inconsistencies and individualized  
13 use restrictions in lease agreements that can impede or limit generally accepted farming  
14 practices; and

15           **WHEREAS**, in some instances, farmers make substantial investments in rented  
16 ground as a means of enhancing an individual parcel's agricultural productivity for the long-  
17 term, and thus are negatively impacted by exceedingly short-term lease arrangements; and

18           **WHEREAS**, recent discussions between farmer groups and senior staff at the New  
19 Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) have resulted in constructive  
20 movement toward more consistent and uniform lease language.

21           **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 103<sup>rd</sup> State  
22 Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on February 7-8, 2018, do  
23 hereby urge the State Board of Agriculture and Department of Agriculture, along with the  
24 New Jersey Farm Bureau, to continue reviewing the current status of lease arrangements for  
25 agricultural purposes throughout the state to determine the potential for enhancing the

26 predictability and consistency of land-leasing arrangements for agricultural purposes at the  
27 state, county and local level, where appropriate.

28 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, we urge that the State Board, Department and New  
29 Jersey Farm Bureau to continue soliciting the input of county boards of agriculture and  
30 commodity organizations, and that the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) be  
31 consulted on lands leased for farming as part of this review process.

32 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we acknowledge the recent movement within the  
33 NJDEP toward more consistent and uniform language on leases to farm public lands.