

RESOLUTION # 1

RUTGERS 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 impacted by
6 untapped market opportunities and limited access to innovations that would enhance
7 prosperity, stewardship potential and compatibility with other land uses; and

8 **WHEREAS**, given the economic impacts and public benefits of the agricultural and
9 food complex, not only in rural areas but also in the state's urban and suburban communities,
10 the constraints on the industry impinge upon the assurance of food security, nutrition and
11 health, water quality and supply, environmental sustainability, economic development, and
12 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, social issues, and community health concerns uniquely
15 distinguish it from other states, thus requiring that new economic growth policies and
16 technologies are effectively balanced with these considerations in order to improve the
17 quality of life of New Jersey residents; and

18 **WHEREAS**, the Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES)
19 provides a diverse range of research, extension and education programs that serve the
20 people and businesses of New Jersey and the urban, suburban and rural communities in
21 which they live and work, and provides the expertise and information needed to develop the
22 policies and technologies that strike the balance between environmental quality and
23 economic growth and sustainability; and

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

27 **WHEREAS**, the current (FY2018) state appropriation to the NJAES is 32 percent
28 lower, in inflation-adjusted terms, than it was one decade ago; and

29 **WHEREAS**, the University has used “subvention” funding to reduce the current \$8
30 million deficit, and while it is appreciated, it does not provide budget stability; and

31 **WHEREAS**, the accounting system being used for NJAES – Responsibility-Centered
32 Management (RCM) – shows transparency of financial details, it does not bring the needed
33 sustainable funding mechanisms for vital programs; and

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

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

39 **WHEREAS**, further continued decreases in funding will negatively impact the delivery
40 of crucial agricultural and community-engaged programs across the state, as well as
41 negatively impacting the maintenance of facilities at some NJAES stations; and

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

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

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

54 **WHEREAS**, NJAES’ two agricultural agents specializing in nursery, the state’s
55 leading agricultural sector, retired in 2011 and 2016, and have not yet been replaced; and

56 **WHEREAS**, both Monmouth and Cumberland Counties have offered to fund 50-
57 percent of the salaries of nursery agents to replace those who have retired; and

58 **WHEREAS**, there currently is no agent specializing in livestock, since the retirement
59 of the Hunterdon agent in 2017; and

60 **WHEREAS**, counties traditionally have been asked to provide 25 percent of the
61 salaries of County Agricultural and 4-H Agents’, counties now are routinely being requested
62 to provide 50 percent or more of those salaries; and

63 **WHEREAS**, communication with stakeholders is vitally important and should be held
64 periodically to allow for and exchange of ideas about industry needs and potential funding;
65 and

66 **WHEREAS**, NJAES, unlike other facets of the university system, cannot make up for
67 lost budget dollars with tuition increases, as it does not receive tuition revenues; and

68 **WHEREAS**, we recognize and support the continued efforts of the Executive Dean of
69 the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences and the Executive Director of the New
70 Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, in cooperation with its Board of Managers, County
71 Boards of Agriculture, the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture, agricultural commodity
72 groups and Rutgers Cooperative Extension staff to develop the necessary strategies to
73 support the continued delivery of quality programming in production agriculture and diverse
74 areas affecting the quality of life for all NJAES constituent groups.

75 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 103rd State
76 Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey on February 7-8, 2018, do
77 hereby declare that support for production agriculture and NJAES must be improved and

78 maintained if solutions to the critical issues that production agriculture faces are to be
79 achieved, ensuring the viability of the state's agricultural and food system.

80 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we strongly urge the New Jersey State Board of
81 Agriculture, the NJAES Board of Managers, County Boards of Agriculture and the New
82 Jersey Farm Bureau to work with the Governor, the Legislature, and the county Boards of
83 Chosen Freeholders to restore adequate, stable state funding for the NJAES and agricultural
84 research and extension.

85 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge all county boards of agriculture and
86 commodity organizations to support the Rutgers NJAES Board of Managers' "Discovering
87 New Jersey's Agricultural Experiment Station" campaign, which includes education
88 information and an on-site visit to an NJAES facility for state legislators and county
89 freeholders so that they can learn of the large and diverse constituency of New Jersey
90 residents served by NJAES.

91 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we call upon the Executive Dean of the School of
92 Environmental and Biological Sciences and the Executive Director of the New Jersey
93 Agricultural Experiment Station, the Board of Managers, County Boards of Agriculture, the
94 New Jersey State Board of Agriculture and Rutgers Cooperative Extension staff to maintain
95 timely communications on key issues, including through stakeholder meetings and other
96 meetings/forms of communication.

97 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we also urge agricultural and other stakeholders
98 to communicate with federal Congressional representatives, through NJAES representatives
99 to the Council for Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching (CARET) and all other
100 appropriate agencies and officials, the continued need for stable USDA funding for the
101 research and extension missions of NJAES that have proven their many-fold return on
102 investment for more than a century.