

**RESOLUTION # 26**

**LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY, HUMANE STANDARDS AND ANIMAL WASTE  
MANAGEMENT**

1           **WHEREAS**, New Jersey’s livestock and meat production industry is an important  
2 part of the state’s agriculture, not only contributing wholesome, locally produced meat and  
3 meat products, but also creating demand for field crops used as feed, as well as other  
4 industry support sales; and

5           **WHEREAS**, recent years have seen wide market swings, combined with periodic  
6 spikes in input costs, and the lack of processing facilities that will enable producers to  
7 establish Custom Value-Added sales, both wholesale and retail to the consumer; and

8           **WHEREAS**, the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic has brought to the forefront the  
9 potential need to decentralize the meat processing industry, and to provide greater  
10 availability in processing centers throughout the United States of small to medium size meat  
11 processors; and

12           **WHEREAS**, within the current marketing structure, New Jersey livestock producers  
13 have suffered from the lack of processing centers within the state’s borders that have as their  
14 first priority of providing custom harvest and processing of all types of livestock; and

15           **WHEREAS**, the Department has been working with livestock producers to explore  
16 alternative modes to marketing livestock meat and meat products outside the traditional  
17 route of selling live animals into a commodity processing system; and

18           **WHEREAS**, those alternative approaches include the establishment of on-farm,  
19 small group, or area processing centers for the purpose of harvesting, cutting, packaging,  
20 and further processing for table-ready livestock protein meat products; and

21           **WHEREAS**, the creation of opportunities to process New Jersey-produced and  
22 processed livestock meat and meat products within the state can provide the state’s livestock  
23 farmers with a chance to control their own destiny and earn significant premiums over the  
24 commodity market; and

25           **WHEREAS**, as with all agricultural products, the return to the farmer for livestock  
26 produced meat and meat products should be greater the further into the marketing chain the  
27 farmer controls the packaging and sale of the products that his farm produces; and

28           **WHEREAS**, all value-added ventures in agriculture involve a considerable amount  
29 of risk, and this level of risk is additionally intense for livestock processing ventures, which  
30 tend to be capital-intensive and require large investments of equity on the part of the  
31 principals to establish; and

32           **WHEREAS**, New Jersey is demographically favorably positioned to have direct local  
33 or on-farm processing of livestock meats be profitable ventures for any size livestock  
34 farmers looking to diversify, as evidenced by existing successful on-farm operations  
35 providing needed livestock meat supplies during the initial stages of the COVID-19 Pandemic  
36 and has since continued with consumers wanting more knowledge of where their food is  
37 coming from; and

38           **WHEREAS**, the state Economic Development Authority has been directed, via  
39 statute, to establish a funding pool to aid the state's farmers in acquiring the equipment  
40 necessary to modernize their livestock meat processing operations and to create on-farm  
41 produced and processed value-added products; and

42           **WHEREAS**, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture's Division of Animal Health  
43 (DAH) is the primary agency charged in the state with ensuring the health of livestock  
44 animals, since diseases in livestock can spread to other animals and, in some cases, to  
45 humans; and

46           **WHEREAS**, a large part of that responsibility is ensuring that livestock coming into  
47 New Jersey from other parts of the nation or the world does not also bring animal diseases  
48 that could spread to animals already in the state; and

49           **WHEREAS**, the DAH must prepare to prevent diseases from entering the state, not  
50 only via animals that may be imported to New Jersey, but also through wildlife that cannot be  
51 controlled for testing; for example, the recent preparations to respond, if necessary, to Highly

52 Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) that is transmitted by wild waterfowl and has resulted in  
53 the euthanasia of millions of birds in the Midwest and West, where those wild birds have  
54 passed HPAI into poultry operations, but has not, to date, similarly impacted the East Coast;  
55 and

56 **WHEREAS**, the Certified Livestock Inspectors within the DAH, or hired as outside  
57 consultants, are, by law, the experts for humane treatment of livestock when an allegation of  
58 cruelty or neglect is made against an owner of livestock, as those inspectors have expertise  
59 that is not common among humane-law enforcement officers, or others, who may mistake  
60 normal husbandry, an ill animal or biosecurity measures for mistreatment of animals, and  
61 humane-law enforcement officers and others may jeopardize a farmer's livelihood or the  
62 state's livestock population when they do not follow appropriate testing and biosecurity  
63 protocols; and

64 **WHEREAS**, previous State Agricultural Conventions have seen livestock owners  
65 complain about similar issues centered on livestock, and that the tenets of the regulations  
66 regarding Humane Treatment of Domestic Livestock, N.J.A.C. 2:8 et seq. (herein referred to  
67 as the "Humane Standards") which offer a safe harbor to livestock owners in New Jersey if  
68 they follow accepted livestock practices, are not always followed by animal-cruelty  
69 investigators; and

