

RESOLUTION # 22

RUTGERS NEW JERSEY AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION

1 **WHEREAS**, the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES) has been
2 generating and disseminating science-based knowledge and resources to New Jersey's
3 residents, communities, and businesses since 1880; and

4 **WHEREAS**, the federal Hatch Act (1887) and Smith-Lever Act (1914), respectively,
5 established federal funding for agricultural experiment stations at land-grant institutions
6 across the nation and Cooperative Extension in New Jersey and nationally; and

7 **WHEREAS**, the NJAES is a separate line item in the State of New Jersey's annual
8 budget; and

9 **WHEREAS**, NJAES has research faculty and staff in campus-based departments,
10 centers and institutes at the Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences with
11 disciplinary expertise in agricultural, food and resource economics; animal sciences;
12 biochemistry and microbiology; ecology, evolution and natural resources; entomology;
13 environmental sciences; food science; human ecology; landscape architecture; marine and
14 coastal sciences; nutritional sciences; and plant biology; and

15 **WHEREAS**, NJAES maintains research farms, business incubator facilities, and
16 marine and coastal research stations across the state; and

17 **WHEREAS**, the NJAES strives to support the contemporary and emerging needs of
18 a diverse range of stakeholders in the state; increase the resiliency of our communities and
19 businesses; catalyze economic development and innovation; and promote environmental
20 integrity and sustainable resource management and land use; and

21 **WHEREAS**, the NJAES generates and extends university knowledge and science-
22 based educational programs through research and outreach programs to the public in
23 diverse areas encompassing agriculture; natural resources stewardship and the
24 environment; food, nutrition and health; fisheries, aquaculture, marine and coastal resources;
25 home, lawn and garden; and, youth and community development; and

26 **WHEREAS**, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, an integral part of NJAES, has faculty
27 and staff with expertise in agriculture and natural resource management; 4-H youth
28 development; and family and community health sciences in county offices across New
29 Jersey; and provides access to the resources and expertise of Rutgers University and the
30 national Cooperative Extension system; and

31 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey’s agricultural community is faced with a multitude of
32 challenges that threaten its viability and sustainability, including: food safety regulations; new
33 invasive pests; urbanization; land use and environmental regulation; water-quality concerns;
34 rising labor and other production costs; wildlife damage; cost and accessibility of farmland;
35 climate issues; globalizing market competition; Right to Farm conflicts; and labor supply
36 shortages; and

37 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey agriculture’s viability and sustainability requires access to
38 information and innovations that would enhance production efficiency and farm prosperity,
39 market access, sound land stewardship and resource management, and compatibility with
40 other land uses; and

41 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey’s status as the nation’s most densely populated state
42 means its environmental pressures, social issues, and community health concerns uniquely
43 distinguish it from other states, thus requiring that new economic growth policies and
44 technologies are effectively balanced with these considerations in order to improve the
45 quality of life of New Jersey residents; and

46 **WHEREAS**, State appropriations to NJAES have, in inflation-adjusted terms,
47 declined by 35 percent in the decade preceding Fiscal Year 2019; and

48 **WHEREAS**, NJAES, unlike schools in the university system, does not receive tuition
49 revenues and cannot make up for funding shortfalls via tuition increases; and

50 **WHEREAS**, the erosion of stable “base” state funding adversely impacts the ability of
51 the NJAES to cover rising operating costs and maintain and develop the necessary long-
52 term physical infrastructure, technology, and human capital needed to support the existing

53 and evolving needs of New Jersey residents, as well as their communities and businesses;
54 and

55 **WHEREAS**, the State supplemental budget appropriations to NJAES in FY19 and
56 FY20 were a departure from a decade of declining or flat state support and facilitated the
57 beginning of much needed re-investments in NJAES research farms and facilities;
58 equipment, machinery and instrumentation; and programs related to hemp production,
59 wildlife management, aquaculture breeding and development, invasive species detection and
60 control, 4-H camp infrastructure, and new crop commercialization, to name only few; and

61 **WHEREAS**, long-term planning and appropriate staffing (i.e., strategic faculty hires)
62 cannot be supported with year-to-year supplemental budget, but requires sustained
63 increases to the State's base funding of NJAES; and

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

66 **WHEREAS**, it is certain that further decreases in state funding will negatively impact
67 the NJAES' delivery of crucial programs across the state, investment in, and dissemination
68 of, new research and technologies, and the maintenance of campus-based and off-campus
69 research facilities; and

70 **WHEREAS**, the state's agricultural community has experienced and continues to
71 experience the negative ramifications of funding-related attrition in Extension agents and
72 specialists who are vital for the delivery of agricultural programming needed to maintain
73 industry viability; and

74 **WHEREAS**, the state's agricultural community is deeply concerned about further
75 erosion in NJAES staffing in the face of looming retirements and the growing need for both
76 existing agricultural programming and innovation within the industry, such as value-added
77 products and new technologies; and

78 **WHEREAS**, county salary contributions for county-based Rutgers Cooperative
79 Extension faculty and staff have, in aggregate, been rising, which reflects local recognition of
80 the importance of NJAES research and Extension programming; and

81 **WHEREAS**, we recognize and support the continued efforts of the Executive Dean of
82 the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences/Executive Director of the New Jersey
83 Agricultural Experiment Station, and the NJAES Board of Managers, in cooperation with,
84 County Boards of Agriculture, the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture, New Jersey Farm
85 Bureau, and agricultural commodity groups to develop the necessary strategies to support
86 the continued delivery of quality programming in production agriculture and diverse areas
87 affecting the quality of life for all NJAES constituent groups.

88 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 105th State
89 Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on February 5-6, 2020, do
90 hereby declare that support for NJAES must be improved and maintained at higher levels if
91 solutions to critical issues are to be achieved, ensuring the viability of the state’s agricultural
92 and food system.

93 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we strongly urge the New Jersey State Board of
94 Agriculture, the NJAES Board of Managers, County Boards of Agriculture and the New
95 Jersey Farm Bureau to work with the Governor, the Legislature, and the county Boards of
96 Chosen Freeholders to provide sustained increases to the State base funding for the NJAES.

97 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we strongly urge the New Jersey State Board of
98 Agriculture, the NJAES Board of Managers, County Boards of Agriculture, and the New
99 Jersey Farm Bureau to work with the county Boards of Chosen Freeholders to provide
100 increased financial support toward the salaries for the Agricultural and Natural Resource
101 Agent positions in the County Cooperative Extension Programs.

102 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge all County Boards of Agriculture and
103 commodity organizations and Farm Bureau to support the Rutgers NJAES Board of
104 Managers’ “Discovering New Jersey’s Agricultural Experiment Station” campaign, which

105 includes education information and on-site visits to NJAES facilities for state legislators and
106 County Freeholders so that they can learn of the impacts to the large and diverse
107 constituencies of New Jersey residents served by NJAES.

108 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we applaud the efforts of the Executive Dean of
109 the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences/Executive Director of the New Jersey
110 Agricultural Experiment Station and its senior leadership team, the Board of Managers, Farm
111 Bureau, County Boards of Agriculture, the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture, and
112 Rutgers Cooperative Extension staff to maintain timely communications on key issues.

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