

RESOLUTION # 24

HUNGER, NUTRITION AND GLEANING IN NEW JERSEY

1 **WHEREAS**, schools are an appropriate vehicle to promote the availability of
2 healthier foods and nutrition services, as they are uniquely positioned to model and reinforce
3 healthy eating behaviors, such as increasing knowledge of and improving access to fruits
4 and vegetables on the school campus and at school-related activities; and

5 **WHEREAS**, schools can serve as an outreach tool to carry positive nutrition
6 messages to parents and the community at large; and

7 **WHEREAS**, schools are required to develop and implement a school
8 nutrition/wellness policy and to promote nutritious alternatives, and the Department
9 continues to train schools and school food-service providers about marketing nutritious foods
10 to children and incorporating more fresh fruits and vegetables into the school meal program;
11 and

12 **WHEREAS**, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the usual ways of delivering nutritious
13 foods to students while they are **in** school were disrupted by schools shifting to virtual
14 learning from home, meaning the Department of Agriculture and Department of Education
15 needed to collaborate on ensuring those meals continued to get to students, through various
16 methods of delivering those meals to students at home; and

17 **WHEREAS**, the Department of Agriculture has significantly increased participation in
18 the School Breakfast Program by working in conjunction with the New Jersey Department of
19 Education to facilitate the inclusion of “breakfast after the bell” options in schools; and

20 **WHEREAS**, the WIC Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program, Senior Farmers’ Market
21 Nutrition Program and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and
22 Children are established through the United States Department of Agriculture but have been
23 administered in New Jersey through the New Jersey Department of Health; and

24 **WHEREAS**, WIC coupon redemption rates in New Jersey have traditionally been low
25 compared to other states, and resistance has been met for the idea of “over-issuing” WIC

coupons in order to ensure the highest possible number of people are receiving them, with the goal that they will also use them; and

WHEREAS, a sound, balanced, nutritional diet is important to the well-being of society, both in terms of the future productivity of our children and the health and well-being of the population in general; and

WHEREAS, approximately 1.9 million people in New Jersey rely upon various feeding and nutrition programs administered by or through the Department; and

WHEREAS, local purchases of food items including fresh fruits and vegetables can benefit the local economy, growers and distributors, thus reducing the number of “food miles” those commodities must travel to reach the end consumers; and

WHEREAS, timely information from state officials regarding the potential for sale of locally grown and harvested foods through federal government programs such as SNAP, WIC and the Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program would help farmers more effectively plan for what types and amounts of produce they should grow in a coming season; and

WHEREAS, volunteer gleaning organizations that provide surplus produce from farms to community feeding operations are a valuable source of fresh agricultural products that do not demand financial resources for purchasing this food, yet still have costs related to storage and transportation of this produce; and

WHEREAS, gleaning surplus agricultural products as a means of reducing food insecurity has been increasing in popularity, and more gleaning organizations are working with farmers in New Jersey than in the past; and

WHEREAS, the biggest challenge in adding that stream of food to the feeding operations is aligning hunters with butchers who can cut and prepare the meat for the feeding operations’ use; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture has for the past 25 years worked with municipalities and agriculture groups to establish and support community farmers markets, where, in addition to selling to the general public, farmers can accept

federally issued Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition program vouchers from senior citizens,
which the farmers then redeem for additional income; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey is home to some of the largest commercial fishing ports in
the United States, and New Jersey's commercial fishermen seek to reduce hunger by
participating in a seafood gleaning program; and

WHEREAS, among the goal of the gleaning program is exposing consumers to the
tastes of some underutilized species, in the hope they will seek them out in the future, and,
under the program being proposed, fishermen will receive neither payment nor tax write-offs
for the fish being gleaned.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the delegates to the 106th State
Agricultural Convention, assembled through a virtual platform hosted in Trenton, New
Jersey, in accordance with COVID-19 pandemic recommendations, on February 17, 2021,
do hereby continue to support the efforts of the Department and its partners in the United
States Department of Agriculture (USDA), as well as community feeding organizations to
ensure that healthy food choices and fresh fruits and vegetables are available to all children
and adults throughout New Jersey.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Department to continue to lead in
promoting healthy foods and sound dietary choices to improve the well-being of New
Jersey's citizens by promoting programs such as "Jersey Fresh Farm to School", "Farm to
Preschool", "Farm to Summer" and school wellness policies.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Department to continue promoting
the increased participation in School Breakfast programs, especially the inclusion of
"breakfast after the bell" options, which have helped New Jersey significantly increase
participation over the past several years.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Governor and Legislature to
recognize the critical nature of maintaining state funding levels supporting the federal school

79 nutrition and commodity programs in an amount that will ensure that no accompanying
80 federal funds are lost.

81 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge those at all levels responsible for
82 purchasing or otherwise acquiring food for community feeding programs to ensure that those
83 foods are grown, harvested or produced in New Jersey to the greatest extent practicable.

84 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we stress the critical nature of the Governor and
85 Legislature providing adequate funding for the State Food Purchase Program (SFPP) in the
86 FY2022 budget at a level at least equal to the current funding, and that additional funding
87 should be provided for storage and distribution of emergency food.

88 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the Department to work with New Jersey
89 fruit and vegetable processing companies and the Rutgers Food Innovation Center to
90 produce pre-packaged, value-added, single-serving New Jersey fruit and vegetable
91 products, and "Made with Jersey Fresh" products, for use in school food service menus.

92 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we encourage the Department to engage in an
93 education and outreach campaign to link hunters with butchers, and to further link those
94 butchers with feeding operations, in order to fulfill the mission of Hunters Helping the Hungry
95 by moving meat from hunts into the stream of food accepted by the feeding operations.

96 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we strongly support increased participation in the
97 following safety-net federal and state nutrition programs administered by the Department:
98 National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program; After School Snack
99 Program; Special Milk Program; Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program; Child and Adult Care
100 Food Program; Summer Food Service Program; School Commodity Program; The
101 Emergency Food Assistance Program; the State Food Purchase Program; WIC and Senior
102 Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, and we urge the Department to work toward having
103 white potatoes established as an eligible commodity in the WIC, SNAP and other food-
104 assistance programs in which they currently are not eligible.

105 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we do hereby support and encourage the use of
106 grants from all possible sources by New Jersey fishermen to establish the United States
107 Seafood Gleaning Program, and we support the USSGP pilot project in Monmouth and
108 Ocean counties in New Jersey to promote these efforts.