70 **WHEREAS**, the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture has previously testified at  
71 legislative hearings about the absolute need for DAH's Certified Livestock Inspectors to be  
72 involved in EVERY cruelty complaint involving livestock, in order to ensure that animals that  
73 may be sick, and not subject to cruelty, are not removed from the property on which they  
74 reside because such removal could risk spreading the disease they have; and

75 **WHEREAS**, it is vital that livestock farmers understand their rights, the role of the  
76 DAH and how humane-law enforcement officers in a given location operate; and

77 **WHEREAS**, it is crucial for law enforcement officers to understand the vital role  
78 played by DAH's Certified Livestock Inspectors, and to understand that they must

79 immediately notify the Department of Agriculture's Division of Animal Health for all cases at  
80 the time a complaint is filed and before an investigation begins; and

81 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey's commercial farmers have in recent years branched out  
82 beyond "traditional" livestock (cattle, poultry, swine, small ruminants, etc.) and there are now  
83 also New Jersey farmers raising llamas, alpacas, water buffalo, bison, rabbits, emus,  
84 ostriches and other livestock, all of which can be a source of farm income and contribute to  
85 the overall value of farm products sold in the state; and

86 **WHEREAS**, the Department, working with industry representatives, New Jersey  
87 Farm Bureau, veterinarians, Rutgers University, and the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment  
88 Station, wrote and adopted N.J.A.C. 2:8, which became the first regulations of their kind in  
89 the country to address the humane care and keeping of domestic livestock; and

90 **WHEREAS**, the Department adopted the Humane Standards with amendments, as  
91 prescribed by the New Jersey Supreme Court on July 30, 2008, following a challenge by the  
92 New Jersey Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, among others, in which the  
93 Standards were largely upheld; and

94 **WHEREAS**, the application of animal cruelty statutes without recognition of the safe  
95 harbor provided by compliance with the Humane Standards and without consultation with  
96 Certified Livestock Inspectors from the Department's Division of Animal Health (DAH) can,  
97 and has, resulted in officers removing or trying to remove animals from farm premises and  
98 charging livestock owners without any basis in law; and

99 **WHEREAS**, the risk of spreading disease is a vital reason why DAH veterinarians  
100 and other trained personnel must be consulted by humane-law cruelty investigators before  
101 considering the removal of any animals from a livestock owner's premises; and

102 **WHEREAS**, animal agriculture increasingly finds itself misunderstood by a public  
103 largely removed from livestock agriculture and there exists activism of those who either  
104 oppose animal agriculture altogether or object to certain science-based practices; and

105           **WHEREAS**, we support the New Jersey Department of Agriculture’s cooperative  
106 efforts in developing a comprehensive animal waste management program for livestock  
107 farms that considers and incorporates the environmental, alternative-energy and economic  
108 aspects of animal waste; and

109           **WHEREAS**, the Department recognizes animal waste as a nutrient- and energy-rich  
110 resource and continues to explore alternative uses of animal waste, including bio-gas  
111 production, and allowing for the productive reuse of manure as a means to reduce the use of  
112 synthetic fertilizers, which reduces hauling costs and benefits the environment; and

113           **WHEREAS**, the Department works in conjunction with its conservation partners to  
114 implement demonstration projects, such as the one that installed best management practices  
115 at the Rutgers Equine Science Center, to provide hands-on training and research facilities to  
116 educate livestock owners on the design, implementation and construction of cost-effective  
117 environmental management practices and facilities to minimize water quality impacts and  
118 provide an opportunity for the evaluation of the effectiveness of such practices and facilities;  
119 and

120           **WHEREAS**, the Department continues to identify ways to assist livestock farmers  
121 with self-certified and high-density plan development and implementation to assure that the  
122 animal waste management program is effective, practical, affordable and feasible.

123           **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 106<sup>th</sup> State  
124 Agricultural Convention, assembled through a virtual platform hosted in Trenton, New  
125 Jersey, in accordance with COVID-19 pandemic recommendations, on February 17, 2021,  
126 do hereby strongly urge the New Jersey Department of Agriculture to do the following:

- 127           • Continue to support value-added projects, both on-farm and those that involve  
128           processing at off-farm sites, that can offer New Jersey livestock meat producing farmers  
129           significant premiums for their products.
- 130           • Continue to work with all appropriate state and local governments and agencies, as well  
131           as the livestock meat industry, to seek funding for on-farm, stand-alone small processing

132 centers or regional processing plants and/or equipment toward that end, with a focus on  
133 reaching the high-end market in New Jersey and surrounding states.

134 • Help livestock farmers access all appropriate state and federal government agencies  
135 with the goal of maximizing all small-business funding program opportunities in order to  
136 create value-added livestock meat processing units that will support and grow the  
137 diversified livestock industry in New Jersey.

138 • Help livestock farmers expand beyond custom retail cuts to include alternative table  
139 ready livestock meat.

140 • Work through the Department's Division of Marketing and Development to provide  
141 enhanced support for establishing a viable "*Jersey Fresh*" livestock meat/protein  
142 products brand.

143 • Enthusiastically support development of a processing facility that would be owned by a  
144 group of livestock producers and facilitate the development of individual branding of  
145 custom products and enhance the ability to develop a wholesale market that would  
146 establish greater volumes of meat product which can be made available to a wider  
147 consumer base.

148 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Department, along with Rutgers Cooperative  
149 Extension and Rutgers University as the result of the two Special Statewide Livestock  
150 Summits, continue working to identify all possible resources and partnerships that could help  
151 livestock producers create livestock harvest and processing facilities of source-verified  
152 *Jersey Fresh* livestock meat products, either individually or in tandem with other New Jersey  
153 livestock producers.

154 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the Department to closely monitor  
155 developments in the drafting of the next federal Farm Bill as regards the livestock industry,  
156 and that it advise and educate the New Jersey Congressional Delegation as to New Jersey  
157 livestock farmers' support or opposition of livestock-related issues in the Farm Bill, in order to  
158 ensure that the Farm Bill best reflects the needs of New Jersey's livestock industry.

159           **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the Legislature and the Governor to  
160 provide additional and appropriate funding levels to the Department to allow the DAH to  
161 continue providing expert advice and training to those tasked with humane-law enforcement  
162 and livestock owners regarding the Humane Standards in cases where abuse and/or neglect  
163 are alleged but which also require knowledge of animal husbandry, best management  
164 practices, animal diseases, diagnostic testing and the practice of proper biosecurity  
165 measures.

166           **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we require the New Jersey humane-law  
167 enforcement community to follow the Humane Standards and work with the DAH when  
168 assessing livestock so that better and more consistent decisions concerning law  
169 enforcement are made, ensuring that appropriate animal husbandry, biosecurity and health  
170 documentation are followed as part of every humane investigation.

171           **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the New Jersey State Attorney General  
172 to require that all law enforcement personnel authorized to respond to animal cruelty  
173 complaints comply with the rules set forth in the Humane Standards upheld by the Supreme  
174 Court, including reporting cases involving livestock to the Division of Animal Health and  
175 following proper biosecurity measures.

176           **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we recognize the interest and concern within the  
177 state and country about livestock handling and welfare and therefore support the services  
178 provided by the Division of Animal Health in order to maintain pace with requests for field  
179 investigations of alleged violations, and that we recognize the limitations currently faced by  
180 the DAH in order to conduct field inspections that ensure compliance with the Standards.

181           **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge humane-law enforcement personnel to  
182 avail themselves of regular training regarding the Humane Standards, which the Division of  
183 Animal Health has made a commitment to provide, in an effort to have humane animal  
184 enforcement more accurately and consistently reflect the provisions of the Standards.

185           **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that law enforcement officials must understand that  
186 they must immediately notify the Department of Agriculture's Division of Animal Health for all  
187 cases involving livestock at the time a humane-treatment complaint is filed and before any  
188 investigation begins.

189           **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Legislature and the Governor defer to the  
190 existing NJDA Humane Standards N.J.A.C. 2:8 when and if any proposed legislation is  
191 presented that could be in conflict with said rule.

192           **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we strongly urge livestock operators to file  
193 animal waste management plans with the Department in order to comply with state  
194 regulations regarding the need for such plans, and we further direct the Department to  
195 continue to recognize animal waste as a resource and continue to explore alternative uses of  
196 animal waste including bio-gas production that could help meet the State Energy Master  
197 Plan goals, allow for the productive reuse of manure, reduce hauling costs and benefit the  
198 environment.

199           **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we direct the Department to continue to work in  
200 conjunction with conservation partners to: implement demonstration projects, such as the  
201 one that installed best management practices at the Equine Science Center; to provide  
202 hands-on training and research facilities to educate livestock owners on the design and  
203 construction of cost-effective environmental management practices and facilities to identify  
204 opportunities for implementation incentives for facilities to minimize water quality impacts  
205 (such as in the State cost-share program and the Farm Bill); and provide an opportunity for  
206 the evaluation of the effectiveness of such practices.